


Guided Pathways Synopsis: South Puget Sound Community 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 South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what SPSCC needs from the system to continue their success.

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

 **When did we meet?** SBCTC and South Puget Sound Community College met on Monday, December 19, 2022.

Key Success Points

- **Excellent Adoption of Third Party Software:** College has fully adopted "Compass" which is the re-branding of Starfish and are fully engaged in using this software in delivering integrated mapping, providing student plans and managing student alerts. Compass can feed a class syllabus to Canvas and in Canvas staff can see where the student is in their class each week, which has been a game changer in Student Support efforts. Their college has built a fairly sophisticated integration pulling data from ctcLink to feed into Compass.
- **Essential Practices of Guided Pathways:** College has implemented all the essential practices for Guided Pathways, such as all on-boarding and intake processes, and is now reviewing all major processes to see what might need to be tweaked, essentially a version 2.0 of implementing Guided Pathways processes. Including performing a full scale review of the mapping work completed 5 years ago to implement improvements next year. Another area of continuous improvement is tutoring. Services have been expanded and the tutoring model is based on student needs, ensuring tutoring is available when and how it is needed, with quarterly monitoring for effectiveness.
- **Guided Pathways IS the Strategic Plan Framework:** Measures used for the college's strategic plan are the same measures that the State Board uses for Guided Pathways. The college uses additional measures around student success, equity, and student engagement. One area of focus has been the revision of Adult Basic Education Programs to be aligned with Guided Pathways and workforce development. SPSCC has embedded I-BEST in each of their areas of study or pathways. One example being we we have completely revised our adult

basic education programs. It is based on our guided pathways model and a work development model. We have, I-Best in every one of our areas of study or pathways.

- **Guided Self-Placement:** College has removed entry barriers through use of guided self-placement model for both English and Math. No assessment required, no fees. Removes the need to have to travel on site for an assessment on campus. This represents a change in perspective on placement, more about understanding the student's relationship with a subject, to find those indicators that a student will be successful in a course. Students can come in person or online. For those who need it, there is still an option to have outside testing for a fee. As a companion to this effort, the college has completely re-structured their Math and English to be a co-requisite model so any student, regardless of where they start, can complete their degree English and Math requirement in the first year.
- **Free Learning Resources:** The Instruction division has worked very hard to review coursework with a focus on Open Educational Resources (OER) and Free Learning with a focus on Accessibility. Barnes & Nobel is no longer providing the college bookstore as they are not finding the large profit margins they once enjoyed, which is evidence of how well the Instruction Division has succeeded in their goal to provide affordable learning opportunities to students. This is huge in removing cost barriers for our students.
- **Early Readiness Outreach for High School Students:** SPSCC Staff are now going onto High School campuses for graduating seniors, for Running Start and College in the High School students learn more about their intentions for college, assess readiness for college entry, and assist them with the process.
- **Next Step Sessions:** Sponsored by Outreach, Financial Aid and Assessment. Students can do everything "virtual" and online. For students who need to connect with resources, there are hands on experience options where students can receive real time, live assistance to get through any question or barrier they may have. College provides advising staff in a room and the ability to schedule longer appointments. These sessions are designed to ensure the student is either ready to register or actually registered and return a very good return value for the initial resource investment, as well as providing a two-way experience for the students.
- **High School Navigators:** In a new partnership with the United way, High School Navigators partner with two school districts to work with High Schools to support students with FAFSA completion, admissions, and dual enrollment opportunities.
- **Personal Support Center:** A survey goes out before every quarter to students to understand the basic needs for the student so that they can eliminate this as a worry for the student before classes begin. They have given assistance to more than 300 students.
- **Flexibility in Classes:** They have classes that are hybrid to help meet more of the student's needs. Intentional about the prerequisite of classes to remove any unnecessary barriers that would prevent at student from getting into the classes they need for their program.
- **Tracking Student Process:** As articulated above, the College is using "Compass" (Starfish) in conjunction with Canvas by using the student's syllabus and their completion of weekly coursework to track student progress during the course. In a new partnership with the United way, High School Navigators partner with two school districts to work with High

Schools to support students with FAFSA completion, admissions, and dual enrollment opportunities.

- **Use of Tableau:** College uses Tableau to take a look at student enrollment data, for example those enrolled in Fall, currently registering for Winter. Every week they provide an update report as a visual, disaggregated by categories, for example Running Start, Full-Time, Part-Time, receiving aid. This data informed approach allows the college to monitor various student groups and provide "hands on" support where it is needed most. The college uses DATA to inform every decision of the college. It is built into their faculty evaluation process, and is part of everything the executive team does and everything the Instructional Deans do.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- **3rd Party Integration:** Integration between "Compass" (Starfish) and ctcLink that can feed data back into the student services center. The advising notes are the most critical to the work that they do with the students.
- **Breaking Down Walls:** ctcLink is very silo-ed and needs to have better faculty access to the Student Center.
 - **SBCTC Clarification:** needed on this statement as college's have local control of granting staff security to the Student Center.
- **Class Language:** Class schedule, that students can select and enroll in classes. The wording needs to be in the students' words and not the college words so it would be less confusing to the students. Example is the "&" classes.
- **Financial Aid module:** The Financial Aid process is the greatest barrier to students and for the staff. This is causing confusion for students and the staff.
- **College Transparency:** Consistency is needed in seeing items from other colleges. Not all items from other colleges can you see. Academics tab needs some improvements. (Student Services page) You can see that they took English 101 but then only after you dig around do you notice that it is from a different college.
- **Shortcuts in the System:** Navigation collection would be a helpful tool to group pages together for a better student experience in ctcLink and a better advising experience in ctcLink.
- **ctcLink Appearance:** The look of ctcLink it appears to be outdated compared to what students are use to seeing.

Key Risk Points – Please Don't Disrupt This Process

- **Starfish:** Starfish is a must to keep. They are happy with Starfish and don't believe that ctcLink can fill this gap and would not like to be pushed onto any other third party product that might be chosen to integrate with ctcLink.

Professional Development Opportunities

- **Reporting and Queries:** When it comes to effective dates are difficult to run at times and it would be helpful to close those gaps.
 - **SBCTC Clarification:** would need more information to understand what the gaps are to determine how to close them.

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?