



## Glossary of Terms

### **Academic Advising:**

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.

### **Academic Advisors:**

An academic advisor provides educational guidance to a student to support educational planning, career planning, and student support services. The meaning of this term varies among colleges. Some colleges use it to refer to faculty providing discipline and/or career advice, whereas some colleges have hired classified staff to triage or provide limited direction to students in order to direct them to the appropriate counselor or counseling services.

### **Active Learning:**

Active learning methods ask students to engage in their learning by thinking, discussing, investigating, and creating. In class, students practice skills, solve problems, struggle with complex questions, make decisions, propose solutions, and explain ideas in their own words through writing and discussion. Timely feedback, from either the instructor or fellow students, is critical to this learning process.

### **Appreciative Advising:**

Appreciative Advising is the intentional collaborative practice of asking generative, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials.

### **Co-Curricular Activities:**

Recommended activities in which students should be engaged to assist in their academic and career goals. These activities could be included in the program map for each certificate or degree. Examples of co-curricular activities include seeing an advisor, petitioning for graduation, joining a club, seeking internships, etc.

### **Collaborative Advising:**

Collaborative advising brings together academic advisors and faculty serving in an advising capacity to ensure accurate and consistent information is provided to students based on where they are on their path. Collaborative advising enables faculty and advisors to have the same view into a student at the same time because they share information, thus increasing the chance of student success.

### **College Ready:**

In Texas, college ready is a designation determined by the Texas Success Initiative that indicates an entering, non-exempt student is ready for entry-level college coursework in the areas of English Language Arts Reading (ELAR) and mathematics.

**Corequisite Model:**

A corequisite model is an instructional strategy whereby non-exempt undergraduate students who have not demonstrated college readiness in mathematics or English Language Arts and Reading are co-enrolled or concurrently enrolled in a developmental education course or non-course-based option (NCBO) and the entry-level, credit course within the same semester for the respective subject area. The developmental component provides support aligned directly with the learning outcomes, instruction, and assessment of the entry-level credit course, and makes necessary adjustments as needed to advance students' success in the entry-level course.

**Critical Courses:**

Courses within a program that are critical to success. For example, Anatomy and Physiology for Nursing programs.

**Culturally Responsive Advising:**

Culturally responsive academic advising is defined as building warm, welcoming relationships to increase knowledge of individual students' strengths/needs and leveraging that knowledge to support them in meeting high academic expectations and successfully navigating complex systems at institutions of higher education.

**Cross-Functional:**

An approach to college planning that includes input from administrators, content faculty, counselors, classified staff, and students.

**Data Driven:**

The commitment to acknowledge and use data to inform decisions and development of policies, processes, and practices. This includes quantitative and qualitative data.

**Disaggregated Data:**

Disaggregating data means breaking down information into smaller subpopulations. For instance, breaking data down into grade level within school-aged students, country of origin within racial/ethnic categories, or gender among student populations are all ways of disaggregating data. Disaggregating student data into subpopulations can help schools and communities plan appropriate programs, decide which evidence-based interventions to select, use resources where they are needed most, and see important trends in achievement.

**Early Alert:**

Early alert is a strategy for communicating with students when barriers or success issues become apparent. Early alerts sometimes involve the use of technology so that instructors, counselors, and staff can tailor an alert (communication) or customized message regarding the needs and resources available.

**Educational Plan:**

Individualized plans of classes for all of students' semesters based on achieving a degree or certificate and customized according to students' needs. Educational plans include a term-by-term individualized plan of courses a student should take based on his/her placement levels, full-time/part-time status, summer term plans, and pathway selection.

**Experiential Education:**

Experiential education is a hands-on form of learning that begins with a concrete experience. After solving a problem, learners reflect on the process and are able to apply lessons more broadly to their program of student and life. Experiential learning activities can include, but are not limited to, hands-on laboratory experiments, internships, practicums, field exercises, study abroad, undergraduate research and studio performances.

### **Four Pillars of Guided Pathways:**

The framework for Texas Pathways that encompasses the essential practices necessary to redesign the student experience in community colleges.

- Pillar 1: Mapping pathways to student end goals.
- Pillar 2: Helping students choose and enter a pathway.
- Pillar 3: Keeping students on path.
- Pillar 4: Ensuring students are learning.

### **Gateway Course:**

The introductory or first college-level course typically recommended to enter and/or explore an academic pathway. For example, Calculus I for STEM programs.

### **Guided Pathways Framework:**

A college's guided pathways framework is an institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent, and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, which are intended to guide each student effectively and efficiently from his/her point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and degrees and into careers with value in the labor market and as citizens in society. Guided pathways is an umbrella term used to describe highly-structured student experiences that guide them on the pathway to completion.

### **Intrusive Advising:**

Intrusive advising refers to proactive practices in advising students; however, this term has been found to have negative connotations. Instead, please reference proactive advising in this document.

### **Learning Framework:**

A course offered in Texas colleges that offers a study of the research and theory in the psychology of learning, cognition, and motivation; factors that impact learning, and application of learning strategies. Theoretical models of strategic learning, cognition, and motivation serve as the conceptual basis for the introduction of college-level student academic strategies. Students use assessment instruments (e.g., learning inventories) to help them identify their own strengths and weaknesses as strategic learners. Students are ultimately expected to integrate and apply the learning skills discussed across their own academic programs and become effective and efficient learners. Students developing these skills should be able to continually draw from the theoretical models they have learned.

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are a set of metrics designed to measure institutional success in student progress through milestones and are specifically used to monitor the effects of institutional initiatives. Texas Pathways KPIs were built from the AACC Pathways Project and specifically include only first-time-in-college students (excluding dual enrolled students).

### **Meta-Major:**

A collection of academic programs that have common or related content. Programs within a meta-major will share some common requirements to allow for early exploration as students may enroll in this broad field of interest without collecting excess units. Also known as academic clusters, academies, schools, colleges, interest areas, career clusters.

### **Milestones:**

Milestones represent measurable educational achievements, such as completing a college-level math course or completing a number of units within a defined period of time. Milestones often provide places where students may receive positive acknowledgment of their accomplishments or "nudges" to help them back on their stated educational pathway.

### **Multiple Measures:**

Utilizing multiple methods of assessment to determine placement into college-level math and English courses for incoming college students.

**Nudges:**

Actions that guide decision making while preserving freedom of choice.

**Onboarding:**

The term onboarding may refer to many aspects of guided pathways design depending on the context. Onboarding within the context of student services can refer to processes and services intended to support a student's enrollment in the college and/or the information provided to help students determine a meta-major or general career path. Within an academic context, onboarding may refer to the processes used to determine college-readiness, and support curriculum and learning assistance services for students in order that they enter a program or pathways at the level where they will be most successful. Onboarding might include offering corequisite support courses that align math and other foundational skills with a student's program and contextualized credit or noncredit curriculum.

**Pre-college Pathways:**

Pre-college pathways are designed to lead to a meta-major, in order to prepare students to meet their goals without taking unneeded coursework through accelerated college-credit in high school or through pre-college courses, such as developmental education, which may include GED and ESL populations.

**Proactive Advising:**

Previously referred to as intrusive advising, refers to an approach by advisors that involves deliberate intervention to enhance student motivation, use of strategies to show interest and involvement with students, intensive advising designed to increase the probability of student success, working to educate students on all options, and approaching students before situations develop.

**Program:**

A set of courses and related activities that lead to an attainment of educational objectives such as a certificate or an associate's degree; often referred to as a major of study.

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):**

PLOs are those student learning outcomes specific to a program of study that indicate the skills and abilities students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of all program requirements. PLOs are often measured using the aggregated data collected by measuring critical course student learning outcomes of required coursework within the program of study.

**Program Maps:**

A descriptive and easy-to-use plan detailing the scope and sequence of courses required to complete a certificate or program and transition to baccalaureate degree programs or the labor market. Includes the route a student takes to connect with, enter, progress through, and complete his or her program of study, as well as, the skills they need to acquire for the labor market they will enter after their certificate or associate, baccalaureate degree, or graduate degree.

**Success Coaching:**

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.

### **Teaching and Learning:**

In the guided pathways model, instruction is delivered in a way that encourages active, engaged learning and emphasizes overall program learning outcomes framed as skills, concepts and habits of mind.

- Skills include both program-specific skills, like creating a project management document, and general-education skills, such as critical thinking.
- Concepts are valued over content: Less course/class time is focused on delivering factual information and more on contextualizing content, so students understand connections between content and to their own mental models.
- Habits of mind include how to approach learning, mindsets around learning and behaviors that reinforce learning.
- A critical part of teaching and learning in this model is assessing whether students are learning what they have been promised through learning outcomes. This helps faculty revise and improve the learning throughout a program.

### **Texas Pathways:**

The statewide strategy coordinated by the Texas Success Center to implement guided pathways in Texas community colleges described as:

- A strategic plan to support community colleges to build capacity to implement structured academic and career pathways at scale for all students.
- A research-based strategy built upon the foundation of the American Association of Community Colleges' Pathways Project.
- A student success framework to support colleges to clarify paths to student end goals, help students choose and enter a pathway, help students stay on their pathway, and ensure students are learning.
- An integrated, system-wide approach to student success that guides students from the selection of their high school endorsement through postsecondary education to attainment of high-quality credentials and careers with value in the labor market.