

# Onboarding at Prince George's Community College

MAY 2020

## FAST FACTS

**Location:** Largo, MD

**2017-18 enrollment:** 16,868

**Percent part-time (fall 2018):** 73%

**Race/ethnicity:**

Black – 71%

Asian – 4%

Hispanic – 12%

White – 4%

**Percent receiving Pell Grants:** 37%

## Key Features of Redesigned Practices at PGCC

### Organizing and Introducing Programs by Field of Interest

- In 2017, PGCC began organizing its programs into meta-majors called “academic and career pathways.” The college [website](#) lists all the possible types of credentials and learning paths within each meta-major, including noncredit certifications and related degrees available at four-year destination colleges.

### Improving Orientation and New Student Advising

- Incoming students are provided with a one-page, six-step enrollment [checklist](#) that explains everything a new student needs to do and in what order, including filling out a combined financial aid and college application to begin planning college financing.
- Students are required to complete orientation, take any needed placement tests, and meet with an advisor before they register for courses. Students complete orientation before they take a placement test so they can learn about the test, resources to help them prepare, and testing alternatives.
- Orientation includes an introduction to: the meta-majors, student support resources such as tutoring, the use of individual educational plans, and campus clubs and activities.
- Advisors are embedded within meta-majors and are trained as career counselors through the National Career Development Association. They work intensely with students on program and career exploration and provide support for activities such as resume writing and job searching.
- PGCC mandates advising checkpoints at 15, 30, and 45 credits.

### Expanding Career and Transfer Advising to All Students

- Each semester, advisors facilitate early advising weeks to help eliminate the bottleneck of students who need advising to register for the following term. In those sessions, new students work with advisors to identify goals; discuss career options and the characteristics of good employees (such as punctuality, professionalism, and integrity); and develop a full educational plan.
- PGCC has a dedicated three-person team of transfer advisors for students who plan to transfer.

### Increasing Engagement With Programs From the Start

- Before the first day of classes in fall and spring, new students and their families are invited to participate in New Student Convocation. Each “academic and career pathway” sets up a table where students can meet faculty, staff, and other students and learn about programs and career options within the meta-major.
- Students receive career and academic counseling from a full-time advisor until they earn 30 credits. After that, they transition to a faculty advisor in their program. Faculty mentors receive training on topics such as addressing personal bias, career counseling, and interpersonal communication.

### Designing Dual Enrollment as an On-Ramp to College

- **COAST** is a high school-to-college pathway program that places dedicated PGCC academic coordinators in targeted Prince George's County high schools.
- The coordinators facilitate college readiness, career exploration, and dual enrollment, and they host workshops on topics such as financial aid.
- Dual enrollment students can take courses on the college campus or at the high school, where they are taught by a certified instructor.
- Dual enrollment students have access to full-tuition scholarships to PGCC.

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