Guided Pathways Implementation Stages and Timeline
Revised April 2017

Overview

Colleges and universities across the country are redesigning their programs and support services to better help students explore, choose, enter and successfully complete programs of study that will prepare them to advance in the labor market and pursue further education.

These "guided pathways" reforms are spreading. Among community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is leading a signature initiative to support adoption of guided pathways at scale at 30 colleges across the country. Efforts to support implementation of guided pathways reforms statewide across two-year colleges have been launched in several states, including Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington State. And many colleges are implementing pathways reforms on their own. Early results from colleges that were early adopters of the model are very promising.
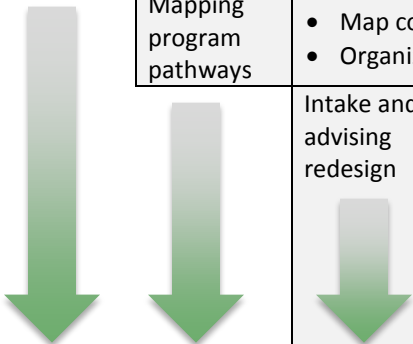
CCRC's book, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* (Harvard University Press 2015) is being used as a blueprint for this national reform movement. Since the book was published, CCRC has continued to conduct research on guided pathways, including studies of the design, implementation, effectiveness and economics of the model.

In our research on the implementation of guided pathways, we have observed that these reforms often follow a similar pattern of development. The diagram on the next page shows the general stages of this process and the timeline through which we have seen them unfold at colleges that are implementing guided pathways reforms. We have also noticed that in colleges where we have seen substantial improvements in near-term measures of student success, such as the community colleges in Tennessee and Sinclair Community College, these improvements seem to become evident only after colleges have begun to implement the essential elements of the model at scale and in concert with one another. **We emphasize that this is an idealized conceptualization of the process—no college will follow these stages precisely as outlined here, and the process is much messier (and perhaps less linear) in practice.**

CCRC plans to use this framework to classify colleges (roughly) by how far along they are in implementing pathways, and to see if there is a correlation between more developed implementation and improvements in near-term and longer term student outcome measures.

For more information, contact Davis Jenkins, CCRC Senior Research Scholar, at davisjenkins@gmail.com.

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Stage	Actions		Timeline
Laying the groundwork	• Develop strategic plan with measurable goals for improving student completion, transfer, workforce, learning and equity outcomes • Build capacity to collect, analyze, report, and use data college-wide to improve student outcomes • Make the case for change, highlighting rates of student attrition, excess credits, inefficient transfer, etc. • Broadly engage faculty and staff in scrutinizing current practice, focusing on how it affects students' ability to enter and complete programs affordably and advance to further education and employment • Implement at least one major innovation in practice at scale (that is, for all degree-seeking students)		3+ years
	Mapping program pathways	• Map course sequences for all programs, identifying gateway courses and co-curricular requirements • Organize programs into career-focused "meta-majors" and connect to job and transfer opportunities	1-2 years
	Intake and advising redesign	• Continue to communicate the vision and engage participation broadly • Refine course sequences for all programs including gateway courses and co-curricular milestones • Plan redesign and pilot intake system as "on-ramp" using "meta-majors" as a framework to facilitate career/college exploration and planning • Plan and pilot integrated and contextualized academic support for program gateway courses • Plan reorg of advising to support timely program completion • Plan upgrade of information systems to support student progress monitoring and e-advising • Train faculty and advisors for initial scale implementation	1-2 years

Initial scale implementation	• Continue to makes case for change, engage broad participation in reforms
	• Begin scale implementation <u>for all first-time students</u> of:
	  - Program maps and meta-majors (clearly accessible with job/transfer information on website)
	  - Reorganized college intake focused on career/college exploration and program planning
	  - Integrated/contextualized academic support for critical college-level courses
	  - Redesigned program advising system, including e-advising
	• Plan extension of program pathways into high schools (starting with dual credit) and adult ed programs
	• Provide training and professional development to support implementation
	• Formatively evaluate initial implementation
			1-2 years

Improved scale implementation	• Continue to makes case for change, engage broad participation in reforms • Refine and expand scale implementation for all students • Extend program pathways into high schools (starting with dual credit) and adult ed programs • Continue training and professional development to support implementation • Organize program review, improvement, and professional development within and across meta-majors • Continue formative evaluation of pathways implementation, including program-level assessment of learning		1-2 years
On-going improvement	• Institutionalize program review, improvement and professional development within and across meta-majors		On-going

NOTE: Phases where we expect to see substantial improvements in student momentum and progression indicated in green—darker shades indicate higher impacts expected in later phases.

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