

Personalizing the Onboarding Experience through Guided Pathways: Lessons from Ohio Community Colleges

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Fall 2020 OACC Student Success Leadership Institute
September 17, 2020

Presentation Overview

- ***Guided pathways in the current moment:***
Redesigning for access and success post-COVID
- ***Making the case:*** Why onboarding and personalized support are important
- ***Guided pathways in practice:*** Personalized onboarding examples from colleges
- ***Taking institutional context into account:***
Strategies for personalizing support in small and large colleges

Redesigning for Access and Success post-COVID

Guided pathways college: Redesigned for access and success

Clarify paths to student end goals – by ensuring that every program prepares students for good jobs and further education needed for career advancement

Help students get on a path – by helping all students actively explore options and interests, become part of an academic and career community, and develop a full program completion plan

Keep students on path – by scheduling classes and monitoring student progress based on students' plans to ensure timely and affordable program completion

Ensure students are learning – by strengthening active and experiential learning across programs to ensure students have know-how (including soft skills) required for good jobs and further education

COVID challenges for students and colleges

- Students will be even less able to afford college so they will expect programs that enable them to achieve goals as quickly and affordably as possible
- Students will want programs that enable them to secure stable jobs in short term and good jobs in longer term—offered in formats/on schedules that work for adults with intense job and family pressures
- Demand for HS dual enrollment offerings that save time and money required to earn a bachelor's degree will increase
- Students will face higher levels of trauma than usual
- Competition from online degree completion providers, regional public universities, less-selective privates will intensify
- State funding will likely be cut substantially; colleges will have to break down silos, work collaboratively to respond to challenges

GP strategies for student success and college survival **post-Covid**

- 1) **Program** – Ensure every student is in high-opportunity program that leads to good job or transfer with junior standing in student’s major
- 2) **Purpose** - Help every student explore interests/ strengths and connect with faculty, experienced students, alumni others in fields of interest from the start
- 3) **Empower** - Ensure every student takes a “light the fire” course on topics of interest in term 1
- 4) **Plan** - Help every student (including dual enrollment) develop an educational and financial plan by end of term 1

How Colleges Are Rethinking New Student Onboarding as Part of Guided Pathways

<p>CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY</p> <h2>Redesigning Community College Student Onboarding Through Guided Pathways</h2> <h3>Part 1: Rethinking New Student Onboarding</h3> <p><i>By Davis Jenkins, Hansa Lahr, and Lauren Pellegrino</i></p> <p>Apply to college. Take a placement test. See an advisor. Register for first-term courses. Attend a college orientation. Start attending classes.</p> <p>This is the typical experience for the nearly two million first-time community college students every year. The process is designed to get students started on their college journey as quickly as possible. But the institutional process is not well designed to help students explore academic interests, find a program of study that is a good fit for their goals, and choose to use it. But most students do not until they near graduation, if at all. And while students may be required or encouraged to attend orientation or meet with an advisor, they are often not given the time or support to do so during their first term, advising is typically focused on selecting and registering for courses for the upcoming semester rather than on helping students explore interests, develop goals, and build an appropriate educational plan. While it characterizes the situation at many community colleges, that is not the case at all. Two Florida community colleges are modifying their onboarding process to give entering students active support in exploring, goal-setting, and educational planning.</p> <p>This is Part 2 of a three-part packet designed to provide guidance on redesigning their new student onboarding practices. Part 1 of the packet describes the current onboarding process at two Florida community colleges and summarizes students' experiences with it. This second part summarizes students' experiences with, and practices for degree-seeking students. Indian River State College (ISCC) will organize the discussion around three key questions: (1) explore interests and programs of study; (2) gain confidence in their selected pathway; and (3) explore</p>	<p>CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY</p> <h2>Redesigning Community College Student Onboarding Through Guided Pathways</h2> <h3>Part 2: Student Perspectives on Onboarding Practices at Two Florida Community Colleges</h3> <p><i>By Elizabeth Kopko and Sarah Griffin</i></p> <p>Until recently, most community colleges have done little to help entering students explore academic interests, find a program of study that is a good fit for their goals, and choose to use it. But most students do not until they near graduation, if at all. And while students may be required or encouraged to attend orientation or meet with an advisor, they are often not given the time or support to do so during their first term, advising is typically focused on selecting and registering for courses for the upcoming semester rather than on helping students explore interests, develop goals, and build an appropriate educational plan. While it characterizes the situation at many community colleges, that is not the case at all. Two Florida community colleges are modifying their onboarding process to give entering students active support in exploring, goal-setting, and educational planning.</p> <p>This is Part 2 of a three-part packet designed to provide guidance on redesigning their new student onboarding practices. Part 1 of the packet describes the current onboarding process at two Florida community colleges and summarizes students' experiences with it. This second part summarizes students' experiences with, and practices for degree-seeking students. Indian River State College (ISCC) will organize the discussion around three key questions: (1) explore interests and programs of study; (2) gain confidence in their selected pathway; and (3) explore</p>	<p>CCRC PACKET ON REDESIGNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT ONBOARDING THROUGH GUIDED PATHWAYS</p> <h2>Onboarding at Laramie County Community College</h2> <p>MAY 2020</p> <h3>Key Features of Redesign</h3> <p>Organizing and Introducing Programs by Field of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, faculty, staff, and the institutional effectiveness office at LCCC organized the college's programs into seven meta-majors called "pathways." The college website shows each meta-major's program maps, which include recommended course sequences by semester and indicate decision-making milestones that LCCC calls "choice points." Each map includes a first-term program course, a college math and English course in the first year, and a required first-year experience course. <p>Improving Orientation and New Student Advising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to participate in an online orientation and an initial advising appointment before the start of the first semester. Advisors are organized by meta-major, and students are assigned to an advisor based on their meta-major. During students' initial advising appointment, advisors confirm each student's program direction and facilitate a discussion of their academic and career goals. <p>Expanding Career and Transfer Advising to All Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students interested in applying to the college are encouraged to use an online tool called Career Coach to explore their strengths, career goals, and aligned program options. If they are undecided or lack confidence in their choice of program, they are directed to the career center for guidance. The college's first-year experience course is focused on career exploration and educational planning. Students develop full-program educational plans using a planning tool implemented in fall 2019. <p>See onboarding profiles of other colleges at https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.html</p>	<p>CCRC PACKET ON REDESIGNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT ONBOARDING THROUGH GUIDED PATHWAYS</p> <h2>Onboarding at Alamo Colleges District</h2> <p>MAY 2020</p> <h3>Key Features of Redesign</h3> <p>Organizing and Introducing Programs by Field of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In fall 2014, the five Alamo community colleges, under leadership from the district, organized their credit and noncredit programs into six meta-majors called Alamo Institutes. In consultation with area employers and universal Alamo faculty mapped all programs to employment and transfer outcomes. Advisory committees at the district, college, and program level work with university and employer representatives to ensure that program maps are up-to-date and responsive to employer needs. Alamo and seven regional universities formed a "transfer compact" to develop transfer maps in field of economic importance in the region. <p>Improving Orientation and New Student Advising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alamo hired 25 enrollment coaches across all five colleges who contact applicants to welcome them and guide them through enrollment, helping those who get stuck. They also confirm each applicant's choice of meta-major. Orientation is organized by meta-major; students participate in group advising sessions at orientate. Students are assigned an advisor within their meta-major and attend a mandatory advising appointment after completing 15, 30, and 45 credit hours. Each Alamo Institute (meta-major) developed learning outcomes for advising connected to marketable skills that are shared with students in an advising syllabus. <p>See onboarding profiles of other colleges at https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.html</p>	<p>CCRC PACKET ON REDESIGNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT ONBOARDING THROUGH GUIDED PATHWAYS</p> <h2>Onboarding at Prince George's Community College</h2> <p>MAY 2020</p> <div data-bbox="2030 1246 2250 1400"> <p>FAST FACTS</p> <p>Location: Largo, MD 2017-18 enrollment: 16,868 Percent part-time (fall 2018): 73% Race/ethnicity: Black - 71% Asian - 4% Hispanic - 12% White - 4% Percent receiving Pell Grants: 37%</p> </div> <h3>Key Features of Redesign Practices at PGCC</h3> <p>Organizing and Introducing Programs by Field of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, PGCC began organizing its programs into meta-majors called "academic and career pathways." The college website lists all the possible types of credentials and learning paths within each meta-major, including noncredit certifications and related degrees available at four-year destination colleges. <p>Improving Orientation and New Student Advising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incoming students are provided with a one-page, six-step enrollment checklist that explains everything a new student needs to do and in what order, including filling out a combined financial aid and college application to begin planning college financing. Students are required to complete orientation, take any needed placement tests, and meet with an advisor before they register for courses. Students complete orientation before they take a placement test so they can learn about the test, resources to help them prepare, and testing alternatives. Orientation includes an introduction to the meta-majors, student support resources such as tutoring, the use of individual educational plans, and campus clubs and activities. Advisors are embedded within meta-majors and are trained as career counselors through the National Career Development Association. They work intensely with students on program and career exploration and provide support for activities such as resume writing and job searching. PGCC mandates advising checkpoints at 15, 30, and 45 credits. <p>Expanding Career and Transfer Advising to All Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each semester, advisors facilitate early advising weeks to help eliminate the bottleneck of students who need advising to register for the following term. In those sessions, new students work with advisors to identify goals, discuss career options and the characteristics of good employees (such as punctuality, professionalism, and integrity); and develop a full educational plan. PGCC has a dedicated three-person team of transfer advisors for students who plan to transfer. <p>Increasing Engagement With Programs From the Start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the first day of classes in fall and spring, new students and their families are invited to participate in New Student Convocation. Each "academic and career pathway" sets up a table where students can meet faculty, staff, and other students and learn about programs and career options within the meta-major. Students receive career and academic counseling from a full-time advisor until they earn 30 credits. After that, they transition to a faculty advisor in their program. Faculty mentors receive training on topics such as addressing personal bias, career counseling, and interpersonal communication. <p>Designing Dual Enrollment as an On-Ramp to College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COAST is a high school-to-college pathway program that places dedicated PGCC academic coordinators in targeted Prince George's County high schools. The coordinators facilitate college readiness, career exploration, and dual enrollment, and they host workshops on topics such as financial aid. Dual enrollment students can take courses on the college campus or at the high school, where they are taught by a certified instructor. Dual enrollment students have access to full-tuition scholarships to PGCC. <p>See onboarding profiles of other colleges at https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.html</p>
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Why focus on onboarding?

- Uncertainty about enrollments, in-person vs. online, funding, etc.
- Between 10 and 40% of students who apply don't enroll
- ~40% of all CC students are gone from higher education by the start of year 2; nearly 60% among underrepresented students
- Selecting a major is a complex process, yet orientation is often limited to an introduction to the college campus and first-term registration (Jenkins, Lahr, & Pellegrino, 2020).
- Even adults with prior college experience need the opportunity to explore program and career options and confirm their choice (Klempin & Lahr, forthcoming).

Rethinking onboarding from a guided pathways perspective

FROM

Orientation to college

Optional career and transfer advising and planning

Engaging with programs after prerequisites

À la carte high school dual enrollment coursetaking

TO

Orientation to fields of study

Required career and transfer advising and program planning

Engaging with programs from the start

Dual enrollment as an on-ramp to a program pathway

What do students want from onboarding?

- The opportunity to explore programs and careers thematically through meta-majors.
- To interact with other new and current students who share similar academic and career interests.
- To network with faculty and professionals in their field of study.
- Students who have clear career goals need different kinds of support than those who don't.

Why Personalized Support Matters

Defining personalized support

- ***Targeted***: differentiated types or intensity of support based on students' needs, interests, academic focus, etc.
- ***Individualized***: one-on-one interactions, support designed for or tailored to a specific individual

Why focus on personalized support?

- ***Targeted***
 - Efficient and effective way of delivering support given limited time and resources
 - More relevant to students than generalized support
- ***Individualized***
 - Students need personal connections
 - Establishing relationships builds a foundation for addressing more challenging issues with which students may need support

How Colleges are Using Guided Pathways to Provide Personalized Onboarding

Overview of how Ohio community colleges are personalizing support during onboarding

- **Program and career exploration**
 - *Targeted*: Orientation and FYE courses based on meta-major
 - *Individualized* : Small group orientations
- **Program selection**
 - *Targeted*: Exploratory majors
 - *Individualized* : One-on-one advising

Targeted program and career exploration: Organizing orientation by meta-major

- Allows students to “put faces” to departments and start making connections early
- Allows students to meet peers with similar interests
- Creates the opportunity for more personalized discussions about students’ strengths, and program and career interests
- More enriching and satisfying experience for students and faculty

Individualized program and career exploration: Small group orientations

- More attentive to student needs
- More time for establishing relationships with students
- More time to connect students to resources
- Greater opportunities to discuss long-term career goals

Targeted program and career exploration: FYE courses connected to meta-majors

- Multiple strategies for contextualizing FYE courses:
 - Dedicated course sections for different meta-majors
 - General course sections with meta-major specific assignments
- Prepares students for their program while helping them understand employment opportunities.

Targeted program selection: Exploratory majors

- Rather than allowing students to be undecided, asking students to select an exploratory major tied to a meta-major provides a structured opportunity for students to explore their interests and understand their options.
- Being able to identify which students are uncertain about their program selection enables colleges to provide more targeted advising.

Individualized program selection: One-on-one advising

- Colleges are using multiple strategies to confirm students' program choice through individual advising
 - Requiring an appointment with a meta-major advisor prior to orientation
 - Using career assessments as the basis of discussion for initial advising appointments
 - Having students complete an intake survey
 - Requiring an additional advising appointment mid-way through the first semester for undecided students

How Institutional Context Affects Strategies for Personalizing Support

Personalizing support in small and large colleges

- Small colleges may have an easier time offering *individualized* support due to size.
- Regardless of size, meta-majors offer a key strategy for *targeted* support.
- Meta-majors may also make it easier to identify undecided students, providing an opportunity to offer additional *individualized* guidance, even in large institutions.
- Regardless of size, assigning advisors by meta-major offers a means of providing both *targeted* support (advisors are experts in their field), and *individualized* support (one-on-one meetings).

CCRC Resources

- Redesigning Community College Student Onboarding Through Guided Pathways: <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.html>
- Fay, M.P., Smith-Jaggars, S. & Farakesh, N. (forthcoming). “Lost in the Shuffle”: How relationships and personalized advisement affect transfer aspirations and outcomes for community college students.
- Kalamkarian, H.S., Pellegrino, L., Lopez, A., & Barnett, E. (forthcoming). Advising redesigns at three institutions: Implementation findings.
- Karp, M.M., & Stacey, G.W. (2013). What we know about nonacademic student supports.
- Klempin, S., & Pellegrino, L. (2020). A complex ecosystem: A qualitative investigation into dynamics affecting the implementation of college advising redesigns.
- Klempin, S., & Lahr, H. (forthcoming). How guided pathways reforms can improve support for adult students: Lessons from three Tennessee community colleges.

Thank you!

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