

Notes

“Redesigning America’s Community Colleges”

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What is our model of education?

Self-Service Cafeteria Style	Guided Pathways to Success (GPS)
Overwhelming array of choices	Clearly-defined, manageable choices (e.g. “meta-major”)
Open-ended exploration	Guided exploration
Checking off requirements	Building up to clearly-defined learning outcomes
Unclear alignment with further goals	Clear roadmaps to student end goals
Optional career/education planning	Required plans, exploratory majors
Unclear paths, too many choices	Full-program maps
Competencies are defined on the course-level	Students build skills across curriculum
Assessment used to sort students	Assessment used to diagnose areas needing support
Pre-requisite courses cover general content	Basic skills are integrated and contextualized
Students receive limited feedback on their progress	Proactive progress feedback and support

Guided Pathways (GPS) Model Features

- Clear roadmap to success
- Exploratory majors
- Contextualized instruction in foundation skills
- Predictable scheduling
- Progress tracking
- Bridges to college programs

GPS Features Defined

- **Clear roadmap to success:** Academic programs are clearly defined with roadmaps that show students the courses they need to take (and the sequence they should take them) and the learning outcomes they need to master to complete programs and prepare for specified job and further education opportunities.
- **Exploratory Majors:** Students who don't have a declared major are required to enter an "exploratory major" that enables them to explore the field and either move to major in that field or switch to another field with no loss of credits.
- **Contextualized instruction in foundation skills:** Academic foundation skills and college success skills are contextualized into college level coursework in the student's field of interest. Any remediation is ideally accelerated, specific and contextualized.
- **Predictable scheduling:** Students are placed into pre-determined, pre-sequenced, whole-program schedules that lead to on-time completion. Schedules allow for full-time (15-credit) and part-time attendance. Though they may customize schedules with advisor knowledge and consent, this structure helps students better plan their schedules and balance school with family and work obligations.
- **Progress tracking, feedback and support:** Students receive frequent feedback that includes academic plan tracking as well as non-academic milestones like internships, service learning, preparing resumes, and applying for transfer. Early alert systems help identify when students are falling off track and signal appropriate supports.
- **Bridges to college programs:** High school students in dual credit courses should enroll in required, high-quality courses that are part of an entire program of study, not just any courses that appeal to them. And efforts can be made to bridge students in adult basic education and workforce programs into college-level programs that lead to credentials and careers in high-demand fields."

GPS Design Principles

- Require students to explore careers, set goals and develop academic plans from the start
- Assist them with choices with clear roadmaps
- Resign intake with goal of helping students choose and successfully complete a pathway
- Assess and improve learning across programs, not just courses
- Monitor students' progress giving frequent feedback and support

Pathways Structural Components

