

Guided Pathways—What Are They and Where Are We Going?

Rebecca Eikey, ASCCC Area C Representative

Ginni May, ASCCC Area A Representative

Carrie Roberson, ASCCC North Representative

Currently in California, three major guided pathways programs have been initiated: the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways Project, the California Guided Pathways Project, and the California Community Colleges Guided Pathways Award Program. The programs all have different features, and thus the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is working to provide information on all three as well as general guidance for faculty as they address guided pathways at their local institutions.

Clarifying the Pathways Programs

AACC Pathway Project

The AACC Pathways Project is a national initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and supported by other national partners such as Achieving the Dream, the Aspen Institute, Jobs for the Future, the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, and others. The AACC describes its pathways model as “an *integrated, institution-wide* approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guide each student effectively and efficiently from her/his point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.” To achieve this end, the intent of the AACC Pathways Project is to support colleges as they establish four essential practices: clarify paths to student end goals, help students choose and enter a pathway, help students stay on path, and ensure that students are learning.

A rigorous and competitive application process took place during Fall 2015, resulting in 30 colleges from 17 states being selected to participate, three of which are from California: Bakersfield, Irvine Valley, and Mt. San Antonio. Colleges participating in the 2016-2018 program are committed to sending teams to multiple institutes at a cost to each college of about \$45,000. The AACC recently approved applications from additional colleges to participate in the 2017-2019 cohort, and these selected colleges will not receive grant funding from the AACC Pathways Project; rather, participation is based on a full fee-for-service model.

The California Guided Pathways Project

The California Guided Pathways Project adapted the national AACC Pathways concept in California. This project intends to support “a student-centered approach that can significantly increase the number of students earning community college credentials, while closing equity gaps. Rather than work with a subset of students, guided pathways are a college-wide undertaking that provides a framework for integrating California-based initiatives such as SSSP, Equity, Basic Skills Transformation, the Strong Workforce Program, and the California College Promise.”

As with the AACC Pathways Project, an application process took place in Spring 2017 that resulted in the selection of 20 California community colleges for participation in the California

Guided Pathways Project. Tailored to meet the governance structure of the California Community College System, this process required the signature of the local academic senate president. The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the fiscal agent for this project with additional fiscal support from the College Futures Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Teagle Foundation, and required fees paid by participating colleges.

The California Community College Guided Pathways Award Program

In order to support more participation in guided pathways, the California Community College Guided Pathways Award Program was approved by Governor Brown in the 2017-18 budget. A total of \$150 million will be distributed to California community colleges in grant form by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The Chancellor's Office and the Board of Governors will be responsible for statewide implementation of the one-time grant program for colleges. The program includes "organizing students' academic choices in a way that promotes better course-taking decisions" and creating a necessary "framework for colleges to better organize existing student support programs and strategically use existing funding to support student success." Local senates of California community colleges must be prepared to address the impacts of this transformational effort, which requires engaging in deliberative conversations and creating collaborations around guided pathways at local colleges.

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC)

The ASCCC has been involved in guided pathway discussions for over a year and strongly encourages the use of innovative strategies and actions that support students in achieving their educational goals. Resolution 9.12 F15 *Support Local Development of Curricular Pathways* urges local academic senates and curriculum committees to be genuinely involved in any decisions regarding curricular pathway programs under consideration. Although no single guided pathways model for all community colleges has been or is planned to be proposed, the ASCCC will investigate frameworks for implementation of pathways programs and disseminate effective practices as directed by Resolution 9.03 F16 *Investigate Effective Practices for Pathways Programs*.

In response to resolutions and recent legislation, and because pathways are an academic and professional matter, the ASCCC is forming a Guided Pathways Task Force. In addition, the ASCCC requests that each college establish a liaison that will communicate guided pathways program information, issues, questions, and concerns between the local academic senate and statewide groups.

What's Next?

Guided pathways are here. Faculty can either be pulled along as decisions are made by others, or faculty, through local academic senates, can take the lead. The Chancellor's Office will soon announce a request for applications for colleges to apply for the CCC Guided Pathways Award Program funds. Faculty must be directly involved in the design and implementation of the programs at each college. The application for the grants will require that colleges demonstrate a commitment to the guided pathways framework as specified in Education Code §88922(c):

- (1) A letter of support to the Chancellor's Office, with signatures of the president of the governing board, the chief executive officer, and the academic senate president required;

- (2) Attendance at an IEPI workshop on guided pathways;
- (3) Submission to the Chancellor's Office of a work plan that outlines the college's commitment to guided pathways, integration with other student-success initiatives such as the Basic Skills Initiative, the Zero Textbook Degree Initiative, SSSP, and the Adult Ed Block Grant, and college's policies related to use of high school records and other assessment measures for student course placement.

Although several colleges have begun an implementation of their own guided pathways programs, local senates should familiarize themselves with each of the three pathway programs described. The ASCCC is committed to continuing to update the body with the latest information regarding guided pathways.

REFERENCES:

AACC Pathways Project:

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/pathways/Pages/default.aspx>

California Guided Pathways Project: <https://www.caguidedpathways.org>

CCC Guided Pathways Grant Program Trailer Bill Language:

http://www.dof.ca.gov/budget/Trailer_Bill_Language/documents/307CCCGuidedPathways_001.pdf

Resolution 9.12 Fall 2015: <http://asccc.org/resolutions/support-local-development-curricular-pathways>

Resolution 9.03 Fall 2016: <http://asccc.org/resolutions/investigate-effective-practices-pathways-programs>