


Guided Pathways Synopsis: Pierce College District

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 Pierce College District around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what Pierce College District needs from the system to continue their success.

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

 **When did we meet?** SBCTC and Pierce College District met on Wednesday, November 16, 2022 1 pm - 3 pm.

Key Success Points

- **Recent Redesign of the Faculty Hiring and Tenure Experience:** The college used a faculty cluster hiring approach with Black and Brown excellence in mind. The college is also redesigning the tenure track process with both Black and Brown student excellence as the top priority. The institution has committed to provide the necessary opportunities and resources to support this effort. Examples: Inclusive pedagogy, culture of care commitment, work with the Hope Center to address basic needs, identify resources in the community, and training in being Trauma Informed.
- **Course and Map Creation/Development Revisions:** The college has included their focus on equity as they revise their course maps, focusing on questions like, "Are these courses and outcomes set up to be equitable?" Curriculum and Acalog are third party software systems that are currently being used. Pierce worked backwards from career KSAs to outcomes to courses in order to build intentional maps. Revisions to maps are done through the college's standing shared governance process for curriculum review.
- **Guided Self Placement:** Pierce College has fully implemented a guided or self-reflective placement for Math and English. Along with options of co-requisite of Math and English with embedded support. This is to achieve the goal of student completing Math and English in the first year of attendance. College is at 98-99% of students being placed into college-level with positive success outcomes demonstrated.
- **Removing Barriers for Students:** Reevaluated the items that a student needs to complete to make it easier and more efficient for the student. Eliminating some of the items that

the student needed to be present for to help ease the process for the students. The welcome message for undocumented students was also re-framed so that they see they are accepted and welcomed to the family while still requesting a few pieces of information, along with a web page with resources.

- **Progress Monitoring:** Starfish is being used for progress monitoring along with Alerts. Awareness sharing or “flags” are being used so that the faculty can share a student’s progress with the assigned advisor or success coach. Alerts happen a few different ways. First the student and the success coach receive an email of the progress; two days later the student will receive a phone call from the success coach. A note is then logged in Starfish so that the faculty can see the resolution and to close the loop. Starfish also has a monitoring page where students can see their completion rate and see if they are close to completion rates on other programs. Connecting students to the people associated with their program or coach, advisor, etc. is a click away in Starfish. Students can also raise flags themselves as a way of signaling a need for support.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- **Plan Changes/Code Changes:** These need to be visible before the term date, currently the only way that you see them is when the effective term date comes to fruition. Not being able to see these in advance causes inefficiencies in areas like Financial Aid processing for example.
- **Program Change:** When a program is changed there is a disconnect from the Advisor, so then you need to manually change the Advisor to the new Advisor associated with the new program. An automatic connection would be helpful to connect the correct advisor when there is a program change.
- **Student Alerts:** During implementation the college felt that the alerts were only negative or perceived as negative. The alert system is static and leaves no opportunity for the faculty to enter a narrative about the student or customize the message. Tracking ability and routing ability to different resources along with closing the link is not available so the decision was to go with Starfish.
- **Update Workflow:** It would be amazing if there was a way to submit changes that needed to be done with a program plan stack, or to an advisor without the current use of the homegrown third-party system.
- **Acalog to ctcLink Integration:** An integration between Acalog (curriculum management system) and ctcLink would help prevent that occur from manual changes.
- **Starfish to ctcLink Integration:** The Starfish integration would allow students to register once their degree plan is decided. Pushing data into ctcLink would be extremely helpful.
- **Mobile Version of ctcLink Disconnect:** The college currently encourage students to use the mobile version of ctcLink rather than the desktop version. Students find the mobile version more intuitive and easier to search for classes and add classes to the cart in the mobile version. It was also found that using the desktop version classes were unable to be found due to a filter setting.

- **Automated Evaluation Process:** Auto awarding of a degree or certification, or generation of an alert to the student when a degree or certification is within their reach or has been achieved. The more automated a process can get will make the overall process easier.
- **Improved Data Segregation in the Student Services Center By Institution:** Being able to see information from other colleges than where the student is currently enrolled at is confusing to staff. Course history is confused with other colleges, the course looks like theirs but has not been officially transferred into Pierce. Even if the class was identified with the college that it was taken from would be helpful.
- **Student Services Center and Advising Center are Disjointed:** When it comes to the Student Services Center and the Advising Center there is some shared information, and it is confusing for advisors to successfully navigate.

Key Risk Points – Please Don't Disrupt This Process

- College did not highlight any specific areas of risk to disrupt their current business processes around Guided Pathways.

Professional Development Opportunities

- **Progress Monitoring & General Query Management:** Queries and Reports are needed to help with monitoring student progress. Hard to trust the data by the name of the query or query description, the query can change because it is global, and the changes are unknown. Batch degree audit needed for efficiency.
- **3C (Comments, Checklist, Communications):** This is difficult to use. The colleges need more help on how to make the best out of this tool. Checklists are unorganized and seemed to be jumbled with other colleges. At this point they are using this more for staff to staff and not for the students. Interdepartmental requests would be helpful.

Review of the Set of Questions SBCTC Asked All Colleges

Questions for Overall College Perspective:

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?