

# Guided Pathways Synopsis: Renton Technical College

**Purpose:** This guide is a synopsis of the invaluable conversation that staff members of the State Board for Community and Technical College's Education Division and Project Management Office had with leaders and key staff at Renton Technical College around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what Renton Technical 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 Renton Technical College met on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

## Key Success Points

- ***Flex Modality:*** College delivers class experience in all of these modes: In Person, synchronously "online" or asynchronously. The college has invested in to the technology to support flex modality, large screen TVs and other tools to support a blended experience. This has been challenging for faculty to manage 3 different modes, but they are making it work for the sake of the students. This allows students to be able to continue attendance, even in the face of life emergencies that might otherwise cause them to miss classes. During the entry process this is explained to the students to get on the path and stay on the path. This ability for students to engage even with life events creates confidence in the students that they can succeed, even when life makes that challenging.
- ***ctcLink System Training in New Student Orientation:*** RTC has put in a concerted effort into revamping the 'College Success' course to include aspects of navigating the ctcLink system. This helps build confidence to move through next quarter successfully. Student services and faculty helped students enrolled in this new process and online portal.
- ***Bridge & Pathways Classes in Basic Studies:*** The college has created a number of "Bridge" classes, such as Bridge to IT, Bridge to Allied Health and are currently developing a Bridge to Automotive. These types of classes help our English as a Second Language (ESL) students better prepare for the courses in those programs by providing the vocabulary that will be needed to succeed in those programs and giving them context for what to expect when they enroll in to those programs. The "Pathway" classes help to identify where students get stuck and improve English. College and Career Pathways, or CCP, courses also provide flex modality for basic studies. The college works to ensure there are translations available for

some classes. Instructors have created videos to showcase the programs. They have focus groups with students enrolled in CCP courses. We have an OER committee and teachers can apply for grants.

- **Spanish Immersion Program for Early Childhood Program:** The college is working on a Spanish immersion program for the Early Childhood Education program. Advisors work with the students in the early childhood program on enrollment and make staying in the program easier for students.
- **Student Services Virtual Services:** In person or virtual services are provided. Students can access a suite of services, including advising, disability services, and enrollment. Students can make an appointment with their advisors online. In addition to coming to campus or engaging over the phone, students can also do their entry advising through open Zoom lobbies four afternoons a week.
- **Technology Loan Program:** For students that don't have the technology, the college has layered in a Technology Loan Program that was initially spearheaded out of IT, but is now being deployed through the Library. This enables those students who want to take advantage of all the various modalities, but don't have the technology to do that, can gain access to that technology for their program success.
- **Integrating Guided Pathways in Strategic Planning:** Guided Pathways is promoted across campus. The college is building a new strategic plan over the next 2 years and integrating GP in everything they do.
- **Removing Fees & Blocks:** Removed online application fees and matriculation fee or registration block to provide one less barrier for students.
- **Testing & Directed Self-Placement Focused:** Asking the hard questions, 'How are you actually using the math test entry scores?' 5 years ago removed Accuplacer and each program has assessed and eliminated or reduced testing requirements and now it is down to only 2-3 programs that actually require it. The college has offered Directed Self-Placement for English for 8 years now. Now working on Directed Self-Placement for Math.
- **Open Education Resource (OER) Grant:** Supporting faculty to move away from text books and move towards OER.
- **CADRE for Faculty Advising:** 3 teachers work together work with the students and provides easier access to teachers. Reduces technology barrier (example: if Canvas is a barrier).
- **Better Transparency with ctcLink Class Schedule Online:** With ctcLink the Student Account in Student Financials is way more transparent for the student, so it is important to mirror that in providing transparency in the costs that students will encounter for any text book requirements. If it is not possible for a class to only require free OER resources, the college commits to providing students the real text books cost for a program. This makes it possible for students to understand the anticipated costs of text books, tuition and any additional program costs.
- **Student Alert:** The college is not using the ctcLink custom Student Alert processes, but rather is building out and using EAB Navigate for their Early Alert System to give students idea if they will be on SAP or kudos for making a 2.0 or higher GPA. The college also

consistently runs the process quarterly for SAP (overall for every students which relates to FA SAP) to monitor progress.

- **Revised Academic Policy:** The college has rewritten their Academic Policy Manual in a way that is understandable for all students.
- **ctcLink FA checks:** Disbursement has been greatly improved with reduced lines now.

## Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- **OAAP:** Different student populations find the Online Admissions Application Portal a little overwhelming. It would be great if unique student populations could have simplified templates for different types of students, such as our Career Training Program students or English Language Learners. and providing multiple language translations would significantly help this later population.
- **HGX:** Removing permission code field in HGX as it causes so much confusion for students and so many questions to college staff.
  - **SBCTC Comment:** HGX has accepted the Enhancement request to align the HGX Permission Code pop-up with how ctcLink's Permission Code option functions during Class Search & Enroll (to only display the Permission Code pop-up for classes with permission codes generated). We anticipate an HGX Enhancement release in 2023.
- **Program Maps Difficult to use in ctcLink:** The college has resorted to using a Canvas shell for developing Program Maps. College would like to explore functionality for program maps in canvas to be linked to that program information in ctcLink. The maintenance in Canvas is intense and is not kept in sync when a change is made in ctcLink. If there was the ability to build those maps within ctcLink, and connect it to Ed Planners within ctcLink that would be ideal and would reduce duplicate maintenance. Building a set of Program Maps is just the initial lift, but the long term maintenance it is an ongoing concern.
- **AAR Features in ctcLink Should be Integrated to Maps:** Need a way for the Academic Advisement Report (AAR) feature be automated to generate/populate on the built Program Maps. Program requirements are built in ctcLink. There should be a way to utilize this data to form "Pre-Built" Educational Plans (for a Full-Time or a Part-Time students). Ideally a generic plan could be generated and made it available to a student in their student center as a place to start, where they can edit it and make it their own, even with help from advisors. This would allow them to easily generate an Ed Planner they can work off. The plan templates can be provided to the student and either they or their advisor can modify them.
- **Identify and Code Accessibility Students BY College:** In ctcLink a better method is needed to code students with accessibility needs, accessibility services provided by each of the individual institution, not all grouped under one institution.
- **Auto Credentialed:** The system needs a tool that identifies students who have taken all the necessary coursework to receive a credential or degree and notify them that they are in a position to graduate or receive that certification.
  - **SBCTC Comments:** QCS\_AA\_DEGREE\_BOOST is a query for students who are near completion but no longer enrolled. This query was recently updated/improved. The

following QRG outlines what is needed for the query to work (i.e. TotalUnits for the academic requirement and a generated AAR): <https://ctclinkreferencecenter.ctclink.us/m/79543/l/1647860-degree-boost-query-identify-students-near-completion-but-not-enrolled>

- If a similar query is needed for enrolled students, college query writers could potentially use the Degree Boost query as a base depending on the records and criteria.
- Once students have been identified, 3Cs and Message Center functionality could be leveraged to contact the student.
- **Link to ctclink Mobile site to ctclink Online (desktop) Site:** These two systems need to be more closely integrated for a single student experience. The format should mirror the most efficient ways for students to engage in ctclink related tasks.
- **Solution Needed for Capturing and Reporting Meta-Major Coding:** College does not use sub plans, but really needs a method that colleges can use to efficiently track Meta-Majors.
  - College Update: College has since started tracking using a crosswalk that we made and added it as a view in SQL. However, we would still prefer a ctclink solution.
- **Students in Correct Program:** The college is having trouble getting students in right program plan and would like ctclink simplified to manage it and provide better training opportunities for colleges as makes it hard to train staff in this area.
  - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** We are unsure if this is referring to a local business process, local plan configurations, OAAP, or Student Program/Plan stacking changes. Any clarification the college can provide would be helpful as we schedule future trainings.
  - **College Response:** Our preference would truly be for the whole Program/Plan management process to be simplified in the system. Currently, it takes three or more different pages in ctclink (depending on the exact task at hand), to determine whether or not a student's program/plan record is correct. And each of those pages has one or more entry fields that can be opportunities for conflict. And there are too many processes that depend on their being correct Financial Aid, credentialing, etc. for there to also be so many processes that could affect these potential areas of conflict like admissions, batch term-activation, etc. And then there's all the things that get attached to these records, like student attributes and milestones, that could potentially stop working right if the record is modified usually to correct other errors or conflicts. For comparison, in Legacy HP-UX, correct program record was achieved with ONE entry field in SM2001. While it could have used a slight upgrade to allow for multiple plans, it didn't warrant the behemoth of a process we have now. College suspects that the current processes may be too far embedded in the system now to easily change. But at the very least, we would like to voice the difficulty we are having with them and the many, many cases where a student's ability to enroll, eligibility for financial aid, or academic progress, has been obstructed by a simple error in a process that is so vulnerable to errors in so many areas. Also, barring (or pending?) such dramatic improvements in these processes, then we would like to see more Professional Development Opportunities regarding this topic. College sees the "Activate Students Overview" module under the "Beginning of Term" Canvas course. This topic alone is complicated enough to need to be taught in isolation, without being sandwiched in-between other processes, too.

## Key Risk Points – Please Don't Disrupt This Process

- *The college did not specifically identify any areas of the system they felt would be disruptive to their current guided pathways work.*

## Professional Development Opportunities

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## 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?