

## Episode 3: Cultivating a Pathway for Global Learning at University of Michigan-Dearborn

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STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> You're listening to Making Global Learning Universal. Conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration and complex problem solving in higher education on campus, online, in local communities and abroad. I'm your host, Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University and co-author of Making Global Learning Universal, Promoting Inclusion and Success for All.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> I think that's it's pretty clear now to all of us that we are living in a global society and that everything is flowing across borders; materials, information, and sadly even pollution that we have to deal with. And we have to come together as a society of humanity to solve many of these problems.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> That was Domenico Grasso, Chancellor of the University of Michigan, Dearborn. I sat down with Chancellor Grasso; student leader Vivian Adams, Scott Riggs Director of Global Engagement, and Ilir Miteza, Associate Provost for Graduate Global and Digital Education to discuss the development of Dearborn's Discovery Quest, a new integrated global learning pathway that students in any major can take through their undergraduate education.

We talked about how Dearborn defined global learning for themselves. How they built Discovery Quest on the firm foundation of existing global learning opportunities and how they connect students global learning to other major strategic research and engagement initiatives.

Be sure to listen until the very end when Vivian ties all of this together in a powerful statement about the relationship between global learning pathways and student success.

So, I am absolutely delighted to be joined today by the team from University of Michigan at Dearborn. We're going to have a conversation that I really think will probably end up being a first of several about initiating a global learning initiative at a large institution.

I think before we dive into the conversation, it would be a good idea for each of us to kind of introduce ourselves briefly, so listeners hear our voices and they get a sense of who is speaking as we have our conversation.

Let's start with the VIP in the room, the very important person and that would be our student leader, Vivian. Would you introduce yourself to our listeners?

VIVIAN ADAMS >> Hello everyone. My name is Vivian Adams. I have a senior at the University of Michigan Dearborn. I was the previous Student Body President and am still involved in multiple organizations as well as international student organizations on campus.

SCOTT RIGGS >> Scott Riggs, Director of Global Engagement. I've been in this capacity for two years at the University of Michigan Dearborn.

ILIR METEZA >> Ilir Miteza, I've been on campus for about 18 years as a faculty in economics and I'm currently serving as associate provost for graduate global and digital education. Pleased to be here.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> And I am Domenico Grasso. I'm the Chancellor of the University of Michigan, Dearborn and I've only been here a little less than a year and a half. And before that, I was Provost at the University of Delaware, where study abroad was actually started in the United States right after World War I by a person named Professor Cartwright.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Right on.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> Took students to France because his thinking was that if we learn more about other cultures, we would not have to repeat the horrors of World War I.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Fantastic, I'm glad you shared that and I think you might have even mentioned that the first time that I met you, which happened to have been the time that I visited your campus.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> Um-hmm.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> I think you were pretty new at that point.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> I was very new. (Laughter).

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Yeah.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> I think it was just a few months.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Yeah, absolutely. So, Scott, I believe, and Ilir, invited me to come to your campus to talk about what global learning is all about. Our book had just come out and it was an afternoon of meetings. We had a workshop with faculty. And we were kind of grappling with how we define global learning, what is this concept? Before we think about providing it to our students, we really need to wrap our own minds around it.

So, we had this great discussion. It was really inspiring to me. Then I left. (Laughter). You know, I flew away. And even though I've had an opportunity to see Scott and Ilir at conferences and we've talked a little bit, I really don't know what happened next.

So, I think it might be a good place to begin, like what happened next? After the consultant comes and talks about the definition of what global learning is or a definition, how did your institution then proceed with the conversation and make global learning your own? How do you define global learning?

ILIR METEZA >> Yeah, well thank you Stephanie for taking us back to that September, or October last year when you visited us, because I think at that point our global learning operation, if you will, was about a year old. Most of our conversations really were with internal, with our faculty colleagues, particularly in GLAC, the Global Learning Advisory Council, where Vivian is also a member of.

We knew we had some very important elements of global learning on campus. We had a longstanding experience of our faculty, teaching courses around international themes about global challenges. We had a very strong cohort, still do, of faculty leading trips overseas, study abroad trips.

And this reminds me that I had a faculty colleague in economics who since retired, Michael Tomb me. Who used to every year prepare a list of campus-wide courses with international content. So as junior faculty.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> This is so cool.

ILIR METEZA >> I asked him whether anybody requested, had requested that list from him. The answer was no. He would publish it, publish it on his website every year. Every year, in order to inform students what global courses we were offering campus-wide.

My point is, as a campus, we had, we still do, many wild flowers growing everywhere on the curb, on the walls, in the cracks of the asphalt, we realized that our goal was to actually create the platform, to create the conditions where all of that energy, that global wisdom, if you will, would sort of thrive, blossom in the garden.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> I love that story.

ILIR METEZA >> That's where we saw as our job. That's why we engage the faculty in the global learning, advisory council, and that's why we invited you. You really were the, our first effort to engage with the community off campus. With campuses that had more experience in this area.

In terms of where we are, if we fast forward about a year, our vision for global learning now is to prepare self-aware global citizens who are able to collaboratively address complex and borderless problems sustainably and justly.

It took us awhile to get there and a lot of conversations with our colleagues, but mostly we have engaged faculty, we have engaged alums, students of course, colleagues in other universities as I mentioned, and also a couple of cohorts of provost fellows. And I can talk more about that later on.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> I love the story about the, the faculty member who had taken it upon himself to let students know all the opportunities that were existing on campus. That was the overwhelming feeling that I had when I visited your campus.

I didn't know what to expect, I'll be honest. Because I'm familiar with Dearborn as a great American city, right? As kind of the home of the Ford Motor Company. And in the middle of the rust belt. And I was largely unfamiliar with any of the history that you're talking about.

So, I could feel that there was this zeitgeist, and Chancellor Grasso, you were knew at that time, not so new anymore, but if you could kind of share with us from your view, from your position at the highest level of administration in your institution, why is global learning something that you see as important to the institution and to the institution's mission?

DOMENICO GRASSO >> Stephanie, that's a great question. I think that it's pretty clear now to all of us that we are living in a global society, and that everything is flowing across borders; materials, information, and sadly even pollution that we have to deal with. And we have to come together as a society of humanity to solve many of these problems.

But more importantly, there is also a sense of xenophobia sometimes, when we are unfamiliar with individuals from other locations. And I think the concept of global education, whether our

students are going abroad, or we have students or faculty joining us here, or if we're just learning about other places, gives us an opportunity to see things through different lenses.

And of course there are many problems that we deal with as a group of nations or societies, but there are also things we can learn from other countries. For instance, in Denmark, Copenhagen, has a very strong bicycle culture which is something that I think many of our communities could benefit from, in terms of sustainable transportation and alternative modes of transportation.

Or their approaches to toxic chemicals. They have a, in the Netherlands, and in parts of Europe, they have an approach called a precautionary principle which is really risk averse. These are things that whether we adopt their views or not, we are better informed if we learn about them, we could make better decisions.

So I think there is so much that we can learn about from other cultures and we can share what we've learned here. And so that there is this transfer of information, of knowledge, and of just a sense of community of being part of the human race.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Vivian, when you hear the Chancellor of your institution talk like that, how does that make you feel?

VIVIAN ADAMS >> As a student, that's incredible, because, especially for the generation of students that are attending the University of Michigan Dearborn, we want in the university, that's so forward thinking, that's so, that has mind for sustainability, that has a vision for what a university could be in a global aspect. And that's just incredible to hear.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Is it important for you to hear that from your President or from your, from your Chancellor? I mean, to be honest, like how often are students paying attention to what the Provost is saying and what the President or Chancellor is saying? Does it make a difference to you?

VIVIAN ADAMS >> I think it does, especially for students that are involved on campus, like I am. We have a really involved campus. It's interesting to see how students react to statements such as this to the way that the university is forming and evolving, because it overlaps so much with our curriculum the way that our curriculum is shaping.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Why did you want to shape your curriculum? Most students are just trying to navigate their curriculum, right? Like how do I figure out which courses I should be taking, which Professors I should be taking, in what order should I do this? How can I get these courses done as quickly as possible. But you're taking a much larger view. Why does it matter to you?

And I think this is an important thing to share with listeners, because there are a lot of institutions that adopt necessarily involve students in the design of the curriculum in this way.

VIVIAN ADAMS >> From all the advisory councils and committees that I've had the pleasure to attend, there has always been at least one student representative. When talking to provosts and different heads of colleges, Professors, there is also a student perspective to the grass roots of a creation of whatever it might be a curriculum of; a new class.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Would you say anything to students out there who might be invited or considering? Would you suggest that they get involved? Or do you have any recommendations or advice to them?

VIVIAN ADAMS >> Absolutely get involved. You're only helping yourself and your community by getting involved. And I think that that's something special about the Dearborn community that we try to get involved as much as we can because we try to better ourselves and our neighborhood as well.

The reason that we attend this university is to better ourselves and to get best job opportunities that we can. And by getting involved and by making our names stand out, that's the only way that we can best get ourselves for this global job market that we have to navigate.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Right on, thank you.

So, I think we should maybe kind of start digging into what UM Dearborn has designed collaboratively, right? So we have this, from what I understand, what I heard about when I was at the AAC&U Global Citizenship Conference is that the institution has planned a new pathway through the general education sequence that is focused on global learning.

So, what does that look like?

SCOTT RIGGS >> This pathway, from a four-year perspective, students will enter in a foundations course which is similar to a first-year experience. Transfer students can join as well so it's being called foundations. And I should preface this by saying, students at the outset will be choosing a global challenge that they feel passionate about.

The two global challenges that we are going with at this time are sustainable systems and building a better world. So they will choose one of these goals, these complex problems that they would like to address. They will take a foundations course that's related to that theme in their second year. They would take two disciplinary courses that are also related to this theme. Third year would be an interdisciplinary course related. And finally there would be an interdisciplinary project.

So it starts at a broad level with a foundations course. It goes specific in the second year where they're picking up disciplinary knowledge to the challenge. In the third year it goes broad again, bringing all the disciplines together as they look at these challenges. Then it ends specific with a particular project based on, on the community.

Embedded throughout the experience, throughout the program are experiences and students will be choosing two of four experiences. And these could be anything from undergraduate research, academic service learning, co-op internship, study abroad. And these too will be related to the theme.

There is enough credit hours there to end with two certificates, so at the end we are envisioning that students will be getting a certificate, likely one related to the pathway, and one related to the process of global learning itself on something about the nature of addressing these complex problems from various perspectives.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> And the way you describe this, it's clear to me now, because I've already seen a picture of it. So, and I know that there is this fantastic image that helps people

see how students can navigate the kind of broad and then more specific and broad again. We will include that in the show notes that so listeners can get a slightly better idea. But it sounds like, well, okay, I have a genuine question.

Did you start from scratch with this concept of design, or were you working from some current framework, right? So, this is a pathway through the general education sequence. Help us understand how the committee worked through the design piece of what this would look like.

ILIR METEZA >> Ilir. Not easy to answer that question, because I think quite a few things sort of came together at the same time. We were for some time keeping our ear to the ground, so to speak, in conferences, but also surveying the literature, particularly the global learning literature. The Gen Ed literature.

We were aware of many experiments, innovative ideas across the country. None of these looked exactly like this. But I think what happened at the same time was that in one of the Council of Dean retreats, as we were thinking and brainstorming around how to create, how to design a curriculum for this century, this idea of grand challenges came from our engineering colleagues, our engineering dean.

This created immediately a spark, I would say.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Yeah.

ILIR METEZA >> And, so unanimous support from all the Deans that this was something that was experiential, engaging, connected, integrating, for our curriculum. And that was experience based and that students would actually respond to it.

And then we have a global team, mostly made of Scott and I, but also the other associate provost as well as some colleagues that work in student success. And we've been designing this, say from scratch. We're still designing it and laying out the plans for implementation to launch it this coming fall.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Okay, I think you said a couple of really important things there. So, one, is that the committee, you spent some time just taking in information, taking in information about your own institution, taking in information from other institutions, what they've tried, the models that they've used from the literature, and you discussed it, you dialogued it. Nothing was quite gelling. Then suddenly, someone, and it happened to be your dean of engineering, came up with kind of that spark, that lynch pin, some might if you were thinking of it from a backward curriculum design point of view, it was the ultimate goal, right? The grand challenge. That was the piece that caused everything to gel and then to be able to make sense, and pick through all of the different ideas.

Is that, do I have you right?

ILIR METEZA >> Yes, that's, that's correct. To be more specific, our engineering colleagues have been designing a grand challenges scholars program based on the National Academy of Engineering program. And so, we've been working with them throughout this process in order to make these programs run side by side without duplication, but really a sort of reinforcing each other, because we want our engineering students to be in these project-based learning groups, in these foundation courses. In the interdisciplinary courses, along with students from business, and from English and from history and economics.

We see a lot of value in learning from difference, whether that difference comes from cultural aspects or disciplinary lenses, we think difference has potential on this campus.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Okay. So, that idea of the grand challenges, that was kind of the sticky space for your institution. For my institution, the sticky space was global citizenship. That was the thing that really drew everyone together. It was part of the zeitgeist of the institution. For you, it was global challenges. For other institutions it might be something else.

That also prompts me to ask Chancellor Grasso, that grand challenges piece, Do you see a connection between Discovery Quest which is I think the name of this program right now, this pathway. Do you see any connections between Discovery Quest and any of the institutions strategic goals?

DOMENICO GRASSO >> Stephanie, let me just expand a little bit on the grand challenges, because I've been involved with the national academy around the grand challenges as well. And I think the National Academy of Engineering and many disciplines have defined grand challenges in their areas. A lot of them are technology based. But I think that this serves as one organizing principle here.

I think two others might be great debates, which are not technology based, and then big ideas, which may not relate directly to a grand challenge or a great debate, but it is just a creation of human spirit, so to speak.

And I think these all serve as opportunities for structures to contextualize the educational experience for the students. So this is what might get them excited about bringing all the things that Scott and Ilir talked about together in trying to marshal them towards a specific goal that they would work on interdisciplinary and in a moral listen particular fashion.

So the I think the grand challenge is one approach. It's based in engineering. It started in engineering with a report from the national academies, but there are other approaches that we could also take, because things like the great debates would be more humanistically based and there are so many things we could talk around great debates that have no technological solution but we, as a society, have to come together to try to solve.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Um-hmm. And more and more institutions are, I hear, the dialogue around the Sustainable Development Goals. So this kind of is another kind of organizing principle as you were going to say, as you were saying.

I can't help but ask again about that question about the strategic plan, right? Because you know, I spent a lot within my own institution and other institutions that I'm working with, you know, how can we make sure that whatever we're doing is in line with the institution's strategic plan overall, right? So that we're not duplicating efforts and that we can also gain the buy in of high-level administrators like yourself.

You know, people may be really used to having such great buy in on your campus, from the highest administration, but it's not, it's not the case at all in institutions. Sometimes we have to lead up. So, do you see a connection between the work that's happening in the Gen Ed and the institutions overall strategic plan?

DOMENICO GRASSO >> I absolutely see a connection. I think that the initiatives that have been led by Scott and Ilir and Mitch, our associate provost in the provost Cate Davy, they are all very creative. And have engendered a sense of buy in by the people involved.

We're in the middle of a university strategic plan right now. We have 150 people involved in it. Ilir is actually leading, co-leading con of the sections. And we're trying to get people to develop what they want to do for if future, not something that's top down, it's something that they will own so that it will continue on irrespective of the leadership.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> That making it your own, it's just like a theme that I keep hearing when I hear the story of how your institution has developed this pathway.

Ilir at the AAC&U Conference, you said this really interesting thing, I wrote it down in my notes. You said, when students in addition to declaring a major, when students enter the university, we'll invite them to declare a passion, right? And those are those two themes that Scott was talking about earlier, sustainable systems and building a better world.

What was the process around how your, the global learning committee or, I don't know whomever, was working on deciding what those themes would be? Because there is so many that you could choose from. How did you land upon those?

ILIR METEZA >> I think my experience here as a faculty member has taught me one thing, that students don't tend to be motivated by learning outcomes. They're motivated by questions. In fact, the bigger the questions, the more animated students are in pursuing those questions.

I think it's our job to think long and hard about connecting our courses, connecting all of the learning experiences we provide here on campus, which are excellent, but connecting them in a way that they make sense and that they generate a sense of purpose and mission in our students.

And perhaps Vivian can talk more about this later, but in terms of how we, how do we integrate these experiences. This was the biggest question in our minds. How do we create a pathway that appeals, that appeals or will appeal to students, that will allow them to follow their passion, so that somewhere down the road the university can figure out ways to actually shape our curriculum more in terms of these questions and passions, and less in terms of disciplinary terms or disciplinary turf.

I do not want to minimize or reduce the value of disciplines in what we've achieved in terms of science, literature, everything. Our disciplines have made so much progress in terms of understanding, understanding the world, innovation, technology. Our disciplines give us the hierarchy of the most important questions in our literatures.

But, we also, I think most faculty also realize that the biggest benefits and the biggest payoffs will probably be when we work together right there where the interdisciplinary boundaries are with each other. And if we can pull our students with us, doing that important risky work, I should add, is interdisciplinary work is high payoff, but it's also quite risky.

If we can pull our students together to work with us, right, on those complex challenges, I think they will be much better off, much better prepared for their own future, but also for the world.



STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> That reminds me a lot of what Jaime Casap says, he's the Education Evangelist for Google. He says, instead of asking students what they'll major in when they enter the university, we should be asking our students what problem they want to, what problem they want to solve.

SCOTT RIGGS >> I would add too that there was some logistical decisions happening to make sure that this was actually a sustainable and do able. It was a five-person planning team really involved with this effort. And it's a large effort and we knew that that wouldn't fly unless we did a lot of hitchhiking on other initiatives that were already, had momentum.

So, one of those things was again from the national academy, and they had, four various spears of grand challenges. So two of those we borrowed. One was joy of living which we have modified to building a better world, because when we tested that with students they didn't know what we were talking about when we said joy of living. I know joy of living in an engineering sense makes a lot of sense. In the broader disciplines, people kind of fumble with what that would mean or look like.

And then, sustainability was another one. And we (indiscernible) sustainable systems, so that is not just environmental or something of that, that nature.

So, again that was a, Chancellor, we hitch-hiked a ride and an initiative that was already happening, because we're trying to build as much support, as much buy in. The same thing with the foundation courses, the first year experience courses, those were already being done by our College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters. And that was another example of us teaming up with the group running those and saying would it be possible to nudge some people in the direction of these two themes in which we were interested, and they bought in. So I would say there was a lot of hitchhiking along the way.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> So you did a lot of collaborating with other programs to make sure that things were feasible, that they were existing resources, and aligning sort of the pathway with other existing programs.

SCOTT RIGGS >> Correct.

ILIR METEZA >> I just wanted to add to what Scott said, agree and then add that have essentially so much can be done on our campus, on any campus frankly. There are so many good things that are happening, but if we only can connect better, collaborate better, coordinate things better, a lot is possible. And that's what we've been trying to do here, build on the great work of our colleagues in the colleges or faculty, other leaders as well. And connect this into one coherent learning experience for instance.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> So often we think, this is awesome. We're going to build it and they will come. (Laughter). Right?

So my next question is. Vivian, do you think students are going to, are they going to come? Are they going to go for this pathway? What do you think are the most attractive aspects of this pathway.

VIVIAN ADAMS >> I think the most attractive aspects would be what students can get out of this program. Like Ilir said, this all starts with a passion that a student has.

Now, in order for a student even to apply or attend a university, there has to be some kind of passion, whether it be through their background experiences, whatever the case might be. There is always a problem that a student wants to tackle.

And a lot of the times students get sidetracked by requirements and money, looking for outcomes that will put them in the best position in the future; however what this program can provide is leg work in order to make themselves shine even more than other candidates at future job opportunities and make them more aware of what's happening globally.

Global learning can be seen through a lot of our courses on campus already, however students don't really realize the different connections, whether it be from history to English, to math, to science, whatever the case might be. This is a way that students can connect everything that they've been working towards and see that everything is interconnected and they can see that through their jobs. They can see that through, in their communities and wherever they might end up in the world.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> So, if I understand correctly, you're inviting students to co-create their general education experience, choosing a passion, and then choosing the courses and the activities that they will put together that will give kind of, some kind of realization to that passion.

And Vivian, something that you just said really stuck with me. So you said when students apply to a university, they already come in, oftentimes, with something that's of interest, something that, something that's already a driving force. I wonder if we shouldn't be making more use of that application experience. You know, if we shouldn't be asking students explicitly about what their passions are. And then using the information that we get from their applications to help them from the moment they arrive find the resources and the opportunities that are available to them when they come to campus.

I mean, you made me think, I need to have another conversation with our admissions team. It's been ten years that we've been doing this work, and I've never really thought of making use of that space to really get students started off on an exciting, passionate engaged foot. So this is the benefit of having a conversation like this. That's all I have to say about that.

So far you all have made it sound pretty easy. Like, we did a lot of research. We scanned the field. We talked, we had a committee. We talked about our ideas. We have these great student leaders. We had support from above. There had to have been some challenges along the way.

Could you just share a little bit about kind of the bumps in the road. Any push back you might have had, lack of resources in order to do the sorts of things that you, that you may envision.

What kind of challenges have you encountered just in the design process itself?

SCOTT RIGGS >> I would say for our team, the biggest problem thus far have been logistical. The, one of our key concerns is the whole notion of credits, and making sure that we just aren't adding on and adding on to what students already have to do when it comes to which courses they have to take. And that is tricky. And it's something that we spent a lot of time thinking about. And we feel pretty good that we can get most aspects of the program through without adding additional credits by keeping things gear by the general education platform.

There are still some, some of the experiential components we are still wrestling with a bit as to how we are going to make sure those aren't unessential credits that those are aligned with what the students need, because that's certainly not the intent of the program.

I would say the other thing, from my perspective that has been very challenge is how do we make things broad enough to get by in a cross campus, to make things applicable to all the various disciplines, and yet also still meaningful.

As we, it seems rather broad, when building a better world, what does that really mean and how, how are we going to make sure that something meaningful happens at the end. We want to include a broad array of disciplines here. So it's intentionally broad, but the issue there is how do we make sure it doesn't get washed out to really be meaningless at the end, because anything could theoretically, a lot of things could come under that umbrella. So how do we make sure that the umbrella is broad enough to be inclusive and tight enough to have meaning. I think those are two things we have really wrestled with internally.

Then also, from a, from a fiscal point of view, I mean getting somebody, hiring somebody to oversee this program I think long term is going to be an essential component because there is so many moving wheels and cogs. And when it comes to scheduling, there is going to be some nightmares in there trying to figure out a few of the hurdles.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Do you have advisors on your, anyone from advising on that committee? Are you planning to engage?

SCOTT RIGGS >> So we have engaged with them, they are not on the committee. So when students come to the university, they go through a Start program. So all students, whether they transfer or freshman come in through the Start program where they get advising. And we have brought in the leader of the Start program and he is on board and he is willing to work with us. Because really everybody entering the program would have to start there.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Yeah.

SCOTT RIGGS >> So that is nice, if one regard that everything is centrally located that we can work through one key office to make sure that students are being advised properly. So we are putting together pieces for the advisors, so that the advisors know how to properly advise students as they're making their way through the program.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> I think your experience may be similar to an experience that we had at FIU and others had, that an initiative like this begins with a core team, a very passionate engaged core team. And that team coalesces a vision. And then there is a need to bring on other people, right, and some of those initial team members may need to go off and do other things. And so that committee changes over time with different needs as we get deeper and more and more into the nuts and bolts of the program.

I'm thinking, and I'll you already intimated that this is happening. That this is also, just by virtue of being involved in a general education design experience, that has an impact on the way faculty kind of thinks about their work.

I know that the institution, that Dearborn has an initiative called urban futures. And that's a university-wide initiative. And I'm thinking about the sustainable living in the urban futures initiative, kind of the research mission and the community engagement mission of the institution.

Chancellor Grasso, can you speak a little about the relationship perhaps between the global learning pathway and that Urban Futures initiative?

DOMENICO GRASSO >> Thank you for bringing up Urban Futures, which is an organizing theme for our campus.

As we all know, the future of the planet is becoming increasingly urban. By 2050, two thirds of the population is expected to live in urban areas. And when we're looking at urban futures, it does not have to necessarily be a densely populated area, but it's just where people congregate, to live, and to go to school, to have commerce, and to recreate.

So it applies to very densely populated areas be and less densely populated areas, but there are a lot of challenges we're going to be challenges in urban environments. One is the topic of smart cities and the Internet of things, the AI, everything is going to be connected. There are going to be health issues. There are going to be education issues, sustainability, agriculture. Those are all topics that we're all going to be grappling with, whether you're in China, Africa, South America, or North America.

And this is an opportunity for us to look across all of our disciplines and look at what the challenges are going to be, what the great debates are going to be, some big ideas and really start thinking about how we can lead in thinking about the future of the urban environment. And we've got some terrific people here already doing great work. We're going to be making some additional hires in this area, and this is an exciting plan that we have, I think that's going to bring a lot of interesting people together on campus to talk about the future.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> It will be amazing if by virtue of students making new connections amongst their courses and their experiences, they actually communicate some of those cool connections to faculty and staff and even community members who are working, in order to kind of connect for the Urban Futures initiative.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> Oh, I think, I think the students can easily be the pollinators of this.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> This is, it's yet to launch, right? Discovery Quest hasn't quite launched. It's still in kind of the final design phases, but if we were to meet again, a year, a year and a half from now, what would you like to be able to say about Discovery Quest at that point?

ILIR METEZA >> I'll take that.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Everybody can take it.

ILIR METEZA >> Sure. We're confident that we're going to launch Discovery Quest as the program that we have designed up to this point. Its integration with general education is still being studied and designed and it's still too early to say whether we'll be able to do that and in what timeframe, because I think our first principle when it comes to integrating anything or changing anything in the general education framework is do no harm.

Much thoughtful work from our faculty colleagues has gone over the years into the design of general education, and we want to make sure that the principles that they laid for, for the general education, which we call Discovery Core Dearborn, discovery core, that those principles are not affected.

We have to make sure that we build on those principles. And we offer a platform for advancing them, perhaps doing them better, right?

My hope is that if we spoke for instance in October, is that we would have launched Discovery Quest with enough foundations courses that we would have also figured out to a good degree, good extent, the number of experiences tied to each theme or to each pathway, especially with study abroad, but also internships and academic service learning. We are more confident that we will find lots of research, undergraduate research opportunities for our students in all of areas.

But I'm also hoping that many students and perhaps also many faculty will take up the Chancellor's, the Chancellor's challenge of urban futures in shaping these two and creating courses, I should say, and experiences that basically focus on how do we create a better world given that so much of our population is going to live in urban areas. How do we design better cities, more humane cities, more educated cities? How do we, how do we wrap our mind around complex systems? How do we teach our students to approach these complex systems with humility?

And we think that both of our themes, meaning both building a better world, but also sustainable cities are perfect fits for the urban future, futures initiative. In the case of sustainable systems, for instance, the question, perhaps one of the most important questions is how do we build resilient cities? Cities that can withstand economic shocks, social shocks, political shocks. Cities that can design, not just physical infrastructure but also policy and social norms that make them more vibrant and more resilient.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> So not just, students won't just be saying how can I get through my college experience? How fast can I get through it? But how can I use it to make the world a better place for me having been there.

DOMENICO GRASSO >> What I hope happens with Discovery Quest and our discovery core and all the work that we're doing around urban futures and complexity is that we start to dissolve these boundaries between disciplines. And we start looking at what E.O. Wilson and his book in the late 1990s called Consilience, which is The Unity of Knowledge, so we're not seeing knowledge vulcanized or quantified in a way that is very restrictive, but we see it a continuum.

And this, what Ilir and his colleagues and Scott have put together, is something that I think will help us oh get to that point. Because when students, like Vivian come in, they don't necessarily see this disciplinary rigor that we have evolved in the academy. And they're looking for solutions, as she said. They're not interested in what one particular discipline has to say but what the integrated body of knowledge that humanity is evolved over time has been able to accommodate. And I think this is going to be a step in that direction.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> Vivian maybe we'll give you, no, go ahead Scott.

SCOTT RIGGS >> I was going to say, yeah, I was going to point to Vivian as well, because I think to me one of the most interesting thing will be the student perspective, and that will be one of our best metrics is to how successful we work is how interested and excited students are about their education. If we can talk to somebody and say, I'm really fired up about next year because X, Y and Z. I mean that would be exciting for me.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> You get the last word, Vivian.

VIVIAN ADAMS >> Thank you. I think with the integration of this pathway into star counseling that all freshman have to go through when they enter this campus is going to be essential for student exploration of this program.

My hope is that a lot of students find a sense of security in knowing that what they want to do is not restricted just to the major that they pick, but also the passion that they have or whatever problem or exploration they want to do in their own personal lives or in whatever job field they want to explore; they get a sense of security of knowing that they can explore this through the pathway.

I think that it's going to be very important for the new generation of students coming in, especially because at the University of Michigan Dearborn our student population is so diverse and comes from so many different backgrounds that it would be very, I would be very hopeful for this program to succeed with the incoming students.

STEPHANIE DOSCHER >> I'll tell you what I just heard. You see that there is a possibility for a sense of security in an open-ended exploration of undefined possibilities in the company of diverse others. I can't think of a more beautiful way of articulating the purpose and the mission of what global learning is all about.

Every time I talk to you all, at University of Michigan Dearborn, I come away with some kind of poetic idea that I cannot ever forget. You have not all heard the last from me or seen the last from me. I thank you so much for joining me today. I can't wait to converse again. I can't wait for us to be able to talk again in a year, a year and a half, to hear where Discovery Quest has led us all. Thanks a lot.

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