Bringing
GUIDED
PATHWAYS
to Life

25 Strategies
for Community College
Leaders and Innovators

EAB

Achieving the Dream, Inc.

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Albany Technical College

American Association of Community Colleges

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Georgia State University

Golden West College

Grossmont College

Guilford Technical College

Guttman Community College

Harrisburg Area Community College

Hocking College

Indian River State College

Iowa Central Community College

Jackson State Community College

Lake-Sumter State College

Lakeshore Technical College

Monroe Community College

Montgomery College

Mount Wachusett Community College

Mt Hood Community College

Nashua Community College

New Mexico Junior College

Northeast Lakeview College

Northern Virginia Community College

Northwest Vista College

Ozarks Technical Community College

Palo Alto College

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San Antonio College

Sinclair Community College

Snead State Community College

Southern Crescent Technical College

St. Philip's College

Thomas Nelson Community College

Trident Technical College

Tulsa Community College

Victor Valley College

Washtenaw Community College

Western Wyoming Community College

West Hills Community College District

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

WHO WE ARE

EAB is a best practices firm, serving over 1,100 educational institutions worldwide for more than two decades.

We forge and find the **best new ideas and proven practices** from our vast network of leaders. Then we **customize and hardwire** them into your organization across your most critical functions.

RESEARCH

Community College
Executive Forum

TECHNOLOGY

Navigate

CONSULTING

Dedicated Change
Management Engagements

GPS DIRECT
COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

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HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE OUR STAFF?

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What Are Guided Pathways, Anyway?

Student Success is a Top Priority for College Leaders

But the Definition Is Evolving and Expanding Over Time

At the beginning of each research cycle, EAB researchers poll members and ask a seemingly simple question: "What's keeping you up at night?" The aim is to understand the top challenges college leaders face in their roles.

Even the most casual observers of the community college sector will not be surprised to learn that over the past several years, college leaders have identified student success as the most important item on their long list of priorities. The diagram on the following page demonstrates the evolving questions about "student success" at colleges across the country.

"What's keeping you up at night?"

EVOLVING QUESTIONS ABOUT "STUDENT SUCCESS"

1940 to Today

How can we minimize effort across the intake process?

Can we establish value in a competitive market?

Is our institution well designed for students with "nontraditional" backgrounds?

Can we demystify postgraduate careers early to avoid mismatches?

Are graduates developing standard competencies within each program?

How do we better align programs to employer needs?

1990 to Today

How can we provide students high-touch support at scale?

Can we bridge the gap between academics and student services?

How do we help students earn their degrees faster?

What does "success" mean for our increasingly diversifying population?

Are we creating opportunities for skill building in and out of class?

2010 to Today

Access · Retention · Postgrad Outcomes

Access: These perennial questions have been relevant for community colleges since their inception. In 1947, the Truman Commission recommended the creation of a national network of community colleges that would "carry a large part of the responsibility for expanding opportunities in higher education." Since then, questions about ensuring open access to community college have continued to be top-of-mind for leaders.

Retention: The first study on retention was published in the mid-1970s, and the concept grew in popularity in the decades that followed. Recently, retention has become of even greater importance for college leaders as public scrutiny of higher education intensifies and more state funding is tied to student progress and graduation.

Postgraduate Outcomes: Over the past few years, the public has asked, "Why go to college?" For public institutions, this skepticism presents a real threat to funding streams in the short term, and the fate of the college in the long term. College leaders are now expected demonstrate return on investment (ROI) from higher education, typically in the form of job placement tests, salary bumps, and alumni satisfaction.

Though community college leaders debate the fairness of holding the institution responsible for answering such a lengthy list of questions, EAB members agree that their jobs now require crafting an approach to this evolving and expanding 21st century definition of "student success."

CUNY Setting Strong Example for Two-Year Sector

EAB Research and Technology Bring High-Touch Models to Scale

In fall 2007, the City University of New York (CUNY) system launched the Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP) with the aim of helping socially and economically disadvantaged students in the city earn an associate degree as quickly as possible. Participants were required to enroll in at least 12 credits per semester, register for a prescribed block schedule of courses, and meet with dedicated ASAP advisors in twice-monthly advising sessions, in addition to regular tutoring, seminars, employment workshops, and other events.

In 2012, CUNY opened the Stella and Charles Guttman Community College (Guttman CC) with the promise of piloting a new vision of

the community college experience. Guttman CC shared many similarities to ASAP, but took the innovations further by scaling the boutique program to an entire institution.

Put simply, the results of CUNY's Great Experiment with ASAP and Guttman CC were phenomenal. Despite an overwhelming proportion of students entering with traditional risk factors (e.g., low-income, developmental placement, etc.), over half (53%) of ASAP participants earned an associate degree in three years, compared to 23% of comparison students. When factoring in university transfer, college "completion" rates rise to 63%, compared to 44% for comparison groups.

Back to Reality (for Everyone Else)

Though the outcomes of CUNY's student success models were impressive, the price tag attached to each was gut-wrenching. Community college leaders came to regard ASAP as an unachievable goal upon seeing its price tag: the cost to deliver such a high-touch program was about $4,000 per participant, amounting to $1.2 million each year. Cash-strapped institutions managing deep budget cuts searched for ways to deliver a similarly personalized, high-touch student experience at a fraction of the price—and called on EAB for national best practices.

In response, EAB researchers set out to answer an important question: How can community

FAST FACTS ABOUT ASAP

85%

Of students enter with developmental needs

2.25x

Increased likelihood of ASAP students graduating, compared to peer cohort

$4K

Annual cost to deliver services to each ASAP student

⭐ **The City University of New York**

colleges prevent students from dropping out and instead keep them on path to graduation? To fully understand the scope of the challenge, we deployed researchers across the country to conduct the following activities:

- Student focus groups and interviews
- Secret shopping enrollment exercises
- College staff and administrator interviews

Very quickly, we learned that while common barriers to student completed manifest in the middle of a semester, they originate in decisions made during onboarding, the period of time between application and the first day of class.

EAB Research and Technology

This primary and secondary research became the basis of two major EAB publications: *Preventing Early Attrition and Eliminating Enrollment Pain Points*. Our findings also informed the development of EAB's Navigate, a student-facing platform created specifically for the community college sector. The platform addresses four key dropout culprits by providing guided onboarding, intelligent academic planning, advisor dashboards, and actionable insights that empower students, staff, and leaders with the information they need to support and ensure timely completion.

In 2014, Nashua Community College (New Hampshire) and Tulsa Community College (Oklahoma) joined the Student Success Collaborative as alpha partners to support the design, development, and launch of this comprehensive student success solution.

A Buzzword Is Born

Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins Introduce "Guided Pathways"

In 2015, researchers from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University published *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success*. The authors, Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Davis Jenkins, reaffirmed their prominence and "celebrity" in the two-year sector—seemingly every college leader, faculty member, researcher, and newspaper editor was talking about the lessons learned from the publication, including a need to abandon the traditional "cafeteria college" model, described on the facing page.

The Mystery of Ubiquity

Redesigning America's Community Colleges brought a new term to the fore: "Guided Pathways." It wasn't an entirely new concept (or even a wholly new term), but this new concept quickly gained popularity in community college circles. Our research team found a spike in the number of online searches including the term "Guided Pathways" in May 2015, just a few months after the book's release. However, as the term Guided Pathways made its way into conference program books, newspaper headlines, and task force titles, conversations online, and in our office, confirmed a need for a common definition of Guided Pathways.

One EAB member we spoke with said, "We now talk about Pathways with a capital 'P' rather than a lowercase 'p,' but I don't think there's any more clarity about its definition now than in the past." Many leaders admit that the term Guided Pathways has become a catchall for a variety of models, campaigns, and initiatives (educational plans, early warning systems, default scheduling, career ladders, meta-majors, etc.). EAB members asked us for a clear definition of Guided Pathways and, more importantly, guidance on how the model can be operationalized on campus. This briefing will bring clarity to the thinking about Guided Pathways.

The confusion—or rather, the skepticism—about how we think about, write of, or refer to Guided Pathways is warranted. While Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins eloquently articulated the shared challenge community college students face at their institutions, readers were left unsure about how to implement Guided Pathways at their colleges.

"Community colleges and other broad-access institutions are well designed to serve the mission of providing low-cost access to college. However, the same features that have enabled these institutions to provide broad access to college make them poorly designed to facilitate completion of high-quality college programs...**we refer to the prevailing model as the 'cafeteria' or 'self-service' college because students are left to navigate often complex and ill-defined pathways mostly on their own.**"

Redesigning America's
Community Colleges

The Promise of Fame, Fortune, and Impact

Campus Interest in Guided Pathways Intensified by External Drivers

Despite some confusion, the Guided Pathways train is showing no signs of slowing down. In fact, within the past few years, interest in the model has only intensified. Much of this can be ascribed to the long list of organizations that have published research about Guided Pathways and encouraged institutional adoption of the model.

Achieving the Dream

American Association of Community Colleges ◀

Aspen Institute

Community College Research Center

Community College Survey of Student Engagement

Complete College America

Jobs for the Future

National Center for Inquiry and Improvement

AACC DEFINITION OF GUIDED PATHWAYS

"The Pathways Model is an integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guide each student effectively and efficiently from her/his point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market."

State and private money is available to support institutions in implementing Guided Pathways. For example, the Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) initiative is a $6 million grant program that funds institutions adopting Guided Pathways technology. The grant specifically supports technologies that improve student experiences through educational planning, enhanced counseling and coaching, and risk-targeting and intervention.

A Working Definition

Despite millions of dollars in grant funding and consulting available to support leaders in launching Guided Pathways at their institutions, the fact remains that a single, clear definition of Guided Pathways has yet to emerge. Though many organizations, such as AACC, have outlined guiding principles of the model to help clarify its goals, campus leaders still struggle to describe exactly what the model looks like when implemented. One president described this as a phenomenon of "I'll know Guided Pathways when I see it," which most people find vague.

For the purposes of this report, our team read through hundreds of research reports, online articles, and websites pertaining to Guided Pathways to identify the common threads and craft a working definition that captures the primary goals of the model, as well as the features most often used to describe it. The graphic below functions as a cross between a bible, a field guide, and a manual to help explain the goals of Guided Pathways, its typical characteristics and features, and strategies to implement that are outlined in this report.

4 PILLARS OF GUIDED PATHWAYS

1. Clarify pathways to end goals
2. Help students choose pathways
3. Help students stay on path
4. Ensure students are learning

▶

8 COMMON FEATURES OF A GUIDED PATHWAY COLLEGE

Onboarding guidance

Relevant resources

Progress tracking

Course milestones

Meta-majors

Optimized schedules

Degree maps

Proactive advising

▶

25+ STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION[1]

- Enrollment comment cards
- Ensuring timely completion of all intake steps
- First-year exploratory tracks
- Questions to assess course map edits
- Real-time withdrawal alerts
- Co-curricular maps
- Matching developmental courses to programs
- Better planning with multi-term registration

02

How Should We Prepare Our Staff?

"

"Change is scary. But if you think change and failure are so scary that you don't want to improve our ability to serve students, then get a dog. It's not my job to comfort you, it's my job to educate our students."

—*Community College President*

Admitting There's a Problem

Create Campus-Wide Agreement About the Need for Guided Pathways

In fall 2014, community colleges lost more than half of all applicants in the period between application and the first day of the fall term. Analyzing nearly 200 two-year public colleges that report application and enrollment data to the National Center for Education Statistics, EAB found 56% attrition during this onboarding period. The data is shocking for several reasons.

First, very few institutions track and analyze their own applicant conversion rates, which makes it nearly impossible to have an informed discussion on campus about the challenges students may face when enrolling at the college for the first time. There must be better data collection at the campus level to inform redesign efforts.

Secondly, this is a significant number of students who demonstrate interest in attending community college through their application submission but who, for some reason, fail to complete enrollment by the first day of the term. Given the enrollment declines most community colleges are facing, the severity of this early attrition is difficult to ignore and impossible to explain away. While skeptics have wondered whether the act of applying to an institution should be interpreted as a commitment to attend (the "safety school" argument), data from 25 community colleges in 2015 revealed that between 2% and 10% of lost applicants enroll at another college. Typically, the community college is a student's first and only choice, and there are major barriers preventing them from enrollment.

Lastly, pre-enrollment attrition is not the only disappointing data point college leaders face. To date, community colleges have not measured a significant rise in three-year graduation rates, even when accounting for university transfer or an extended graduation timeline (six years).

Tough Conversations

The data isn't easy to accept given the enormous amount of effort that community college leaders, along with faculty and staff, put into raising student outcomes. However, grappling with the data is the only way to move forward with redesigning administrative processes.

Any institution excited about realizing the promise of the Guided Pathways should first understand their own data and identify the major pain points students face on their path to enrollment, retention, and completion. This helps narrow efforts to the areas most in need of attention.

FALL ENROLLMENT AND APPLICANT CONVERSION RATES

Two-Year Public Colleges, Fall 2010–2015
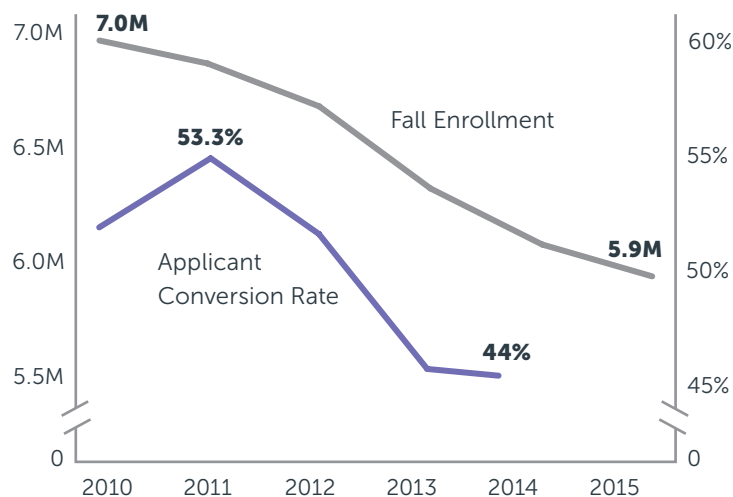
Strategy 1

ENROLLMENT COMMENT CARDS

Enrollment Comment Card

How Are We Doing?

EXCELLENT	AVERAGE	POOR
○	○	●
○	●	○
○	●	○

At the beginning of a new change management engagement with members of the Student Success Collaborative, EAB consultants help staff create a process map to uncover the greatest pain points students face during enrollment. In this exercise, student service staff outline all of the steps students must take to get from application to enrollment— and the result is almost always far from streamlined or linear.

At Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC), leaders were inspired by EAB's process mapping and secret shopping exercises to create new ways of capturing the new student experience at the college. As one example, TNCC introduced comment cards, which give students an opportunity to provide feedback on their service experience during enrollment, and identify what worked (and what didn't) during their visit. College leaders report receiving 20 to 30 cards each week, with submissions serving as fodder to congratulate high-performing staff and evidence to identify areas for improvement across the front line.

⭐ **Thomas Nelson Community College**

Enabling and Encouraging an Open Mindset

Fostering a Culture of Innovation Means Willingness to Try, Fail, and Try Again

In large part, every college leader's job is to create an ambitious vision for the future and lead the charge to attain it. However, at cash-strapped institutions especially, the prospect of leading an institutional redesign as large as Guided Pathways can feel daunting, if not impossible; it's hard to focus on innovation when you're mired in fundraising, budgets, and resource allocation decisions. For faculty and staff, innovation feels similarly removed from the day-to-day responsibilities and challenges they face in teaching and helping shape the institution.

Today's community colleges have no choice but to innovate to compete. Students demand more from their higher education experience, and the institutions that can meet these needs will not only win enrollments in the short term, but also retain and engage students through to graduation. Guided Pathways present a clear way forward, if only institutions could be amenable to the changes this model demands.

Leaning on Design Thinking to Open Minds

When our dedicated consultants lead change management engagements for members of the Student Success Collaborative, they typically find that college leaders have the resources they need to make transformational change happen: their students, their staff, and their own influence on campus. The bigger issue is how leaders can leverage these resources productively to make holistic improvements to the institution.

This is where a design thinking framework can inspire and lead innovation. The design thinking approach is low in cost and inclusive of diverse opinions, which aligns well with the budget realities and collaborative culture of community colleges.

At its core, design thinking is an approach to innovation that relies on three key tenets of problem solving: inspiration (understanding people's needs), ideation (exploring all possibilities for addressing people's needs), and implementation (making ideas a reality within resource constraints). The facing page presents three strategies to engage faculty and staff with each step in the design thinking process.

Strategies 2–4

THREE STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE FACULTY IN DESIGN THINKING

INSPIRATION

Student feedback is a virtually unlimited resource: scan social media, read course surveys, or **schedule focus groups** to understand students' needs.

Include faculty and staff as moderators, or share results to inspire the team toward action.

Access our *Student-Intake Focus Group Guide* on eab.com to learn best practices for assembling, monitoring, and facilitating student focus groups.

IDEATION

Perfect is the enemy of the good. Rather than strive for the "best" solution, work with your team to **first develop a basic solution** that addresses the aspect of the Guided Pathways model that is most pressing at your college. This can be a useful starting point to test with students before developing and refining later.

Access *Bentley University's Innovation Profile* on eab.com to learn how they **set aside time for staff ideation** on campus.

IMPLEMENTATION

Engage leaders from campus finance, technology, and operations offices early and often, perhaps including them in the inspiration and ideation stages of the innovation process as a way of gathering diverse perspectives.

Remind staff that student success is everyone's job on campus—not just a select few. Learn how the Spokane Falls Community College **engaged faculty in college-wide success goals** in our *Expert Perspectives* publication on eab.com.

Activating Faculty as Retention Coaches

Support Your Greatest Allies

Many conversations about implementing a Guided Pathways model at community colleges focus on the student services changes that need to take place. This is not a new trend; in an evaluation of the first cohort of Achieving the Dream institutions, about 75% of reforms were in either student services or instructional support, such as tutoring. Very few changed the core academic experience or made meaningful instructional reforms, which is part of bringing Guided Pathways to scale. The next section of this report addresses curricular and academic redesign in depth. This page outlines a strategy from New Mexico Junior College to not only inform faculty of student success challenges at the institution, but also activate faculty as the first line of defense against attrition.

Strategy 5

REAL-TIME WITHDRAWAL ALERTS

At New Mexico Junior College (NMJC), the faculty senate wanted to help reduce total withdrawals after reviewing course-level data across the college. These faculty leaders determined that they did not have timely information about students attempting to withdraw from their courses, especially those with grades above a C. Like many community colleges, the NMJC system notified faculty only after a student has fully withdrawn from their course. By that time, it was too late for the faculty member to intervene.

The faculty senate and the administration worked together to redesign the withdrawal process. Now, students must wait 48 hours before they can officially withdraw from the course. During this "cooling-off period," the instructor receives an automatic notification of the student's decision. They then have 48 hours to contact the student, identify the reason for the withdrawal, and connect students with resources and improvement plans.

With this approach to preventing withdrawals, the withdrawal rate decreased by over four percentage points in two years at New Mexico Junior College. It engages faculty members by giving them timely information and leverages their unique relationships with students to encourage progress toward completion. Most students who choose not to withdraw successfully complete their courses.

Decline in Withdrawal Rate Leads to More Completions

14.5%
2012

▼

10.3%
2014
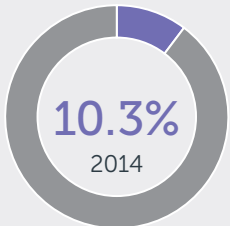
2,000

More completed classes
over five semesters

786

More students earned
credential in six semesters

★ New Mexico Junior College

Not Poking, but Partnering with the Bear

Engaging faculty as partners, rather than adversaries, in institution-wide reform efforts is important in theory, but it's often difficult to achieve in practice. Based on national research, we recommend striking a balance between "accountability" efforts and "engagement" efforts.

Accountability efforts are just that—activities, programs, or processes put in place to hold faculty responsible for student outcomes. While these can be effective, focusing on accountability practices alone leads to faculty burnout and resistance. More importantly, a paternalistic approach does not create long-lasting results.

Engagement efforts are focused on building positive energy and excitement among faculty, but they often lack a clear purpose. Focusing on engagement efforts in isolation may create a "warm," "inviting," and "friendly" atmosphere on campus, but the college will never move toward its goals this way.

To achieve the goals of Guided Pathways, faculty should be brought on as partners in the redesign to share accountability and enjoy the engagement with colleagues across campus. This practice from New Mexico Junior College is just one of many practices that strike this balance, which we've profiled in the Community College Executive Forum's best practice study *Partnering with Faculty to Achieve Sustainable Campus-Wide Change.*

Supplemental Reading List

Research-Based Resources Available on eab.com

EAB BEST PRACTICE STUDIES

A Student-Centered Approach to Advising, 2014

Defining the Faculty Role in Student Success, 2016

Eliminating Enrollment Pain Points, 2015

Guiding Student Choice to Promote Persistence, 2015

"Withdrawal Prevention Specialists," pg. 59, in *Preventing Early Attrition*, 2015

EAB TOOLKITS

New Student Onboarding Diagnostic, 2016

"Non-academic Resource Matrix," pg. 87, in *Preventing Early Attrition Implementation Toolkit*, 2015

EAB WHITE PAPERS

Enfranchising Faculty in the New Budget Reality, 2016

Optimizing Academic Advising at Community Colleges, 2014

What Can Health Care Teach Us About Student Success?, 2016

EAB ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webinars

Increasing Individual Faculty Participation in Mitigating Student Risk, October 2016

Making Strategic Goals Meaningful for Departments and Faculty, October 2016

Infographics

Fight or Flight, 2015

Six Roles for Faculty in Student Success, 2016

Expert Perspectives

David Bevevino, "How to kick start the use of course-level data," 2016

Alexa Silverman, "How to transform an early course withdrawal into a timely catch-up opportunity," 2016

03

How Should We Redesign Our Curriculum?

"
"Guided Pathways stand to upend everything about our college, and the most daunting thing is the curriculum itself. What you need to ask yourself before commencing on this road is: 'Is the juice worth the squeeze?' For us, the answer was a resounding yes."

—Community College President

The Case for Meta-majors

Support Program Selection Through
Structured Exploratory Tracks

Many community college leaders have introduced meta majors to help students with initial program selection. Rather than selecting from a long list program offerings, students have a choice of a short list of meta -majors—families of like majors clustered under broad thematic titles (e.g., business, health science, etc.). To simplify course selection, progressive leaders have also embedded meta-majors with exploratory tracks for the first term. These tracks allow students to explore the curriculum with less risk, as any course a student takes in an exploratory track will count toward degree requirements for all affiliated majors.

In addition to preventing progress setbacks if a student changes his or her major, exploratory tracks give undeclared students greater sense of purpose and direction to their studies. By exposing students to classes critical to an area of study, exploratory tracks also help students to more quickly determine whether they have the interest and aptitude in that curricular area. The example below is from Georgia State University, members of the Student Success Collaborative. This strategy demonstrates the essential elements of GSU's first-year exploratory tracks strategy, with results measured since implementation.

Strategy 6

FIRST-YEAR EXPLORATORY TRACKS

Advisors: Introduce as Career Exploration Guide

▸ Students can select major upon application

▸ Introduced to meta-majors at first-year orientation

▸ Students attend sessions on job opportunities related to majors in meta-major

Health Sciences

- Exercise science
- Nursing
- Behavior and health science
- Occupational therapy
- Radiology

Nurse practitioner

Health educator

Therapist

Radiologist

Registrar: Mandate Exploratory Tracks First Year

▶ Mandatory for all students, not just undeclared

▶ Class selection ensures timely academic progress

Preset Schedule
Preset Schedule *Health Sciences, Term 1*
English Literature *General education requirement*
General Calculus *Required for all STEM majors*
First-Year Seminar
Elective 1
Elective 2

⭐ **Georgia State University**

A Light Lift for Faculty

▶ Academic advisors design clusters

▶ No change to curricular requirements

RESULT
30%
Reduction in major changes since implementation

Strategy 7
MORE IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTING EXPLORATORY TRACKS

At Queensborough Community College, another institution with meta majors, staff recommend assessing historical enrollment data to identify the most popular classes for first-year students and use this data to shape first-year exploratory tracks that students find appealing. In addition, tracks should include general education requirements.

Consider students' often varying nonacademic commitments (e.g., jobs, familial duties) when building tracks. Students typically favor completing all courses in a block of time, rather than spaced out across the day. Finally, many students enter college unsure of their major but sure that they intend to transfer. Clearly marking courses that transfer to four-year university partners helps students make informed decisions.

⭐ **Queensborough Community College**

Nuts and Bolts

Implementation Considerations for Academic Redesigns

While meta majors are a first step toward bringing Guided Pathways to life on campus, there are various implementation details that college leaders recommend to optimize academics on campus. The strategies and advice below come from college leaders who have implemented Guided Pathways at their institutions.

The Promise and Perils of Minimizing Course Electives

Most leaders are familiar with the behavioral economic theory of choice architecture, the idea that an individual's decision is influenced by the context in which the decision is made, such as the environment or the number of choices. To prevent students from becoming distracted or misled by an overwhelming list of electives, colleges often limit the number of electives students may choose from when customizing their academic pathway.

However, minimizing elective options has consequences for instructional staff, whose courses may be left off the course map for certain meta-majors. In fact, during EAB research conversations with community college presidents nationwide, fear of faculty revolt in the face of academic redesign was mentioned as a top concern.

EAB recommends creating a standardized internal protocol for editing course maps at the college. At Indian River State College, leaders require that any courses included in a meta-major course map comply with a short list of requirements. See the box on the right for sample questions leaders may use to assess changes to meta-major course maps.

Strategy 8

QUESTIONS TO ASSESS COURSE MAP EDITS (ADAPTED)

1. Is this a general education requirement?
2. Is this transferrable to a university partner?
3. Is this offered in-person and online?
4. Is this offered on multiple campuses?
5. Is this offered during the day and night?

★ **Indian River State College**

★ **Guilford Technical Community College**

Strategy 9

USING UNCAPPED WAIT LIST TO GAUGE TRUE COURSE DEMAND

Student survey data suggests that administrative barriers often prevent students from timely completion, particularly when it comes to course selection and availability. In fact, lack of adequate course availability is one of two most important areas of the college experience students are the least satisfied with (the other being parking).[2]

While size of the problem of administrative barriers is often difficult to gauge because colleges lack sufficient data. Some colleges use historical fill rates, for example, which is helpful to a point. This metric can be useful to support closing a section if the fill rate is low; but fill rate alone says nothing about the likelihood additional sections will fill if opened.

Instead, improve data collection by uncapping course wait list. This approach maintains the same benefits of the capped wait list model (primarily managing access to courses to avoid over-enrollment) while capturing new data to inform future scheduling decisions.

In the box on the right, we show an example of an institution with a traditional wait list compared to a college with an uncapped, centrally managed wait list model. While the number of students allowed into the course (e.g., 5) is the same under both models, administrators at the school with the centrally managed wait list know how many students wish to enroll in the course and for that particular section (which indicates day and time preferences). A registrar can take this data and decide to open more sections or shift section times for future terms.

Getting a True Picture of Demand

Number of Students Requesting a Course Section
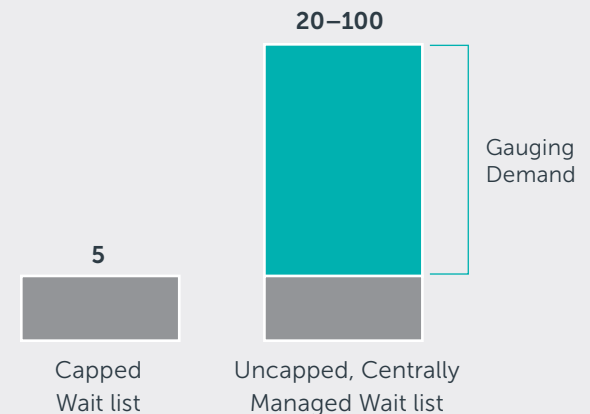
Bells and Whistles

Considerations for Optimizing Academic Redesigns

Another strategy to assess course demand is to break from traditional registration patterns (where students typically register for one term at a time) and instead encourage students to preregister for multiple terms at once. The strategy below is adapted from the 2015 EAB best practice study *Preventing Early Attrition*.

Strategy 10

BETTER PLANNING WITH MULTI-TERM REGISTRATION

In 2014, West Hills Community College helped students take action on their educational plans (degree maps) by allowing them to enroll in a year of courses (summer, fall, and spring) at one time. This innovation had two primary benefits.

First, more students register for summer courses and complete 30 credits per year. Second, administrators can analyze student registration patterns to create schedules that align with demand. This allows for better

Outcome of WHCC's Multi-term Registration

4%
RESULT

Increase in students enrolled in 30 credits per year after introducing multi-term registration, 18% vs. 14%

★ **West Hills Community College District**

scheduling options, earlier faculty workload planning, and improved space allocation.

A core principle of the Guided Pathways movement is to shift away from boutique, small-scale interventions in favor of institutional redesigns that positively impact all students on campus. With that in mind, leaders must make innovations such as meta majors and course maps accessible to developmental and college-ready students. The strategies below are adapted from the 2013 EAB best practice study *Reengineering Developmental Math*.

Strategy 11

MATCHING DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES TO PROGRAMS

A growing number of community colleges have implemented math emporiums, where traditional classrooms are transformed into interactive problem-solving time. Students use adaptive software to complete lessons with on-demand help, and exercises are personalized to individuals' needs and include multimedia tools.

Institutions with the modified emporium model in place can tailor the developmental curriculum to students' academic and career goals through a strategy called major module matching. At Jackson State Community College, department chairs review descriptions of each developmental math module at the institution and determine which are necessary for success in each major. Students are required to complete only those modules that are matched to their major, which shortens the developmental sequence and ultimately improves completion rates.

Outcome of JSCC's Major Module Mapping

Average Number of
Developmental Modules
Required

Students Completing
Developmental Sequence

☐ Traditional, Spring 2008 ☐ Redesigned, Fall 2009

⭐ Jackson State Community College
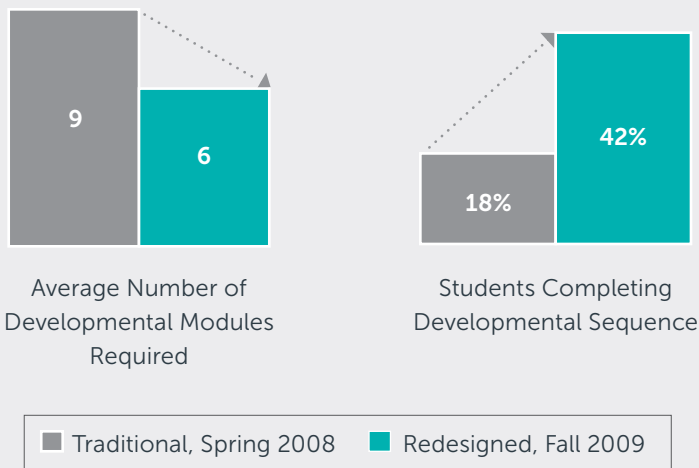
Strategy 12

DIRECTING STUDENTS TO REFRESHERS BEFORE TESTING

Math refresher courses have sprung up at more than a handful of community colleges around the country to help students prepare for academic placement exams. The courses typically last about a week and are voluntary reviews of content that will be included on the placement exam.

In 2011, leaders from Fayetteville Technical Community College began offering a math refresher boot camp for Special Ops students from nearby Fort Bragg. Before implementing the math refresher program, only 12% of Special Ops students placed into college math. With the refresher course, however, 92% of students tested into college-level math—an increase of 80 percentage points.

Success in math refresher courses hinges on voluntary enrollment, attendance, and dedication to an intensive, multiday math review. EAB research found that in-person math refreshers are most effective for highly motivated students. To appeal to a larger audience, consider connecting students with online refresher resources (e.g., MOOCs, worksheets, textbook excerpts, etc.).

Designing with the End in Mind

Create Transfer-Ready, Employer-Informed Academic Pathways

When building clear, streamlined academic pathways, college leaders must always consider the "destination" of said pathways—if Guided Pathways are a means to an end, how are we preparing students through these new pathways for transfer and/or employment? This question is critical in the American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) Pathways Project: "The redesign process starts with student end goals for careers and further education in mind and 'backwards maps' programs and supports to ensure that students are prepared to thrive in employment and education at the next level."

Transfer-Ready Pathways a Challenge for Most

For community colleges in states with strong centralized coordinating boards, such as Michigan or Florida, creating academic pathways that set students up for successful transfer to the state's public universities is a straightforward endeavor. In Florida, for example, the state's two-year and four-colleges have a shared course numbering system that even some private institutions in the state have aligned themselves with to appeal to transfer students. Operating in a system like this, redesigning the curriculum to create Guided Pathways for all majors can occur without question of whether credits will be accepted for transfer from the university.

Unfortunately, in the absence of such a centralized state system or coordinating board, most community colleges struggle to ensure that newly created Guided Pathways will set students up for smooth transition to a university. While some colleges have attempted to overcome this challenge,[3] no agreed-upon best practices have emerged.

Employer-Informed Pathways

While 80% of community college students initially intend to transfer to a university upon graduation, only 25% transfer within five years. This suggests that the vast majority of community college enrollees will enter the workforce after graduation and need to be well prepared to succeed in the industry they chose while in college.

There is no greater expert in what employers want in their future employees than the employers themselves. Increasingly, community college leaders are leveraging existing relationships with local employers to help inform the academic and non-academic skills most critical to teach students across a Guided Pathway. Three strategies for leveraging employer insights indirectly and directly are outlined on the facing page.

Strategy 13

INDUSTRY-DEMAND ANALYSIS

At CUNY Guttman, meta-majors are created based on employer recommendations, to ensure students are educated and prepared for in-demand jobs. Refer to **job market analytic tools** such as Burning Glass or O*NET for regional data.

Access our **Regional and State Employer Demand Dashboards** available on eab.com to see the hottest jobs, skills, and employers in 2014–15.

⭐ **Guttman Community College**

Strategy 14

EMPLOYER ROUNDTABLES

In spring 2016, Sinclair Community College invited employers from the college's workforce advisory board to discuss the skills and competencies they're seeking from potential hires. Program staff (including faculty and the dean) were asked to sit around the perimeter of the room to listen and take notes, using the information to inform future program development.

⭐ **Sinclair Community College**

Strategy 15

META-MAJOR SPONSORS

DCCCD **assigns a corporate partner** to each early college high school (or "academy") to provide mentorships, internships, and employment opportunities to participating students. A similar model could be introduced for the college's meta majors.

Learn more about **Partnership Account Managers** on eab.com to secure meta-major sponsors.

⭐ **Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD)**

If Guided Pathways are a means to an end, how are we preparing students through these new pathways for transfer and employment?

Supplemental Reading List

Research-Based Resources Available on eab.com

▶ EAB BEST PRACTICE STUDIES

"Aligning Course Capacity with Student Needs," in *Promoting Timely Degree Completion*, pg. 56–64, 2016

"Brokering Accelerated Career Pathways," in *Turning High School Partnerships into College Enrollments*, pg. 61–82, 2014

"Determining Optimal Student Mathpath," in *Reengineering Developmental Math*, pg. 93, 2013

"First-Year Meta-major Schedules," in *Promoting Timely Degree Completion*, pg. 47–48, 2016

"Matching Curriculum to Career Goals," in *Reengineering Developmental Math*, pg. 75, 2013

"Wraparound Advising Partnerships," in *Paving the Path to Transfer*, pg. 30, 2015

▶ EAB TOOLKITS

"Identifying Career Paths for Prospective Students," in *Adult Learner Recruitment Toolkit*, pg. 67–72, 2015

Math Innovation Diagnostic, 2013

"Sample Executive Advisory Council Agenda," in *Employer Outreach Implementation Toolkit*, pg. 38, 2015

▶ EAB WHITE PAPERS

Apprenticeship Programs at Community Colleges, 2014

Elevating Success in Developmental English, 2014

Expanding Corporate Training Programs, 2014

First-Year Experience Program Components and Resources, 2013

Innovative Career and Technical Program Development at Community Colleges, 2014

▶ EAB ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webinars

Reengineering Developmental Math, Part I, February 2015

Reengineering Developmental Math, Part II, March 2015

State of the Union—Reclaiming Our Value, Part II, February 2016

Infographics

How Will Big Data Reshape the Workforce?, 2013

Preparing Students for the Workforce, 2015

Expert Perspectives

David Attis, "Using data to find and eliminate section bottlenecks," 2014

▶ EXTERNAL RESOURCES

AACC, *The Pathways Project*, 2012

Waugh A, *Meta-majors: An Essential First Step on the Path to College Completion*, Jobs for the Future, 2016

04

How Should We Optimize the Student Experience?

"

"For many administrators, college is like a bed of nails. If there was only one problem in the enrollment process and you encountered it, it would hurt. But since there are so many, the president or the provost doesn't even notice them. Unfortunately for our students, they feel every single one."

—Community College President

Making Sense of the Onboarding Maze

Simplify Enrollment Steps and Support Critical Career Decisions

Administrators see the enrollment process, from submitting an application to attending the first day of classes, as a distinct and linear path. But in reality students struggle to make sense of this complex system; they don't know where to go or what questions to ask. After conducting hundreds of interviews with students across the country, EAB researchers found an apt metaphor for the typical community college onboarding process: a game of Chutes and Ladders. While the exact size, shape, and structure of the onboarding maze varies by institution, the reality is that more than half of all community college applicants are lost before the first day of class, and those who remain often feel ignored and abandoned during this critical stage in their educational careers.
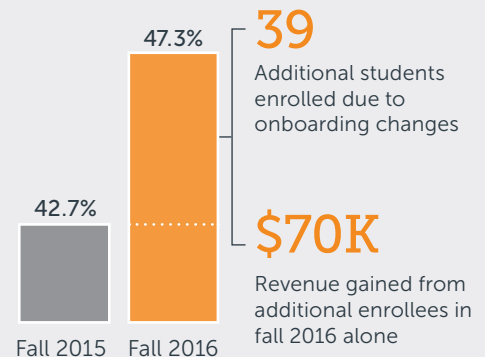
Strategy 16

IMPLEMENTING PERSONALIZED GUIDANCE DURING ONBOARDING

Partnering with EAB, leaders at Danville Community College identified pain points that applicants encountered during onboarding and introduced a combination of best practices and technology to address these concerns.

The first step was to reduce the number of times students visited campus to complete enrollment from four visits to two. Newly admitted Danville students were also introduced to Navigate through an embedded link in their welcome email. With early access to the Navigate platform, students no longer need to visit campus for a "program placement" appointment and still receive personalized guidance. The platform also guides students to complete enrollment on time; 77% of fall 2016 applicants who logged in to Navigate completed enrollment that term.

Since partnering with EAB in early 2016, Danville Community College has seen a 4.6 percentage-point increase in their applicant conversion rate, which suggests entering students are encountering a far less confusing enrollment process and are benefiting from personalized onboarding guidance in Navigate.

42.7% — Fall 2015
47.3% — Fall 2016

39
Additional students enrolled due to onboarding changes

$70K
Revenue gained from additional enrollees in fall 2016 alone

Scale is off.

⭐ **Danville Community College**

Strategy 17

ENSURING TIMELY COMPLETION OF ALL INTAKE STEPS

Because of the length and complexity of the enrollment process, applicants can easily misunderstand the steps they need to take. In the absence of communications from the college, many may feel frustrated and overwhelmed, and they may fail to complete enrollment.

Lake-Sumter State College sends personalized emails to applicants to alert them to remaining steps in the enrollment process. Admissions staff email applicants approximately five times during each admissions cycle. Messages give instructions on how to complete a specific step such as financial aid, orientation, or registration.

On average, it takes admissions staff only 25 minutes to set up each email campaign and send it to all relevant recipients. However, staff must also set aside time to respond to incoming messages because many applicants reply with questions about the outlined steps.

See the results at the right to learn about the substantial financial returns Lake-Sumter has realized from this strategy in the first few years of implementation, in terms of applicant conversion gains and tuition revenue.

Results from Prompts to Complete Missing Steps

3% Rise in average applicant conversion rate from 59% in 2013 to 62% in 2015

$191K Estimated additional tuition revenue per year[4]

⭐ **Lake-Sumter State College**

Personalizing the Commuter Campus

Coordinate Wraparound Student and Career Services

While the removal of administrative and process barriers is critical to building Guided Pathways on campus, it is insufficient on its own. For all students to remain on path and continue to learn throughout their time in college, leaders must also proactively connect them to relevant support resources. As an increasing percentage of community college entrants matriculate with dire academic and non-academic support needs, college leaders must connect them to on- and off-campus resources.

Bear in mind that simply creating support services will not adequately meet student needs. Data from the 2011 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) shows that while the vast majority of two-year colleges have basic resources like academic tutoring centers (99%), student success courses (84%), and first-year experience programs (60%), less than a third of students report participating in them.

To solve this problem of underutilization of services, consider the strategy below from Mount Wachusett Community College, which proactively matches students with relevant resources at the institution.

Strategy 18

PERSONALIZED RESOURCE NUDGES

Intake Survey	Required survey collects data about risk factors at time of placement test
Referral Matrix	Each question on survey corresponds to available college resource or service
Resource Nudge	Students receive invitation to join custom list of clubs and services

RESULT

20% Increase in fall-to-fall retention of 2013 cohort, vs. 2012 cohort

⭐ **Mount Wachusett Community College**

PROFILE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

60%
Students placed into
remedial courses, 2008

72%
First-time students
completing FAFSA, 2013

38%
Non-traditional age
student enrollees, 2013

### Integrating Student Services with Academics

College leaders should also consider strategies for connecting students to co-curricular clubs, services, and activities that will deepen and strengthen their learning within a particular discipline. EAB research identified two universities leveraging co-curricular maps to engage students with non-academic resources on campus.

Georgia State University created roughly 30 co-curricular maps that suggest on- and off-campus activities associated with the content of the course map. Inspired by GSU, faculty, career services staff, and students from Queen's University created their own maps to nudge students toward experiential and service learning opportunities, online resources, and suggested career fields. Maps are revised annually to maintain relevance.

Strategy 19

CO-CURRICULAR MAPS

Co-curricular maps at Queen's University were an instant hit, with over 65,000 views of the online pages within the first year. The maps can serve multiple purposes: recruiting (for prospective students) and registration (for enrolled students).
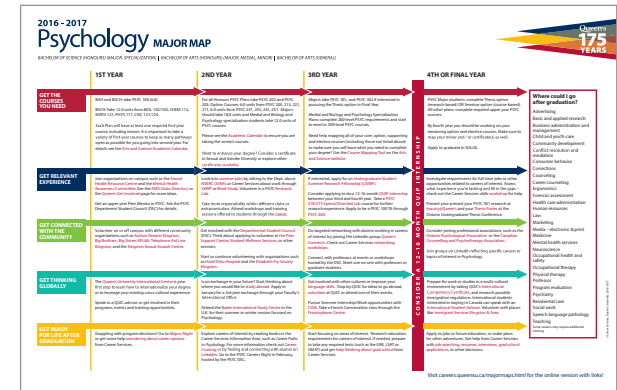
RESULTS

95%
Of surveyed students agreed that the maps help them understand the skills and careers associated with programs[5]

89%
Of surveyed students agreed that the major maps help them be more aware of experiential learning opportunities[6]

⭐ **Queen's University**

Reducing Anxiety Around Tuition Bills

Connect Students with Straightforward Financial Aid Information

In an EAB survey of 125+ community college presidents, we found that financial aid is the point during onboarding where leaders see the most attrition. While the vast majority of entering community college students apply for financial aid, most institutions offer a fragmented array of supports to help students connect with and make sense of the ample resources available. Since financial aid isn't a factor for all students, few colleges have built adequate structure around the offering.

In addition to being an obstacle at onboarding, finances are a major reason enrolled students drop out mid-semester, before completing a credential. Recent studies by the Community College Research Center and Public Agenda prove that students who fail to receive some type of financial assistance (e.g., scholarships, private loans, or federal aid) are more much more likely to drop out compared to those who do receive assistance.

The complexity of funding and payment in higher education causes distress even among students with little to no financial hardship. Too many students avoid aid applications altogether (42% of Pell-eligible community college students never complete the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA]), make critical errors in applying for federal or institutional aid (62% of students selected for federal aid verification thought the application process was complete), or are just unaware of the availability of various funding sources (over 50% of college hopefuls have never heard of the federal Net Price Calculator).

Leverage Technology to Scale Basic Advising

Colleges should take immediate action to maximize student awareness and utilization of financial resources, beginning with the creation of web-based, self-service tools that significantly reduce uncertainty and error with minimal one-on-one staff time. The University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) created a widely popular series of video guides about the FAFSA to help applicants and current students navigate each step of the process.

Strategy 20

ONLINE FINANCIAL AID TUTORIALS

Image 1: UC Santa Barbara's financial aid video guides; Image 2: Financial Aid TV's customizable video library

Image 1

Image 2

UCSB's FAFSA guide has remained among the top five Google search results for "FAFSA steps" for several years, demonstrating its value not only to their own student population, but as a resource to other students and institutions as well. There is no need to reinvent tutorials addressing standardized topics such as federal or state-administered student aid; preexisting resources can and should be leveraged by others.

Several vendors have also emerged to help institutions address common financial aid questions. Financial Aid TV, for example, partners with institutional aid offices to host hundreds of premade instructional videos on institutional websites. Partner institutions are able to pick and choose individual videos or video categories to include and provide a comprehensive array of guidance without needing to invest in creating high-quality (and expensive) video tutorials themselves. The videos target student audiences; within the first year of launching the video library at Rutgers University, administrators recorded over 47,000 views of the content, signaling a real need for support.

Supplemental Reading List

Research-Based Resources Available on eab.com

▶ EAB BEST PRACTICE STUDIES

"Campus-Wide Basic Training," in *Responding to Students of Concern*, pg. 44–56, 2013

Community College Enrollment Pain Point Audits, 2014

Eliminating Enrollment Pain Points, 2015

"Missing Step Enrollment Prompts," in *The Shifting Enrollment Landscape*, pg. 30–34, 2016

"Personalized Resource Nudges," in *Preventing Early Attrition*, pg. 55–57, 2015

Reimagining Experiential Learning, 2015

Strengthening Hispanic Student Success, 2014

"Targeted Continuing Student Outreach," in *Incentivizing Behavioral Change with Aid Dollars*, pg. 31–33, 2015

Transforming the First-Generation College Student Experience, 2016

▶ EAB TOOLKITS

"Co-curricular Involvement Campaign Guide," in *Experiential Learning Toolkit*, pg. 51–53, 2015

"Non-academic Resource Matrix," in *Preventing Early Attrition Implementation Toolkit*, pg. 87–88, 2015

"Sample Enrollment Checklist," in *Eliminating Enrollment Pain Points Toolkit,* pg. 37–38, 2015

"Student-Staffed One-Stop Resolution Center," in *Transforming the First-Generation College Student Toolkit,* pg. 21–25, 2016

▶ EAB ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webinars

Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions, January 2016

Meeting the Enrollment Challenge, March 2015

Infographics

Four Tactics to Support the First-Generation Student, 2016

The New Blueprint for Student Success, 2016

▶ EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Lumina Foundation, *Beyond Financial Aid*, 2015

U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid: Publications, Fact sheets, Online Tools, and Videos, 2016

05

How Should We Communicate Guided Pathways?

66

"The struggle at my college is always getting people to buy into a new program or service. And I'm not even talking about faculty—I mean students or our community members. And that's where my expertise just stops. I know it sounds silly, but it's so hard, and I don't really know why. These are human beings, after all."

—Community College Vice President

Marketing College Outcomes

Guided Pathways Model Sparks Questions
About Institutional Positioning

Any institution creating the transformational changes required to fully adopt the Guided Pathways model should protect its investments by ensuring their value and benefits are properly communicated to campus constituents. This section investigates practices for communicating Guided Pathways-related changes to students. Given the number and variety of these practices, it is important for college leaders to deliberately create a clear, cohesive message that can be easily seen, digested, and understood.

Focus on Outcomes

One way to explain the institutional shift toward Guided Pathways is an enhanced focus on student outcomes on par with the traditional community college mission of open access. Defined broadly, student outcomes include university transfer, job placement, debt load, overall satisfaction, and long-term well-being (i.e., Is this graduate equipped with the life skills to live her best life as she defines it?).

Experts have taken this focus on outcomes as a welcome alignment with students' priorities. To appeal to money-conscious students (and parents) searching for ROI, some community colleges are incorporating career outcomes into their marketing messaging. While this messaging may be novel among public two-year colleges, four-year and for-profit competitors have found great gains in emphasizing these themes in their outreach efforts.

Cost Savings Alone Build "Cheap" Brand, Not "Quality" Brand

An EAB survey of community college advertisements found that most campaigns focus on a single attribute of the institution: low tuition. Although community colleges' tuition is typically lower than their competitors', a brand built solely on affordability may alienate audiences who equate low cost with low quality. Marketing directors revisiting how colleges convey their value proposition should instead focus on high return and high quality.

BELONGING—CONFESSIONS OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEAN

"I can understand the reluctance to identify majors too closely with career paths. At a basic level, it risks reducing education to training. But the objection strikes me as partly manageable and partly misplaced. It's only education if they show up. If they walk away because they don't see the point, it's nothing at all. And to the extent that students have a clear goal, it's not that difficult to build in true educational moments."

Matt Reed—Confessions of a Community College Dean

Strategy 21

FACULTY-CENTERED CAMPAIGNS

A marketing campaign from Alamo Colleges profiles the real-world expertise of faculty across various disciplines. Through a series of five television commercials, three radio commercials, and a website, this campaign demonstrates how 96 faculty members draw on their professional experiences to enhance classroom instruction.

Participating faculty include an accounting professor who works as a certified public accountant (CPA) and a political science professor who previously served as city mayor. These profiles allow prospective students to understand the applied expertise that distinguishes community college faculty from the stereotypical "ivory tower" academics common in other higher education sectors.

The campaigns also educate students about the programs offered at the college. Students unfamiliar with Alamo Colleges may not know it offers an accounting technology degree until they see an advertisement featuring a professor who works as a CPA.

CITY MAYOR

Dr. Paul Wilson
Political Science Professor

⭐ Alamo Colleges

Best Practices in Campus Communication

Lessons from Launching EAB's Navigate Technology

Once an institution decides on the right messaging to explain the shift toward Guided Pathways, the next step is to choose appropriate communication channels most likely to be seen by students. The strategies on the facing page are inspired by members of the Student Success Collaborative; members have identified several unique ways of sharing news of Guided Pathways and the Navigate platform that are easy to implement at any institution.

Educating Constituents About Campus-Wide Changes

Strategy 22

EDUCATE STAFF AND FACULTY ABOUT RATIONALE FOR GUIDED PATHWAYS

Pueblo Community College maintains an online resource center for all faculty and staff to understand why the college adopted Guided Pathways and learn about associated changes. In addition to maintaining a database, the college also communicated to staff in the following ways:

▸ Email senior staff explaining Guided Pathways

▸ Include Guided Pathways in strategic plan

▸ Invite Guided Pathways expert to campus

▸ Create simple collateral to promote Pathways

▸ Foster open dialogue about Guided Pathways

★ **Pueblo Community College**

Strategy 23

EDUCATE STUDENTS ABOUT GUIDED PATHWAYS WITH MARKETING

College leaders consider students to be the most important, and difficult, campus constituency to communicate with about Guided Pathways. Taking a mass-marketing approach, Thomas Nelson Community College identified several tactics to inform students about the Navigate platform, which can be adapted for any announcement:

▸ Incorporate Navigate into standard enrollment steps for all new students

▸ Introduce Navigate to students during orientation and other formal meetings

▸ Remind students about Navigate with posters

★ **Thomas Nelson Community College**

Strategy 24

EMPOWER STAFF AS ADVOCATES FOR GUIDED PATHWAYS INITIATIVES

College staff may agree with Guided Pathways in principle but struggle to communicate the model to students; members of the Student Success Collaborative face similar challenges promoting the technology to students. To empower staff as advocates of the technology, EAB created a **Campus Adoption Toolkit** with the following resources (partial list):

▸ Basic fact sheet builder

▸ FAQ scripting guide

▸ Welcome letter templates

▸ Sample email signatures

Strategy 25

EMPOWER STUDENTS AS ADVOCATES FOR GUIDED PATHWAYS INITIATIVES

Popular wisdom in student communication suggests that students are most likely to listen to and retain messages from peers, rather than from administrators. To ensure that new students felt comfortable using Navigate, leaders at Wallace State Community College tapped current students to act as "ambassadors" of the platform. To work as an ambassador, students had to demonstrate:

▸ Familiarity with the platform by actively participating in EAB pilot testing cohorts

▸ Commitment to the ambassador role by taking on the position through work-study

★ **Wallace State Community College**

Supplemental Reading List

Research-Based Resources Available on eab.com

▶ EAB BEST PRACTICE STUDIES

Marketing Across the Program Lifecycle, 2016

"Student Social Media Ambassadors," in *The Shifting Enrollment Landscape*, pg. 76, 2016

▶ EAB TOOLKIT

Navigate Campus Adoption Toolkit, 2016

▶ EAB WHITE PAPERS

Allocating Funds to Program Marketing, 2013

"Conveying the Community College Value Proposition," in *Excellence in Community College Marketing*, 2014

▶ EAB ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webinars

Navigating the Complex Landscape of COE Marketing Challenges and Opportunities, November 2016

Supporting Student Conversations with SSC, April 2016

▶ EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Bailey, T, Jaggars, SS, Jenkins D, *Implementing Guided Pathways: Tips and Tools*, New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center, 2015

Community College of Philadelphia, *Guided Pathways: The City's College: Impact 2025*, 2016

Everett Community College, *Guided Pathways: Spreading the Word About the Student Success Movement*, blog post, 2016

Johnstone R, *Guided Pathways Demystified: Exploring Ten Commonly Asked Questions about Implementing Pathways*, 2015

Pueblo Community College, *Databases by Guided Pathways and Subjects*, 2016

06

CONCLUSION

Where Do We Go from Here?

Achieving Scalability Through Technology

Hardwire Best Practices at Your Institution

Higher education experts and practitioners from community colleges, universities, and public and private institutions agree that the Guided Pathways model is in many ways an oxymoron: a modern idea born within the last five years that feels very familiar. The terminology has only just come into fashion on Twitter, in industry news, and on the conference circuit. But the idea that student success demands a streamlined, cohesive experience that blends rich academic experiences with supportive resources and services is a very traditional line of thought, particularly in the community college sector, which has always served diverse student populations.

Thus, it's not entirely surprising that to fully adopt Guided Pathways at an institution for long-term success and sustainability, college leaders must simultaneously investigate both new and traditional implementation strategies.

New Ways of Implementing Student Success Reform

A core principle of the Guided Pathways movement, according to organizations like AACC, Achieving the Dream, Complete College America, and others is that curricular redesigns, streamlined onboarding experiences, enhanced support services, and all of the other elements of the model must be accessible to all students at an institution, not just a small subsection of the general population. For a budget-constrained institution (which describes the vast majority of community colleges), this cannot be achieved by hiring more advising staff or launching more boutique programs. Instead, leaders have looked to technology to deliver personalized guidance at scale.

On the facing page, we outline the core features of Navigate, EAB's direct-to-student technology platform designed to bring the principles of Guided Pathways to life at community colleges across the country.

NAVIGATE PLATFORM FEATURES

AACC PATHWAYS PILLARS

GUIDED ONBOARDING with custom enrollment steps individualized to each incoming students' needs

▶

Providing personalized support at entry for all students to...

▶

Clarify paths to end goals

SMART ACADEMIC PLANNING matches students to best-fit careers and relevant courses

▶

Balancing structure with flexibility for part-timers to...

▶

Help students choose and enter a pathway

360º ADVISOR DASHBOARD empowers frontline staff to meaningfully reach cohort

▶

Empowering advisors as completion coaches to...

▶

Help students stay on path

ACTIONABLE ADMINISTRATOR VIEW gives leaders relevant data to serve students and report on outcomes

▶

Highlighting the most relevant data for leaders to...

▶

Ensure all students are learning

Technology Necessary,
but Insufficient on Its Own

Human-Centered Institutional Redesign

Navigate was built expressly to ensure that all students complete enrollment, connect with advisors, and get the most out of their college experience, whatever their goals might be. As our member institutions launch the platform to students across their campuses, we are inspired and humbled by the impact this has and will continue to have on the community college student experience.

Traditional Ways of Implementing Student Success Reform

Technology has enormous potential to challenge, disrupt, and improve higher education. Employed correctly, technology platforms can be leveraged to scale high-touch support programs, personalize student outreach and communication, identify and target at-risk students, and make higher education accessible and approachable to generations of students who are more comfortable with self-service technology than ever before.

But technology is only one piece of the redesign puzzle. Even the most sophisticated, incredibly built software can fall flat in the absence of thoughtful process changes and user education. Radical results in student outcomes come when institutions embrace technology at the same time as wholesale change management.

Elements of the Student Success Collaborative

The success of Guided Pathways relies on both new and traditional ways of implementing student success reform—a delicate but important balance of technology and process improvement, managed by dedicated change management support, which we offer to (better stated: require of) all members of the Student Success Collaborative. The 25 strategies outlined in this report are a selection of some of the most important recommendations from our best practice research library, lessons learned on member campuses, and success stories from Navigate members themselves.

While the term Guided Pathways is likely to evolve in the next decade, we are confident that institutional commitment to its four pillars (see page 13) will remain relevant and important for many years to come. Our aim in assembling this resource is to provide college leaders with the inspiration and guidance they need to make meaningful, innovative changes on their campuses.

THE STUDENT SUCCESS COLLABORATIVE

NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH AND NETWORK

50+ best practice publications, toolkits, and expert presentations

- Preventing Early Attrition
- Turning High School Partnerships into Enrollments
- Reengineering Developmental Math

1,500+ site visits and interviews with frontline staff, administrators, and students

NAVIGATE: A DIRECT-TO-STUDENT GUIDED PATHWAYS PLATFORM

Put students on right path...

- User-friendly interface
- Powered by EAB analytics
- Platform design guided by behavioral science research and breakthrough research practices

...while providing personalized support from entry to exit

- Scaled communication tool for advisors and students to connect
- Administrator dashboard shows where biggest pain points exist

DEDICATING CONSULTING AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Kickoff: Onsite leadership kickoff and enrollment pain point audit

Strategy Formation: Report on key opportunities to improve student success

Implementation Support: Custom-built teams and implementation blueprint

Ongoing Consulting: Leveraging data insights for continuous improvement

| RESEARCH | TECHNOLOGY | CONSULTING |

Learn more at eab.com/navigate

EAB in Brief

Start with best practices research

› Research Forums for presidents, provosts, chief business officers, and key academic and administrative leaders

› At the core of all we do

› Peer-tested best practices research

› Answers to the most pressing issues

Then hardwire those insights into your organization using our technology & services

Enrollment Management

Our **Royall & Company** division provides data-driven undergraduate and graduate solutions that target qualified prospective students; build relationships throughout the search, application, and yield process; and optimize financial aid resources.

Student Success

Members, including four- and two-year institutions, use the **Student Success Collaborative** combination of analytics, interaction and workflow technology, and consulting to support, retain, and graduate more students.

Growth and Academic Operations

Our **Academic Performance Solutions** group partners with university academic and business leaders to help make smart resource trade-offs, improve academic efficiency, and grow academic program revenues.

EAB BY THE NUMBERS

1,100+
College and university members

450+
College and university members of the Student Success Collaborative

50+
Community college members utilizing Navigate

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Endnotes

1. The list shows a sampling of the 25 strategies detailed in this report. More strategies are available on eab.com and outlined at the end of each section for members to explore and review on their own.

2. Based on survey of 93 Queen's University students.

3. Our research uncovered three common strategies colleges have adopted to ease the transition from a two-year to four-year program, though all are difficult to scale: individual student counseling for all students who intend to transfer, articulation agreements with select university partners, and requirement analyses of top transfer destinations.

4. Assumes students enrolled in an average of 20 credits per year at in-state tuition rate.

5, 6. According to a Corporate Executive Board survey of 879 customers, the average person younger than 51 years old prefers to self-serve rather than seek live support for an issue. For context, 95% of all community college students in 2015 were younger than 51 years old.

The best
practices are
the ones that
work for you.℠

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