



Progress Scaling Texas Pathways

Pillar 3: Keeping Students on Path



Overview

The third pillar of the Texas Pathways strategy outlines the essential practices necessary to keep students progressing on their program pathways. Colleges are innovative in the ways in which they support students on their paths. Advising and student support is occurring during outreach, onboarding, registration periods, in-semester, between-semester, and with advisors, coaches, program coordinators, faculty, and mentors. In this brief, we report the scale of implementation of Pillar 3 practices, examples of college practices, and recommendations for continued progress.

March 2022

Introduction

Texas community colleges are keeping students on path through advances in advising, coaching, and holistic supports. Some colleges have made student support unavoidable by implementing mandatory advising each semester or at program milestones (or both). Larger colleges have increased advising staff to scale this practice, while smaller colleges have engaged a broader group of stakeholders, such as program and faculty advisors, to build capacity. While more colleges require mandatory advising as compared to 2019, colleges without mandatory advising milestones note a lack of resources as a barrier to scaling the practice to all students. Most colleges have utilized technology to allow students and college staff to monitor progress. Yet many colleges still require students to seek support when needed. Some colleges are learning how to use technology to systematize outreach and to provide proactive support directly to students.

Colleges recognize the need to support students' non-academic needs, providing on-campus and virtual supports, as well as forming strong partnerships with community organizations to support student well-being. Colleges are leveraging federal and state aid, grants, and community partners to provide ongoing support. The biggest challenge for most colleges is how to scale promising practices to reach all students given resource constraints.

All colleges provide schedule options for various semester lengths, course delivery types, campus locations, and class times. Almost all colleges use a historical supply-and-demand model to plan future courses. Actively mining student educational plan data with the correct technological support to plan future schedules, based on what students need next, remains an area of opportunity.

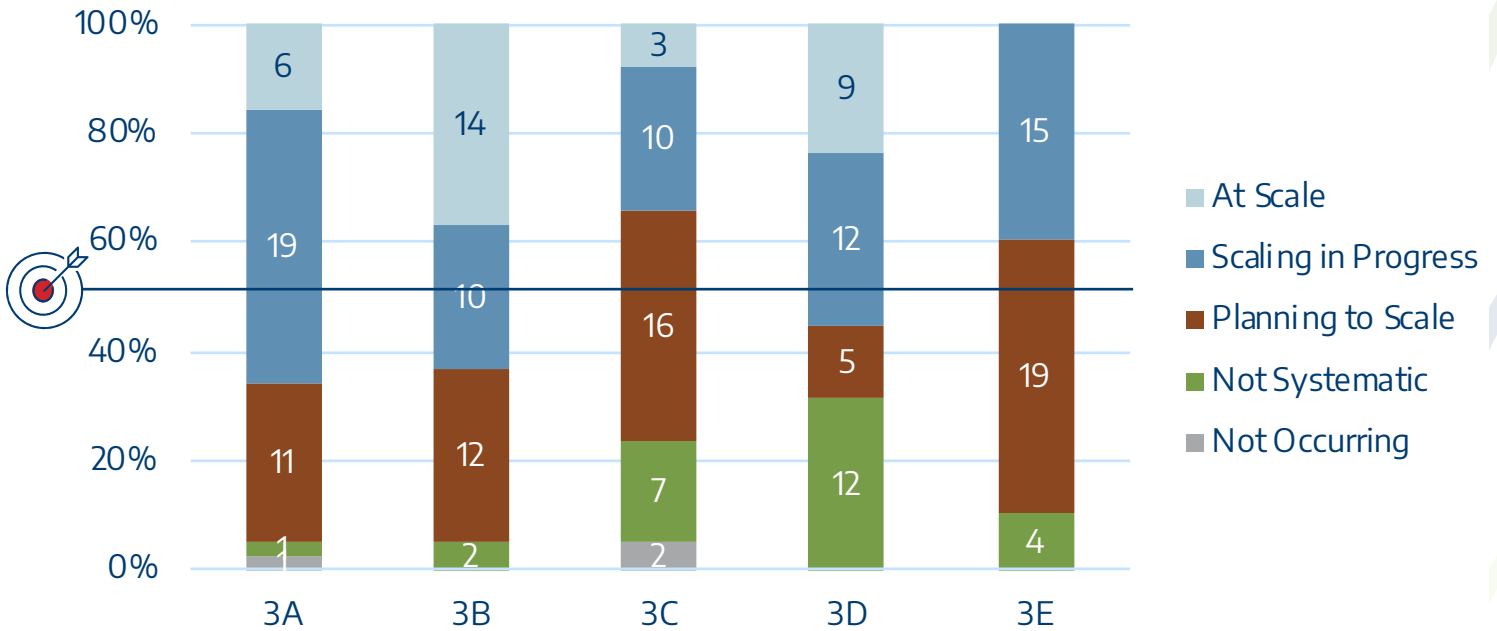
This research brief provides insights into Pillar 3 essential practices. Examples of implementation are provided for each practice to highlight the various ways colleges are keeping students on path.

Pillar 3: Essential Practices

- 3A.** Advisors monitor which program every student is in and how far along the student is toward completing the program requirements.
- 3B.** Students can easily see how far they have come and what they need to do to complete their program.
- 3C.** Advisors and students are alerted when students are at risk of falling off their program plans and have policies and supports in place to intervene in ways that help students get back on track.
- 3D.** Assistance is provided to students who are unlikely to be accepted into limited-access programs, such as nursing or culinary arts, to redirect them to another more viable path to credentials and a career.
- 3E.** The college schedules courses to ensure students can take the courses they need when they need them, can plan their lives around school from one term to the next, and can complete their programs in as short a time as possible.

Pillar 3: Keeping Students on Path

Figure 1. Number of Colleges at Each Level of Implementation



Note. The 2021 Texas Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA) was administered to 48 member colleges in Spring 2021. Forty-three colleges returned the SOAA and 38 colleges participated in validation interviews. (N = 38 colleges)

In Spring 2021, Texas community colleges self-assessed their progress scaling the essential practices of the Texas Pathways strategy by completing the Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA). Researchers followed up with a series of validation interviews to calibrate responses across the state. The SOAA process revealed that colleges are making significant progress scaling the Pillar 3 essential practices (Figure 1).

The Texas Success Center goal of having at least half of colleges “at scale” or “scaling” was met for practices 3A, 3B, and 3D. To be “at scale,” colleges must serve at least 80% of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students with the practice. “Scaling in progress” requires the practice to reach 50% of FTIC students. At least half of the colleges have systematized ways to have advisors monitor student progress, allow students to see their progress, and provide viable opportunities for limited-access programs. The Texas Success Center will use the knowledge gained from the SOAA to provide targeted support to help more colleges scale practices 3C (provide systematic support for students off path) and 3E (schedule based on student educational plans).

A Note on Terminology. Colleges create student support service models based on their mission and values. NACADA defines academic advising as: *a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities, and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes.*¹

Several colleges transitioned to the use of Success Coaches. Success Coaching is described as: *the individualized practice of asking reflective, motivation-based questions, providing opportunities for formal self-assessment, sharing effective strategies, and co-creating a tangible academic plan. The coaching process offers students an opportunity to identify their strengths, actively practice new skills, and effectively navigate appropriate resources.*²

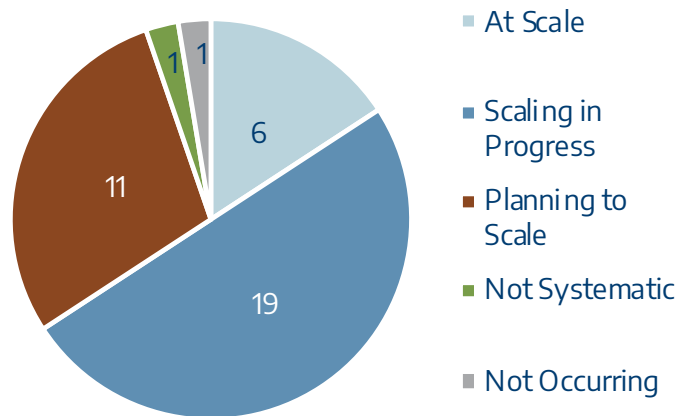
Other colleges use several types of mentorships as part of a student support model: faculty mentors, peer mentors, and career mentors. Mentors provide specialized support in their areas of expertise.

Regardless of the components included in advising models across the state, all colleges are working diligently to provide appropriate supports to students to keep them on their paths. In this report, we use “advising” and “advisors” to encompass all these models, recognizing that there this term does not capture the necessary nuance in advising models adopted by individual colleges.

3A: Advisors monitor which program every student is in and how far along the student is toward completing the program requirements.

Caseload Management. Advising structures vary by the size of college, as colleges designed structures based on available resources to serve students. Several colleges noted that the redesign of college programs into meta-majors translated into changes in advising structures. These colleges trained advisors to be program/meta-major specialists and assigned student caseloads based on students' meta-major/program type. Smaller colleges noted that this practice was challenging as some meta-majors/programs did not have high enough enrollment to be able to dedicate a full advisor. In this case, if case management was used, advisors were trained as generalists and students were assigned by last names.

Figure 2. Number of Colleges at Each Level of Implementation (Practice 3A)



¹NACADA, [NACADA Concept of Academic Advising](#) (2006).

²Claire Robinson, [Academic/Success Coaching: A Description of an Emerging Field in Higher Education](#) (2015).

Large and Very Large Colleges. Colleges with large student bodies are adding advisors to manage caseloads and provide support tailored to meta-majors. Increasing advising staff and capacity requires sufficient resource allocation from the college.

- Advisors at **Amarillo College** are assigned to the college's communities (meta-majors). The college increased advising staff from nine to 13 to manage growing health science, STEM, and business communities.
- At **Austin Community College**, Area of Study advisors assist students with class selection, progression, and career goal decision making. At present, about 10,000 students with less than 12 hours are assigned an advisor/coach. Students receive at least five touch points (i.e., in-person, email, text, call, etc.) throughout the semester. The college developed a comprehensive Academic Success Coaching Manual to provide support and standardize advising practices.
- **Dallas College** doubled their advising capacity to track and support student success and completion by hiring 244 Success Coaches, including coaches specifically selected to serve dual credit and continuing education populations. Success Coaches are expected to case manage meaningfully and coaching is tracked by 12 associate deans who have 20 success coaches assigned to them. This new system allows the college to keep themselves accountable for helping students.
- **Navarro College** advisors' titles changed to College & Career Success Coaches (CCSCs) in 2019. CCSCs are assigned a caseload and use Self-Service to monitor student progress. CCSCs are expected to be proactive and reach out to students.
- **North Central Texas College** automatically assigns students to advisors based on their major and candidacy type. As a result, caseload ratios are more evenly distributed, and advisors know which students they are responsible for in terms of academic progress.
- Various work teams tied to the **Tarrant County College's Eight Principles** are working on revising onboarding, orientation, and advising processes with a focus on guided pathways. Advisors are assigned caseloads and must contact students about registration, advising appointments, etc.

Small and Medium Colleges. Colleges with smaller student bodies are creating systems to advise based on meta-majors, programs, and student needs. Not all colleges can hire additional staff to support advising redesign. Many small and medium colleges have innovated by restructuring departments and offering relevant training to existing faculty and staff.

- **Cisco College** uses a campus approach to assigning students to advisors. Depending on the campus specialty, students are grouped into cohorts by pathway or activities, such as athletics, to ensure students receive advising that is relevant to their needs.
- Advising caseloads at **College of the Mainland** are organized by meta-majors. The college hired additional staff to manage the mandatory advising in the first semester, at 15 hours, and at 45 hours.
- Students at **Frank Phillips College** are assigned to an advisor that is the instructor of their First Year Institute Seminar (FYIS) course. The same FYIS advisor then supports the student through the completion of their goal.
- At **Midland College**, students are placed in “pods” by meta-majors for advising.
- Every program at **Panola College** has an assigned advisor who specializes in that area. Program-specific advisors check on students every semester prior to registration. Students also benefit from faculty advising as they progress in their program.
- Advisors at **Paris Junior College** are matched with students using alphabetical caseload management. The advisor stays with the student throughout their time at the college, unless a student changes from academic to workforce or vice versa. Advising documents are still completed manually, but the college uses scanning software to store plans.
- Students at **Texarkana College** are advised by faculty in their meta-major. Meeting with the faculty advisor is a requirement of the mandatory Learning Frameworks course.
- **Vernon College** requires advising for all students with the same advisor from entry through completion.
- **Victoria College** advisors are assigned caseloads by meta-majors.
- Students at **Western Texas College** are required to meet with their advisor every semester. Advisors and students review their progress and identify any areas for support.
- All students enrolled in academic majors are assigned an advisor based on their major at **Wharton County Junior College**.

Advising Coordination. Several colleges utilize advising teams to support students throughout their program. Some colleges have an onboarding/orientation team that hands-off students to academic advisors. Other colleges have first-year or pre-program advisors that hand-off students to faculty advisors for specialized support. These various models help colleges manage the needs of students with limited advising staff.

- At **Austin Community College**, faculty mentors work to assist with advising, retention, and completion efforts. For example, the faculty mentor for the Business Area of Study works within [Inspire for Advisors \(IFA\)](#)—a Civitas Learning Product—to generate reports for students who are nearing graduation or have excessive hours to provide assistance with completion. The college also assigns advisors and case managers to Adult Education (AE) students transitioning to credit courses and co-enrolled in credit and AE. AE student progress is monitored and supported until completion of a certificate and/or associate degree.
- At **Brazosport College**, the [ACE It Program](#) provides holistic advising and four semesters of ACE It coaching to all first-time-in-college students. Relationship-based coaching includes the creation of a detailed educational plan, growth mindset instruction, and the tools to support belongingness. The college continues to increase capacity for ACE It coaching by training new faculty and staff coaches and adding new part-time ACE It coaches.
- **Coastal Bend College** developed a Collaborative Advising Plan with the dual credit office to provide dual credit students with information regarding the degree plan filing requirement and options for consulting with an academic advisor for students with 15 credits or more.
- Advising at **Del Mar College** comes from several sources: Primary Role Advisors, enrollment specialists, dual credit coordinators, faculty members, and graduation coaches. Advisors use degree audits and graduation applications to monitor student progress. Primary Role Advisors are placed in key programs to advocate for student persistence. Additionally, faculty are encouraged to utilize Student Retention services to assist students with academic and personal needs. Finally, faculty and advisors are regularly training on supports available to all students.
- During orientation or in the first semester at **San Jacinto College**, students choose a major based on the Focus 2 career readiness assessment. Advisors connect with students during the first semester to ensure they are on the right MAP and help them register for courses in the second semester. At the 24- to 27-hour mandatory advising checkpoint meeting, the student's listed major is confirmed by the advisor. Students meet with an advisor again at 47 hours to ensure completion and plan for transfer to career or university.
- The Student Services team at **Trinity Valley Community College** meets monthly to discuss the advising needs on their five diverse campuses. This close relationship between advisors ensures consistency for students.
- **Tyler Junior College** provides advising in student services while students complete the first part of their program. Then, students engage with faculty for program-specific advising to prepare for transfer or the workforce.

- At **Victoria College**, advisors meet bi-weekly with faculty to help advisors understand what students need to be successful in their courses. The relationship between advising and instruction is strong and open. Advisors know they can reach out to faculty, and vice versa, and value the open communication channel.

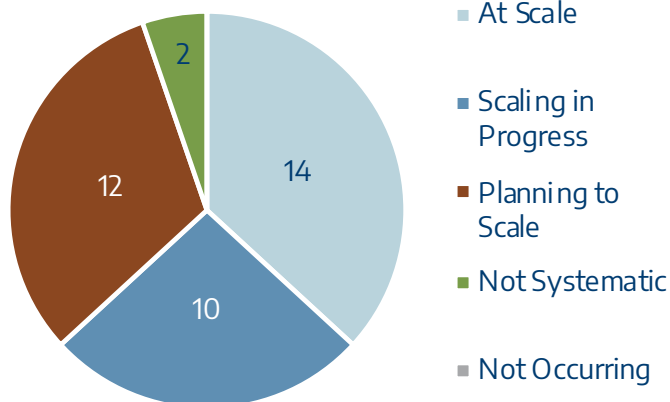
Advisor Professional Development. Colleges recognize the importance of well-trained advisors. Many colleges offer ongoing support to assist advisors in understanding meta-majors, college programs, promising advising practices, supporting basic needs, and providing culturally relevant support.

- At **Alamo Colleges**, advisors go through intensive 60-hour training that is completed within the first year of employment. The program includes human development theory, student development theory, advising theory, as well as training for working with diverse, special populations, students of color, students with disabilities, and adult students.
- At **Alvin Community College**, advisors are certified by the [Appreciative Advising Institute](#) to enhance advising services for students.
- The advisors at **Dallas College** benefit from their own student success professional development director who onboards success coaches, provides ongoing support, and plans equity-minded professional development opportunities.
- **Del Mar College** offers workshops throughout the year for all advisors. In addition, the college offers a Level 1 and Level 2 Advising Certification course for faculty to learn best practices, and provide opportunities for faculty and embedded advisors to attend [NACADA training](#).
- At **Victoria College**, advisors are required to go through professional development each academic year through national and state organizations, including training on equity.

3B: Students can easily see how far they have come and what they need to do to complete their program.

Online Program Planning Software. Most colleges utilize online programs to create, store, and update program plans. This technology allows students, as well as advisors, faculty, and administrators, to login and monitor program progress. Technology still requires significant human capital to program and maintain; however, colleges report the benefits of access for students and staff is worth the work of developing online systems.

Figure 3. Number of Colleges at Each Level of Implementation (Practice 3B)



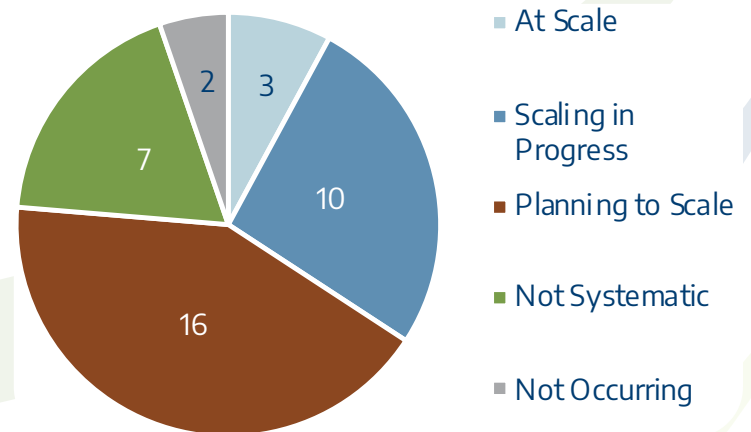
- At **Austin Community College**, Civitas Degree Map evolved into [Civitas Inspire](#) which provides advisors with degree progress tracking, appointment scheduling, advising notes, etc.
- Students at **Blinn College** can use [Degree Works](#) for academic planning. Students need to verify their major in Degree Works to ensure they are on the correct path. Students enrolled in co-enrollment programs, athletics, livestock judging/agriculture, health sciences, and dual credit meet individually with advisors to discuss their academic progress.
- Students at **Central Texas College** can use Eagle Self-Service to access Student Planning and see the courses they have to take, what is next, and options to fulfill their program requirements.
- **Dallas College** successfully uploaded over 300 program maps into EAB Navigate to support student planning.
- **Lee College** purchased [FlightPath](#) software to present an easy student view of program progress.
- At **McLennan Community College**, all advising and registration is controlled through Student Planning software that ensures students stay on their degree program and follow the required course sequencing to graduation. The software allows students to see their progress through their degree/certificate. Insight software allows advisors and faculty to share information on student progress, including progress on their degrees/certificates.
- **North Central Texas College** acquired [Jenzabar](#) and with it, a new academic planning feature available to students in their MyNCTC portal. Students can see a real-time view of their degree plan and work with their advisor to determine the best way to sequence courses.
- **San Jacinto College** MAPs are entered on SanJac GPS. The ADVISE program, developed by the college and Ellucian, was added to San Jac GPS. The program shows a personalized webpage where each student can view their progression on their MAP and see the next courses needed.

- **Ranger College** created a shared Google Drive to collect documents and make them available for each student and advisor to use during advising sessions.
- **Temple College** locks students' programs into their online student planner. Students can log in and see where they are on the program plan and what courses are remaining. Students also cannot veer off path by registering for a different course without seeing an advisor.

3C: Advisors and students are alerted when students are at risk of falling off their program plans and have policies and supports in place to intervene in ways that help students get back on track.

Intrusive Advising. Several colleges engage intrusive advising practices when alerted that students are struggling or veering off their path. Most colleges utilize technology to manage early alerts, while other smaller colleges use face-to-face advising to determine when students need additional support. Most systems rely on faculty to submit a report that is then acted upon by advising staff. Some colleges systematize early alert protocols so that all struggling students are contacted with support. Early alerts create a link between faculty and advisors that provide necessary in-semester supports to students.

Figure 4. Number of Colleges at Each Level of Implementation (Practice 3C)



- The AlamoADVISE model at **Alamo Colleges** includes an [Advising Scorecard](#) that includes success rates, persistence, caseload contact rates, graduation rates, early alert rates, and academic standing to track progress of student benchmarks. The data is used to identify issues students may encounter and informs the creation and refinement of interventions.
- **Alvin Community College** purchased [EAB Navigate](#) to allow for a more robust Early Alert system that will make communications between faculty, students, and advisors more efficient.
- **Coastal Bend College** reimplemented its Early Alert program so that when a referral is submitted by a faculty member, the success team formulates a personalized success plan for the student.
- **El Paso Community College** created [First-Year Experience Centers](#) across the district to assist with providing supports identified by the existing Early Alert system.
- **Galveston College** uses the CRM Advise algorithm to assign success scores to student records. Advisors can use this score, advising notes, faculty alerts, and student educational plans to reach out to students and provide relevant supports.

- **Grayson College** assigns students to success coaches by program area. Some programs with high caseloads, such as nursing, may have more than one advisor with caseloads determined by both major and last name. Students are required to meet with their success coach prior to enrolling at the college.
- **Hill College** ensures advisors are aware of student progress with two faculty engagement strategies: an early alert retention system and a requirement for faculty to submit students with grades of D and F at midterm. Advisors provide support to students identified by these two processes.
- **Houston Community College** is using the “Connect, Enter, Progress, Succeed” framework to plan guided pathways implementation. Within the progress and completion stages, the college monitors to ensure students stay on the path. If a student veers off their path, technology alerts an advisor who reaches out proactively to the student to provide support.
- **Kilgore College** created a withdrawal policy that requires students to meet with instructor or advisor before withdrawing from a class to try to provide supports to keep students on their path.
- **Lee College** added a section to their Alert System that allows faculty to identify additional support needs for students beyond academics. In response, faculty have begun using the tool more frequently to connect students to supports.
- **McLennan Community College** acquired [Brightspace D2L](#) which allows the IR team to capture real-time student progress data for use in the early alert system. All final grades load automatically into Colleague, as well as attendance data which is shared with the Success Coaches.
- **Navarro College** faculty submit Early Intervention Reports to advisors for students in danger of failing. Then advisors contact students about intervention strategies and the impact of possibly failing the class. Additionally, Success Coaches proactively communicate with students on their caseload to offer support, guidance, and resources.
- At **South Texas College**, students can see their progress in Degree Works. If a student veers off track, an advisor reaches out to help them get back on track. During COVID-19, the college implemented a student support chat feature that students use to communicate their needs and be connected to college services. Additionally, the college asked all faculty to call students to check on them and provide support.

Targeted Outreach. Many colleges recognize the need for specialized supports for student populations. As a result, colleges developed systems to provide targeted support.

- Every program at **Amarillo College** has written mandatory tutoring into policy. Each department decides what triggers the tutoring - failing a test, missing class, etc. - and every faculty member can see what the student worked on in their tutoring session.

- In the [student success and wellness area](#) at **Dallas College**, the “Thrive in Learning Communities” area developed programs and supports for students identified as needing extra support, such as students leaving foster care and men of color. As data shows more need, they develop and provide additional support.
- Advisors at **Del Mar College** use the six-phase [Appreciative Advising model](#): Disarm, Dream, Discover, Design, Deliver, and Don’t Settle. This approach guides collective conversation to empower the student to monitor their progress and for the college to intervene quickly when students need supports. Retention Case Managers also aid academically adrift students and encourage students to explore career options.
- **San Jacinto College** established [Chronus](#), an online mentoring platform for diverse student populations housed in the Education, Equity, and Excellence department. Peer mentors receive training in coaching strategies and campus resources. Faculty and staff mentors in the San Jacinto First Generation program can increase their connection points with assigned mentees. The 2020 pilot program included 75 mentors and mentees to determine the feasibility of scaling.
- **Southwest Texas Junior College** uses the [Signal Vine](#) app, to intrusively alert students on a variety of topics, such as registration deadlines, and other academic calendar dates. The app also allows Success Coaches to chat with students. Additionally, the colleges developed “Stars Plans” for students with six to 30 semester credit hours and GPAs in the range 2.0 to 2.5. Advisors follow “Stars Plan” guides that provide students with the appropriate academic and basic need supports to improve their performance in both virtual and in-person coaching sessions.
- **Temple College** redesigned students’ services with the first-generation student in mind. After the change, the college conducted a communications audit to look at their website, email, orientation, communication, and presentations. Feedback was used to redesign communications and clarify the information being shared with students. The college underwent a large effort to translate all documents and offer all communication in Spanish and English.
- The conceptual framework for advising at **Texarkana College** is the appreciative advising model. All advisors use a six-step process for advising based on what the students share with them. All advisors are trained on this process and have access to resources to connect students with based on student needs.

Time to Text!

Colleges with automated and/or personal text-messaging campaigns noted incredible levels of student interaction.

Students respond well to texts!

Addressing Student Basic Needs. In addition to academic support, colleges are identifying and caring for their students' basic needs. Most colleges rely on students identifying and seeking support for basic needs. Some colleges collect information about needs directly from students on applications and surveys. Other colleges use national and state reports to understand the challenges students face.

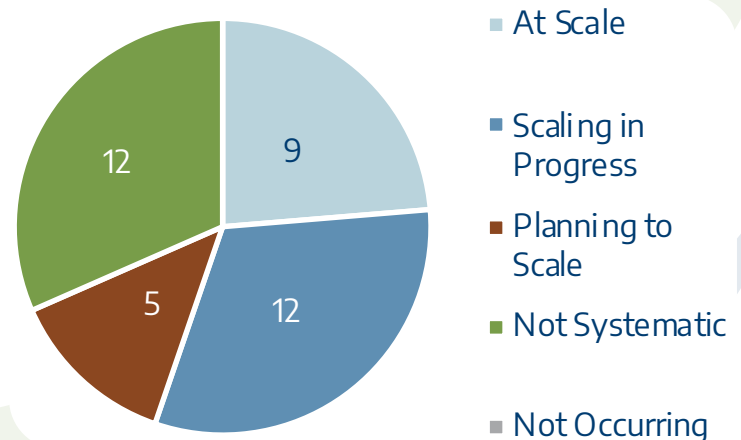
- Students can get their needs met at **Alamo Colleges** by accessing counseling, food pantries, and clothing pantries at all campuses, as well as receiving emergency loans or grants provided by the college's foundation. Special Services counselors provide wrap-around services with case management including free textbooks, food assistance, childcare, public benefits, emergency services, and other support services.
- The [Advocacy and Resource Center](#) at **Amarillo College** provides students access to food, gas vouchers, housing support, and bill-pay support. The college offers two childcare centers, which are open to the public; the college continues to develop childcare supports to serve all students, particularly health science students with early clinical assignments.
- Through [Grayson Cares](#), faculty at **Grayson College** can refer students for housing, food, gas, repairs, and rent support. Grayson Cares also offers counseling, a food pantry with grab-and-go breakfast and lunch, multi-day food packs for families, and transportation vouchers.
- **Howard College** uses a student-need survey to learn about students' immediate needs. Advisors receive the information and connect students to the appropriate supports.
- **Lee College** developed a [Student Resource and Advocacy Center](#) to meet students' immediate needs. The college hired a full-time counselor who is available to students to connect them with appropriate resources and is working to offer mental and medical health on campus.
- Advisors at **San Jacinto College** worked diligently in a mostly virtual environment to connect students to wrap-around services such as food banks, laptop loaner programs, free WIFI hotspot parking lots on campus, CARES funding, mental health services, and academic support services. The Continuing and Professional Development (CPD) department launched the CPD [Learn@Home program](#) to address online learning needs for families during the pandemic and beyond. The site offers tips for everything from video conferencing and fitness to stress-busting arts and crafts, as well as tips for parents, seniors, and retirees. These tips are backed with CPD learning opportunities. The site also includes online assistance for job seekers (e.g., applying for unemployment, keeping health insurance, resume writing, and job search skills).
- **Southwest Texas Junior College** implemented mandatory advising during the first term and developed a student success questionnaire which asks about pathway selection, graduate plans, areas for help, and required resources. The college works with the [Hope Center](#) to provide wrap-around supports for students based on student data.

3D: Assistance is provided to students who are unlikely to be accepted into limited-access programs, such as nursing or culinary arts, to redirect them to another more viable path to credentials and a career.

Most colleges recognize the capacity issue for entrance into certain programs such as nursing, truck-driving, and culinary arts. Colleges are building strategies to serve students within current constraints, while working to expand capacity in these programs. Many colleges offer specialized advising in advance of entry into limited-access programs for students who seek advising support. Colleges are developing systems to reach all interested students with program alternatives and information. These practices should be extended to any program that requires a cohort structure to allow more students to access and progress through structured programs.

A few colleges have examined racial/ethnic and gender equity in enrollment, persistence, and completion in limited-access and high-demand programs. Yet, taking programmatic action to remove disparities remains an area of opportunity for most colleges.

Figure 5. Number of Colleges at Each Level of Implementation (Practice 3D)



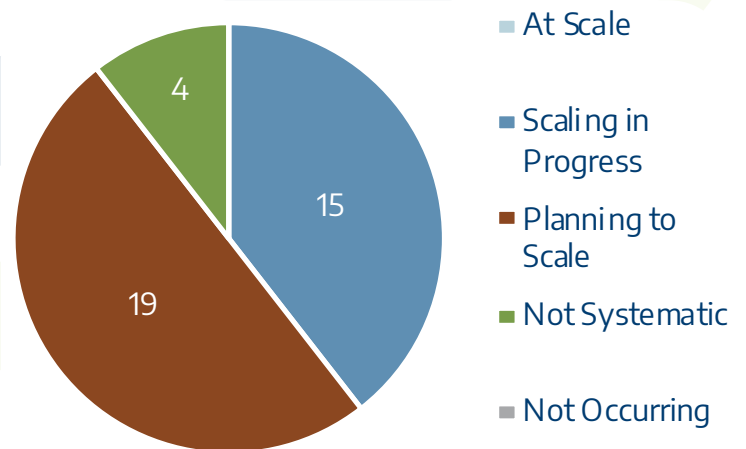
- At **Alvin Community College**, the Health Science Pathway Mentoring Experience (PME) is timed to occur after students receive a denial letter to expose them to the other health programs offered at the college. The college plans to expand the program to include invitations to PME events to students that are interested in the pathway.
- **Austin Community College** expanded a [Fast Track program](#) that serves students who need more viable cost-effective options for credentials and a career. About 1,000 students are currently served in 20+ program areas. The [Career Pathways](#), [Career Accelerator](#), and [Career Scholars](#) programs assist students with information about in-demand careers through case management advising and financial support. Scholarships, career counseling, labor market information, and academic supports are provided to students to widen their knowledge of careers beyond limited-access programs.
- All first-time-in-college students at **Howard College** that participate in [LEADS](#)—a comprehensive program consisting of academic instruction, student engagement, and community involvement through skill-based activities that are designed to empower students during their freshman year and beyond—develop a Plan A and Plan B for careers. Success Coaches work with students to create full academic and career path plans by the end of the first semester.

- **Midland College** acquired the [Vita Navis](#) academic planning platform to help students assess alternative career paths. The college also hired two student resource advisors to assist with career counseling services.
- **North Central Texas College** students who apply as a Health Science major are assigned to a Health Science advisor and placed on a Health Science pathway so they can work towards the courses required for one or more programs. Advisors provide information about non-credit Allied Health programs and discuss how credits may transfer to another program should students not be admitted into their first choice. Students are also assigned a Career Coach who assists them with career exploration and other programs or majors befitting their interests.
- At **Vernon College**, students interested in limited-access programs in the Health Sciences are required to take a Career Assessment. The results are reviewed during advising sessions to redirect students, if necessary. Additionally, advisors collaborate with prerequisite instructors to identify students who may benefit from an alternative pathway.

3E: The college schedules courses to ensure students can take the courses they need when they need them, can plan their lives around school from one term to the next, and can complete their programs in as short a time as possible.

For most colleges, scheduling based on student program plans is an area of opportunity. Several colleges noted that workforce and limited-access programs already schedule courses based on student plans, as most of the students remain in a cohort. However, for academic programs, the practice becomes more difficult, given the part-time nature of most community college students. Nonetheless, colleges are now collecting student educational plan data and identifying technology to support the meaningful mining of that information to improve scheduling. The goal is to evolve the scheduling process from the historical supply-and-demand model to one that supports proactive supply-for-demand planning.

Figure 6. Number of Colleges at Each Level of Implementation (Practice 3E)



- **Amarillo College** is enhancing the existing master eight-week schedule by examining student educational plans to better meet student needs and to address ongoing waitlist issues. The master schedule organizes the eight-week courses, provides multiple entry and exit points, and offers courses with several modes of delivery. The college is integrating its technological tools to conduct schedule planning based on student needs.
- **Central Texas College** collects student educational plan data and student success survey data on course offerings to determine what types of courses to schedule to serve their diverse student population.
- Several colleges—such as **El Paso Community College** and **Houston Community College**—work with [Ad Astra Analytics](#) to pull insights from student educational plans to create smart scheduling practices based on students' needs.
- **McLennan Community College** offers students a variety of times (morning, afternoon, evening, weekend), course structures (16-week, 12-week, eight-week, and two three-week mini-mesters), and course formats (online, hybrid, two-way interactive and face-to-face) throughout the year.
- **North Central Texas College** allows students to register and schedule their courses for a full year through Lion365. Courses are available in a variety of formats (e.g., online, hybrid, synchronous online, eight-week, mini-mester, and summer terms). Advisors work with students to sequence their courses based on major and course availability. Advisors also provide faculty leaders with feedback through advisory boards and committee work so the year-round schedule of classes reflects students' needs in both academic and technical programs.
- **San Jacinto College** created [San Jac My Way](#), which allows students to choose from the following modes of course delivery: Online Anytime, Online on a Schedule, Face-to-Face (where applicable), Hands-On Hybrid, or Flex Campus. During registration, department chairs receive daily enrollment reports that analyze and respond to course demands. As more students move on to Pathways MAPs and student progression is monitored with Sanjac GPS, department chairs will be able to better predict when classes need to be offered and how many sections to offer.
- **Temple College** used student educational plans to implement its eight-week course schedules. After noticing that current offerings did not meet student needs, the college committed to designing a full calendar year of coursework to meet student needs.
- **Weatherford College** moved all course builds into Colleague. As a result, for the 2021-2022 academic year, all courses will be available for student review as they complete Summer and Fall enrollment. The college also included an activity period in the schedule each day so students have an opportunity to engage with college resources without missing class.
- **Vernon College** added [Acadeum \(Digitex\)](#) to expand ability for students to take courses out of sequence. Since the pandemic, the college continues to improve scheduling coordination to accommodate student needs.

Recommendations

Colleges are making significant progress in scaling the essential practices in Pillar 3. To continue this momentum to improve practices and scale efforts to serve all students, the Texas Success Center recommends colleges:

1. Set a specific institutional goal to provide systematic and proactive advising support to all students linked to student progress, program milestones, and student needs. Prepare and/or review plans to leverage available resources to reach this goal and/or improve existing policies and practices.
2. Ensure that advisors and students have easy access to accurate information on each student's progress on their academic plan, including courses and milestones completed and remaining. Train advisors to use this information to proactively contact students to ensure progress and persistence.
3. Develop systematic ways to collect information on student basic, financial, and academic needs to inform the development of holistic supports for students.
4. Support advisors, faculty, and staff to incorporate engaging, proactive, and culturally-relevant advising practices to better support students' success in their programs.
5. Examine data to understand if underrepresented students are disproportionately directed away from competitive, limited-access programs. Use the analysis to examine and reform college policies and practices that may contribute to disparities.
6. Collect and analyze student course-taking patterns to develop year-long (or longer) schedules based on student educational plans for both full- and part-time students. This requires that deans, program chairs, and others can access reports based on students' customized educational plans to predict course and section demand.
7. Use the information provided in pillar briefs to network with peer colleges to learn more about processes that could support the scaling of Pillar 3 practices at your college.

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Texas Success Center

The Texas Success Center supports the Texas Association of Community Colleges members' efforts to improve student success and directs Texas Pathways—a statewide strategy focused on building capacity for community colleges to design and implement structured academic and career pathways at scale, for all students. For more information, visit tacc.org/tsc.