Bakersfield College Guided Pathways
Frequently Asked Questions

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

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 our six goals as defined 2018-19 work plan.

How do you facilitate communication between groups?

a. Bi-annual, campus-wide institutes
b. GPIT to serve as liaisons to campus-wide committees
c. Annual meta-major 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

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

a. The momentum points provided focus
b. The campus-wide bi-annual institutes helped us ensure broad engagement

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
2. Refusal to allow the concept of perfection to stifle momentum (So, the book says to tackle x, y, or z in this order but x will completely halt momentum on our campus on y, and z. Let's table it and come back to it later)
3. Transparency, broad communication, and a commitment to building trust across campus

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 cohorting students 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 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, workshops, forums, etc. 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 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 meeting.

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.

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.

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

Both. 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 education majors need to complete their pathway and influenced scheduling almost immediately. Other concerns may be passed along to the Guided Pathways Implementation Team or onto the dean to address with the administrative team.

Please describe your personal and career exploration "meta-major."

Our goal is to work this meta-major 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 path and enrolled in their true area of study.

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 Learning & Career Pathway 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.

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 find 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.

Our formal structure includes the Guided Pathways Implementation Team (GPIT) which works to monitor, support, advocate for, and advance *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.

In addition, 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, it 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.

How are faculty involved in the improvement of teaching practices, including the 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 review process
4. Annual program review process for all programs

Professional Development Workshops: All new BC faculty are participate in the New Faculty Seminar in their first year of teaching, through which they have many opportunities to discuss, share, 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.

Faculty are also 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 participating 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: Assessment is a part of both full-time and adjunct 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 new 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.

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