Guided Pathways Synopsis: Edmonds College

Purpose: This guide is a synopsis of the invaluable conversation that staff members of the State Board for Community and Technical College Education Division and Project Management Office had with leaders and key staff at Edmonds College around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what Edmonds College needs from the system to continue their success.

Audience: College Subject Matter Experts (SME) interested in Guided Pathways.

💡 **When did we meet?** SBCTC and Edmonds College met on Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

Key Success Points

- **Work Groups:** Eight cross-functional Guided Pathways work groups were formed as part of Edmonds College's equity-centered Comprehensive Plan. Each developed action plans,with a primary focus on optimizing ctcLink for Guided Pathways.

- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan:** The college has completed this plan, and has made a commitment to being an anti-racist institution.

- **Online Forms:** Forms for financial aid and other student services have moved fully online, so that students can access services even if they are not on campus.

- **Faculty Senate Summit:** This group of faculty are engaging other faculty in equity work and helping faculty across campus understand ways they can apply equity concepts to their teaching.

- **E-Pathways:** a program to expand access to students through online programs and includes the following:
  - High Flex teaching mode
  - Data Driven
  - Enhancing Quality of Online Courses
  - "Anytime Anywhere" Providing Student Services virtually for students, based on their needs

- **HR/Recruitment:** Implemented the *Our College is Our Future Act* of 2021, Leaned into focusing on equity gaps and impacts as a core part of the faculty. Improving the recruitment materials for new faculty to ensure that the position descriptions put "front and center" that the college is seeking faculty that are going to be able to support our students from

historically underrepresented populations, and be prepared to work towards closing those equity gaps as a part of their work at our college.

- **I-Best:** Vision for pre-nursing pathway, intentional partnership with Faculty and Advising. Improved ways for getting students through English and Math prerequisites and getting them to level up on a faster path.

- **Fee Removals:** The college has chosen to remove fees to apply for admission and to apply for graduation. This change was implemented a few years ago as a way to remove barriers.

- **Online Advising:** Service for students was initially transitioned online due to COVID, but continues today as another effort to ensure there are no barriers to student success.

- **Re-Design New Student On-boarding:** Includes self pace videos and check points with advisors during this on-boarding process.

- **Academic Planning:** Worked to realign prerequisites Math and Science classes by working with Faculty to address complex pathways, using co-requisites.

- **Alternative Assessment:** Offer reciprocity from other colleges, look at transcripts and assess it and put it in ctcLink so it doesn't hold up students' registration as college is in the process of improving English self placement.

- **Student Resource Hub:** These essential services have been moved into their own stand alone building and includes: food pantry, transportation, childcare and are tied to community agencies to provide resources for students.

- **College Website:** College is providing new students with user friendly approach (launched end of January).

- **Removing Barriers:** Removed fees for graduation and the college now provides virtual advising spaces, as well as implementing co-requisite for Math courses.

- **New Student Advising:** College is now providing a self-paced process model, videos and checkpoints to meet with a person one on one, instead of in a larger group, to ensure the student gets the help they need and dedicated time to answer their questions.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- **SMS Messaging to Students:** A way to send mass notifications to students, especially some way to send event triggered communications to a student's cell number. This avoids the challenge of having the right email address.

- **Program Plans/Maps:** Currently published in Acalog/Curriculog, ideally would like student to go in to a template and identify plan in ctcLink instead of going to different places. This template would then create the Planner for them (seamless with AARs which are already in ctcLink). Advisors would also like the ability to create the plans instead of requiring the student do so.

- **Early Alert Program:** College has locally developed a process to address alerts submitted by faculty in ctcLink. The college is not using a 3rd party vendor and no longer using Starfish. A

---

locally developed application is being used to make the alerts submitted by the faculty available to appropriate advisors and responders. It would be ideal if the entire alert and response process could be more robust within ctcLink. For example:

- Ability to automatically route alerts to special population coordinators by Student Group (Examples: TRIO, ELA, Athletics).
- Ability to integrate Canvas data, to provide more details about students' attendance and progression during the term, perhaps comparing assignment completion to the course syllabus during the term, or at grading time, so that Advisors can engage in real time with students.
  - **SBCTC Comment:** Colleges can do this by creating an Alert Organization. Please see this QRG for more information: [https://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79555/l/1318832-9-2-create-a-student-alert-organization\\](https://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79555/l/1318832-9-2-create-a-student-alert-organization\)

- ***Student Withdrawal Automated Approval Process & Questionnaire****:* When students want to withdraw from a class, if the system could have an approval workflow for specific students that require sign off. Also, if at that time of withdrawal if the system could require the student to complete a simple questionnaire so that college staff can ask "why" and to educate the college on the issues that students are having and provide the college staff an opportunity to intervene and see if they can ensure the student knows their available resources and options, such as tutoring. At minimum, some way to alert the student that the action could impact their Financial Aid.
  - The desire is to have this approval/questionnaire be date driven, so it's not something that occurs during the normal adjustments of a student schedule before the start of the term, but after attendance has commenced and some engagement period and then the student decides to withdraw. That is the period where this mechanism should be activated.

- ***Assigned Advising:*** Need a better way to manage Advisor assignments. Not flexible enough to make it easy to assign, to get the student a "network" of Advisors, or easily transition advisors when attrition occurs.
  - **SBCTC Clarification:** It is unclear whether the college is looking for a solution to assign a network of advisors, or believes the current solution does not offer flexibility.
    - If the college is looking for a solution, Batch Advisor Assignment can assign a committee which can have multiple advisors assigned that are displayed to the student. The "reassign" mode can be used when an advisor is no longer active for an institution. (https://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79545/l/1016872-9-2-creating-committees)
    - If the college knows about the solution but feels it is not flexible enough, any clarifying details on what flexibility they are looking for would be helpful.

  - **College Comments:** The advisors have been exploring these capabilities and have gained more understanding since the interview. More automated batch assignment of advisors based on a wide range of data attributes such as program of study, student group, date of admission, etc. would help to make this process less time consuming.

- ***Advising Note Capability:*** Concerns about privacy, ability to edit and attachments of .pdf plans.

- **SBCTC Comment:** about Privacy: Advising Notes security has been improved since the date of the college's interview. Advising notes are now locked down with college-specific advising notes roles. See QRGs for more information: https://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79543/l/1663510-9-2-create-an-advising-note-category-and-subcategoryhttps://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79543/l/1059082-9-2-assign-access-to-advising-notes-note-category-access
  - https://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79543/l/1059082-9-2-assign-access-to-advising-notes-note-category-access
  - **SBCTC Clarification about Edit & Attachments:** What is the concern about the ability to edit and attachments? Any clarifying details will be helpful.

- *Transfer Credit Evaluation:* The college currently have to use external system to complete this work, but feel it would be better if a user friendly way was developed in ctcLink.
  - **SBCTC Clarification:** What external system is the college choosing to use? For transfer credit evaluation, what does the college feel they cannot do within ctcLink for transfer credit evaluation?
  - **College Comment:** "The College is evaluating transfer credit manually using a home-grown system called GATE."

- *Self-Service Graduation Evaluation Request Process:* It would be great if there was a tool or process where a student can notify the school that they have credits from an external school and would like them evaluated for applicability towards their graduation requirements. College are currently forced to use an external process for this.
  - **SBCTC Clarification & Comment:** What is the driving force for the college to use an external process? Without knowing the details, it is difficult to make recommendations. However, if the student had to submit a request for transfer credit evaluation, the college could potentially house the form on their website and ask students to submit via Upload Documents functionality.
  - **College Comment:** This is being done manually now. Is there something in ctcLink that will automate this process?

- *Electronic Transcripts Issue with Repeated Courses:* There are currently [...at the time of this interview...] problems with the electronic transfer of credits into the system not correctly uploading Repeated courses. It appears to be uploading the first and usually zeroed out course rather than the correct course, which has caused a problem because the data is not correct and evaluators do not feel comfortable using that transcript. The problem is causing college evaluators to go back and forth, sometimes having to request another transcript, which in turn causes delays for the students.

- *Transcripts:* College want to have Cumulative GPA and College Level (non-remedial) GPA to appear on the transcript.

- *Enrollment/Advising:* It would be great if the system could alert students when a course they are attempting to register for is not applicable to their Program/Plan. Looking for an automated way to alert the student that they are attempting to go off-plan and they need to see their advisor.
  - **SBCTC Comment:** One potential solution is to send a Message Center or 3Cs communication if a student's current enrollment was in the "unused" bucket on their Academic Advisement Report (AAR).

- **College Comment:** Looking for an automated way to alert the student that they are attempting to go off-plan and they need to see their advisor. Would this be an automated action or manual?

- *Advisor Center:* The Advisor Center email listed is not the one marked by the student as their "Preferred" email, they only see the first email that exists for a student and not necessarily the preferred email. They have to navigate to another screen to see whether that email is preferred or not. Makes more work for the advisor unnecessarily.
  - **SBCTC Comment:** A possible workaround is the My Advisees tile which displays the preferred email.

- *Report of Potential Graduates Nearing Completion:* It would be good if the system had the capability to run a report of students who are nearing or at 75% completion of a certificate or degree and generate a notification that they either have fulfilled the requirements are eligible to apply for graduation or alert them that they are nearly complete and they only have a few classes left to apply for graduation.

- *Class Information Visible to Students:* Make modalities clear to students wanting to register, also more transparency for students to see the course/class fees that the students don't actually see until it's in their cart. Students can't always see the notes related to a course. Hyperlinks in the class notes would be incredibly helpful.
  - *Also noted*: When the staff run 'Permission Codes' for a faculty member so they can 'have them' in case they need them, the college wants to be sure it doesn't appear to the student that they must have a permission code to register for the class.
    - **SBCTC Comment:** The DGC course modality subcommittee is currently discussing a modification to the instruction modes to make it more clear to students how and when classes are offered.

- *Self-Service Graduation Evaluation Request Process:* It would be great if there was a tool or process where a student can notify the school that they have credits from an external school and would like them evaluated for applicability towards their graduation requirements. Colleges are currently forced to use an external process for this.
  - **SBCTC Clarification & Comment:** What is the driving force for the college to use an external process? Without knowing the details, it is difficult to make recommendations. However, if the student had to submit a request for transfer credit evaluation, the college could potentially house the form on their website and ask students to submit via Upload Documents functionality.

Key Risk Points - Please Don't Disrupt This Process

- *Academic Structure:* Do not redesign the full Academic Structure.

Professional Development Opportunities

- ***Class Information Visible to Students:*** It would be helpful to have some kind of training on what students see when searching for a class or registering for a class, and where colleges can store notes in a place that students can see the notes related to a course.

- ***Quick Reference Guide Glossary Links:*** Often in the QRGs there is terminology used and if one is not familiar with the terminology it becomes very difficult to follow a QRG. It would be very helpful if within a QRG that there were links to provide clarity with regard to terms used in the guide itself. The guides are designed to use terminology to name a task and provide the steps for how to execute the task, but not what the terminology actually means. So links for a glossary for the module would be very helpful.
    - **SBCTC Comment:** When reviewing a QRG in ctcLink, on the left-hand side of the screen will be a section titled "Other Resources." Under that section is a link to crosswalks and glossaries.

- ***3Cs & Milestones:*** The college wants to learn more about how to incorporate this into progress monitoring, such as how to trigger specific communications and generate milestones to help them track a student's progress towards degree completion.

- ***Promote & Support Student Graduation:*** It would be great if we could as a system host some professional development or learning communities around how to use the system to promote and support students applying for graduation. The college previously used a custom built system and would love to engage with other colleges on the best ways to use ctcLink to facilitate students applying for graduation.
    - **SBCTC Comment:** There was a CS Work Session on 04/06/2023 about this topic. We understand this was after your Guided Pathways Interview, but wanted to mention it in case your college was unable to attend. The recording is in the ctcLink Work Session Information Canvas Course: https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/educational-technology-open-education/canvas-login

Review of the Set of Questions SBCTC Asked All Colleges

1. What is your college most proud of in the work you are doing to make your college more equity-centered/student-centered? How is this shaping your strategic plans for process improvement over the next two years?
2. What has your office done successfully to remove barriers for students who are wanting to attend?
3. How successful do you feel your college has been developing program maps and providing opportunities for exploratory courses? Is there anything within the ctcLink system you wish could be improved to help with this work?
4. What changes have you made in your business practices to improve progress monitoring of students? What are you most proud of in your process for ensuring staff are involved in identifying students who are struggling? Is there anything within the ctcLink system you wish could be improved to help with this work?

5. Does your college currently use a Third Party Product (Starfish, EAB Navigate, Civitas, Watermark Aviso, etc.)? If your college is using any tertiary systems (external products, business intelligence systems, and/or locally developed solutions) to support Guided Pathways, what benefits are being provided that are not currently available in ctcLink?
6. How do you feel your college is doing in evaluating student enrollments and their alignment to completing a degree in two years? What changes have you made across student services to support this work? Is there anything within the ctcLink system you wish could be improved to help with this work?
7. What elements of the Guided Pathways framework is your institution currently prioritizing? How are you currently documenting your work? Is there anything within the ctcLink system you wish could be improved to help with this work?

Questions for Specific Offices/Teams:

1. From each office (IT, Financial Aid, Admissions, etc.), what has been your greatest improvement to support Guided Pathways?
2. From each office, if you could improve the system in one small way to help your office significantly to support GP, what would you change in ctcLink?
3. From a data perspective-
   a. How are you tracking a student's journey through their programs on your campus?
   b. How are you currently reporting student enrollments by meta-major? Are you using locally developed Plan Code to Meta-Major crosswalks?
   c. What data points are you finding it difficult to track in the system today and what would you learn from tracking that data?
   d. Is there anything within the ctcLink system you wish could be improved to help with this work?

4. From your area's perspective, what key enhancements could you envision that would support your college's Guided Pathways work?