



RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT'S GUIDED PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

In 2017, Riverside City and Norco colleges were two of 20 community colleges selected statewide to participate in the California Guided Pathways Initiative, a venture designed to substantially increase the number of students who earn a certificate or degree at a California Community College by leveraging the significant investments California has made in student success. In addition to the formal partnership in Guided Pathways, Moreno Valley College is also preparing the program framework.

The California Guided Pathways Project, modeled from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways Project and adopted for implementation in California, is an integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guides each student effectively from their point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.

Riverside Community College District embraces the Guided Pathways model of improving performance-based data, integrating innovation and wrap-around, integrated student and academic services, resulting in increased student access, equity and success.

Principles of Guided Pathways

The Guided Pathways model creates a highly structured approach to student success that:

1. Provides all students with a set of clear course-taking patterns that promotes better enrollment decisions and prepares students for future success.
2. Integrates support services in ways that make it easier for students to get the help they need during every step of their community college experience.



Clarify the path



Create clear curricular pathways to employment and further education.

Choose & enter



Help students choose and enter their pathway.

Stay on path



Help students stay on their path.

Ensure learning



Ensure that learning is happening with intentional outcomes.

In 2015, Norco College made a startling discovery. A review of their 2010-2014 cohort data of all first-time students, a total of 2,474 students, revealed that only 9.8% of these students had completed a degree or certificate in the course of four years. In response, a Completion Initiative Summit was held and attendees carefully reviewed two documents: 1) The 2015 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence; and 2) The Game Changers, produced by Complete College America. Simultaneously, the College was preparing its Equity Plan, framing its discussions around Completion by Design's "Loss and Momentum Framework" and the work done by the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges which focuses on factors that contribute to student achievement.



Completion Initiative

Based on this research and its own completion data, Norco College designed a holistic Completion Initiative comprised of five interconnected components, each of which addresses institutional barriers to completion. The College's Academic Senate and key shared governance committees have strongly endorsed the Completion Initiative and are now engaged in all aspects of its implementation.

- **Meta Majors** – Norco College now has four schools with the intent of helping students choose a major and degree based on their interests, knowledge, skills and abilities. The four schools are: Arts & Humanities, Business & Management, Social & Behavioral Studies, and STEM (with subdivisions of Science & Health and Technology, Engineering & Math). Within each school, a community of learners is created amongst students with similar academic interests.
- **Guided Pathways** – The College developed highly structured pathways that identify the courses students need to complete their goal. This is designed to minimize the choices students have to complete a degree/certificate by providing them with a roadmap and additional support structures in order to reduce the time it takes students to complete a degree or certificate.
- **Faculty Advising** – Conducted by instructional faculty, faculty advisement is designed to enhance the quality of a student's college experience through mentorship and increased communication with instructional faculty. Aligned within the schools, faculty advisors help students explore educational and career goals as well as identify program pathways for a student's selected degree. Counselors led the faculty advisement training and each school has two assigned counselors.
- **Linking College to Career** – One of the ways in which meta majors/schools and Guided Pathways interconnect with a faculty advisement model is through an exploration of careers that are related to various degrees. The College is increasing opportunities for career exploration, personality assessment, industry partnerships, and earn-and-learn/internships in order to support students' completion of certificates and degrees. Career resources are linked on the website for students, faculty, and staff to reference.
- **Models of Student Care** – Lastly, in response to both the research findings and the voice of its own students, the College is developing more intentional methods of supporting student success and completion with opportunities for students to mentor and support other students. As of fall 2017, student mentors support each school and serve as a team member along with counselors and faculty advisors.

After assessing the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan and undergoing a comprehensive Institutional Self-Evaluation during the 2014 Re-affirmation of Accreditation, Riverside City College found that student success and completion rates were flat. As a result, the College decided to make student access, success, completion, and equity a focal point of all strategic planning activities.

Despite the overall flat completion rates, the College experienced promising results in programs such as Completion Counts and athletics. In assessing these programs the College identified several key traits that led to student success: clear pathways, intrusive advising, a clearly identified cohort, and a 1+2+2 model for transition from basic skills to an associate degree to a bachelor's degree.

In 2015, the College identified Completion Counts through Pathways as its overarching strategy for student success. It first identified four broad highways for students: College Readiness; Career and Technical Education; Transfer Pathways for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; and Transfer Pathways for Arts, Languages, Humanities, and Social Sciences. As the College progressed in the work, the need for academic clusters and a clearer sense of student pathways emerged. Comprehensive and integrated academic supports are central to the College's Pathways work.

Completion Counts through Pathways

- **Clarity** – The College developed pathways for students. Through the Guided Pathways framework, the College developed pathways for students, providing clear program maps and support structures to guide students towards achieving their academic, transfer and career goals. The College continues to refine program maps, ensure that every program has a fully developed map, and regularly review and update existing maps.
- **Intake** – RCC initially identified eight academic clusters to guide students through their academic and career development: Language & Humanities; Social & Behavioral Sciences; STEM; Visual, Performing & Creative Arts; Advanced Technical Trades; Business & Information Systems & Technology; Health-Related Sciences; and Education & Teacher Preparation. In addition, RCC has enhanced relationships with local high schools to create pathways to guide students from high school through community college leading to career and baccalaureate educational opportunities. During its college-wide mapping day, faculty began developing on ramps to guide students through career exploration and first-year education plans.
- **Support** – Collaborative teams of counselors, educational advisors, faculty advisors, librarians, peer mentors, tutors, and supplemental instructors provide integrated and comprehensive academic support for students in identified highways. Student Engagement Centers dedicated to each highway serve as the hubs for academic support.
- **Learning** – The College is using the degree qualifications profile model to create and provide resources for students about program learning outcomes, future educational opportunities and careers in their desired field of study.



Designing and Implementing Guided Pathways

The 2017-18 California State Budget included funding for the expansion of the Guided Pathways framework across the California Community Colleges. These funds complement, augment, and integrate existing financial support provided by various statewide initiatives such as the Student Success and Support Programs (SSSP), Student Equity Planning, the Basic Skills Initiative, and the Strong Workforce Program.

Guided Pathways is a planning framework for colleges to bring together and scale effective programs, services and activities that currently exist into structures that include all students. Guided Pathways requires a whole-college transformational reform that brings together evidence-based practices and emphasizes interventions that work at scale.

The program is designed to implement and integrate an institution-wide approach to student achievement by creating structured educational experiences that support students from point of entry to degree or certificate attainment. The result will be that the colleges implement institutional changes which are scalable, transform the system, and are sustainable.

KEY ELEMENTS AND GOALS



Structured onboarding processes including improved placement tests and co-requisite instruction that provide students with clear, actionable, and usable information they need to get the right start in college.

Instructional support and co-curricular activities aligned with classroom learning and career interests.

Responsive student tracking systems aligned with interventions and resources to help students stay on the pathway, persist, and progress.

Proactive academic and career advising from the start through completion and/or transfer, with assigned point of contact at each stage.

Programs that are fully mapped out and aligned with future education and career advancement while also providing structured or guided exploration for undecided students.

Goal 1: Increase by at least 20% the number of CCC students annually who acquire associate degrees, credentials, certificates, or specific skill sets that prepare them for an in-demand job.

Goal 2: Increase by 35% the number of CCC students system-wide transferring annually to a CSU or UC, necessary to meet the state's needs for workers with baccalaureate degrees.

Goal 3: Decrease the average number of units accumulated by CCC students earning associate degrees from approximately 87 to 79 total units.

Goal 4: Increase the percentage of exiting CTE students who report being employed in their field of study from the statewide average of 60% to 69%.

Goal 5: Reduce equity gaps by 40% across all of the previous measures through faster improvements among traditionally underrepresented students, closing the gap within 10 years.

Goal 6: Reduce regional achievement gaps across the previous measures through faster improvements among colleges located in regions with the lowest educational attainment of adults with the goal of closing the gap within 10 years.

