Critical Steps to Building Back Enrollments and Engaging Students in Program Choice

Ohio Association of Community Colleges, Fall 2023 SSLI
Doreen Larson and Hana Lahr
September 15, 2023
Presentation overview

1. What we are learning from our research at CCRC on guided pathways
2. The Ask-Connect-Inspire-Plan framework for program onboarding
3. Who Control Who You Enroll: The Four Ts of Enrollment Management
What are the big goals of guided pathways reforms?
Guided pathways provides a research-based framework for redesigning colleges to meet the twin challenges of increasing equitable outcomes and building back enrollment.
COVID hit community colleges’ enrollment especially hard, but they had already been losing students for a decade before.
There have been sharp enrollment declines among both older and traditional college-age students.

Fall Enrollment Trends by Sector and Age
*IPEDS Data, 1997-2021*

HS dual enrollment only growing student segment

CCs have lost market share to public four-years

Older student enrollment at historic lows

Source: [CCRC analysis of IPEDS fall enrollment data](#)
Most community college starters do not earn a credential in six years; completion rates for low-income students and students of color are even lower.

Retaining more students, particularly those from underserved groups, would go far in reversing community colleges’ enrollment declines.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, *Completing College.*
New research on the adoption and early effects of guided pathways
AACC Pathways Project

- 30 colleges from 17 states participated.
- College teams attended 6 intensive workshops to learn about Guided Pathways and make plans (2016 and 2017).
- CCRC collected data on adoption of guided pathways practices between 2018 - 2022.
- CCRC analyzed changes in EMMs between 2012 and 2020 (capturing four years before and four years after the project start)
Student Outcomes Analysis Focuses on Early Momentum Metrics (EMMs)

- Key indicators:
  - Credit accumulation in term 1 and year 1
  - Completing college-level math and English/college-level math credits completed in year 1
  - Persistence from term 1 to term 2
  - Persistence from year 1 to year 2
- Sample includes all students entering college for the first time.
- We examine EMMs for successive cohorts of students to capture change over time.
Findings on Adoption of Guided Pathways Practices

11 colleges adopted practices at scale

12 colleges were in the process of scaling

6 colleges adopted some GP practices but did not scale corequisite math + math pathways
Findings on Changes Early Momentum Metrics

- Generally, all colleges made improvements on EMMs.
- Colleges that made more progress in scaling guided pathways reforms made greater improvements on the EMMs.
- All racial/ethnic groups benefited, but equity gaps did not close.
- Term-to-term persistence declined, mainly due to Covid.
AACC Pathways Colleges: Completion of 12+ College-Level Credits in Term 1

Start of the AACC Pathways Project

- Fully scaled (N=11)
- Scaling in progress (N=12)
- Strides made, math limited (N=6)
AACC Pathways Colleges: Disaggregated Trends, Fully Scaled Group (N=11)

12+ College-Level Credits in Term 1

Start of the AACC Pathways Project

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
AACC Pathways College: Persisted from Term 1 to Term 2

- Fully scaled (N=11)
- Scaling in progress (N=12)
- Strides made, math limited (N=6)
What’s next based on our guided pathways research?
Gaps in the *Redesigning* model and early GP implementation

Too much focus on

- Teaching
- Customizing
- Course Scheduling
- Outreach

Too little focus on

- Mapping
CCRC has launched a series of projects designed to motivate and guide next frontiers of community college redesign.
Why focus on program onboarding?
Students who gain early momentum are more likely to persist and complete.

Early momentum has added benefits for students of color and low-income students…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit of completing 12+ college-level credits in year 1 on transferring and completing a bachelor’s degree</th>
<th>Black students</th>
<th>Hispanic students</th>
<th>Other students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4x</td>
<td>4.2x</td>
<td>1.7x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yuxin Lin, Maggie Fay, & John Fink (2020). CCRC analysis using statewide administrative data on 573,806 community college entrants between 2009 and 2018, tracked up to 10 years. Estimated odds ratios from hazard models controlling for student characteristics, college fixed effects, and cohort fixed effects.
...but too many students, particularly those from underserved groups, have dropped out by year 2.

Source: IPEDS [https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data)
Many students who apply (and are accepted) to community college never even start classes.

How many students applied to your college for fall 2023?

How many students enrolled in your college in fall 2023?
What was the typical student experience as they entered your college this fall?
How much do you currently learn about your students’ interests and goals?

Is it clear to students what they need to do to achieve their goals?
What students want during onboarding

- Assistance exploring academic and career interests
- Opportunities to interact with other new and current students, faculty, and others who share similar academic and career interests
- The chance to take a course on topics of interest in term 1
- Assistance developing a full-program educational plan

To achieve more equitable year 1 outcomes, colleges need to reimagine program onboarding.

And there’s a role for everyone in ACIP.

Remember the four pathways pillars of reform?

1. Clarify paths to student education and career goals.
2. Get students on a path.
3. Keep students on a path.
4. Ensure students are learning.
Clarify paths to student education and career goals

Help students choose and enter a path

Keep students on a path

Ensure students are learning

ASK
CONNECT
INSPIRE
PLAN
Every student is engaged in an ongoing conversation about their interests, strengths, aspirations, and life circumstances with the aim of helping them explore programs of study and career paths aligned with their goals.
From the start, colleges organize opportunities for every student to meet with faculty, students, alumni, and employers in fields of interest to them and access college and community resources that can help support their needs.
Every student takes at least one course in term 1 on a topic of interest that "lights their fire" for learning.
Every student is helped by the end of their first term to develop a full-program educational plan that shows them a path to their goals.
How can we tailor Ask-Connect-Inspire-Plan onboarding experiences for these key, often underserved, student groups at our college?

- Older returning students?
- Dual enrollment students?
- First-generation students?
- Incarcerated students?
- Students in noncredit programs?
An Invention versus an Institution

Community colleges are *inventions* in higher education rather than *institutions* of higher learning such as 4-year colleges and universities.
Theory of Reform An Invention versus an Institution

Approaching community college as an invention in delivering higher education in the United States immediately:

1. Creates a culture of energy and creativity. (versus one of justification)

2. Frees community colleges to differentiate the learning environment. (versus trying to mirror legacy systems)

3. Prioritizes knowledge of and response to changes in learning and learners. (versus seeking alignment with traditional college)
You control who you enroll

The ease or challenge of enrollment is the result of institutional decisions.
You control who you enroll

Rates of employment, economic health, and census changes inform community college responses rather than dictate enrollment outcomes.
Edison State community college case study

- Edison State enrollment has increased every year since 2016.

- Edison State has set records in degree and certificate completion for the past three years.

- Edison State has captured over 37% in new state performance funding as a result of increased student success.
Share Share of Instruction (SSI)
2018-2023
Funding per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Trends

This view utilizes the same data from the previous dashboard "Scorecard Funding per FTE". Ranks are plotted over time for all colleges to see trends on a global view.

Total Funding per FTE

2018  2019  2020  2021  2022  2023

BELMONT TECH  MARION TECH  ZANE STATE
CENTRAL OHIO  NORTH CENTRAL...
CINCINNATI ST... NORTHWEST...
CLARK STATE  OWENS STATE
COLUMBUS ST...  BUCYRS ST...
# Edison State Headcount Enrollments

## Head Counts From Current & Previous Semesters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>1-Year Fall Change</th>
<th>5-Year Fall Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>3,228</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>3,694</td>
<td>2,961</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>3,888</td>
<td>3,175</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>4,137</td>
<td>▲ 1%</td>
<td>▲ 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1,703</td>
<td>1,618</td>
<td>704</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,639</td>
<td>1,486</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>1,602</td>
<td>▲ 5%</td>
<td>▲ 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC+</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>2,038</td>
<td>1,484</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>2,249</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>2,535</td>
<td>▼ -1%</td>
<td>▲ 74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Note: Data reflects student counts from Fall (AY2022-23).*
Compare your college completion milestones to the sector average

Select your college and year

2) Select college(s) for comparison

EDISON STATE

Any Completion credentials awarded per 100 FTE
College and Sector Longitudinal Comparison
Theory of Enrollment

You control who you enroll

Enrollment increases or declines are a result of institutional decisions
Theory of Enrollment

You control who you enroll

You never get a second chance to make a first impression
Enrollment Tools

Basic tools – The 4 T’s

- Timing/course schedule
- Testing (placement)
- Transfer
- Tuition
Create ability to work and attend college
On-line courses don’t need a traditional seat count
“100%” online schedule AND in person schedule
A waitlisted student is a lost student (forever)
The (un) Testing Tool

- Minimize the use of placement testing
- Placement testing assumes a lack of college readiness
- Placement testing is inaccurate, biased, and unpredictable
Placement via multiple measures is preferable and can be applied to many categories of incoming students.

Self-placement is proven valid and establishes a culture of mutual respect while assumes student competency.
The “Golden Rule” of Transfer policy

- Accept and apply credits as you would like other institutions to accept and apply the transfer credits of your students.
- Vocational credits are worthy of attention and adjustments in the rules for application to associate degrees.
The “Golden Rule” of Transfer policy

- Workplace training is consistent and well-assessed.
- Shared course and catalog databases create transparent and real-time transfer portals.
Promote your Tuition: Include your annual tuition rate in ALL promotional material

- Share a course-course cost comparison of English Comp at your college versus the nearby 4-year schools.
- Design a bold graphic comparing your annual tuition with nearby 4-year colleges.
- If you engage in dual credit – highlight the totality of savings for a 4-year degree by combining dual credit and community college courses.
What to do right now!

- Take the cap off online courses
- Extend multiple measures
- Transcript Career Tech credits
- Promote the heck out of your tuition rate
Enrollment tools - summary

On the horizon…

The community college role as an invention

Career transfer pathways (combined with Liberal Arts)

Reaching the 25+ demographic

Childcare, childcare, childcare
Thanks!

Doreen Larson, Doreen57larson@gmail.com
Hana Lahr, lahr@tc.columbia.edu