

Insights from the Guided Pathways 2.0 Institute:
 “Engaging the Entire Institution in Guided Pathways Implementation”
 September 27–29, 2023

INSTITUTE OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Establish an institutionwide commitment to implementing Guided Pathways reforms at scale to ensure improved and more equitable student outcomes.
- ◆ Ensure that supporting student success is the top priority in everyone’s job at the college.
- ◆ Explore college Guided Pathways implementation models that include back-of-house college support structures.
- ◆ Understand how a culture of caring for students can create more equitable and inclusive student experiences that facilitate better student outcomes.

Keywords: belonging, coalition, community partnerships, equity, scale, whole-college commitment



Engaging the Entire Institution

Guided Pathways is a framework for transformative institutional changes that strengthen student outcomes and advance equity by eliminating barriers to student progress. It is grounded in whole-college collaboration and a commitment that everything within our institutions can and should evolve — including roles, systems, resources and policies — to open doors for students’ socioeconomic mobility, living wages and prosperity after completion.

Ultimately, Guided Pathways is the vehicle for achieving the bold goals outlined in the Vision for Success (2017), the Governor’s Roadmap (2021) and [Vision 2030](#) (2023). The framework enables colleges to shift how they approach their missions. Redesigning the student experience requires courageous leadership and [commitment to racial equity](#) from all campus stakeholders, collaboration across campus, and a shared sense of ownership of both challenges and solutions.

In this brief, we share strategies and resources from the Guided Pathways Institute on leveraging the full campus environment to deliver on the California Community College’s commitment to students.

“As you work towards Guided Pathways, whether you’re a classified professional, the President, or any other role, think about yourself as a change agent who can lever Guided Pathways opportunities to create a more equitable and just institution, not just for our students, but for our colleagues and our community.

— Dr. Eric Felix

Associate professor at San Diego State University



What Colleges Can Do

1. Make student success a top priority in every role at the college.

When colleges involve and empower all personnel in a coalition for collective action, it is possible to mobilize around student success as a shared priority. By ensuring all college professionals have a clear understanding of their role and that leadership is distributed equitably, colleges can create new opportunities for staff to work together so that no one will shoulder the responsibility of change alone.

ACTIONS COLLEGES CAN TAKE

- ◆ **Start with a coalition of the willing.** Collaborate with those already advancing this work and invite them to build a process focused on a specific change at the college. As momentum builds, this core group can become ambassadors and communicate to others why they should get involved. Learn more in the Guided Pathways Playbook brief [“Create a Coalition of Support for Large-Scale Change.”](#)
- ◆ **Think of institutional engagement like a grassroots movement.** Many colleges are integrating Guided Pathways with the Institute for Evidence-Based Change’s [Caring Campus](#), which is an approach to make students feel welcome and connected to their college. Caring Campus focuses on engaging faculty and classified professionals, who are on the front line with students but not always seen as contributing to student success efforts. [Research on Caring Campus](#) found that the approach led staff to see themselves as change-makers while building their leadership skills and interpersonal relationships.
- ◆ **Create spaces for all college professionals to build partnerships with one another.** Classified professionals, many of whom reflect the racial and cultural diversity of our students, bring valuable insight and institutional knowledge to the table. One way to break down silos is to recognize this value and bring a cross-section of college professionals to work together in formal spaces on campus, such as committees. Reedley College uses a “tri-chair” model where faculty, classified professionals and administrator representatives co-chair committees. This model works well when co-chairs commit to lose their titles and take on roles they may not otherwise (such as being the designated note taker). Be inclusive and equitable, ensuring all are respected, honored, validated and compensated for their work. Mutual respect across campus relationships shapes student belonging, persistence and completion.

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When you ask the college perceptions of classified professionals, folks agree they could not run without these important professionals, but they are not included in institutional change efforts. All the things classified professionals do each and every day make such an impact on the student experience & student success.

— Ken Sherwood

Chief Operating Officer and Vice President, Institute for Evidence-Based Change



STRATEGY IN PRACTICE:

MiraCosta College embeds Guided Pathways at every level

MiraCosta College has been committed to the Guided Pathways framework and engaging in this work for years. This year, college leaders are reintroducing Guided Pathways to articulate everyone's role across the college. To that end, they have enacted institutional, technology and communication changes to embed Guided Pathways into everything they do. They have institutionalized change by **codifying Guided Pathways responsibilities in job descriptions** of professionals across the college such as instructional and counseling faculty and financial aid staff. By making Guided Pathways part of everyone's role, it doesn't become another initiative but instead becomes a core part of the way they work.

2. Go big on practices that advance student belonging systemically.

To truly transform student experiences and outcomes, it is important to move beyond small-scale changes that individuals or small teams carry out that only reach some students. By bringing in cross-campus college professionals early on, we can take a holistic approach to addressing systemic issues and caring for our students. Scaling systemwide solutions through a culture of caring manifests in how faculty, staff and administrators engage with students and influences student outcomes.

ACTIONS COLLEGES CAN TAKE

- ◆ **Prioritize one to two things across campus that will make a difference at scale.** Think about your why, whom you are transforming into and what every student should experience for success. Use this to drive each decision. For example, Alamo College calls what it is trying to achieve as its “moonshot”: partnering to end poverty through education in the greater San Antonio region. All decisions Alamo College makes aim to fight poverty in the region and make it economically stronger.
- ◆ **Use systemwide action to support the whole student.** As you look at student needs, consider how your college is supporting students' social determinants of success (e.g., support networks, financial stability, physical and mental well-being). At Alamo College, one action it is taking to reach its moonshot is increasing access and enrollment by removing financial barriers for high school students. The college partnered with local high schools, the City of San Antonio and funders to develop [AlamoPROMISE](#), which covers tuition and fees and offers holistic support services. To learn more about creating holistic support, see the Guided Pathways Playbook brief “[Developing a Holistic and Student-Centered Support Ecosystem](#)” (first log into the [Vision Resource Center](#) to access).

- ◆ **Regularly review what you are doing and why you are doing it, and measure whether it is effective.** Continuous improvement and data-informed decisions are central to systemwide culture change that works for both students and college professionals. Monitor student progress and check that against your why.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE:

Moorpark College collectively defines its culture of social justice and equity

Moorpark College, a Top 10 Aspen Prize finalist, demonstrates committed Guided Pathways leadership. President Julius O. Sokenu, Ed.D., gathered stakeholders across a range of roles and divisions, including students, to define the college's values and what every student needs to succeed. Together, they are moving toward a campus culture of social justice and equity. This guides their decision-making, and they use data to target action. For example, they saw that fewer Black students were enrolling in transfer-level English and math. They conducted focus groups and interviews, and they learned these students love being college students but sometimes feel like they do not belong. Moorpark invested to make a difference, providing faculty and staff with professional development to support these students in ways that respect their culture. As a result, they have seen more Black students persist and participate in work-based learning opportunities.

3. Leverage K-12 and community partnerships.

Colleges can improve the overall student experience when they engage not only the entire institution in transformational change but also important partners outside of the institution such as K-12 and community-based organizations. With strong partnerships in place, community colleges are an engine for economic development and tackling poverty.

ACTIONS COLLEGES CAN TAKE

- ◆ **Carry out listening sessions, vision sessions and town halls.** This will help colleges gain a better understanding of the community's needs. Community events can also foster strong relationships among partners.
- ◆ **Take college to the community.** Lorain County Community College (LCCC) reports that 8 out of 10 new students come to LCCC through a pipeline or partnership, such as with employers, churches and K-12 districts. In Kern County, in response to growing homelessness, Bakersfield College partnered with the community to create the Bakersfield College Homeless Initiatives. The initiative's pilot project, "Homeless to a Job in 6 Months," provides adult learners with a certificate in basic office skills, landscape design or food handling in just six months.
- ◆ **Understand labor market data and know workforce needs.** When labor market data informs programs, students have a better chance at earning a living wage. LCCC has conversations with its Chamber of Commerce about economic development and getting the industry what it needs, with a focus on equity to ensure students equitably benefit from this partnership.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE:

Imperial Valley College and partners create college-going culture

Imperial Valley College (IVC), a 2023 Aspen Prize co-winner, is getting the whole college involved in creating a college-going culture in the community by expanding its reach at K-12 schools. It is being intentional about its pipeline for student enrollment by working to have every local high school student take at least three IVC courses through dual enrollment (DE). IVC's DE program exemplifies how collaboration across the whole campus drives transformation: classified professionals provide holistic student support services; admission and records enroll students; vice presidents of instruction build classes and set schedules; deans and the chair approve the number of DE sections and who will teach the course; IT manages data infrastructure; Institutional Research assesses impact. In addition, IVC evaluates its efforts by surveying students in the program to understand their experience and continuously improve. In its DE program, 94% of students are Latinx, 57% are female, and 31% are first-generation in 12 local high schools. IVC's DE efforts are averaging high success (81%) and retention (91%) rates as access and enrollment expand through the Imperial Valley region. These efforts are creating a pathway and a college-going culture, with 72% of IVC's DE high school graduates enrolled in college within one year.

Conclusion

Implementing Guided Pathways across the entire institution is essential for transforming the student experience. This will require all campus personnel to work together to prioritize supporting student success, cultivating mutual respect among colleagues on campus, scaling efforts across campus and partnering with the community. By engaging the entire institution in Guided Pathways implementation, colleges will create a greater culture of caring for students and stronger, more equitable student outcomes.



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The Success Center at the Foundation for California Community Colleges independently prepared this overview based on the presentation; the overview may not fully represent the presenters' viewpoints.



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