

Guided Pathways & Equity Project Teams

2020-21 Final Report

PROJECT NAME: Programs to Careers (2019-2020)

DESCRIPTION: The Programs to Careers project team is responsible for evaluating student and program learning outcomes alongside employment outcomes in order to deepen and apply career-based skills through projects, internships, co-ops, service learning and other activities.

PROJECT SPONSOR: Guided Pathways and Equity Work Group

TEAM LEAD(S): Ashlee Johnson (Faculty Co-Chair)
David Schlanger (Administrative Co-Chair)
Lilia Garcia (Classified Professional Representative)
Isaac Nunez (Student Representative)

TEAM MEMBERS: N/A

DATE: May 26, 2021

SUMMARY:

The Programs to Careers project team will conduct research, consult with other college stakeholder groups, and make recommendations to track student outcomes, outline best practices of extra-curricular student support, and identify the flow of students through pathways.

DELIVERABLES:

- 1) Identify research tasks involved in discovering activities currently available to track exiting students and make recommendations for how to design an outcome survey (including when to offer it, where to distribute it, and who to administer it to).
 - I. Activities:
 - i. The team interviewed five special programs (Women's Lean in Circle, STEM, TRiO SSS and SSS-RISE, Men of Color, and UMOJA) to identify a set of best practices for tracking students after exit. For purposes of this study, exit is defined as a point at which a student, graduates, transfers, or drops from the program.
 - ii. The team also reached out to several key institutional programs involved with student exit, such as, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Student Life, to identify a method to track students after exit.
 - II. Findings:
 - i. As a result of the study, it was found that all programs developed a unique tracking system which included one or all of the following: texting, phone calls, email as well as social media such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Discord. Some programs also used GroupMe, Google text and Remind to send text messages to their students. The processes were very informal and relied heavily on human capital to maintain.
 - ii. One program discussed the use of exit surveys, which were given to students at time of successful completion via Survey Monkey. These surveys were used to collect updated contact information and assess the student's level of interest in future alumni events, such as, student panels and mentorships. The program also used exit interviews to gain insight on student's plans after graduation.
 - iii. A unanimous finding highlighted the importance of creating professional relationships with students and building community to maintain engagement and communication even after the point of exit.
 - iv. Last, it was found that students are not currently being tracked after exit in institutional programs, however, there seems to be an opportunity to identify and track student leaks as well as post-exit outcomes in the future.
 - III. Recommendations:
 - i. Develop and implement the pathways model (deliverable 2) which includes a method to track students after exit.
 - ii. Build relationships and a community with students within their program of study / academic pathway.

- iii. Connect with students through multiple methods (in-person meetings, social media platforms, text, phone, and e-mail)
 - iv. Send out a survey whenever students exit programs, including when they withdraw from a program, complete a program (graduate), and 6 months after completion.
 - 1. Surveys sent while students are enrolled should ask them to update their contact information in preparation for the 6-month outcome survey.
 - v. Develop a method to disseminate the survey at mandatory processes and exit points.
 - 1. Collaborate with ERP team and technology committee to integrate features into technology updates.
- 1) Characterize and package the STEM Pathways model in a way that can be adopted by student success teams across other Norco College Schools. This includes a method to begin and sustain wrap-around student support services, instructional programs in alignment with workplace and job skills goals, and work-based learning opportunities.
- I. Activities:
 - i. The team developed a list of questions and invited relevant partners for interview. The team being interviewed included STEM Pathways Director, STEM Counselor, Student Success Coach, Recruitment Specialist, STEM Services Developer, Grants Administrative Specialist. A team of representatives from the STEM Pathways program was interviewed by the Programs to Careers project team to identify success factors, as well as a method to replicate/scale the program across other pathways. Interview questions are included in Appendix A.
 - ii. A team of student representatives was also interviewed to gain the student perspective on the success of the STEM pathways program. Interview questions are included in Appendix B.
 - iii. Subsequently, a design framework on how to replicate the pathways program was drafted and included in Appendix C.
 - II. Findings:
 - i. There were several themes that emerged from the qualitative research which are synthesized into findings throughout this section. The main finding is that student recruitment, success, retention, learning, transfer attainment and career attainment seem to have been improved by several key components of the STEM Pathways Program.
 - ii. The STEM Pathways model can be replicated by reallocating resources, thus, requiring little additional resources.
 - iii. The model holds a great deal of value to both, students, and the college at large by:
 - 1. Value Proposition:
 - a. **Students:**

- i. Identifying careers of interest
- ii. Developing plans to reach career goals
- iii. Receiving support, encouragement and accountability to persist.
- iv. Deepening understanding of content needed for career and transfer.

b. College:

- i. **Institutionalizing and scaling wrap around services in alignment with student career and transfer needs.**
- ii. **Improving College metrics:**
 - 1. Increasing persistence
 - 2. Increasing retention
 - 3. Increasing completion of degrees and certificates
 - 4. Reducing time to completion
 - 5. Reducing units to completion
 - 6. Increasing transfer rates
 - 7. Increasing employment outcomes

III. Recommendations:

- i. Define “Pathways.”
 - ii. Replicate the STEM Pathways Program across other Pathways.
 - iii. Include the following elements, not currently found in the STEM Pathways Model:
 - 1. Add an Equity Specialist to each Pathways Team.
 - 2. Utilize the Mustangs Mentors Program to enrich and scale the community.
 - 3. Develop a “First Years” program and utilize the Career Counseling and Coaching program to help students identify and integrate into their pathway program.
- 2) Make a recommendation to the Assessment Committee to integrate career-related assessment questions into the Program Review prompts to promote reflection and alignment between PLOs and career outcomes.
- I. Activities:
 - i. In collaboration with NC Assessment Committee, several questions were developed and included in the instructional program review to develop an at-scale practice of analyzing the alignment between program, career, and transfer needs. A copy of the questions is included in Appendix D.
 - II. Findings:
 - i. After review of several instructional program reviews, it was found that many programs were out of alignment with career and transfer needed. The program review analysis further indicated that several programs shall be updated in the near future as a result of the analysis.

III. Recommendations:

- i. Continue to work with Program Review Committee and Assessment Committee to maintain this practice during annual updates.
- 3) Determine what technology exists and what is needed to track rational behind student leaks and transitions in programs and courses and make recommendations to the college to procure technology gaps.

I. Activities:

- i. Consultations were held with those leading Norco College's ERP implementation and the Office of Institutional Research to inquire about methods of tracking student drop behavior. A resource about [College Dropout Rates](#) was identified and used as a guide for asking questions related to assessment of drop reasons.

II. Findings:

- i. No technology is currently being implemented that can directly track when students exit programs. The team considered multiple exit points, including when students drop core courses, when students change their majors, and when students drop out of college entirely, but no technology is currently in use that can track these activities.
 1. **Dropping core courses** – while the current ERP knows which courses are included in each program, it does not know which courses are considered “core” to the major. In addition, a course that is “core” to one major may simply be an elective for another.
 2. **Change of majors** – the current ERP logs the status of each major on a student's record and lists each major declared by the student, but there is no current mechanism that logs the moment of major change as an event that could be used as a trigger to ask for more information.
 3. **Dropping out of college** – the meaning of dropping out of college needs a definition. For some calculations, withdrawing from all courses in a given term is considered dropping out of college (even though many students re-enroll in the subsequent term); and for other metrics, dropping out of college is not logged until after one primary term is missed following the withdrawal. The lack of a definition for this activity has resulted in mixed data and we would first need a consistent definition before considering which technology could be used to track this activity.

III. Recommendations:

- i. The team recommends working with the new ERP, Anthology, and Institutional Research to agree on specific definitions for different drop / “leak” related activities. Related, work should be conducted to identify “critical program courses” in each major that can serve as predictive analytic triggers whenever a student drops such a course. Once each activity is defined, methods to track these activities should be prioritized

in the development of the new ERP's workflows, surveys should be developed to inquire about why the activity is taking place, and a plan to review the data regularly should be developed. These definitions and "drop assessment" plans should probably also be agreed upon district-wide.

APPENDIX A

STEM Pathways Team Interview

1. What Services does this program provide to its students?
 1. Events
 2. Supplies
 3. Space
 4. Guidance
 5. Social emotional support
 6. Networking
 7. Projects
 8. Internships
 9. Transfer prep
 10. Career prep
 11. Learning support
 12. Community
2. How often are these services provided?
3. What roles/positions are needed to make the program work?
4. What responsibilities does each role have?
5. What resources are needed to make the program work?
 1. How much space?
 2. Besides salaries, how much funding?
6. How many man hours per week spent networking with the community? How important is this?
7. In what ways do you collaborate with faculty?
8. What service are you not currently offering that you wish you could offer?
9. What are your program outcomes?
10. To what standards are your program outcomes aligned?
11. How do you assess your program outcomes?
12. How do you stay in contact with students after exit?

13. How do you reach students who are less involved?
14. How do you reach students who are struggling?
15. How do you reach underrepresented students?
16. At the initial stages of the program, what services were offered?
17. At what point did other services become available?
18. What services must be offered at a minimum to make the program work?

APPENDIX B

STEM Pathways Student Interview

Intro:

- Team Intro
- Project Intro
- This is being recorded.
- We have about one hour, approx. 4 min per question
- Answer as if in typical setting (not COVID-19)

Questions:

1. Briefly state your name, major, and expected grad/transfer year
2. How did you first hear about the program?
3. What encouraged you to join the program? Were you skeptical?
4. What encourages you to continue to meet program requirements?
5. What do you like most about the program?
6. What don't you like about the program and what would you change?
7. Which services do you use most (counseling, advising, events, equipment, etc).
8. What services are not being offered that you think should be offered?
9. How has the program helped increase understanding and skills for your desired career?
10. When you struggle what support did the program offer?
11. How accessible are resources that you need?
12. How does the program help keep you moving towards your educational and career goals?
13. Are there any changes in services due to COVID-19 that you would like to keep?
14. In what ways does the program support equity and diversity?
15. Have you ever changed you major?
 - a. Why?
 - b. How did you come to the realization that the change was needed?