Palomar Pathways

Title: How to include the student voice in Guided Pathways

About: Collecting student voice can be challenging, luckily we have been provided with some suggestions! Take a look at the 5 step approach provided by the Chancellor's Office.

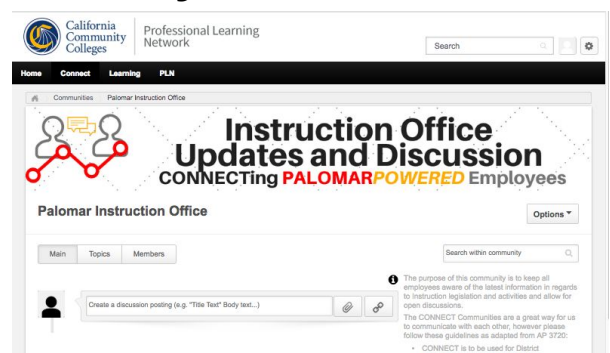How could we use the five step approach to increase student voice at Palomar?

Resource: http://cccgp.cccco.edu/Portals/0/GPGetStartedCollectingStudentVoices_ExecSummary_May11.pdf

From Your Palomar College Guided Pathways Team

We would love to hear from you!

If you'd like to share your thoughts about Guided Pathways please join the conversation in the 3PD Portal!
Just go to the PD website and log-in:
https://www2.palomar.edu/pages/pd/
Go to Communities > All communities > Palomar Instruction Office

California Community Colleges | Professional Learning Network

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CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Guided Pathways

Get Started...

Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design

California Community Colleges

Introduction

Students have vital perspectives on our institutions that can offer valuable motivation for Guided Pathways (GP) transformation and help shape our institutional redesign. While many colleges across the California Community Colleges (CCC) system want to include students in making the case for GP on their campuses and informing their inquiry and design work, they are uncertain about who to involve, when to do it, and how it is practically done. This tool provides cross-functional teams leading campus-based GP planning tips and ideas for getting started with the process of collecting student voices.

How to Use This Tool:

This tool includes an introduction to:

- What we mean by student engagement, particularly in the context of the CCC Guided Pathways Self-Assessment
- Why collecting student voices is integral to GP development
- How to collect student voices as part of your inquiry and design process

Cross-functional teams can use this tool to launch discussions about where to begin your effort to collect student voices, connecting it to your CCC GP Self-Assessment results and immediate plans to move along the GP inquiry and design scale of adoption.

To create a more concrete plan, teams can find specific guidance in *Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design: Why Do It, How It's Done, and What It Looks Like in Action[1]*, a companion piece offering detailed directions and methods, resources, and tangible examples from community college peers.

1 - http://cccgp.cccco.edu/Guided-Pathways-Electronic-Toolkit

What We Mean by Student Engagement in Guided Pathways Reform

Collecting student voices specifically refers to…

- **Engaging students to amplify their experience as a means to positively impact the effectiveness of college policies, practices, or programs.**

Student engagement in GP inquiry and design can happen on a continuum—from a singular activity to gather student perspectives, to regularly listening to student experiences, to fully involving students in GP decision-making. Approaches range from informal activities (e.g., fishbowls) to formal methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys) to college-level leadership opportunities (e.g., participation on shared governance committees).

With the GP movement, we have the opportunity to move toward more authentic and continuous involvement of different student populations as part of the institutional culture—identifying ways to more deliberately gather student voices and allow them to have regular input into the decisions that affect their experience and achievement.

Student Engagement and the CCC Guided Pathways Self-Assessment

The CCC Guided Pathways Self-Assessment identifies key areas for student involvement in GP inquiry and design and outlines what moving along the continuum of student engagement can look like. For the purposes of this self-assessment…

- **Inquiry** refers to engaging campus stakeholders in actionable research and with local data and creating consensus about guided pathways, core issues, and broad solutions.
- **Design** involves establishing and using an inclusive process to make decisions about and design the key elements of GP.

Four key elements specifically describe what student involvement looks like from pre- to full-scale adoption:

- **Key Element 1:** Cross-Functional Inquiry
- **Key Element 3:** Integrated Planning
- **Key Element 4:** Inclusive Decision-Making Structures
- **Key Element 6:** Guided Major and Career Exploration

Getting Started…

To start your discussion of how you are currently engaging students in your GP work, locate where your college currently falls on the CCC Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption for four key elements:

- **Key Element 1**: Cross-Functional Inquiry
- **Key Element 3**: Integrated Planning
- **Key Element 4**: Inclusive Decision-Making Structures
- **Key Element 6**: Guided Major and Career Exploration

Locate where your college currently falls on the scale of adoption for these elements to start your discussion about how you are currently engaging students in your guided pathways work and what the next level of development could look like. Having this assessment in hand will inform how you approach the steps for collecting student voices (see following section, How to Collect Student Voices).

Why Engage Students in Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design

Emerging research indicates that this engagement not only benefits our institutions, but also can have a positive impact on students themselves. Systematically listening to students and involving them in decision-making can allow us to…

- Examine our approaches and understand our processes and systems through the student lens
- Create a full data "story"—enhancing institutional data with ground-level student insights
- Foster an urgency for institutional transformation
- Motivate different college stakeholders to get involved in GP development
- Strengthen student outcomes (the deeper the engagement, the bigger the impact)

Students have already shown their power to motivate change, contributing to key state and national efforts to generate support for the guided pathways movement and shaping the reform through participation in pioneering research *(see sidebar, Students Contributions to the Guided Pathways Movement)*.

Student Contributions to the Guided Pathways Movement

Student Voices on the Higher Education Pathway

Connection by Design: Students' Perceptions of Their Community College Experiences
WestEd and Public Agenda for Completion by Design, 2012

Student Support (Re)defined
The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group), 2012-2014

Guided Pathways to Student Success: Perspectives from Indiana College Students and Advisors
Public Agenda for Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2014

Bringing Student Voices to Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design
Career Ladders Project, 2017

What Do Students Think about Guided Pathways?
Community College Research Center, 2017

How to Collect Student Voices

Gathering student voices requires ongoing attention throughout the GP inquiry and design phases and thoughtful and consistent strategies. All college stakeholders must make a concerted commitment to learn from and with students and meaningfully include them iteratively in institutional redesign; this process is not a "one and done" activity.

To develop a practice of systematically listening to students, cross-functional teams can think of the collection of student voices as an iterative research process. This research cycle includes determining what you want to learn, whom to engage, how to best answer your burning questions, and how to share and act on those results. Five key steps make up the process for collecting student voices.

Step 1: Identify What You Aim to Accomplish by Collecting Student Voices

Start with a key research objective that outlines the purpose and intent of the research you want to do with students. The objective should help narrow and focus the research on what is most important to know from students; for example: *Identify key loss/momentum points where the guided pathways framework could ensure students select and begin a program of study and complete an award within three years*.

Then, identify a guiding question or a statement that tests a hypothesis. Sometimes the guiding question is exploratory: *What are the opportunities and challenges facing our full-time students as they select a major and enter a program of study*? Sometimes the question tests an assumption: *Undeclared students who do not enter a program of study by the start of their third semester are less likely to complete a certificate or degree.*

Step 2: Determine Which Students to Engage and Develop a Recruitment Plan

Next, decide whom you would like to engage to best address your research objective and guiding question(s) and ensure the information collected will be useful and relevant. If you aim to capture voices from different student groups, consider providing opportunities for students with similar experiences and challenges to share in a way that allows for honest reflection.

Step1: Identify What You Aim to Accomplish by Collecting Student Voices

Consider…
- What is the purpose and intent of our student voices research?
- What is our guiding question for this effort?

Step 2: Determine Which Students to Engage and Develop a Recruitment Plan

Consider…
- Which student groups need to be heard in order to best address our research objective and guiding question(s)?
- How can we involve different student groups with key perspectives on the issue?

Different strategies and approaches, and points and locations of engagement may be necessary to effectively recruit and involve the desired student groups. Regardless of the population, experience shows that effective student outreach can be challenging. Going where students are (e.g., classroom, learning community, student activities, common areas, special program locations) during times that make sense for them is key to their engagement. Moreover, engaging different stakeholders who are best positioned to reach different students can help.

Step 3: Select a Method for Collecting Student Voices

Methods for collecting information from students can take many different forms, including

- **Qualitative research** that involves exploratory questioning, structured or unstructured to examine and investigate students' experiences and perspectives; common formal methods include focus groups and interviews; informal methods include classroom activities or college-level forums
- **Quantitative research** that offers a way to measure and quantify a problem or information to allow for statistical analysis that can uncover trends and patterns in responses from a large number of students, such as surveys
- **Mixed methods research** that involves using two or more data collection activities to balance the logic inherent in quantitative methods and the stories that emerge through qualitative approaches

Student focus groups, interviews, surveys, in-class activities, and activities across the college can all inform GP inquiry and design and contribute to many key elements identified in the *CCC Guided Pathways Self-Assessment*. Each method has benefits and challenges in terms of practicality, resources, sampling, generalization, and approvals. Table 1 provides a high-level description of each method, including when to use that particular approach.

Table 1. Methods for Collecting Student Voices*

Method	Description	Ideal for…	Sample Resources
Focus Groups	Facilitated small group discussion of 8 to 10 participants who share specific characteristics	Digging into specific exploratory questions with defined groups, allowing participants to respond to and build on each other's perspectives and experiences at the college	Career Ladders Project: *Bringing Student Voices to Guided Pathways* RP Group: *Student Support (Re)defined Focus Group Protocol*
Interviews	Facilitated in-depth, one-on-one conversations with students	Gathering specific student stories during targeted efforts, developing an in-depth understanding of these students' experience, and shining a light on key supports and obstacles and opportunities for improvement	Community College Research Center: *What Do Students Think about Guided Pathways?* *"They Never Told Me What to Expect, so I Didn't Know What to Do:" Defining and Clarifying the Role of a Community College Student*
Surveys	Questions printed (web, telephone, or paper form) to gather student experiences or perspectives	Identifying the scale of an issue, quickly quantifying students' experience with the college, or for gathering broad input	Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE): *Crosswalk of CCSSE Questions with Guided Pathway Pillars* RP Group: *Student Support (Re)defined Survey Instrument*
In-Class Activities	Strategies for gathering students' perspectives during class periods and as part of course assignments	Taking the pulse of students in a particular section or cohort that can be used to inform course improvements and program and pathway development	Institute of Educational Sciences, US Department of Education; Regional Educational Laboratory at WestEd: *Speak Out, Listen Up! Tools for Using Student Perspectives and Local Data for School Improvement* University of Houston: *The Power of Digital Storytelling to Support Teaching and Learning*
Activities Across the College	Strategies for collecting student insights in venues across the institution	Collecting student input on specific college functions and/or processes, or collecting student perspectives in college-wide forums	University System of Georgia, Diversity and Inclusion: *Guide and Tips for Planning a Town Hall on a College Campus*

*For detailed information, including guidance on selecting and conduct each method and related examples and resources, see *Collecting Student Voices for Guided Pathways Inquiry and Design: Why Do It, How It's Done, and What it Looks Like in Action*

Step 4: Analyze, Summarize, and Share Student Voices Findings

The next step is to analyze, summarize, and organize the information collected from students to share with the various audiences that can benefit from these insights. When analyzing, consider how to organize results in a way that (1) best represents the perspectives shared by students, (2) takes into account the interests and needs of different audiences, and (3) attends to what findings are most actionable in the short, medium, and long term.

Sharing the results of your student voices activity is, in and of itself, another way to engage key stakeholders (students included) in the GP inquiry and design process. Summarizing and disseminating key takeaways lets participants know that their voices were heard and valued. Key stakeholders involved in the research process can also see that their effort has led to information that can be used to better serve students.

Step 5: Determine Your Next Steps for Student Engagement

Consider what next opportunity the college might offer to include students in your GP inquiry and design work to ensure their involvement continues past whatever initial student voices activity you implement. Whatever your stage of inquiry and design on the CCC Guided Pathways Self-Assessment, we strongly encourage you to iteratively return to the process of collecting student voices and engaging students in your colleges' development of the GP key elements, particularly student involvement in cross-functional inquiry, integrated planning, inclusive decision-making structures, and guided major and career exploration. Doing so in an intentional way, using the scale of adoption identified in the CCC Guided Pathways Self-Assessment, will help strengthen your institution's systematic listening to students and students' meaningful engagement. Undoubtedly, **their input and involvement will ensure that this movement remains true to its core—keeping students at the center.**

For more information, visit cccgp.cccco.edu.