

# Strategic Coaching Design

## Shifting Toward Transformative Change

*In the fall of 2017, JFF launched the Assessment, Research, and Coaching Pilot Project aimed at providing modest amounts of funding to Centers in the Student Success Center Network to design and implement coaching strategies. The Pilot funded 10 Centers to implement coaching to address high need areas such as guided pathways implementation informed by the Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA), data collection on student enrollment and outcomes to inform implementation, and institutional capacity for transformative change. The Centers tested their coaching designs over a 1-year period, offering early lessons on how colleges are using coaching to implement guided pathways and student success strategies.*

The Oregon Community College Association represents the 17 publicly chartered community colleges and their locally elected board members before policy-makers and partners whose actions affect the well-being of community colleges across the state. With funding from The Ford Family Foundation, the Oregon Community College Association launched the Oregon Student Success Center to serve as a hub that will lead a statewide shift from many transactional initiatives to an overarching transformational goal for all Oregon community colleges to optimize student success.

### Why Coaching?

The Oregon Student Success Center elected to participate in the coaching pilot to assist their community colleges in implementing guided pathways. The coaching pilot provided funds to secure an experienced lead coach to work with colleges selected to participate in the first cohort, and also employ a graduate student to support the executive director in identifying and engaging other experienced community college practitioners to share their subject matter expertise with the colleges.

In designing the coaching pilot, the Student Success Center leadership anticipated the importance of linking evolving guided pathways implementation efforts with previous reforms implemented by the colleges to encourage and support student success. Some of these change strategies are associated with Achieving the Dream, Reading Apprenticeships, the new Executive Leadership Academy, and other student success initiatives.

The long-term plan for the Student Success Center's strategic coaching design calls for three cohorts of community colleges to be selected, beginning with the first round of five colleges selected in February 2018 who sent teams to the Guided Pathways Institute offered in May 2018. The second cohort will include an estimated seven colleges that will also receive coaching and targeted technical assistance based on the Scale of Adoption Assessment results. If needed, a third cohort will include the remaining interested colleges, and once these colleges are identified they will be designated as learning colleges and invited to participate in future Guided Pathways Institutes.

### Promising Accomplishments

- All Oregon community colleges completed the Scale of Adoption Assessment with support from the Community College Research Center to help the colleges prioritize where to focus their guided pathways implementation efforts.
- Five Oregon community colleges were selected for the first cohort, which included bringing teams of 8-10 practitioners each to Guided Pathways Institutes that are loosely modeled after the American Association of Community College's (AACC) Pathways Institute.
- A lead coach, along with an Oregon senior campus leader with experience and deep knowledge of guided pathways through her institution's prior participation in the AACC's Pathways Initiative, have visited colleges and begun their coaching assignments.

*"Just like our students need support in a variety of areas to be successful, the coaching pilot has provided flexible and customized support to help successfully launch the first cohort of Oregon community colleges to implement the guided pathways reform."*

**Oregon Student Success Center  
Executive Director**

## Coaching Design and Strategies

### SELECTION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A competitive request for proposal (RFP) process was designed and executed to select the first cohort of Oregon community colleges to implement guided pathways, resulting in five colleges that were invited to be part of the first cohort.

### SELECTION OF LEAD COACH

One coach who has been an Oregon community college executive leader in the state serves as the lead coach for all five community colleges.

### SEMI-ANNUAL GUIDED PATHWAYS INSTITUTE

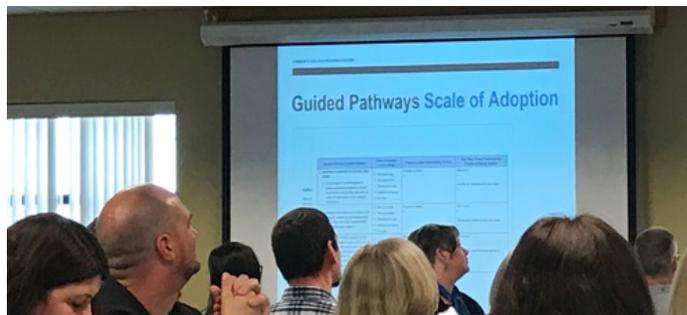
Similar to the American Association of Community Colleges approach, the Student Success Center is hosting two Guided Pathways Institute meetings per year. These institutes are designed for teams of practitioners who are leading guided pathways implementation on their campuses to learn about the model, engage with other college teams to learn how they are implementing guided pathways, and plan for on-going campus engagement in its implementation.

### PAIRING OF COACH WITH SENIOR PRACTITIONER

Along with attending the semi-annual Guided Pathways Institutes, the lead coach is paired with a senior leader of an Oregon community college whose institution was part of the first round of the AACC Pathways Project, to advise on guided pathways implementation in Oregon community colleges.

### COACHING VISITS

The lead coach, often in association with the senior campus leader, conducts 1-day site visits quarterly to each cohort college to gain a deeper understanding of how guided pathways implementation is transpiring and how to best coach in the future.



### COACHING CALLS

The lead coach conducts monthly phone calls with each cohort college to provide coaching on a regular basis. The coach also conducts one monthly call that involves all the college team leaders in order to provide an opportunity for the colleges to share what they are doing and what they are learning about guided pathways implementation.

### RESEARCH

Some coaching pilot funds were used to employ a doctoral intern from the Oregon State University Adult and Higher Education program who attended a state policy meeting, Student Success Center Network meeting, and the first Guided Pathways Institute. She also completed a summary of the colleges' open-ended responses on the Scale of Adoption Assessment and conducted a review of the literature for the House Bill 299Brie8 Best Practices in Advising report. The value of this aspect of the coaching pilot investment is demonstrated in the Student Success Center's decision to retain a doctoral intern for the 2018-19 academic year.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Conversations are occurring with the SSC's Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, and Oregon Presidents' Council about sustaining the Student Success Center and its systemic efforts at guided pathways implementation.

## CCRI Role

As a national partner for the Student Success Center Network, Community College Research Initiatives (CCRI) supports Student Success Center Executive Directors in the design of evidence-based coaching strategies for their guided pathways implementation. These designs utilize strategic planning, technical assistance, professional development, communities of practice, and applied research and evaluation to achieve more equitable outcomes for community college students. Broadly, CCRI conducts research on equitable college access, progression and transfer, degree completion, and employment in living-wage careers for underserved students and diverse learner populations throughout the United States. Follow us on Twitter @CCRI\_UW.

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