

Guided Pathways Synopsis: South Seattle 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 Seattle around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what South Seattle 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 South Seattle College met on Friday, November 4, 2022.

Key Success Points

- **Welcome Center:** It's a "place" that represents the college's effort to reevaluate their intake process and essential practices. To look at the intake process from the student's perspective and see their journey as a means by which to improve those processes. A committee was formed with representatives across the campus. South Seattle gathered student feedback on their intake process experience, what went well, what did not go as well. There was rich feedback from such areas as Prof Tech and Basic Transitional Studies. Students expressed they were getting lost in the on-boarding process. The college took this feedback and crafted a framework that took into account how they wanted students to "feel" and what outcomes they wanted to achieve for the college with the goal to set those as the foundation for the "essential practices." The work done to build a sustainable foundation has resulted in more organizational conversations around the campus and across Seattle District. Students don't just have individual department experiences in their intake process, they in fact must engage with multiple departments through their intake process and providing centralized resources and staff that can guide them holistically is key to ensuring they can successfully navigate.
 - The college is also now exploring how to create 'Funding Centers' to co-locate all services related to funding needs for students. This work continues to evolve at the college as they move away from departments operating independently towards departments strategically participating in the student experience.
 - The college is considering how to translate those essential practices into processes in the other two pillars [HCM and Finance]. Changes are occurring in both small scale practices as well as systemic approaches to integrate their processes.

- **"Intake Process Improvements":** South Seattle has re-invented their intake process, establishing 'points of contact' who are outreach and intake specialist for students who help to create personalized steps through the intake and enrollment process. This also includes ensuring applicants have a 'pre-account' so they can start to leverage services before they become official students in ctcLink.
- **"Area of Study" and "Entry" Advisors:** While the college was hit very hard with turnover in advising, they made huge strides with focusing on Areas of Study advising. They also have hired new 'entry' advising staff that work closely with the Welcome Center staff, enabling the staff in the Welcome Center to hand-off students with a confirmed pathway for an optimal advising experience. This approach has helped significantly, but could benefit from improvements in ctcLink advising functionality outlined in the desired improvements section below.
- **Directed Self Placement:** English placement testing has been replaced with Directed Self Placement as the cost and time involved in placement testing was a barrier for students. College is working on developing Math Self-Placement now.
- **Web-Based Interactive Program Maps:** The college started with PDF version of course mappings, but they were not sustainable or maintainable. They moved to building web-based, interactive maps that link into information in ctcLink, such as clicking on the Course enables students to view the Course Description details from within ctcLink. In proceeding through this work, it was critical to establish workflows to ensure clear ownership for the maps, responsibility for maintenance and reviews through all stakeholders. Maintenance requires dedicated collaboration between student services and instructional divisions.
- **Early Alert in Starfish:** Starfish has been an important tool for the college to engage with students to support their retention and completion. Starfish functionality allows for the development of a student network within the application, creating the opportunity for referrals across multiple departments to support student success. In addition to referrals, faculty are surveyed each quarter to "nudge" students to check in with their instructors and/or to alert members of a student's success network that a student may need extra support. All student engagement is recorded in Starfish and is visible to the student's network. The students can also see their network in Starfish, and they can connect with their academic advisor (by area of study) and also see any secondary advisors, completion or enrollment coaches, or faculty coordinators for specific programs, such as TRIO, the AANAPISI Center, or Completion Coaching.
- **GP College Research:** Schools are on our own to figure things out that we all have to deal with for Guided Pathways. We have spent an immense amount of time researching and reach out to others to learn how other schools are dealing with challenges. Anything that SBCTC can do to increase collaboration and communication would go a long way to reduce frustrations, time wasted, and 34 different ways of doing things.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- **OAAP:** Overall, we want to strongly emphasize that the current biggest barrier for both students and staff is the online application (OAAP).

- **Area of Study Student Coding:** Need a way to code incoming students to an Area of Study (Meta-Major).
- **Missing Area of Study Report:** Need a way to identify students who have not confirmed an Area of Study within their first two terms.
- **Sub-Plan Required Field in OAAP:** If a sub-plan exists for the selected plan, make the student select a sub-plan value during the admissions process in OAAP.
- **Consistent Naming Convention for Program/Plan Across All Platforms:** OAAP, ctcLink, Mobile (HCX) seem to use different labels for Program/Plan values and they should be consistent.
- **Integrate Student Groups in ctcLink to Starfish:** Provide ability to add staff to a student's network in Starfish using Student Group coding in ctcLink automatically.

Key Risk Points – Please Don't Disrupt This Process

- **Academic Structure:** The college would like a way to code for areas of study that will not require them to reconstruct their plan coding and sub-plan coding. There is concern about radical changes to the foundation of Academic Structure that would cause them to repeat already completed work while facing significantly staffing issues.

Professional Development Opportunities

- **Sub-Plan Learning Community:** South Seattle uses Sub-Plans, but would love to see the State Board provide guidance on naming conventions, coding, templates for submissions, proper use of effective dates, anything that would give clear understanding of the most effective and system wide consistent ways to manage this information.
- **"Meta-Majors":** How to track and code meta-majors, create effective dashboard reporting and metrics.
- **3Cs Improving Student Communications Learning Community:** Any help in facilitating ways to improve our student communications, creating visibility to what has been communicated to students. This is challenging to achieve in isolation.
 - **SBCTC Comment:** SBCTC offers both training and work sessions about 3C topics. Prior sessions are available in Canvas for staff to review. We will continue to address this topic with future trainings and work sessions.
 - **SBCTC Clarification:** Needed on what the college means by "creating visibility" - who needs more visibility?
- **Professional Development on Best Ways to Do Student Progress Monitoring:**
 - Although Starfish has been great for student progress monitoring, college has a strong need for additional training on:
 - How to monitor progress towards degrees in ctcLink?
 - **SBCTC Clarification:** Needed as this can be done by running AAR reports for students as long as the AAR has been built.

- How to run queries/do queries exist to track progress monitoring within ctclink?
- Many of the questions on the GP annual report tied to progress monitoring in ctclink are difficult or impossible for us to answer based on our current understanding of ctclink.
- **SBCTC Comment:** We do have end user training available for query search and running queries in Canvas. These trainings are listed on the Data Services website.
- **Multiple Technology:** Using and seamlessly integrating multiple technology systems for Guided Pathway tracking, assessment, and reporting, such as best practices, how to's and recommendations on which system to use for which outcome would be ideal.

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?