

Onboarding at Alamo Colleges District

MAY 2020

FAST FACTS

Location: San Antonio, TX

2017-18 enrollment: More than 90,000

Percent part-time (fall 2018): 80%

Race/ethnicity:

Hispanic – 61% Black – 7%

White – 24% Asian – 3%

Percent receiving Pell Grants: 26%

Key Features of Redesigned Practices at Alamo Colleges

Organizing and Introducing Programs by Field of Interest

- In fall 2014, the five Alamo community colleges, with leadership from the district, organized their credit and noncredit programs into six meta-majors called **Alamo Institutes**.
- In consultation with area employers and universities, Alamo faculty mapped all programs to employment and transfer outcomes. Advisory committees at the district, college, and program level work with university and employer representatives to ensure that program maps are up-to-date and responsive to employer needs.
- Alamo and seven regional universities formed a “transfer compact” to develop transfer maps in fields of economic importance in the region.

Improving Orientation and New Student Advising

- Alamo hired 25 enrollment coaches across all five colleges who contact applicants to welcome them and guide them through enrollment, helping those who get stuck. They also confirm each applicant’s choice of meta-major.
- Orientation is organized by meta-major; students participate in group advising sessions at orientation.
- Students are assigned an advisor within their meta-major and attend a mandatory advising appointment after completing 15, 30, and 45 credits.
- Each Alamo Institute (meta-major) developed learning outcomes for advising connected to marketable skills that are shared with students in an advising syllabus.

Expanding Career and Transfer Advising to All Students

- Students have access to hundreds of transfer advising guides customized by meta-major and major for each of several transfer partners; the guides are frequently updated.
- In a first-year experience course, students complete a mission statement in which they plan out their education and career goals, meet with their advisor, and develop a full-program educational plan.

Increasing Engagement With Programs From the Start

- Advisors, who are embedded within meta-majors, work closely with academic program chairs and faculty to stay informed about program requirements and student needs.

Designing Dual Enrollment as an On-Ramp to College

- The college has aligned its meta-majors and program maps with the state’s five high school “**endorsement areas**,” career field areas every Texas high school student is required to choose from.
- Enrollment coaches work directly with high schools; they engage with students to inform them of what they need to do to enroll in an Alamo college. Additionally, designated Alamo advisors work with students in dual enrollment courses.

See onboarding profiles of other colleges at <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.html>