



michigan community college association

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

**College to Career**

**The Student Journey**

September 26, 2024

MCCA Student Success Summit

# Student Success Project Team & Advisor

## Project Team Members

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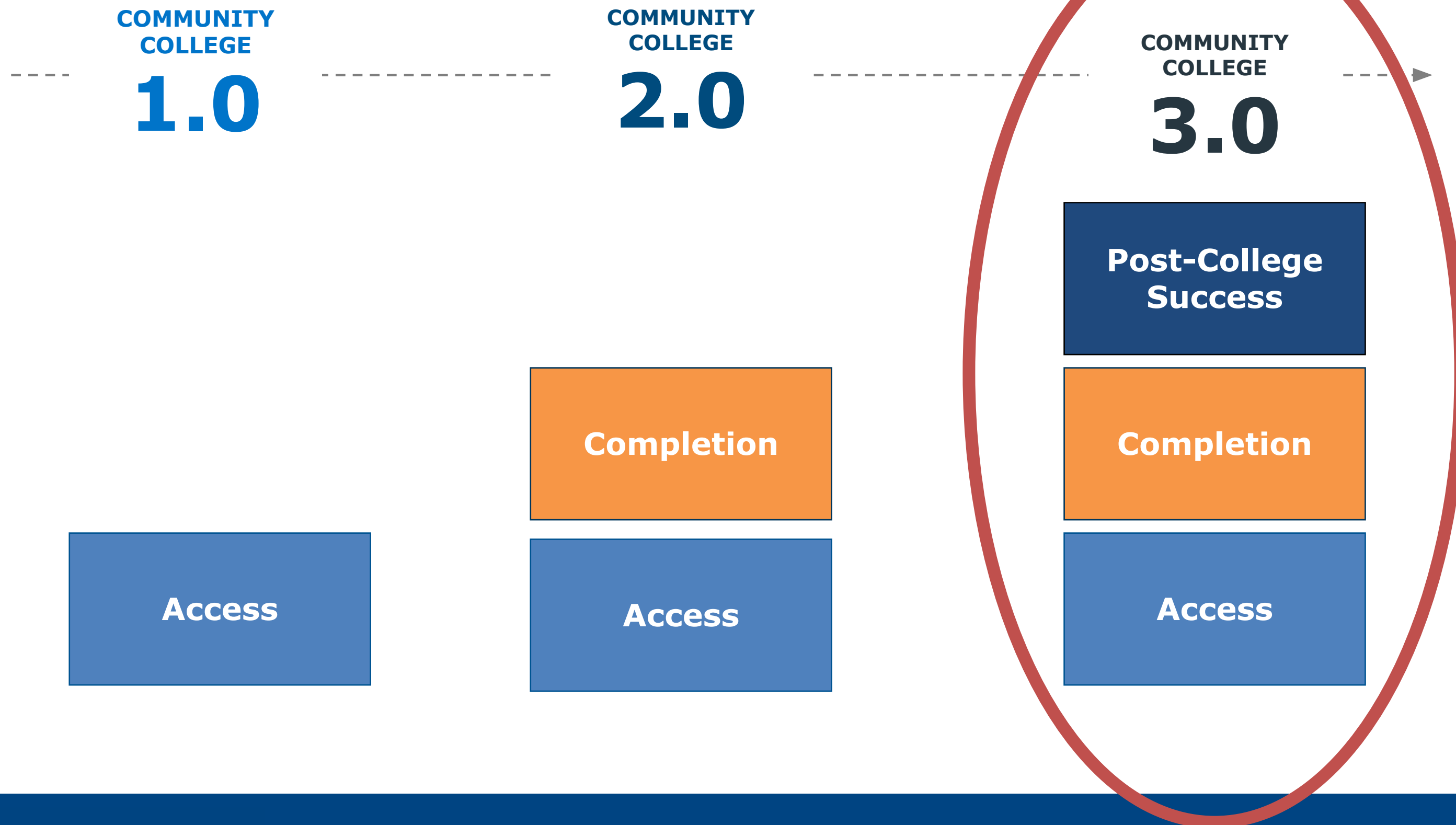
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# Community College 3.0



# Assumptions & Base Knowledge

- Community college students are complex and have varied lives.
- We had awareness of potentially underserved populations.
- Not static—career ambitions change with life experience and knowledge.
- Agility is a key factor.
- Our group contains both one of largest community college systems and one of smallest institutions.
- We anticipated different circumstances based on geography or population.



# Benefits To Stakeholder Groups

## Students

- Provide realistic and tangible connection between work in progress and trajectory into career.
- Acknowledge the shortcomings of college bureaucracy and focus on practical solutions

## College

- Embed agile strategies within college operations, set precedence on continually being truly student focused.
- Not just a wolf in sheep's clothing. (we are not an insurance company)

## Community

- Provide measurable justification of value of community college
- Reinsure relevance within a fluctuating environment.

# Gathering Data

- Coming from disparate institutions, we wanted to understand priorities on our own campuses and identify common points.
- Used a little ChatGPT to get our thoughts percolating!
- Constructed a survey in two parts:
  - Concepts & Concerns related to transition
  - 10 Steps in Moving from College to Career
- Sent survey to 140 people on our campuses
- Received 81 responses (58%)



# Survey Content

## **Part 1: Conceptions and Concerns—13 questions**

- Students enter (School X) with awareness of career options beyond what their family and friends do for a living.
- (School X) needs more resources to provide job placement and networking opportunities.

## **Part 2: 10 Step Process—how well do we do this?**

- Goal Definition—Assess skills, interests, and values to understand strengths and passions. Define short-term and long-term career goals.
- Interview Preparation—Practice common interview questions. Learn about the companies you are interviewing with, to understand their culture, values, and the position applied for.

# What We Learned

- Lots of similarities between schools
- We looked for the biggest gaps—where we should be versus where we are
- One gap stood out that we decided to focus on...
  - **Students understand that finding a career path starts the minute they begin their college career.**
  - This was consistently ranked as “Somewhat False”
- What could be done to create a measurable shift in students beginning their career planning earlier in their education?



# Problem Statement

Community Colleges face a challenge in making existing career resources more tangible, with a focus on improving relatability and accessibility for students.



# Goals

## Tangibility

- Increase awareness of resources available regarding career planning and exploration
- Increasing the % of students who utilize career planning services and/or identify their intended career goals.

## Relatability

- Using right tools and messaging at right time to reach students
- Increase awareness of importance of post-college career planning early/at start of college journey
- Messaging that career planning is not one-time or linear for both students and advisors

## Accessibility

- Messaging related to career exploration featured at every step—marketing, admissions, onboarding/orientation.
- Clarity and understanding of what tools are available.
- Addition of new tools and systems that may better engage students.

# Measures of Success

- Improvement in ratings from annual student satisfaction survey—awareness of services, use of services, satisfaction with services.
- From department—increase in % of students using career services, increase in % of new students (within one year) using services.



# Recommendations

- Assess current strategies being used to inform students of resources available for career planning and exploration.
  - *Are we reaching out to students in ways the students are looking for the information? (email/website vs. texting)*
- Obtain the student voice when developing new or updated strategies for career planning and exploration.
  - *Could be a survey, focus group, student advisors.*
- Seek ways to embed career planning and exploration into curriculum whenever possible, rather than making it “one more thing” the student has to “do” on top of taking classes.
  - *Use experiential learning and community engagement to give real-world examples.*

# Timeframe for Improvement

- Work is ongoing and never-ending.
- Baseline survey of student awareness and engagement with career planning and exploration.
- Annual student satisfaction survey—measuring services available and services used.
- Baseline measurement from department handling career services.
- Statistics pulled on a semester basis by career services department.



# Managing Change (leaping over obstacles)

## **“But our problems are different”**

- They might be! We identified a similar problem across all of our campuses.
- Do a survey, talk to people, figure out what your needs are and what needs to be improved.

## **“We are already telling the students everything”**

- You might have a great website and send out awesomely clear emails.
- Are your students receiving the information? How do they communicate?
- Make sure you get your message where they will see it!

## **“We don’t have time...or money”**

- Start small, pick one or a few programs who are eager partners.
- Capture your benchmarks before you begin.
- Make sure your strategies match your objectives and celebrate small wins...they all add up!



# Takeaways

- To be most effective, career exploration and planning must begin early in a college journey
- We must meet students where they are and how they consume information
- Incorporate career exploration directly into course content whenever possible to minimize creating an additional burden for students.



# Want to learn more?

## Contact us to...

- See how we utilized Chat GPT to get us rolling
- Learn more about how we put together the survey
- See detailed survey results
- Ask any other questions!

# Contact

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*Thank You!*

