

Guided Pathways Synopsis: Spokane Falls 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 Spokane Falls around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what Spokane Falls needs from the system to continue their success.

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

 **When did we meet?** SBCTC and Spokane Falls Community College met on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.

Key Success Points

- **Approach to Maps:** Student's primary introduction to course offerings is through Online Program Maps and not the Course Catalog. Over 90 Program Maps have been developed for every "pre-major" with a 6 to 7 term progression to credential completion. They have maps for all areas that are more than just text on a screen, but have an underlining database to support the display and ensure sustainability of maintenance. Developed to have edits and be integrated into their division and curricular processes.
- **Annual Schedule Complement Program Maps:** Online Program Maps are complemented by an Annual Schedule, which shares with advisors, counselors, faculty, and students the affirmed offerings for the year, with the first set of "affirmed offerings" are on the program maps.
- **2nd Tier of Guided Pathways Implementation:** For the above two key success points, it is important to note that the institution is now at the stage of affirming program maps and annual scheduling, with clear processes timelines for revisions, sustainability, coordination of maps with catalog and a single data source for the information shared out.
- **Required Guidance Course:** Adopted a guidance course, which is a "student support" course called Guidance 105 that is also a graduation requirement for all students in the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) track credential.
- **Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office Added:** This intentional hire was done to support their intent of equity and to reduce the gaps within the student population along with being their institutional indicators.

- **"Institutionalization of Guided Pathways" with Education for College Staff:** College staff are aware of what and why Guided Pathways is so important, this is information/training is provided to all staff. This principal is also incorporated in the hiring process and starts in the application process and continues into the interviews. They are no longer implementing Guided Pathways they are a functioning Guided Pathways College.
- **Holistic/Integrated Mode of Thinking:** GP equity goals are interwoven throughout all their services and support offices and the work that they do, not only with the students, but also how the staff approaches their daily work. GP has become an integration of the work that they do. The ripple effect of this has been very apparent on how all these items have impact each other from Guided Pathways.
- **Guided Pathways Teams:** Each team consists of a dedicated counselor, and a dean, a classified position they call a "GPS" (Guided Pathway Specialists) who manages the contact and coordination to help support the counselors and advisors. This team helps maintain contact beyond the initial orientation of the milestones of the first two quarters.
- **Student Progress Intervention Efforts:** Engaging in interventions and dedicated student support, increased contact with students provides more opportunities to be aware of challenges faced. Providing a coordinated intervention effort, takes advantage of "GPS" and Advisors who are actively engaging with students to connect students to support services in our Equity Office.
- **On-Boarding Student Process:** On-Boarding is now online in an asynchronous format, which is required, with the intent of student success. Students will pick their degree, but usually not their sub-plan.
- **Student Advising and Registration Session:** During COVID-19 they made the shift to have this completely online. They are currently experimenting with different modalities to help find what works best for students with a variety of ways.
- **Placement Reform:** Working with Deans to remove barriers by moving from a 3-year high school transcript window to a 5-year window. Transcript based placement for the majority of students to make it quick and equitable. The college has adopted self-placement for English and Math as well.
- **Advising Professional Development and Faculty Incentives:** With Guided Pathways they have developed training (Advising 101) for the counselors and faculty advisors so that they meet certain milestones or check marks that are "first quarter" and "first year" relevant. Faculty receive a stipend after they have completed the course. Meetings with Faculty are held regularly to ensure the faculty is serving the student to the best of their ability. Students are advised according to program maps. Exploratory maps were also developed. Students are also required to see an advisor for the first year with holds placed to ensure proper tracking.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- **Hide Sub Plans:** Allow Colleges Choice to Hide: Sub-Plans need to be hidden for OAAP, so students don't select Sub-Plans that are incorrect or misleading. The specificity is done at the

initial advisement session and the data selection at that stage is much more relevant and clean. There is currently an enhancement request that was submitted for this item. Presently they can only hide these for Academic Plans and not Sub-Plans. Both are needed.

- **Sub-Plan Maintenance:** Allow colleges to maintain their own Academic Sub-Plan tables at the local level without the need for a ticket.
 - **SBCTC Response:** If we are going to use sub-plans at the system level, it does not work to allow for local code creation and maintenance.
- **Sub-Plan Entry:** It would also be helpful if the system was easier to get the Sub-Plan data entry completed. There are multiple screens to navigate which can be hard for employees. The multiple screens can impact the data entry and the data is needed.
 - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** Does college mean that the Student Program/Plan page has multiple tabs which can be viewed on a single page, but that employees click on different tabs to view/enter data?
- **Progress Monitoring Tool:** A user friendly tool that is easy on both the student and the advisor to see. Not only to see the progress, but also monitoring students that might need an intervention for success. Capturing data points is missing to understand if tutoring helped a student. Also, a 2-way communication piece would be helpful without using a 3rd party tool like Starfish.
- **State Board to College Communication:** It would be helpful if the State Board was able to share communications on plans so that a college doesn't invest in a product or service and then later need to move away from after college collaboration decision from the State Board. It seems that this timeline for decision from the State Board is longer than needed.
- **Distribution Groups Identified:** It would be great if there would be something that could be put on the class students could see so they would know what distribution group it falls under.
 - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** Can the college expand on what they mean by "Distribution Group?" Without knowing the full meaning behind this statement, Course Attributes and/or Class Notes may or may not be a potential solution.
- **Ed Planner Progress:** Have more integrity in the Ed planner process. The ability to measure the students' progress against their own plan. This data would be a better indicator of when the student is being interrupted. This would also help with scheduling.
 - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** If possible, I'd request the college to expand on this desired improvement. College's can run AARs to check on a student's degree progress and potentially work with their Institutional Research office to query and analyze data to look for enrollment gaps and if there were any common elements (i.e. certain classes in certain terms) taken prior to the gap. Our comment may be oversimplifying what the college is asking for so any additional details they can provide will be helpful.
- **Advisor Selection:** It would be nice if there could be a primary and secondary advisory choice and a way to distinguish between the two.
 - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** Is SFCC indicating their students get to choose their advisors? Or is this regarding advisor selection during the batch advisor assignment process?

- **OAAP Focus Area (Meta-Major) Section:** It would be helpful if this section was locally controlled as currently it is global this way the setting could be changed to mandatory non mandatory depending on the college need.
- **Student Messaging in Advisor Center:** When messaging students from the advisor list if one of the emails in the list is incorrect then none of the emails are sent. This is a major hindrance to successfully being able to use this feature.
- **Student UI - Usability:** The system needs to be more robust for students to use and to draw students to want to use ctcLink. It also can take time for the student to receive the information from ctcLink after they have made their desired program selection.
 - **SBCTC Comment:** This is impacted by local business processes of reviewing applications, matriculating students, and sending communications.

Key Risk Points - Please Don't Disrupt This Process

- **Established Sub-Plans:** The reconstruction of Sub-Plan codes would be disruptive as these have been the foundation of which they have built maps and reports and has been an integral part of their Guided Pathways.

Professional Development Opportunities

- *College did not highlight any specific areas where a professional development activity would help in their Guided Pathways work.*

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?