



AACC Pathways Institute – Exploring Commonly Asked Pathways Questions

Based on *Guided Pathways Demystified: Exploring Ten Commonly Asked Questions about Implementing Pathways*

<http://inquiry2improvement.com/attachments/article/12/PWs-Demystified-Johnstone-110315.pdf>

Instructions: The NCII paper, **Guided Pathways Demystified**, explores ten questions commonly asked by faculty and staff about implementing guided pathways. The responses offered in the report use research and promising practices from the field to address concerns about compromising higher education values, practical considerations about control and enrollment, and apprehensions about impacts on students' learning and development—all issues that will need to be addressed to successfully pursue a guided pathways effort. This exploration template is adapted from the companion discussion guide developed by NCII and is designed to promote a dialogue at your institution about these prevailing concerns—and support development of a plan for addressing the concerns while engaging the institution's stakeholders in the solution. **Please complete this template at your institution with a cross-functional team that includes academic and student services administrators, faculty in transfer programs, faculty in CTE programs and student services professionals.**

| | RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS | POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE/CONCERN AT OUR INSTITUTION |
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| Concerns about Compromising Higher Education Values | | |
| Do you think the behavioral economics and social psychology research on the ideal number of choices applies to your students' choices of courses and programs? Why or why not? | | |
| How can we build a structure that allows for some student exploration and choice without allowing students to wander aimlessly around the curriculum? What does this look like in effective practice for the | | |

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| student? | | |
| Describe the existing barriers to students choosing <i>programs</i> instead of a semester of <i>courses</i> upon entry to the college. | | |
| <p>Assume that we selected six "career focus areas" for your college to help structure student choices of programs, and that the draft list started with Business, Social Sciences & Human Services, STEM, Health and Biosciences, Art, Humanities & Design, and Manufacturing & Construction Technology.</p> <p>How do you think this would work at your college?</p> <p>What would you add or reframe?</p> | | |
| <p>How might the reduction of the number of general education course options impact the student achievement of your general education outcomes?</p> <p>Why?</p> | | |

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| <p>What metrics and evaluation processes do you use to assess educational "quality" at your institution?</p> <p>How does the institution ascertain whether course grades reflect common quality standards across course sections?</p> <p>What are the major strengths and limits of those processes?</p> | | |
| <p>Does the design for a general education student experience get stronger under a guided pathways approach with a recommended / default set of general education courses determined by program faculty?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p> | | |
| <p>Why do you think employers most often report issues with graduates' critical thinking, communication, computation, and problem solving skills?</p> <p>As you design and implement guided pathways at your institution, how are you addressing/ embedding these competencies that employers so often feel are lacking?</p> | | |
| <p>Practical Considerations About Control & Enrollment</p> | | |
| <p>What has the enrollment trend been at your college in the past 3-4 years?</p> | | |

Comment [KMc1]: As stated, this is an empirical question for which they will not have data to support an answer.

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| <p>What is the general consensus on the factors driving your enrollment trend?</p> <p>Do you have data to support the hypotheses about why enrollment is trending in the way you observe?</p> | | |
| <p>What is the average number of total credits attempted per new student in their first three years at the college?</p> <p>How can this metric be used to incent guided pathways implementation?</p> | | |
| <p>What is the average number of credits a student has earned when awarded an Associate degree at your institution?</p> <p>How would you expect implementation of guided pathways to impact that number?</p> <p>What are the implications for return on investment and efficiency metrics? For students' Pell Grant eligibility?</p> | | |
| <p>How have state transfer agreements, guaranteed transfer agreements, or other 4-year articulation agreements already affected course offerings at your college?</p> <p>Are transfer changes driven by institutional recalcitrance,</p> | | |

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| <p>institutional collaboration, or state policy?</p> | | |
| <p>What are the one or two most powerful strategies your institution can use to strengthen transfer pathways for your students?</p> | | |
| <p>Apprehensions about the Impact on Students' Learning & Development</p> | | |
| <p>What steps have you taken to integrate the exploration of interests and careers with students' program selection at your college?</p> <p>Have these steps been provided early enough so that students have the information they need to make choices about programs?</p> | | |
| <p>What steps need to be taken in order to implement common first-semester and second-semester course schedules leading to a wide range of programs within a discipline or meta-major?</p> | | |
| <p>The NCII paper asserts there is a connection between attainment of strong general education and preparation for career changes.</p> <p>Describe how the implementation of guided pathways at your institution could strengthen this link.</p> | | |

Comment [KMc2]: This question as currently stated gives them only two response options, and I don't think those options cover the universe of possibilities....

Comment [KMc3]: This is a REALLY big question for this advance work exercise?