

Guided Pathways Synopsis: Bellingham Technical 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 Bellingham Technical College (BTC) around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what BTC needs from the system to continue their success.

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

 **When did we meet?** SBCTC and Bellingham Technical College met on Wednesday, January 11, 2023.

Key Success Points

- **Equity Centered:** College has created a more robust Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) specific plan and working on the Institutional Plan to be more equity focused. Implemented a Campus Wide DEI centered survey, selected a fairly robust instrument and will be sharing out the results next month. Big Picture - all ties back to helping students be successful at Bellingham Technical College.
- **Equity Centered and Student Center Initiatives:** The college is doing a great job of making equity and student centered efforts with initiatives campus-wide. As a really impressive example, the Accessibility Resources Department has decentralized their efforts, causing accommodations and accessibility to really become a campus culture. Also, putting forward a policy to support English Language Learners, to make that another campus-wide effort of how the college can support all students and help them be successful by providing services to students, anytime and anywhere.
- **Data and Research Staff:** Institutional Research unit is incredibly equity focused, informing the college's work on student outcomes.
- **Navigator Program:** College staff through the Navigator program have built a more relationship based interaction with students. College regularly receives student feedback stating that this is the most supportive experience they have experienced at a college in our system. Students express deep appreciation for this work and appreciate how much the college supports them, most notably in Trio. This work helps with retention because it keep people going here even when they change their mind about their program. The "Get

Started" appointments are mandatory advising for all new students. They're individual hour long student appointments where Navigators meet with new students and take the opportunity to get to know them, why they're coming to BTC and what they hope to accomplish.

- ***Instruction and Faculty Embrace Guided Pathways:*** The Instruction division have taken the opportunity to dig deep into the curriculum and review information. The college has an instructional designer that brings the equity lens to the conversation and help faculty look at that information.
- ***Teaching and Learning Academy:*** On-boarding new faculty and adjunct faculty to understand what's happening on campus. Bringing in that equity lens to those trainings for new instructors and creating the culture that's centered around equity ensures that new instructor to more quickly support students in the classroom.
- ***5 Work Teams:*** Work Teams have been established in various areas in different elements of the GP model to help advance equity processes and student centered decision making on campus. Those teams are:
 - Instructional Design
 - College Navigation
 - Faculty Teaching/Learning
 - Employee Technology Training
 - Data Literacy & Research
- ***Working on Restoring Prospect Communication Tools:*** Prior to ctcLink the college used a third party system [Microsoft Dynamics] for sending communications to people who had expressed interest in the college, as well as follow up communications. In the switch to ctcLink communications halted, but the college is working on how begin these practices again as they found this communication approach very successful.
- ***Account Look-Up Tools & Student ctcLink Support:*** College has created a tool so students who were previously at BTC can look up their new EMPLID after conversion to make the process easier for students to get logged into the system more quickly. The college, through their library, offers students support with ctcLink login issues. Guides have been that have been published both on the library website and our general website for students.
- ***Instruction:*** Looking at Allied Health grade requirements that might be preventing program entrance to make a program more accessible. Looking at what pre-requisites are creating unnecessary barriers for students. Will be surveying and looking at where students get stuck and how to help them move forward.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- ***Online System/OAAP:*** System located on the library website to help with login issues and training opportunities for students. Online Admissions Application (OAAP) causes confusion as new students may not understand the difference between Academic and Professional Technical so, resulting in students selecting undecided. BTC students should be Prof/Tech, but Academic shows up first on OAAP.

- **Early Alert System:** Lost functionality for "My BTC Bridge Alert System." Would like Early Alerts and Advising Notes together rather than separate; however 250 word limit is unrealistic.
- **Streamline Financial Aid Processing:** Any ways that ctcLink could streamline how long it takes to process a student's financial aid application would be much appreciated. The current amount of time it takes for the Financial Aid office to process an applicants aid eligibility is causing students to choose not to attend.
- **Ways to Make Using Program Maps/Exploratory Courses/Pre-Requisites Easier to Use:** Re-examining when courses should be taught to revise and redo program maps is more difficult for Technical Colleges as the accreditation process is more difficult to make changes. The colleges feel like Prerequisites are very challenging for BTC, too restrictive (also called out under Professional Development).
- **Mobile Advising Notes in HCX:** Currently advising notes that colleges want the student to see are not visible in the tool, where most students see their information. The college really thinks if we can make Advising Notes and Academic Plans easily visible in HCX it will be a HUGE improvement in the student experience.
- **Academic Advising Report:** Would like a way the students can view their plan and see what courses they have left. Also, if there is a way to converted the notes from the old Degree Audit tool into ctcLink that would recover important information for the student that they are now missing.
- **Academic Planning:** The college would like joint access for students and advisors when creating and editing the student's academic plan. Would like it to show history of plan changes, not just new PDF's being exchanged. Would like the tool to alert a student when they attempt to plan a class in a term it is not offered and a centralized repository of reasons for enrollment changes.
 - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** Does the college maintain the "typically offered" section in the Course Catalog? If so, the college could potentially query that field and compare that with the planner (which can also be queried). The college could then follow their local business process to contact the student.
 - **College Response:** We are working to make sure that all the classes are accurately displayed in the "typically offered" section of the Course Catalog. This will mostly support students who are self-advising. Our college Navigators have a good idea of when certain courses are offered or where to access that information internally. Our comments around academic planning relate to a desire to have a living document that can be accessed by navigator, faculty and student. Our current practice is to create student academic plans in a fillable PDF and then save that to Advising Notes. We would like to see something that goes beyond a static document saved as an attachment.

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. They remain in a recovering position post-go live with the loss of key local integration and the accompanying functionality from legacy.*

Professional Development Opportunities

- **Dashboards for Student Data:** The Data/Research Team Needs Help to Recover Prior Success/Tools: - Since moving to ctcLink the college has been feeling a huge burden/barrier. Prior to ctcLink they had built Dashboards that were setup for student milestones, SAP and Student Progress alerts. They have had many challenges in trying to recover those since conversion. Some form of Learning Community to help colleges rebuild those critical data channels is needed to enable BTC to regain access to information they need to feel like they can successfully move forward with Guided Pathways work.
- **Maintain/Update Pre-Requisite Table:** While the college is currently getting help from CS Core support to fix issues in their pre-requisite table, it's a challenge for college staff to understand and properly maintain. The difficulty is creating barriers to enrollment and overriding students is problematic downstream. Students who aren't able to successfully enroll initially are often just giving up thinking they can't get into the class. The college needs better ways to successfully manage this work.
- **Queries:** Would like clear list of state provided, standardized queries to rely on for longitudinal data. It is challenging currently to differentiate college developed or college initiated changes to queries where the output of the query or the selection criteria within a query is changing over time. It makes it challenging to have a shifting set of values when re-running a query.
 - **SBCTC Comment:** Queries are not modified in the system with shifting sets of values very often, so we would need to know specifically which ones they are concerned about to appropriately address the issue.
- **Security Roles & Information Available in ALL Quick Reference Guide Materials:** Would like security added to for each role and most importantly the college really needs to know what additional SACR Security is needed for Campus Solutions related processes.

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?