



# Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT. VOICE.

## Guided Pathways Liaison Memo

February 2019

Members of the ASCCC Guided Pathways Taskforce have been traveling around the state listening to faculty members and offering their expertise and support to local colleges implementing Guided Pathways. In addition to hearing about the challenges associated with transforming colleges to benefit students, task force members were also presented with concerns about what guided pathways programs might do to students and colleges. Four of the most frequently encountered issues were as follows:

1. Standards for achievement may be lowered.
2. Students might be pushed through the system regardless of their achievement.
3. Students may not learn self-advocacy or sufficiency.
4. Colleges might limit or eliminate student choice and some programs.

The reality is that we, the faculty, through our academic senates, faculty leadership, and faculty participation, are essential to helping students succeed. The faculty have a responsibility to protect student access and success. For these reasons, we must be involved at every step of building the guided pathways framework in spite of the reservations and concerns some faculty may feel.

Education Code § 70901(b)(1)(E) and § 70902(b)(7) and Title 5 § 53200 (b) delegate to the faculty the primary responsibility for the making recommendations regarding curriculum and programs. This responsibility allows the faculty voice in governance to protect students and faculty from the type of decisions and undesired outcomes about which some faculty express concern. At every juncture and for every decision, the intent of guided pathways programs should be to support student success, and under Education Code and Title 5 faculty have the authority and are the appropriate voice to ensure that student success is at the forefront of all decisions.

Community college faculty are professional educators and advocates for students. We have the responsibility of teaching rigorous classes that prepare students for their futures and that fully meet articulation standards so that students can continue successfully into their university careers. Lowering expectations is not only against our professional responsibility, but it would be counter to the success of our colleges. Faculty are empowered by the 10+1 areas of

academic senate purview under Title 5 which give academic senates, through their local curriculum committees, the responsibility of creating curriculum, standards, and programs. We are the leaders and the catalysts for rigor and program design.

Faculty also have a responsibility to guide student and teach them how to advocate for themselves. A well-designed guided pathway framework offers a unique opportunity to empower students so that they can find their own paths in life. Guided pathways programs can and should incorporate career, educational, and life exploration through clearly identified support mechanisms.

Guided pathways programs also need to consider the range and benefits of student choice regarding the courses offered in a pathway. Two common aspects of pathway development are the removal of barriers and streamlining of decision-making, but an over-emphasis on limitation of options often restricts student choice and opportunity. A secondary result is that some programs and classes are placed in jeopardy.

The perceived limitation of student choice runs contrary to several goals shared by educators and by guided pathways programs. Students often need to explore options to discover what they really want to major in. In addition, a broad liberal education is deemed of value in itself by many in the working world, as students who have a broad education have many more options and adaptability in a changing world. Finally, faculty and colleges value smaller programs and stand-alone classes because they offer diversity and breadth to the college community. Some critics may claim that colleges are protecting “boutique” programs, but in truth by preserving these programs we are providing a better, richer, more viable college experience for our students.

The guided pathways frameworks colleges are developing should be largely designed by faculty, and when faculty step up and take the responsibility for being advocates for students and for the diversity of our colleges, we have little to fear. Guided pathways is all about student success, and their success is also our colleges’ success, which is what we work for every single day of our professional careers.

### **UPCOMING WEBINARS!**

#### **Student Support and Staying on the Path – [Register Here Now](#)**

2/27/2019 | 12 Noon - 1:00 PM

Many student support strategies have been developed to support students traditionally defined as “basic skills,” especially in response to AB 705. But how do you know which supports are effective, particularly for staying on the path? This webinar examines data related to a wide variety of pathway supports intended to support students in the post-AB 705 world.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes and Assessing Learning – [Register Here Now](#)**

3/6/2019 | 12 Noon - 1:00 PM

Guided pathways institutions assess students' successful program completion by focusing more on institutional and program learning outcomes and use that data to make program improvement innovations consistent with pathways. Processes for constructing and assessing these high-level outcomes are different from the discipline specific methods we have used in the past, which focused more on the course-level outcome. So, to become a guided pathways institution, how do we get there? Join us to talk about what colleges are doing to assess pathways success.

**Integrated Planning, Guided Pathways, and Sustainability – [Register Here Now](#)**

3/13/2019 | 12 Noon - 1:00 PM

SB 85 establishes the expectation that a college's guided pathways framework drives its integrated planning efforts. In fact, to fully institutionalize guided pathways, integrated planning is the key to sustaining changes. Join this webinar to see what components of the planning and decision making processes have changed at some guided pathway institutions to support sustainable integration.

**Student Equity and Achievement Plans and Guided Pathways – [Register Here Now](#)**

3/20/2019 | 12 Noon - 1:00 PM

A crucial goal of the guided pathways movement is the closing of equity gaps for traditionally marginalized students. The new requirements of the Student Equity and Achievement Plans are intrinsically linked to guided pathways reform efforts, and they should be regarded as partners in equity. Join this webinar to learn how various elements of guided pathways support your SEA plans and your equity goals.

**Recoding MATH, ENGL, ESL by Pathway – [Register Here Now](#)**

3/27/2019 | 12 Noon - 1:00 PM

Accountability reporting for many recent system changes, including AB 705, the Student Centered Funding Formula, and the Adult Education Program are based on codes that have changed as a result of the system-wide implementation of guided pathways principles and strategies. If these codes are not updated at your colleges, funding and success measures will be affected. Join this webinar to find out how a guided pathways institution can make these data changes and use the process to clarify pathways.

We appreciate your support for students across the system and ongoing efforts in guided pathways! Onward!

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