Guided Pathways Synopsis: Olympic 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 Olympic College around how their college is succeeding with Guided Pathways work. It also includes what Olympic 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 Olympic College met on Friday, February 10, 2023.

Key Success Points

- *New Graduation Requirement for All Transfer Students:* Now requiring all transfer students to take an course on Diversity and Social Justice as a graduation requirement, so students have opportunities to dive deep into questions around racial equity, gender, power, privilege.

- *Math & English:* College has worked on shortening developmental pathways for English and Math.

- *Pedagogical/Teaching Approach Changes*: College is using the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (*TILT*) framework, to apply the Transparency Framework (purpose, task and criteria) to *Assignment Design* to close equity gaps for students of color, first generation students and other under-represented students.

- *Accessibility:* The college has done a lot of work on accessibility in course design and accessibility in course materials. Built an instructional Accessibility Triage Team that focused efforts on improving the student online course experience.

- *College Success Course:* The college has not yet currently scaled this to be a mandatory first year student course, but that is the goal.

- *Welcome Center/"Ranger Station" Re-Organization:* Completed a Welcome Center reorganization, combining the "Ranger Station" and Welcome Center into student service *One-Stop* to better enhance the experience for students.

- *Financial Outreach:* Received funds to support Financial Outreach and have added 5 new personnel resources for coaching and assisting in on-boarding process.

- **Process Mapping in Financial Aid:** The college has worked on process mapping on the Financial Aid application processes, looking more closely at those business processes to better support students.

- **Advising Improvements:**
  - Shifting to case load model, allowing coaches to be more focused on knowing their pathways and being able to advise more deeply.
  - Building out Advising Center by hiring more coaches and filling out leadership to support professional development and faculty advising.
  - Targeting that first advising appointment to help a student to define their pathway beyond just identifying that a student is an Associate of Arts Direct Transfer Agreement (AA-DTA) pursuing student.
  - Align coaches to pathways for new student advising appointments with standard content to help identify what pathway students might be leaning towards. Setup technology by their first day. Checking in to see if they're still on the right pathway or need help to pivot.
  - Cross-train staff to minimize need to go from office to office along with developing a set of advising tools: checklist, academic plans, etc.

- **Faculty Climate Survey:** Leading the work around diversity and inclusion to be more student success focused rather than compliance focused.

- **WorkFirst/BFET Re-Organization:** Aligning programs along with Career Services under Student Services to align with Guided Pathways structure that centers around career exploration in that process.

- **Transfer Intensive with Western Washing University:** The college engaged in a "Transfer Intensive" (a one-year initiative consisting of monthly sessions designed to support partnerships between community colleges and WWU) with the intention to help support transfer students.

- **Efforts to Support ctcLink in the System:** The college has invested staff resources by engaging in Washington Community and Technical College Presidents sub-group on technology (WACTC-Tech), Strategic Technology Advisory Committee (STAC), promoting change requests through Working Group and consistent involvement in College Collaboration Group.

- **Diversity Leadership Institute:** Student Services work quarterly at the Multi-cultural Center with a faculty member to take students through a set of curriculum to help students understand some of the intersecting that can occur with college and their lives.

- **Data Assessment - Implemented Changes:** The college has made use of good data to track which pathways have the most demand and which students come back the most. This has enabled the staffing of coaches in the areas needed most. For example, needed more technology coaches because of the special needs of that pathway. This led to being able to substantiate the need for and grow that team from 2 coaches to 7, plus an Assistant Director.

- **College Website:** The college performed a complete rebuild of their website to be student-centric, with step-by-step student processes. The landing pages have seamless integration to the catalog (Acalog).

- ***Established the "SGOC" Need Based Scholarship:*** This fund allows students to enroll in classes and have their tuition paid while they await receipt of Financial Aid assistance. Helpful for those students who apply for aid late, allowing the college to hold their enrollment in classes while working with them on the FA application process. Proven to have helped over 100 students per term to stay in classes while the college works on completing their Financial Aid award process. Can also be used to take a term to be able to apply for Financial Aid reinstatement.

- ***Forms Online:*** The college removed all PDF documents and converted them all to MS Office 365 forms. Students can submit paperwork through Office 365. The use of online form processing removes the need for the student to walk a piece of paper around campus to get approvals.

- ***Enrollment Process Improvements:*** The college consolidated and simplified enrollments for students by:
  - Ensuring communication is leveraged with email and more so with text message campaigns to proactively inform students.
  - Removing "rolling" payment deadlines, so now there is a single deadline to reduce confusion.

- ***Enrollment Events:*** Allow students to complete most of the steps and form relationships with a single visit to campus. This connects to the proactive outreach tech tools being used: Signal Vine text messaging, SalesForce CRM for managing inquiries and admits and ctcLink tools checklists, communications, message center.
  - Enroll Now Event - (started in summer 2021) Utilize Events ARM of Salesforce new student orientation sessions, synchronous advising/faculty assist in registration, resource fair, office open late, cashiering, student account assistance, customized schedule of events, FA.

Key Desired Improvements in ctcLink

- ***Student Feedback on ctcLink Educational Planning Tool***: The college surveyed a group of students to learn more about their experience using the ctcLink Educational Planning tool. The college invited 24 BAS students invited to participate in a virtual workshop facilitated over Zoom. All participants had already earned an Associate Degree or higher. Thirteen students attended, with an age range of 19-47. Students were provided with a campus-made guide that contained screenshots of the specific classes that students should add. The workshop presenter shared their screen and walked through the use of planner in ctcLink step-by-step, quarter-by-quarter. Participants attempted to schedule three classes a quarter over six quarters. There were only two science elective choices in the map, otherwise all students were planning the same courses. Eight students got through three quarters within the hour. One got through 4.33 quarters. One student finished planning all 6 quarters (this was an OC employee), and 3 students were not able plan through the second quarter.
  - _General Insights from this experience include:_
    - Students have to find a class and set it to a specific term to apply it to the plan.
    - In 1 hour they were unable to complete the task of taking the courses and loading them to the terms for the program.

- Would like Planner alert student when they have put a course in for a term it is not typically offered.
- *Generalized Comments Distilled from Students*: Very cumbersome, difficult to manage, would be better if there were templates to follow a recommended schedule for that program/plan into the planner and they can simply rearrange the terms.
- *Specific Comments from students include*: Why can't we add these directly to the right term?; What happens if I don't take all the courses in my term next quarter?; This process takes too long; Can you load these for us?; I get it, but this would be better if we could drag and drop; Can we add more than one course at a time?; Why can't we drag and drop?;Is this necessary or can I register without it?; I didn't finish this.; Why can't I see what I just put into fall term? How can I move this class out and select another class?; I think I have a class planned for more than one term, how can I fix that?; This is frustrating.; Is there any way to print this? (other student response) I took a screen shot of each quarter and pasted it into word.

- **Dynamic Updates to Academic Advisement Reports:** Planner updates in AARs are accurate for current program plans; however, on the student facing side the planner data is not refreshed automatically, students must refresh it manually. It should happen automatically.

- **At-A-Glance Ed Planner View**: Would like a student to see all of their courses in Planner for all remaining enrolled terms on one page. Students need to see a full page of their courses for all remaining enrolled terms and have print functionality for this 1-page, At-A-Glance planner. Currently the students can only have a single Term open at once.
  - **SBCTC Comment:** One thing to note when viewing the information online (not printing) is the current HCX view of the student planner displays the courses within the term. However, we recognize that the ctcLink view requires the student to click into the specific term to view course details.

- **Restrict Visibility to Only "Active" Courses in Ed Planner:** College has found that they need to keep expired courses on the current course lists because returning students were having the old version of a course fall into the "unused" category. The choice to keep historical courses in new effective dated rows is the work-around, because the only other option seems to be manually updating the requirement term for impacted students. This is often not found until graduation if the student does not seek regular advising. College would like students to only see courses that are active in the catalog to show as available. For example, student could have taken ACIS course 2 years ago, and those course numbers are not active. Would like only courses active in the catalog to show as available in the AAR to avoid confusion.

- **Annual Schedule in Ed Plan:** Ability to Tie the Annual Schedule to the Ed Planner.
  - **SBCTC Clarification Needed:** Can you expand on what you mean by this? Is this referencing enrollment dates?
  - **College Response:** We would like disallow the addition of a course to a term in which it is not typically offered, or at a minimum have a warning appear.

- **Multi-Player, Multi-Plan & Plan Lock Capabilities in Ed Planner:** Advisors need to have access to edit and add courses for students and lock those plans in. Love to have option for students create "alternate" Ed Plans, as having alternate plans is important as many

students have multiple programs. What-Ifs would be great as they are very helpful, but need the ability for a student to have multiple Ed Plans active.

- **Advisor Alerts for Straying Students**: Advisors need ability to identify students who have fallen off their path, or are taking courses that are not on their intended program plan requirements. College has considered queries for work around options. However, students who have changed their major, are working on a second degree, and or certificate, or have tech-prep credit will often have unused courses. This results in needing to manually review the unused courses to determine the student's specific situation. A registration of a course could potentially bump an already completed requirement to unused. While the college could adjust AARs configuration of how it pulls classes into the AAR, it would be ideal for classes to be flagged at registration when they are not on the program requirements lists so they can take a proactive approach to keeping students on plan. This would eliminate much of the manual follow-up.

- **Add HighPoint (HCX) Degree Planner & Schedule Builder Functionality:** Academic Advisement Reports can show planned courses but are difficult to read in the PDF version. What you see on the screen looks good for advisors, but for the student view it looks nothing like it. The college STRONGLY recommends the adoption of additional modules available in High Point, such as *Degree Planner* and *Schedule Builder*.
  - **BENEFIT**: Seamless student experience: a student does not realize they're not in ctcLink.
  - **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**: The following presentation materials contain screen shots of the above mentioned High Point HCX module additions being requested by Olympic College. The presentation materials include information on Degree Planner & Schedule Builder. (**Note**: the presentations material also include the Course Auditor and Advisee Relationship Management modules not specifically called out by name during the interview, but were included in the presentation):

    Presentation Deck from College Collaboration Group on April 26, 2023:

    📊 HighPoint Presentation to CCG 4_26_23.pptx

- **Need More Effective Tools for Assessing Program Learning Outcomes:** College faculty heavily invested in redesigning along the lines of programs within the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA). The challenge occurs when DTA is structured in a single Academic Plan. Following the principles of Guided Pathways, with a more prescriptive and clear sequence in a program, but not able to effectively assessment a program against those developed program learning outcomes. When you publish program learning outcomes. You have to assess them for accreditation, and you want to assess them to ensure that students are learning , which is another Guided Pathways principle. The college feels there should be better tools to do this work more effectively.

- **Electives Allowable for AA-DTA Pursuit:** Assigning a sub-plan and creating an AAR for particular pathways prohibits them from taking an elective that falls outside of the map even though that elective could and would fulfill that requirement of their AA-DTA. Either a ctcLink system change is needed or Professional Development is needed to ensure there is a known way to code someone as English, for example, but not force them to only take the classes

that are on the English map. College is using subplans for apprenticeship programs. College has considered using subplans for AA-DTA pathways that outline preferred sequencing and elective suggestions. They can code electives and suggest courses in the notes into the AAR indicating preference for the subplan. However, the managing of subplans is a large concern for registration and records team, as students very often explore between subplans early in their careers. Registration and Records has evaluated the use of subplans and has determined to not pursue that direction due to the level of effort required to implement and maintain students in the correct academic subplan.

- **Advising Outreach:** The *My Advisees* function in the Advisor Center is all or nothing. You cannot filter populations you would like to contact. There is no way to easily customize and target their Outreach for sub-populations. The current workaround is running queries and loading into 3C's process which is cumbersome. Would like to see a customization to improve these capabilities and make them more user friendly.

- **Student Alert:** The routing and process is not transparent in our current custom Student Alert process. The college has submitted two Enhancement Requests #128 and #172.

- **BI Publisher Report - Picture of Overall Metrics:** Would like a customization to deliver the following information:
  - Student Progress so it can be easily tracked.
  - Degree Boost the report is great, but need better reporting tools that gives them the information they need for students close to graduating.
  - Not a query, but a delivered process that provides more effective results.

- **Better Communication Tools to Students:** Either Simplify the 3Cs communication generation process, or give us a better tool. There are too many steps and very cumbersome.

- **OAAP processor to run queries and update contact information:** Need an improvement to OAAP to allow the student to choose to override old contact information if they existed in ctcLink with new bio/demo data input into the Online Admissions Applications Portal.

- **OAAP Fraudulent Applications:** Amount of time spent on fraudulent applications is huge. Although not directly related to Guided Pathways, it does create a block for students who are real, but might have a block placed because of so many fraudulent accounts.

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.*

Professional Development Opportunities

- **Sub-Plans and Academic Advising Reports:** See commentary on *Electives Allowable for AA-DTA Pursuit.*

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?