

# Bakersfield College Guided Pathways

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### General Information

#### What is a Learning and Career Pathway?

Learning and Career Pathway is our term for a “meta-major.” Bakersfield College focuses student onboarding and support efforts by organizing students into cohorts by Learning and Career Pathways and Affinity groups. Our [ten Learning and Career Pathways](#) represent grouping of programs with similar first semester course requirements.

#### How do you define “Staying on the Path”?

Bakersfield College has defined four momentum points that help us understand if we have been successful in keeping students on the path toward their educational goals.

Increase the number and percentage of students who:

- Attempt 15 units in the first term
- Attempt 30 units in the first year
- Complete transfer-level math and English in the first year
- Complete 9 core pathway units in the first year

#### Was there one resource/activity that was a difference maker for your group?

- a. The momentum points provided focus and a basis for data-driven discussion
- b. The campus-wide bi-annual institutes helped us ensure broad engagement. These institutes focused on our student success data trends over several years (such as average number of units to obtain a degree or certificate, percentages of students who transfer, momentum point data, etc.), student body demographics (how many are first generation college students along with the usual gender/age/ethnic-race breakdowns) and challenges identified by students who were trying to navigate our system.

A few key elements that were critical to move from discussion to action:

1. Leadership that embraces ambiguity, is agile in responding to issues, and open to iterative processes. Distributed leadership model that empowers individuals and committees to innovate.
2. Refusal to allow the concept of perfection to stifle momentum
3. Transparency, broad communication, and a commitment to building trust across campus

### Organizational Questions

#### Do you have a committee or group in charge of guided pathways?

Our formal structure includes the Guided Pathways Implementation Team (GPIT) which works to monitor and advocate for *institutional* guided pathways priorities. Members of the GPIT represent

constituent groups across campus including Academic Senate, the Accreditation & Institutional Quality Committee, Classified Union, Budget Committee, Curriculum Committee, Assessment Committee, and more. Each member of GPIT is responsible for serving as a communication liaison to and from those constituent groups similar to what you might see in a College Council structure. Members are not necessarily the boots-on-the-ground folks implementing but instead providing feedback and shaping the direction of the work using a GP lens.

### **How large is the GP Committee?**

In the initial year of our [Guided Pathways Implementation Team](#) (GPIT), we had approximately 35 team members. Since then, we have focused the group to 12 members who each represent specific constituent groups aligned with the six goals defined in our [2018-19 work plan](#).

### **How do you facilitate communication across campus?**

- a. Bi-annual, campus-wide institutes
- b. GPIT members serve as liaisons to campus-wide committees
- c. Annual [meta-major](#) (“Learning & Career Pathways”) data presentations to College Council and GPIT
- d. Early development of a Communication Plan
- e. Meta-majors assigned to Deans of Instructions responsible for administration and coordination of the activities of each Completion Coaching Community

In addition, the Guided Pathways Implementation Team developed a high-level communication plan which details actions the team members can take on a weekly basis to reinforce important, timely messages. Meta-major and affinity group Completion Coaching Communities may utilize this plan to guide their priorities. The GPIT communication structure complements the broader work of our Department of Marketing and Public relations, which is responsible for BC’s internal and external communications. The GPIT communication plan included focused email, posters, flyers, and other media to capture student attention and ensure students are aware of our efforts to improve their learning and achievement. In 2018, GPIT appointed faculty leadership of each Learning & Career Pathway to improve coordination and communication.

### **How are students directly involved in your Guided Pathways efforts?**

Early in our guided pathways development, student voice was essential to gaining campus support and identifying priorities for action. Bakersfield College students participated in focus groups and interviews to offer feedback about the challenges they face as students navigating the higher education terrain at our institution. Students have also been invited to speak at our biannual institutes to share their experiences and recommendations for reform.

Students remain actively involved in our intentionally designed committee structure. Student representatives serve on the KCCD Board of Trustees, District Consultation Council, and campus committees, including Academic senate, College Council, Accreditation and Institutional Quality, Curriculum, and Program Review. Student mentors are also employed to support the Summer Bridge program.

## Completion Coaching Communities

### How did the completion team model come about and how long have they been in operation?

Through Bakersfield College's participation in the [AACC Pathways Project](#), the college learned of various models throughout the country designed to support students in entering and staying on path. By utilizing elements of these proven models and conducting an in-depth review of our own best practices supported by data, the college began grouping students into cohorts and assigning dedicated support in spring 2016. Our early cohort work allowed us to identify needs and implement solutions in the development of our meta-major ("Learning and Career Pathway") Completion Coaching Community model, which began at an institutional level in fall 2017.

### What are the titles, roles and responsibilities for each Completion Coach?

#### **Counseling and Advising Experts**

The primary role of Counselors and Ed Advisors is to become experts on the coursework, internships, and employment associated with the pathway.

- Counsel students in educational planning and transfer decisions
- Recommend effective course placement;
- Develop and conduct co-curricular activities, such as workshops and forums, in collaboration with career center, job placement specialists, transfer center, etc.;
- Work with students flagged for intervention (i.e. probation, SOC, early alert, etc.).
- Provide educational advising and assistance, including placement, registration, and important dates reminders
- Distribute progress reports to faculty each semester;
- Collect and compile progress report data and disseminate to completion team members;

#### **Data Coach**

BC has a cadre of 30+ [Data Coaches](#) who utilize data across our momentum points to improve our integrated planning and activities. Data Coaches are faculty, classified staff, and administrators who participate in ongoing training, support campus-wide data projects, and directly support Completion Coaching Communities in their use of cohort-based data to illuminate the needs of students in each Completion Community. Data Coaches will:

- Assist teams in framing and answering questions with accurate and relevant data;
- Find and interpret data; act as a liaison between the origin of data and the coaching team;
- Coordinate data reports for completion teams and aid other coaches in the creation of reports.

#### **Dean**

The primary role of the Dean in the meta-major Completion Coaching Communities is to coordinate its diverse and multiple functions in a cohesive way.

- Obtain and maintain a thorough knowledge and understanding of the coursework, program requirements, transfer options, and career opportunities;
- Staff, organize, and assess the effectiveness of pathway completion teams through the use of student success metrics

- Identify bottlenecks in enrollment patterns and adapt course scheduling accordingly
- Monitor pathway courses to ensure current local and state approval of curriculum;
- Ensure the assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and Program Level Outcomes
- Apply assessment results to provide leadership for continuous quality improvement;
- Address and resolve systematic barriers to student success within their pathways;
- Communicate pathway resource needs to the Executive Leadership Team

### ***Discipline Faculty Experts***

The primary role of the Discipline Faculty Expert is to share their discipline and pathway expertise with students. Discipline faculty experts may:

- Act as a resource for students by becoming experts in the coursework and broader pathway requirements for certificates, degrees, and employment in their pathway;
- Explore and stay current on student transfer and career options
  - Collaborate with high school outreach efforts;
- Refer students to relevant support services;
- Review and promote thoughtful scheduling of courses based on student progression;
- Report systemic issues to the completion team (and its administrator)

### ***Financial Aid Experts***

The primary role of the Financial Aid Expert is to provide tracking and financial aid information to students within the meta-major (“Learning & Career Pathway”).

- Guide students throughout the financial aid process;
- Provide relevant financial aid updates to the completion teams;
- Inform students of the impact of financial status and impact of decisions, like withdrawal
- Track students within meta-major or affinity group for missing financial aid documentation.

### ***Student Support Experts***

The primary role of the Student Support Experts, comprised of library, writing, tutoring and other specialists, is to share expertise and intrusive guidance for support in the academic career.

- Collaborate with faculty to develop supports tailored to fit specific needs of the pathway;
- Develop extensive understanding of the support services and their role with regards to a specific pathway;
- Monitor student use of support services within specific pathways and suggest improvements and process changes.

### **How often do the completions team meet and for long? What is a typical agenda like?**

Most teams meet bi-weekly for an hour. Some teams meet more frequently, while others have sub-groups focused on a particular event or project that may meet in between the large group meeting. For instance, our [Business meta-major](#) recently hosted an industry summit, which required more frequent meetings to organize the details. Our [Education meta-major](#) pathway has a sub-group that actively pursues grants to advance their work, and they meet in between the large group meetings.

As the administrator, the meta-major dean calls and leads the meeting. Agendas always include a review of the current data around our momentum points and discussion on steps forward or an action plan to address the students not on-path.

### **Do Completion Coaching Communities serve as both inquiry teams and student support teams?**

Yes. The primary responsibility of the Completion Coaching Communities is to ensure students are reaching our institutional momentum points. However, identification of barriers -- particularly systemic barriers the college has unintentionally created -- has proven important in opening pathways and removing bottlenecks to completion. For instance, the [Education meta-major](#) pathway uncovered a scheduling issue with the math course required to earn the Elementary Teacher Education ADT and influenced scheduling almost immediately. Concerns may be passed to the Guided Pathways Implementation Team or onto the dean to address with the administrative team.

### **How did the completion team model impact your existing structures? [For example, is there a dean presiding over a division AND over a meta-major completion team? Did you make any changes to your campus wide committee structures, divisions, departments, etc.?)**

We believe Guided Pathways is not about creating something new but instead rethinking how we all go about our day-to-day work to advance student outcomes. So, our guided pathways work is about both intentionally designing formal structures AND intentionally designing *operational* structures. In other words, we certainly are focused on creating formal structures to reflect this work by hiring and reorganizing (such as our creation of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness) but we find we are able to be agile and responsive to needs through our operational structure that exists to move day-to-day work in our Completion Coaching Communities. It is both the institutional expectation and the institutional culture that we work in a networked structure where we all collectively support the institutional priorities, regardless of formal reporting structures.

In addition to the work of the Guided Pathways Implementation Team (GPIT), our executive leadership team has been clear in their expectation that classified staff and managers participate in the whole-college effort of our Completion Coaching Communities. Each manager submits an annual Work Plan which details how they will use their 40+ hours/week to advance the work and, as such, how they will empower their direct reports to do the same. For instance, our Director of Financial Aid understands and embraces that each of her Financial Aid Technicians on staff will serve on a team and must therefore be creative in their day-to-day work to ensure they adequately support the institutional goals and departmental tasks.

While there is some overlap in the deans' departmental oversight and their responsibility as administrative leads of the meta-major Completion Coaching Communities; this isn't an exact science. Many deans formally supervise departments that do not actually fall into their meta-major assignment. This is, in part, due to workload distribution. However, in many ways, this truly facilitates the work by enabling the deans to be a part of a team without supervisory dynamics at play. As leads of their Completion Coaching Communities, they're able to be at the table with discipline faculty and other staff *as colleagues* intent on advancing student outcomes around our momentum points.

### **You have a meta-major for undecided students? Please describe your Personal and Career Exploration "meta-major."**

Our goal is to work this meta-major (“Learning & Career Pathway”) Completion Coaching Community out of a role. In other words, we are consistently working to reduce the number of students enrolling in that meta-major by getting them on a path leading to a degree or certificate that matches their interests and abilities.

From fall 2017 and fall 2018, we massively reduced the number of first time in college (FTIC) students in the [Personal & Career Exploration meta-major](#) from 450 to 191 which indicates the students remaining in this meta-major are declaring their programs of study earlier.

Completion Coaches for this meta-major focus on early interventions to help students identify their interests and declare a program of study. The counselor assigned conducts career interest inventories with the students, helps them to enroll in a Summer Bridge, etc.

## Faculty Questions

### **How are faculty involved in the improvement of teaching practices, including design, implementation, and assessment, within the guided pathways framework?**

Bakersfield College faculty ensure that instructional content and methods are of the high quality and rigor expected of a higher education institution through a multi-pronged approach:

1. Professional development workshops
2. Regular evaluation of faculty by their peers (both full-time and adjunct)
3. Systematic and regular curriculum design and assessment processes
4. Annual program review process for all programs

**Professional Development Workshops:** In their first year of teaching, all new BC faculty participate in the New Faculty Seminar, which gives them many opportunities to share, discuss, and learn about effective teaching practices. Adjunct faculty have targeted professional development as well and are compensated to attend many professional development opportunities available to full-time instructors.

For example, faculty are encouraged and compensated for their participation as mentors in our [Summer Bridge](#) program, which is designed to help students enter the path seamlessly. Over 100 faculty participated in the Summer Bridge mentorship program in summer 2018, including all new faculty hires per the expectation set at the time of hire. The Research & Planning (RP) Group conducts the analysis of Summer Bridge on an annual basis. The RP Group has reported they have found faculty feel the Summer Bridge experience has improved their own teaching practices.

**Regular Evaluation:** Both full-time and adjunct faculty complete evaluation processes.

**Curriculum Review Process:** The [Curriculum Committee](#) reviews every course in a six-year cycle using the systematic curriculum review process described in the Program and Course Approval Handbook from the CCCCO’s Division of Academic Affairs. This review ensures that course topics are current, that learning outcomes are relevant and appropriate, and that the methods of instruction and evaluation will enable the students to meet the learning outcomes.

**Program Review Process:** Our annual Program Review process includes a requirement that faculty chairs look at all courses that make up a program of study to analyze trends. For example, a program of study in economics is made up of only two economics courses and the rest are other disciplines. In the new Program Review format, the faculty chair in economics must report on all courses that make up the program beyond the discipline-specific courses.

### **How did you approach program and pathway mapping?**

Program maps (recommended sequence of courses leading to a degree/certificate) were initially developed by the counseling department to advise students and then were formalized in collaboration with faculty discipline experts as part of our implementation of DegreeWorks several years ago.

Programs were grouped into meta-majors (“Learning & Career Pathways”) over several institutes of faculty. The institutes are full-day professional development workshops held right after the end of the spring semester and during our “flex week” training periods, the week before the fall and spring semesters. Faculty grouped programs by identifying those with similar first semester course requirements over three institutes with minor iterations thereafter to keep degree/certificate programs in one meta-major (as much as possible). Faculty participation in the institutes increased significantly with each institute.

### **What training do you provide to faculty and staff related to guided pathways?**

Through institutes described in previous questions.

### **What were the first steps that your campus took to begin your Guided Pathways efforts?**

First Generation movie and panel discussions, reading groups of College Redesign book, all-campus workshops on student success data.

### **Others...**

- **What challenges have you encountered? What are things you wished you had known in the beginning?**
- **How did you approach program and pathway mapping?**
- **What training do you provide to faculty and staff related to guided pathways?**
- **What were the first steps that your campus took to begin your Guided Pathways efforts?**