

# From Exploration to Implementation: Lessons from the Guided Pathways & Student Financial Stability Movements

Rob Johnstone  
Florida Pathways Institute #1  
September 2020



NATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
INQUIRY &  
IMPROVEMENT

# Agenda

- **Exploration to Implementation Lessons**
- **Reclaiming the Student Experience as the Center of the Guided Pathways Work**
- **Note: Much of the content in this presentation was put together by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University (CCRC) and the American Association for Community Colleges (AACCC) - and we again thank them for our continued partnership and their efforts helping the field with this important thought capital and research**





# Section 1: Lessons on the Transition from Exploration to Design



# Lessons on Leading College Redesign

- Redesigning colleges on guided pathways model is a **big technical challenge, but even bigger cultural one**
- Effective leaders lay the groundwork: a) engage stakeholders across college in examining **barriers the college creates** to student success, b) **develop vision and goals** for improving experience for all students; c) **empower teams to plan and design innovations at scale**
- Critical importance to implementation of well-managed cross-functional teams
- Critical importance to redesign of broad engagement in **program and student experience mapping** (status quo and desired)
- Challenge: **creating time and resources** for reflection, design, planning, professional development and evaluation
- Challenge: **sustaining and institutionalizing innovation** in face of turnover, uncertain policy/fiscal environment; exhaustion

# How NCII Got Here...

In working with 100s of colleges across the country, we have observed:

- While every college's improvement journey is unique there is a lot of similarity in the journeys
- Colleges must wrestle with similar fundamental decisions about how to optimize the student experience
- Colleges must also consider if and what impact their design efforts have on the actual student experience



# Reflections on the Work

- The transition from exploration to redesigning the student experience is an enormous challenge
- Existing college structures are set up to \_\_\_\_\_
- Old School Innovation – changes to the student experience were either:
  - ✓ **C**hange for small  $n$       -OR-
  - ✓ change for large **N**
  - ✓ Need to fundamentally evolve the student experience at scale
- Lack of clarity around which student experience challenges we are trying to affect / optimize



# Setting Up a Structure to Get the Work Done

- Design Teams – design thinking vs. “Design Thinking”
- Designers like iPhone engineers, not architects
- A2I2 colleges identify specific design teams to work on guided pathways & student financial stability
- NCII suggests starting with 3-5 functional areas to kick off the work and demonstrate early wins
- NCII works with colleges to establish design principles to guide the teams’ work



# Design Principles

- In general, “design principles” are concise, specific guidelines for generating ideas and artifacts.
- Good design principles provide a common language and serve as shared reference points for design, development and deployment.
- Working from shared principles helps teams make decisions independently while sustaining a consistent, coherent vision.

Adapted from 18F of the General Services Administration – [18f.gsa.gov](http://18f.gsa.gov)





# Examples of Decision-Making Design Principle (1)

1. Workgroups will make recommendations to the Steering Committee; the Steering Committee communicates effectively and solicits feedback from committees and individuals where appropriate, refines recommendations, and submits recommendations to Cabinet; the Chancellor makes the final decision.



# Examples of Decision-Making Design Principle (2)

2. Workgroups will make recommendations to the Steering Committee Core Group; the Core Group communicates effectively and solicits feedback where necessary, refines recommendations, informs PIEAC and recommends to College Council with President making final decision.



# Examples of Decision-Making Design Principle (3)

## 3. Decision-Making

1. Workgroups will make recommendations to the GPSC
2. The GPSC communicates effectively and solicits timely feedback from relevant stakeholders (e.g. Chairs Council, Academic Advisory, Curriculum, Student Advisory)
3. GPSC receives feedback, refines recommendations, informs Strategic Planning Steering Committee and makes final recommendations to President's Council with the President making the final decision



# Examples of Decision-Making Design Principle (4)

## 4. Decision-Making


1. Workgroups will make recommendations to the GPSC
2. The GPSC communicates effectively and solicits feedback from the Academic Senate and Classified Senate and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Associated Students, Curriculum, marketing) on an informational basis as necessary but broadly
3. GPSC receives feedback, informs EMPC and makes final recommendations to the College Council / Executive Cabinet with the President making the final decision



# General Thoughts

1. Tolerance for ambiguity
2. There's no one right answer
3. Nothing is set in stone – working toward version 1.0
4. Safe space for conversations and ideas
5. Discomfort and structural tension are expected and positive developments
6. As we often expect of our students, important for design teams to have a growth mindset and productive persistence / grit as we approach our work





# Section 2: Reclaiming the Student Experience as the Center of the Work



# Reflecting on the Movement

- Further, we have observed that many colleges are engaged in (a) exploring guided pathways, (b) guided pathways design activity, and perhaps even (c) rolling out version 1.0 of guided pathways.
- It's possible that this exploration and design activity has in some cases taken the focus off understanding and optimizing the student experience
- Maps & Metamajors illustrations



# NCII Guided Pathways Resource Series

([www.ncii-improve.com/gprs](http://www.ncii-improve.com/gprs))

1. Guided Pathways Demystified I
2. Guided Pathways Demystified II
3. Guided Pathways Return On Investment Model
4. Key Decisions for Colleges Transforming the Student Experience through Guided Pathways
5. Indicators that Your Students' Experience Has Been Transformed by Your Guided Pathways Reforms





# Two Resource Guides – GPRS 4 & 5

- GPRS #4 offers a list of key decisions we see as vital to truly transforming the student experience at scale.
- GPRS #5 offers a list of key student experience-focused research questions that would demonstrate the impact of guided pathways design work on the student experience
- Download both guides [here](#)
- GPRS #6 – *Shared Aspirations for the Guided Pathways Student Experience* (coming soon)



# Equity Considerations: The Student Experience of All Students

- We strongly suggest disaggregation of the data generated by the research questions
- Will help us understand the student experience of historically underserved populations – namely first-time-in-college students and/or students of color
- Disaggregation of data does not ensure equity; but it is a necessary step in understanding how not all students experience the college the same way – and this potentially includes students' experience with our redesigned approaches under GP



# Additional Points of Reflection (1)

- Neither guide #4 nor guide #5 is meant to be exhaustive – but rather a point of departure for college planning & design
- For #5, quantitative and qualitative measures – some easier to obtain than others
- The Momentum Metrics / Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified by the AACCC Pathways Project are still critically important – we intend for them to be complemented by these questions



# Additional Points of Reflection (2)

- For #4, we are not providing answers to these decisions - we believe there are a range of approaches an individual college could take to address them
- Approaches must fit the college culture and should evolve over time, as the college evaluates the effect of initial approaches on the student experience and reflects on both key performance indicators and markers of the evolved student experience



# The Loss-Momentum Framework and the GPRS Guides

- We have used the *Loss-Momentum Framework* from *Completion by Design* as an organizing aid for the decisions, with its focus on students progressing through Connection, Entry, Progress/Completion and Advancement stages on their journey with the college.



# How Both Frameworks Can Relate

- Consider the following relationship between the two frameworks:
  - ✓ The *Loss Momentum Framework* is a way to think about the student experience...
  - ✓ The *Guided Pathways Four Pillars* is a way to think about how we organize our colleges to respond to that experience...
- The key decisions / student indicators on subsequent slides could also be organized by the *Four Pillars*





# Section 3: The Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Series Overview



**N**NATIONAL  
**C**CENTER FOR  
INQUIRY &  
**I**MPROVEMENT

[www.ncii-improve.com](http://www.ncii-improve.com)

# Equity Through Pathways

- Pathways movement is grounded in a desire for equity in the student experience and the structural reforms necessary to ensure equitable outcomes
- But...pathways does not automatically equal equity
  - ✓ Alone or automatically neither does disaggregating data by race or SES or a focus on cultural competency
- We need mindsets and structures and the efforts of individual practitioners to work together to produce the outcomes we want for all of our students - especially those underserved and discriminated against historically





# NCII/CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Series

- July 2019 Convening – twenty national leaders of color from equity & GP colleges identified topics for 1st set
- Each 3-4 page guide has (a) short explorations of a GP topic with an equity lens from the authors' perspectives; (b) 3-5 discussion questions; and (c) 1-3 data tasks
- Released in April 2020 and available from NCII [here](#)

*Guides are designed to help start or advance discussions on a college campus – not serve as the definitive word*



# Organized by Loss-Momentum Framework

- We have used the *Loss-Momentum Framework* from *Completion by Design* as an organizing aid to explore key equity through pathways questions (could also use *Four Pillars*)
- The LMF focuses on students progressing through Connection, Entry, Progress/Completion and Advancement stages on their journey with the college.
- 



# *CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Guide Titles (1)*

## **1. Culture: Institutional Self-Assessment for Equity**

✓ *N'adrea Njoku & Deshawn Preston, UNCF & Rob Johnstone, NCII*

## **2. Culture: Leading Culture Change to Promote Equity: Perspectives from a CEO of Color**

✓ *Michael Baston, SUNY-Rockland (NY), with Introduction by Kay McClenney, NCII*



# CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Guide Titles (2)

## 3. Culture: Leading Culture Change to Promote Equity: Perspectives from a White CEO

✓ *Bill Scroggins, Mt. San Antonio College (CA), with Introduction by Kay McClenney, NCII*

## 4. Culture: Fostering Faculty Diversity

✓ *Edward Bush, Cosumnes River College, with Introduction by Kay McClenney, NCII*



# *CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Guide Titles (3)*

## **5. Connection – Supporting Students From Application Through The First Day of Classes**

✓ *Julianna Barnes, Cuyamaca College & Rob Johnstone, NCII*

## **6. Connection: Creating Student Connection & Belonging upon Entry**

✓ *Amelia Parnell, NASPA & Kay McClenney, NCII*



# *CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Guide Titles (4)*

## **7. Entry: Taking an Asset-Based Approach to Student Onboarding**

✓ *Sunita V. Cooke, Miracosta College & Priyadarshini Chaplot, NCII*

## **8. Entry: Reducing Student Equity Gaps in Transfer-Level Math & English Attainment**

✓ *Robert Vela, San Antonio College & Kathy Booth, WestEd*



# *CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Guide Titles (5)*

## **9. Progress/Completion: Reframing Classroom Instruction to Better Engage a Diverse Community of Students**

- ✓ *Luis Ponjuán, Texas A & M University & Kathy Booth, West Ed*



# *CAGP Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Guide Titles (6)*

## **10. Progress / Completion: Creating Active and Culturally-Responsive Learning Environments for Students**

✓ *Tia Brown McNair, American Association of Colleges & Universities & Rob Johnstone, NCII*

## **11. Progress / Completion: Integrating Non-Academic Supports into the Student Journey**

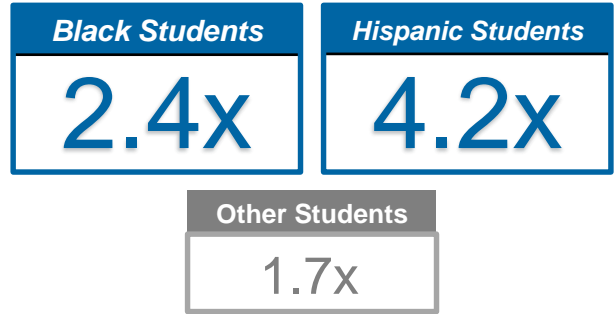
✓ *Linda García, Center for Community College Student Engagement & Priyadarshini Chaplot, NCII*





# Benefits of Momentum for Transfer

*Benefit of completing 12 or more college-level credits on transferring and completing a bachelor's degree*



	Benefit of Milestone (Baseline)	<i>Effects Even Larger for...</i>		
		Black	Latinx	Low-income
<b><i>Transfer to a four-year institution</i></b>				
Credit Momentum (6+, 12+, or 24+ college credits)	3-5x	6x	6-11x	7-8x
Gateway English/Math (College-level)	3-4x	3-4x	6-8x	4-6x
Completed Transfer Degree	6-7x	9-11x	11-18x	11-13x
<b><i>Transfer &amp; bachelor's completion</i></b>				
Credit Momentum (6+, 12+, or 24+ college credits)	1.7-2x	2-3x	4-5x	7-9x
Gateway English/Math (College-level)	1.5-3x	2-4x	4-5x	4-5x
Completed Transfer Degree	3-4x	5-6x	5-9x	6-7x

CCRC analysis using statewide administrative data on 573,806 community college entrants between 2009-2018, tracked up to 10 years. Estimated odds ratios from hazard models controlling for students characteristics, college fixed effects and cohort fixed effects.



# Section 4: Final Thoughts



# Final Thoughts...

- *“Guided Pathways is something you’re becoming, not something you’re doing”* – Ed Bowling, North Carolina Completion by Design Cadre Chair & Pathways Coach
- RP Group’s *Student Support Redefined* and dozens of other research studies provide a clarion call from students for the tenets of GP
- Anti-racism and equity require a combination of equity-mindedness and systemic change
- Authentic GP work requires a design mentality
- More coming soon from NCII...thank you!



# Find Out More

- **NCII website:**

[www.ncii-improve.com](http://www.ncii-improve.com)

- **Dr. Rob Johnstone, Founder & President, NCII**

[rob@ncii-improve.com](mailto:rob@ncii-improve.com)

