

MEMORANDUM

TO: Guided Pathways Orientation Institute Participants
FROM: Chris Baldwin and Jenny Schanker, Michigan Center for Student Success
CC: College Presidents
DATE: December 8, 2014
RE: Expectations for Cohort 1 of the Guided Pathways Institute

Thank you for participating in the Orientation to the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute last week. As promised, below is a further explanation of the commitment and activities required to participate as a Cohort I college in 2015-16. **In order to be considered for Cohort 1, colleges must provide a letter of intent from their institution's president no later than January 30, 2015.** The letter, which should be submitted electronically to Jenny Schanker (jschanker@mcca.org), should describe your level of readiness to undertake this work and outline your initial plans to participate in the activities described below and implement a pathways system by fall 2016.

Please also schedule time in the upcoming weeks to continue the work on the planning template that you began at the orientation, to complete the online Pathway Redesign Readiness Assessment from JFF, and to carefully consider the time and resources you have available to begin your guided pathways work. The JFF assessment can be found at the following link: <http://application.jff.org/prra/>. One person from each college will need to first register to complete the assessment.

Below are the three broad areas that outline the expectations for Cohort 1 colleges:

Attend and Participate

There will be 2-3 one-day institutes and at least one two-day institute that Cohort 1 colleges will be required to attend. The first of these institutes will be a training session for facilitator/moderators, which will be held on February 27, 2015. Another one-day institute focused on program mapping and data collection is scheduled for April 23, 2015. Finally, we are planning a two-day institute for late November or early December. More information about the time and location for these meetings will be provided soon. Please note that each of these institutes may be targeted toward different participant groups such as faculty, advisors, IR staff, etc. Colleges will be expected to send appropriate representatives in order to reap maximum value from the sessions.

There will also be a hybrid component of the institute consisting of at least two webinars and an online course with assigned readings and other resources as well as check sheets, templates and other tools to assist in designing your pathways. In 2015, MCSS will also be offering quarterly Michigan Student Success Network meetings (January 30th, April 24th, and July 8th), Regional Faculty Conversations (the week of May 11th), the 2015 Student Success Summit (October 1-2), and other activities, which will support the development of guided pathways, but will be open to all Michigan colleges.

Provide Support

Cohort I colleges will be expected to appoint a lead or co-leads for the Guided Pathways work. The lead(s) should be supported through released or reassigned time, supplemental contracts, and other assistance as necessary to ensure that the project remains on track. The college should also designate a cross-functional steering team including representatives from faculty, advisors, academic and student services administrators, IR and IT staff, and other stakeholders as needed.

A key component of supporting the team will be ensuring that team members have access to data regarding student enrollment in and progress through guided pathways. At a minimum, it will be essential to monitor for every student enrollment and progression each semester, gateway course and other milestone attainment, and credentials earned by exploratory or “meta-major” and specific program. Demographic information and student type (full time, part time, dual enrolled, etc. should be tracked also. More specific information about data tracking will be provided soon.

Design Pathways

Participation in the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute begins with the process of mapping programs, defining default course sequences and prescribing appropriate general education and elective options. This process should be completed for all programs in broad strokes, proceeding on to more detailed scenarios including sequences for full and part time students and the inclusion of developmental instruction where required. The overall goal is for Cohort I colleges to have a guided pathways “system” available for new students registering in fall 2016. Recognizing that some pathways within each college may be more fully developed than others by that point, each pathway should include at a minimum:

- Clearly specified further education and employment goals for every program
- A full-program curriculum map with a default semester-by-semester sequence of courses to complete the program
- Exploratory or “meta-majors” to help entering students choose a program of study, identification of critical courses and other milestones students are expected to attain in each semester
- Program learning outcomes aligned with the requirements for success in further education and employment, with necessary assessment strategies in place
- Policies for intentional advising at intake to assist students in selecting a program that is right for them
- Policies to provide timely feedback to students when they meet benchmarks or get “off track” in their selected program

Once an initial pathways system is implemented, Cohort I colleges are expected to continue to refine and sustain their efforts, and to commit to sharing data and lessons learned with MCSS and other Michigan colleges.

MCSS recognizes and appreciates that a significant effort will be needed to meet these requirements. It is our hope that the resources we will provide in the form of convenings led by nationally recognized experts within a statewide learning network will assist colleges in meeting their own goals to support the success of their students. **Please note that no direct financial support for colleges is available through this project.** All convenings will take place at Michigan colleges and we will attempt as far as possible to rotate locations across the state in order to “spread the pain” of travel expenses. As noted at the meeting last week, we will also run a second cohort of colleges beginning in late 2015/early 2016 for colleges that are not yet ready to launch this work in early 2015.