



Achieving Pathways Goals with Student-Centered Design



Implementation Toolkit

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Program-Mapping Process Guide

Purpose of the Tool

When designing and implementing student-centric pathways, it is important to consider all relevant requirements and related credits as well as the overall student experience. Consult the following guide to ensure that your mapping process proceeds in the most efficient order and includes all of the necessary requirements.

Process Overview



Process Step by Step



Step 1: Identify Program Requirements

Prioritize...

1. State, accreditor mandates
2. Transfer institution requirements
3. Requests from employer, industry advisory council
4. Existing graduation or completion protocols



Step 2: Determine Non-Major Requirements

Ensure that general education credits...

- Serve as prerequisites for program requirements
- Overlap with other programs within a meta-major
- Provide foundational content knowledge



Step 3: Assemble Program Maps

Establish...

- Participation from various departments and divisions
- Commitment to simplifying the student experience
- A concrete deadline for map completion



Step 4: Implement Maps

Remember to...

- Develop consistent messaging
- Create opportunities for feedback
- Reassess periodically

Program-Mapping Change Management Chart

Purpose of the Tool

As Guided Pathways reform necessarily requires a substantial shift in the way that programs are developed and implemented, generating faculty and staff engagement can be a hurdle colleges struggle to clear. The following guide presents strategies to alleviate uncertainty and opposition from faculty by emphasizing the central role of the student perspective—as well as later outcomes—in Pathways reform.

	Stage	Description	Point Person(s)
Setting the Stage	1. Create Urgency	<i>Identify institutional gaps in efforts to meet student needs</i>	VP of Academic Affairs
	2. Establish a Campus-Wide Vision	<i>Reaffirm the community college commitment to provide educational access and opportunities for all students</i>	Strategic Planning Committee
	3. Assemble the Right Team	<i>Solicit participation in program mapping, strategic planning committees from across campus</i>	Deans
Promoting Engagement	4. Communicate for Buy-In	<i>Establish open communication lines between the faculty and administration regarding Pathways reform</i>	VP of Academic Affairs
	5. Empower for Action	<i>Engage faculty expertise and content knowledge when making program decisions</i>	Deans
	6. Create Short-Term Wins	<i>Offer departmental incentives for successful implementation initiatives</i>	Program Heads
Sustaining Success	7. Don't Let Up	<i>Revisit the original mission and ensure that administrative commitment is consistent</i>	VP of Academic Affairs, Deans
	8. Make Change Sustainable	<i>At the end of each year, evaluate progress and ensure that successful initiatives are made permanent and communicated to the campus community</i>	Cabinet

Speed-Sequencing Checklist

Purpose of the Tool

Community colleges often struggle to identify the right courses to include in their program maps because content and scheduling knowledge is dispersed within campus silos. **St. Petersburg College** solves this problem by bringing together faculty, advisors, and administrative staff in two-hour “speed sequencing” sessions. During these sessions, committees physically map out potential program maps on sticky notes. Use the checklist below to implement a similarly streamlined program-mapping process on your campus.

1 Preparation

Minimize committee inefficiency via advance preparation and communication of mapping goals.

- Compile all of the course titles listed within a program, and write each on a sticky note
- Send invitations to program faculty, advisors, and curriculum support staff to participate in mapping committee meeting
- Communicate in advance a firm time limit and expectations for the mapping meeting

2 Implementation

Create an agenda that allows for collaboration across departmental silos, while maintaining a structure based on effective design principles.

- Identify which courses are externally mandated, prerequisites, or core courses
- Determine whether any courses listed may have hidden prerequisites that need additional sticky notes
- Discuss the optimal general education requirements for the specific program of study
- Categorize courses based on controllability (based on program requirements hierarchy on page 17)
- Beginning with the requirements that you have the least control over (i.e., those mandated by external bodies) and proceeding to those you have the most control over (i.e., existing institutional requirements), lay out the course sequence that promotes the quickest route to completion
- Promote discussion between faculty members and advisors to identify and revise course combinations that may be toxic for students
- Reevaluate the completed map to ensure that it meets all necessary program and institutional requirements

Online Mapping Tool Builder

Purpose of the Tool

Faculty input is a critical component of assembling program maps, however, managing and organizing this input can pose additional challenges. Linn-Benton Community College utilizes an online mapping tool not only to allow faculty from across the campus to contribute to the construction of individual program maps but also to streamline the collection of this data. Scheduling staff then determine ideal course sequences based on the submissions. Share the following seven key components of an online submission portal with the member of your institutional research department who is tasked with building and disseminating the online mapping tool to all faculty.

Process Steps for Building an Online Mapping Tool

Essential Components	Action Steps	Examples
1. Digital Platform Usage	Identify a reliable and easy-to-navigate digital collaboration platform before creating the online tool	Laserfiche, Google Forms
2. Course Identification	Create fields to identify the course(s) in question, provide a drop-down menu of all course options for easy input	"Subject," "Course Number," "Title"
3. Credit Allocation	Utilize a text box for specifying the number of credits allocated to the course	
4. Role Within Program Map	Require faculty to indicate the role of the course within the program map	"General Education," "Program Requirement," "Elective"
5. Specificity	Include options for identifying the nature of the course	"Required" or "Recommended"
6. Sequence Start Selection	List term options for faculty to select when a course will take place	"Summer," "Fall," "Winter," "Spring"
7. Other Comments	Provide a text box for faculty to name additional course recommendations or to add comments related to the process	

Community Interview Guide

Purpose of the Tool

Meta-majors provide colleges the opportunity to engage with their community stakeholders, as they work to tailor academic offerings to workforce needs. However, it can be difficult to meet the myriad demands of community stakeholders given faculty preference, campus history, and accreditation standards. Opportunities for faculty and employer weigh-in are essential when determining clear and agreed-upon standards, which serve to ease widespread Pathways adoption. Use this tool to identify community and campus stakeholders, then, refer to the interview guide to elicit feedback and greater community engagement.

Identifying Stakeholders in Pathways-Related Community Engagement

Location	Stakeholders
On Campus	Current Students Faculty Administrators Past Review Participants
Local Community	Employer Partners Alumni Advisory Board Members Local Government Leaders School Board Leaders District Level Career & Technical Ed. Directors Retired Faculty

General Principles for Gathering Community Input

- Limit number of interview questions to six, and cap conversations at 60 minutes for concise and actionable answers
- Conduct community interviews on an annual basis, engage past participants after the first year
- Following the first year, compare responses to past outreach to ensure progress
- Engage faculty to win buy-in and help them understand the employability skills connected to their courses
- Ask employers and external stakeholders about skills, attitudes, and competencies to ensure the credibility and industry relevance of all meta-majors
- Aim to develop a more vested interest on the part of employers

Community Interview Guide (cont.)

Stakeholder Interview Guide

Stakeholder	Interview Questions
Internal Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What essential academic knowledge do associate degree graduates need in order to be successful employees and well-rounded citizens? 2. What essential academic knowledge do associate degree graduates need in order to be successful transfer students? 3. In what ways do your courses support and challenge students to become more successful employees in the future? 4. Are you familiar with other courses offered on campus that seem to relate to the learning outcomes of your own courses? 5. Which skills do students develop in the context of your courses? How do these skills relate to the workforce? 6. If your career background involves an industry other than education, what competencies did you learn working in that industry that you had not developed while in school?
External Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What essential skills do associate degree graduates need in order to be successful employees and well-rounded citizens? 2. What qualities have you found to be essential in employees? Which attitudes distinguish an outstanding employee from a satisfactory one? 3. What are the specific goals and outcomes you have set for your employees? 4. Where have you noticed deficient performance within your company or organization? (With what tasks do your entry-level employees tend to struggle?) 5. Are any new processes, workflows, or employee expectations being put in place within your company or organization? 6. Are there existing best practices or company processes that we should embed within our standards and curricula?

Course-Overlap Identification Primer

Purpose of the Tool

Colleges often struggle to build meta-majors that encourage timely completion while also allowing for exploration. **Jackson College** uses enrollment information—at the course and program level—to identify the most common courses across programs within a meta-major. Using this information, they are able to build common course schedules across programs, which encourages students to explore within a meta-major without accumulating excess credits. Consult this guide to outline the steps needed to identify these overlapping course sequences.

Identification

1. Identify a meta-major
2. Organize each program of study within a meta-major (e.g., associate degrees, certificates)
3. Determine the number of students within each program
4. Calculate the total number of students within the meta-major
5. Determine the percentage of meta-major students within each program

Pathway (N = Fall 2014)	Degrees	Current # Students	Percentage of Pathway
Business & Computer	AAS-Accounting	100	10%
	AAS-Accounting/Finance	100	10%
Technology	AAS-Administrative Assistant	75	7.5%
	AAS-Business Administration	400	40%
Total Students = 1000	AAS-Culinary Arts & Hospitality Management	100	10%
	AAS-Entrepreneurship	100	10%
	AAS-Executive Assistant	50	5%
	Certificate-Accounting	25	2.5%
	Certificate-Business Administration	25	2.5%
	Certificate-Culinary Arts	25	2.5%

Organization

6. In an Excel document, separate each unique class within a meta-major in its own row
7. List each program of study within a meta-major in its own column, along with its percentage of meta-major students (from step 5)
8. For each individual class, mark the corresponding cell in which it is a requirement for that program of study
9. Add the percentages of meta-major students for each class to calculate the total percentage of the entire meta-major population for which the individual class is required

Liberal Arts				
		41.80%	21.40%	7.80%
	Class	arts.aa	grde.aas	muwd.aas
49.60%	ENG 10	G		G
29.20%	MAT 139		G	G
63.20%	ADO 4	G	G	
41.80%	PSY 140	G		

Next Steps: Mapping Programs of Study

- Following the course-overlap identification process, begin mapping by building as many common semesters as possible across programs of study
- Then, branch out common programs based on class requirements



Program-Mapping Template

Purpose of the Tool

Guided Pathways are often presented to students in the form of inconsistent or administrative language. **Middlesex Community College** uses a simplified jargon-free Pathways map to help students clearly identify the sequence of essential courses needed to complete their program of study. Modify the program-map template below to create your own student-facing program map. Refer to the callout boxes for essential components of a clear and consistent program map. Then, use the “Pathways Jargon-Reduction Audit” (Tool 7) to ensure clarity in your language.

Start Here

Indicate a clear starting point

Semester 1	Credits	Graduation Requirement	Completed
Example: ENG 101—Composition 1	3	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Example: First-Year-Experience Course	1	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Example: Writing Elective—Recommended: ENG 104—Intro to Digital Writing	2	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Credits:			

List course names in simple, jargon-free terms

Specify essential degree-advancing courses

Semester 2	Credits	Graduation Requirement	Completed
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Credits:			

Provide checklist to encourage students to track their own progress

Program-Mapping Template (cont.)

Program-Map Template, Semesters 3 and 4

Major Declaration Occurs Here

Call out critical student decision points

Semester 3	Credits	Graduation Requirement	Completed
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Credits:			

Semester 4	Credits	Graduation Requirement	Completed
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Credits:			

Format using colors consistent with college branding

Indicate a clear end point

Congratulations! You've finished!

Other Essential Components

- Indicate any educational on-ramps along the way
- Highlight opportunities for stackable elements, such as industry certifications and credentials

Pathways Jargon-Reduction Audit

Purpose of the Tool

The following exercise may be used with staff members to conduct a jargon-reduction audit so that students and other audiences may more effectively navigate all Pathways-related communication conveyed via the college website, newsletters, handouts, and other written materials.

Instructions

- Identify the top 10 Pathways-related webpages (i.e., those with the highest volume of traffic)
- Brainstorm all other student- and parent-facing material that generates a high volume of in-person traffic
- Provide staff with print copies of webpages identified and additional self-identified materials
- Ask staff to complete the following tasks

- 1 Reduce Multisyllabic Words:** Underline all words with more than two syllables. Identify and replace them with shorter words (even if this requires using multiple words in the place of one multisyllabic word)
- 2 Remove Passive Voice:** Ask staff to highlight all language in passive voice, rephrase sentences to be in active voice
- 3 Group-Related Information:** Condense all text that pertains to the same topic in a specific area and use white space to separate it from information pertaining to another topic
- 4 Translate Jargon:** Replace jargon (where appropriate) with translations for a non-higher education audience

Example:



Original Text:

Choose a Meta-Major

After you have been admitted to the college, you must select a **meta-major**. **Meta-majors** are **career clusters** used by all community colleges in the state. In order to be **eligible** to **participate** in a **particular program of study** and/or enroll in **credit classes**, students must select one of the college's eight **meta-majors**. Once you have **designated** a program of study, you *will be assigned* an **advisor** based upon your **selection**.

Gunning Fog Index Score: 12.73

Key: <i>Passive Voice</i> Jargon <u>Multisyllabic</u>



Revised Text:

Choose a Meta-Major

If you are an admitted student, you must select a field of study, called a "meta-major." This is a group of majors that fits with your career goals. It's important to select a meta-major because this allows you to enroll in classes that count toward your degree, which could impact how fast you complete your degree.

After the first two terms, you will then select a single major, or program of study, within your broader group of majors. Based on your choice, the college will assign you a success coach to advise you.

Gunning Fog Index Score: 8.80

Student Focus Group Guide

Purpose of the Tool

Course scheduling is an already complicated process that only grows in complexity with the implementation of Guided Pathways. Student perspective is a critical but sometimes overlooked aspect of making successful scheduling changes. While administrators and faculty often rely on preconceived notions of student needs and goals, this does not always align with the student experience. Colleges can use focus groups to move past the limits of traditional course feedback forms and receive real-time student data and feedback to determine students' scheduling preferences and to eliminate course bottlenecks. Use this checklist to convene successful student focus groups on your campus. Then utilize the sample discussion questions to facilitate conversation during the focus group sessions.

1 Student Participants

Ensure that groups represent a diverse sample of students in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and enrollment status as well as a wide array of student perspectives and experiences.

- Include students who are traditional, part-time, developmental ed., and continuing education
- Communicate opportunity for students to participate across multiple modes and venues on campus
- Include students studying a variety of majors across all available pathways

Keep in mind the optimal focus group size is 5–10 students

If enlisting a faculty moderator, identify specific staff members (e.g., student services staff) that are particularly adept at engaging with students, limit ratio of focus group moderators to one staff member for every 6 students

2 Student Staffing Models

Utilize a peer staffing model to promote student leadership and foster greater buy-in from participants.

- Identify student leaders on campus who have demonstrated effective organizational and communication skills
- Solicit help from current work-study students to serve as group leaders
- Consult student advisors for recommendations of potential student leaders

3 Location and Duration

Identify a convenient campus location and adopt a time frame that will be most conducive to generating student participation and eliciting quality feedback.

- Ensure a sense of privacy by conducting focus groups in private rooms with seats arranged in a circle
- Plan for a 60-minute session to allow time for discussion

Prevent interruptions by posting signs indicating focus group in progress

4 Incentive Systems

Consider offering incentives, such as bookstore vouchers, priority registration, or other academic-related incentives to motivate students to participate in focus group research. Students are more inclined to participate in the focus group if there are direct benefits to them.

- Offer a free piece of college-branded merchandise (e.g., T-shirt or tumbler) to students who commit to participate in a focus group
- Award those individuals who attend and contribute quality feedback with attendance and participation prizes

Offer focus group opportunity for more students than optimal focus group size to acknowledge that not all students will respond

5 Data Retrieval

Systematically collect student data produced by each focus group session.

- Ensure that focus groups adhere to all Institutional Research Board (IRB) protocol regarding confidentiality, consent, etc.
- If possible, include additional space on consent forms for participants to consent to being recorded

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Student Focus Group Guide (cont.)

Use the following bank of sample discussion questions to facilitate conversation, elicit student feedback, and inform best course scheduling practices.

Sample Focus Group Discussion Questions

1 Distilling Attendance Barriers

- Which courses do you find most difficult to attend and to attend on time? Which do you find easiest?
 - Do you attribute this to the time of the day when the class meets?
 - The days of the week the classes meet?
 - The campus location in which the classes are held?
- In an ideal situation, where and when would the majority of your classes take place?

2 Managing Competing Demands

- What external barriers do you find most challenging to overcome to attend class? Why?
 - Has difficulty with transportation ever prevented you from attending or enrolling in a course?
 - Have conflicts with work schedules ever prevented you from attending or enrolling in a course?
- How far in advance would you like course listings and schedules to be available?

3 Identifying Modality Preferences

- Have you taken any online classes?
 - If yes, was your attendance rate better than for in-person courses?
 - Did your performance (course grade) differ for the online course?
 - Would you like to have more courses offered online?
- Would you prefer a block schedule for certain classes? If so, which ones and why?

4 Uncovering Registration Bottlenecks

- Have you ever been denied enrollment in a requisite course because it had met capacity? If yes, what course did you take in its place, and why?
- How would you recommend that we ease the registration process?

Cost Comparison Calculator

Purpose of the Tool

When implementing Pathways reforms, changes in course preferences and subsequent enrollment can cause misalignment between faculty supply and class demand. Faculty who are not teaching full course loads can cost the college on average \$14,000 per course¹, in addition to the costs of recruiting and hiring adjunct professors. Alternatively, colleges can assess current faculty credentials, identify related disciplines within their general expertise, and evaluate the costs of retraining these professors so that they can teach alternative courses of higher demand. Use the step-by-step instructions to identify all relevant costs associated with each option. Then, manipulate the cost comparison calculator below to assess your own college's budgetary allowances and determine the best course of action for your institution when addressing the Pathways-generated faculty supply and course demand challenge.



Retraining a Current Full-Time Professor	Hiring a New Adjunct Professor
1. Survey under-enrolled departments to pinpoint which professors are the best candidates to participate in retraining	1. Survey most in-demand courses to identify the number of additional adjuncts needed to teach the courses
2. Enumerate how many additional credits faculty members will need in order to teach the new higher-demand courses	2. Isolate the standard salary of an adjunct professor per course ²
3. Identify the cost of graduate-level credits at a local university	3. Total the number of courses in need of adjunct professors in order to accommodate increased student demand
4. Calculate the cost of retraining a professor by multiplying the number of additional credits needed by the cost of each credit	4. Calculate the salary of each adjunct by multiplying the salary per course by the number of courses taught. Add the cost of a faculty search to find the total hiring costs ³
5. Find the total cost of faculty retraining by multiplying the cost per professor by the number of professors in need of additional credits	5. Assess the total institutional costs by multiplying the total hiring costs per adjunct by the number of additional adjuncts needed

Editable Cost Comparison Calculators

Costs of Retraining Current Full-Time Professors	
# of Additional Training Credits Needed per Faculty Member	6
Cost per Credit	\$450.00
Total Cost of Retraining per Professor	\$2,700.00
# of Professors in Need of Retraining	5
Total Institutional Costs of Faculty Retraining	\$13,500.00
Costs of Hiring Additional Adjunct Professors	
Adjunct Salary per Course	\$2,700.00
# of Courses Taught per Adjunct	4
Total Salary Costs per Adjunct	\$10,800.00
Costs of Faculty Search and Recruitment per Adjunct	\$1,000.00
Total Hiring Costs per Adjunct	\$11,800.00
# of Additional Adjuncts Needed	5
Total Institutional Costs of Hiring New Adjunct Professors	\$59,000.00

1) Assumes \$72,000 median salary and 15-credit course load.

2) Consult this source for the median adjunct salary per course www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/05/the-cost-of-an-adjunct/394091.

3) Consult this source for the average cost of faculty search www.uiargonaut.com/2015/02/09/faculty-hiring-expenses.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Advising Day Communication Materials

Sample Email Template

Purpose of the Tool

Students often choose programs of study based on limited or segmented advice. **Yakima Valley Community College** combines both advisor and faculty advice into a full-day advising event. When planning your own campus-wide advising day, it is essential to adequately inform all students of the opportunity through multiple communication channels and at various times. Begin by reaching out directly to students via a targeted email campaign. Send the following sample email to all students two weeks in advance. Then, follow up with a reminder email within the week of the event.

Advising Day Invitation Email

From: Academic Administrator
 To: Students
 Subject: Campus-Wide Advising Day, Thursday, October 26th

This quarter’s campus-wide advising day will be held on **Thursday, October 26th**. All students are invited and highly encouraged to attend.

Campus-wide advising occurs once each quarter to provide you a chance to review your academic plan and ensure you are moving efficiently along the path to your education goals. This is a full-day event in which advisors suspend their daytime classes so you have more time to meet with them.

Advising sessions are organized by meta-majors and occur at multiple times throughout the day (7:30 am–9:00 am, 10:00 am–11:30 am, 12:30 pm–2:00 pm, 3:00 pm–4:30 pm, 5:30 pm–7:00 pm). Plan to attend one 90-minute session. Please see the available location options below:

- Arts & Humanities Languages Building, Room 115
- Social Sciences & Education Williams Higher Education Center, Room 220
- STEM Smith Family Hall, Room 200
- Business South Campus Technology Complex, Building 18
- Healthcare Ryan Library, 3rd Floor Tutoring Center

We look forward to seeing you on **Thursday, October 26th**. If you have any questions, please click [here](#) for some FAQs and answers. We also encourage you to speak with a faculty member to learn more about the campus-wide advising day.

John Doe
 Director of Student Services
 EAB Community College
 1234 Street Address
 City, ST 12345
 Office: (123) 456-7890
emailaddress@college.edu

Begin by clearly stating the date and encouraging every student to participate

Utilize multiple start times to accommodate all students’ schedules

Provide a direct link to the campus-wide advising day advertisement on the website so students can revisit times and locations as well as learn answers to FAQs

Explain what campus-wide advising entails and why it’s important

List all meta-major opportunities and corresponding locations to eliminate confusion and allow students to plan accordingly

Advising Day Reminder Email

Don’t forget that campus-wide advising day is this **Thursday, October 26th, from 7:30 am to 7:00 pm**. Find a session that works with your schedule to learn about our pathways and discover which one fits your passions. Advisors are eager to discuss future goals and current course selection with you.

Please click [here](#) to learn more.


Don’t miss out on this exciting opportunity!

Advising Day Communication Materials (cont.)

Sample Advertisement Template

Advising Day Student-Facing Advertisement

Generating student interest in the campus-wide advising day is a critical step to the preparation phase. However, many students become disinterested and will choose not to attend an event if they are uncertain about how it relates to them. The following adapted sample advertisement includes Yakima Valley Community College’s answers to some frequently asked questions to help students understand the importance of taking advantage of this advising opportunity. Modify the sample advertisement below to be printed and hung in student spaces across campus, then digitize and post it on the college website as well.



Join Us for Campus-Wide Advising Day
Thursday, October 26th

This quarter’s campus-wide advising day will be held on **Thursday, October 26th between 7:30 am and 7:00 pm**. Don’t miss out on this opportunity to meet with an advisor and review your academic plan. We’re here to help you choose a career pathway that excites you! And we want to guide you as you progress along this path to your education goals.

Why should I choose a pathway?
Students who have a clear plan are more likely to achieve their academic goals. Pathway advising helps you make an academic plan and focus your time at YVC. A good plan can save you time and money.

What is pathway advising?
Pathway advising helps you connect your interests to related degrees and certificates. When you choose a pathway, you choose a group of advisors who are experts on those degrees and certificates.

What does an advisor do?
Advisors are full-time instructors and counselors who will help you understand degree and certificate requirements, develop a balanced schedule, and prepare you for registration. Meeting with an advisor can help keep you on track for graduation.

Am I stuck on a pathway forever?
No. We understand goals can shift and bend as life happens. So if your goals change, your advisor will help you to change pathways.

Consult the student support services website at website.com for more information about locations and starting times. We look forward to seeing you there!

Personalize the event by reminding students of their long-term goals

Use conversational language to attract students’ interest and encourage their attendance

Anticipate student questions about the pathways concept and how advising will help them along their way to graduation

Be sure to include a source for students to find additional information, particularly locations and times

First-Year Exposure Course Sample Curriculum

Purpose of the Tool

The first-year-experience course continues to grow in prominence as administrators aim to orient students to college. Institutions can maximize the impact of these courses by supplementing traditional instruction on study habits and note-taking with early, consistent guidance that translates career goals into academic behaviors. By doing so, colleges can better prepare students to navigate college bureaucracy. This tool provides a sample of what a comprehensive first-year exposure course might include.

Week(s)	Topic	In-Class Activities	Assignments
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of course goals, activities, and expectations Student introductions and community building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personality and soft-skills assessments Pre-course survey Initial academic and career interest brainstorm
2	Navigating College Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of college departments, their roles, and how to contact them Website, enrollment, and SIS orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore available student support resources
3–8	Meta-Major Overviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of required courses and related academic and career outcomes Program representatives share insight and answer questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate interest in and compile questions about presented meta-majors
9	Self-Awareness and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of time management, emotional coping, and study skills Group discussion of first impressions of college 	Checkpoint: Ranking or Selection of Meta-Major(s) of Interest
10	Meta-Major Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library tour and orientation In-depth research and investigation of meta-major requirements and outcomes Research transfer and/or career opportunities associated with meta-major of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit academic and career interest brainstorm Select meta-major for final project Connect with faculty, student, or community member involved in academic interest area
11	Content Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of reading, note-taking, and test preparation skills and tools Connecting course content to long-term goals 	Checkpoint: Schedule an Academic Advising Appointment
12	Career Center Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to career center staff and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work-value assessment
13	Progress Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection on individual growth since beginning of course Tools for evaluating academic and career progress 	Checkpoint: Final Project Progress Self-Assessment
14	Communication & Presentation Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norms of professional communication How to present yourself and your skills effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work-value assessment
15	Course Wrap-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-course survey

Professional Advisor Job Listing

Purpose of the Tool

The need for advising reform spans beyond reducing excessive caseload burdens. Too often, college advisors spend their already limited time with students dealing with lower-order priorities, such as registration and scheduling, as opposed to providing students with the personalized academic and career advice they need to achieve success. In order to elevate the role of the advisor, **Alamo Colleges** took a more comprehensive, goal-oriented approach, thereby transforming their advising from transactional to consequential. Use the sample professional advisor job listing below to recruit advisors for the new elevated position.

Professional Advisor

Salary Range: _____

Job Description:

This position will work closely with the Director of Student Support Services to implement intrusive advising strategies.

The Professional Advisor position promotes student learning and success by providing quality, personalized advising to students from entry through college completion, monitoring and tracking achievement of student learning outcomes, providing services to special populations when needed, advising students based on relevant, up-to-date economic information related to students' career interests, and guiding students through the process of determining their educational and career plans. The Professional Advisor enhances the college's commitment to promote a career-focused, academically rigorous, and culturally inclusive environment.

I. Key Responsibilities

- Provide advising to students from entry through completion
- Assist students in articulating and following their personal mission statements
- Guide students throughout career and pathway exploration to devise a well-informed academic and career plan aligned with students' interests and strengths
- Implement academic advising strategies and track student learning outcomes and achievement
- Respond and assist when students experience academic and career-related setbacks

II. Education and Training

- Bachelor's degree or a combination of relevant experience, education, and training that equates to the required degree
- Career Advising and Diversity Training
- Case Management and Data Collection Training

III. Experience

- Two years of related experience, preferably in a college setting
- Proficiency in résumé writing and conducting interviews
- Experience working with first-generation college students and other underrepresented student populations

Comprehensive approach emphasizes advising throughout the entire college experience

Goal-oriented advising highlights the need to connect academic decisions to career goals and interests

Highlight the value of developing expertise related to advising students of diverse and underserved backgrounds

Advisor Training Curriculum Builder

Purpose of the Tool

Many colleges respond to Guided Pathways' call for "intrusive advising" as a mandate to hire more advisors or implement an early academic alert system. Instead of hiring or sub-specializing advisors, **Alamo Colleges** retrain current advisors to serve as a single point of contact for students' college navigational concerns. This training transforms traditional advisors into professional advisors by reprioritizing advice from "transactional" (e.g., registration and scheduling) to "consequential" (e.g., evaluating academic, transfer, and career trade-offs). Use the guide below to develop a professional advising curriculum to inform advisors about new Guided Pathways institutional reforms and prepare them to meet students' unique needs.

1 *Identify the Appropriate Audience*

Which faculty/staff/administrators are currently providing advising or student support?

2 *Isolate the Key Teaching Points*

What are the most important elements of our institution's Guided Pathways reforms that professional advisors will need to communicate to students?

What are the essential components of consequential advising as it stands at our college (e.g., What must advisors know about at-risk populations, student outcomes, labor market data, etc.?)?

3 *Select the Most Effective Modality*

Would this training material be best conveyed in person, or is it possible to expand access through an online platform or a hybrid of the two?

Advisor Training Curriculum Builder (cont.)

Professional Goal-Setting Advisor Training Curriculum Template

Expanding on your answers to the previous questions, adjust the following sample curriculum to prepare your advisors to meet your own institution’s specifications. We have provided some recommended topics to be covered in each of the three levels of advising training courses based on the advisor training curriculum used at Alamo Colleges.

Level 1: Basic Advising/Student Support Certification			
Curriculum Focus	Duration	Modality	Audience
Introduction to Holistic Advising			
Advising vs. Counseling vs. Coaching			
Advising Student Outcomes			
Career Coaching			
Diversity Awareness			

Level 2: General Advisor Certification			
Curriculum Focus	Duration	Modality	Audience
Competency-Based Education			
Working with Veterans and Other Special Populations			
Group Advising Best Practices			
Labor Market Information			
Prior Learning Assessments			

Advisor Training Curriculum Builder (cont.)

Professional Goal-Setting Advisor Training Curriculum Template (cont.)

Level 3: Master Advisor Certification			
Curriculum Focus	Duration	Modality	Audience
Adult Learning and Advising Theories			
Emotional Intelligence			
Social Roles & Transitioning			
Validation Theory			
Capstone Project			

Advising Goal-Setting Metrics Scorecard

Purpose of the Tool

In addition to retraining advisors, it is essential that colleges also set concrete, manageable goals for their advisors. **Alamo Colleges** use the following metrics scorecard to measure their advising success. By setting yearly goals and tracking progress along the way, the colleges can clearly identify critical strengths and weaknesses of their advising strategies while also communicating to advisors which action steps they should prioritize. Update and share the following scorecard with advisors to record and monitor your college's advising goals.

Measure	Baseline	FY 2016 Target	FY 2016 Actual (8/31/17)	FY 2017 Target (8/31/18)	FY 2020 Target (8/31/21)	Data Source	Scorecard Complete
Student-to-Advisor Ratio (example)	900/1	450/1	405/1	350/1	350/1		
Number of Advisors Certified (example)	87	107	117	127	136		
% of Students with Formal Academic Plan					100		
% of Students with Personal Mission Statements					100		
% of Students with Nonacademic Transcripts					100		
% of Students with Advisors at 15 hours					100		
% of Students with Advisors at 30 hours					100		
% of Students with Advisors at 45 hours					100		
% of Students Taking a Student Success Course Within First Semester					100		
% of Students Satisfied with Advising					100		

Related Program Acceptance Letter & Examples

Purpose of the Tool

High-achieving students enrolled in competitive programs of study who fail to meet a minimum GPA requirement are often at risk of stopping out. To promote student persistence and retention, advisors need to determine how best to redirect these students into programs that both have capacity and better align with the students' academic strengths. **Volunteer State Community College** sends letters to students at risk of stopping out, announcing their acceptance into a related program. Consult the abbreviated version of Volunteer State's letter below as a guideline when crafting your own new program acceptance messages to students. Refer to the callout boxes for essential elements of a successful acceptance letter.

Abbreviated Version of Volunteer State Community College's Related Program Acceptance Letter

Dear Vol State Student,

Congratulations! You have been selected as a potential candidate for our **Information Technology (IT) program**. Based on your academic acumen, we have deemed you a great fit for our IT program.

Do you enjoy helping others? Are you a team player? Then a career in Information Technology is for you! Technology is changing our world, and computing skills are in high demand. We are looking for candidates with your skill set to be a part of this exciting and important program.

The following concentrations are available:

- Cyber Defense
- Networking
- Programming
- System Analyst
- Systems Administration and Management


You may also pursue the Computer Science AS degree path, which will transfer to a university.

To learn more about our offerings, please join us at our Information Technology **Open House on Main Campus, Wednesday, May 10th, 11 am–1 pm**. Here you will have the opportunity to learn about the field, meet with specialized faculty, tour the facilities, and **speak with an advisor about your academic plan**.

To RSVP or schedule an appointment, please contact Jane Doe at emailaddress@college.edu or call XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,
John Doe

Dean
Volunteer State Community College
1234 Street Address
City, ST 12345
Office: (123) 456-7890
emailaddress@college.edu



Using positive language, congratulate student for "acceptance" into new program

Explain why the student would be a good fit for the alternative program

Highlight a variety of related certificate and career options

Invite students to an open house to learn more about the new program, provide the location, date, and time

Encourage students to speak with their advisor and discuss this program change

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Related Program Acceptance Letter & Examples (cont.)

Related Program Examples for Competitive-Major Stop-Outs

Most colleges are struggling to advise and redirect students who are not successful in the more challenging or competitive programs. **Volunteer State** identifies common donor and acceptor programs on campus to provide optimized alternate program recommendations to at-risk students. The donor list encompasses those programs that are most selective, while the acceptor list showcases those programs that students can easily transfer into without a substantial loss of time to degree or accumulation of excess credits since they share commonalities in course requirements. Consult the following example lists of donor and acceptor programs when identifying your institution's related programs.

Potential Donor Programs	Related Acceptor Programs
Nursing	Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory Technology, Radiologic Technology, Exercise Science
Engineering	Mathematics, Mechatronics Technology, Solar Panel Technician, Construction Management Technology, Automotive Systems Technology
Computer Science	Web Development, Computer Support Specialization, Applied Technology, Cybersecurity, Information Technology
Physics	Geosciences, Mathematics, Environmental Science
Accounting	Banking and Financial Services, Real Estate Appraisal, Business Administration, Business Analytics
Pharmacy	Pharmacy Technician, Allied Health, Medical Administrative Assistant, Medical Laboratory Technology



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