

An Introduction to CSCU and Guided Pathways



What Do Guided Pathways Mean for Connecticut?

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) is committed to using guided pathways to improve student retention and completion. This work is a central part of the CSCU Students First initiative, and it builds on a variety of system efforts, including the Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) and Math Pathways.

Guided pathways are academic and career pathways that provide structure, mileposts, and clear outcomes for each student’s college experience. Each pathway is based on a program of study that is aligned with specific employment goals and/or additional education.

Guided pathways include detailed academic plans and incorporate a range of evidence-based supports. The pathways approach is geared toward helping more students efficiently complete credentials, transfer, and attain jobs with value in the labor market.

Because guided pathways touch on every aspect of the student experience, implementing this approach typically requires broad-scale institutional and system change. The work is challenging, and it includes planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Why Guided Pathways?

Educators know what types of changes can help college students complete degrees—and do so more quickly and at a lower cost. Students are more likely to earn credentials if they:

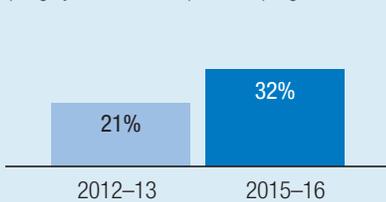
- Choose a program and develop an academic plan early in their college experience;
- Have a clear road map of the courses they need for their credential; and
- Receive guidance and support to help them stay on track.

Several states and systems have seen guided pathways lead to measurable results. For example, since 2012, the Tennessee Board of Regents has been working with its 13 community colleges and five regional universities to implement pathways practices. The state has seen dramatic improvements in terms of both early momentum (students accumulating college credits and passing gateway courses in their first year) and completion rates.

Pathways Lead to Dramatic Improvements in Tennessee Community Colleges

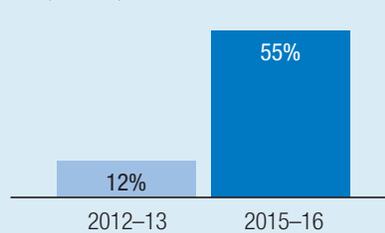
More Freshmen Meet Course Thresholds

Percentage of incoming community college freshmen passing at least nine semester credits (roughly three courses) in their program of study



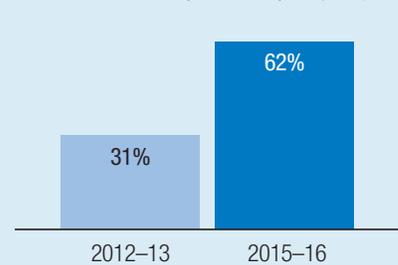
More Students Pass College-Level Math

Percentage of new community college students passing a college-level math course in their first year



Pass Rate for College-Level English Doubles

Pass rate for college-level English (Comp 101)



Higher
Graduation
Rates

42%

Increase in three-year graduation rate from 2013 to 2016 (based on the three years prior to each year)

INCLUDING

88%

Increase among underrepresented minority students

Why the Scale of Adoption Tool?

In 2017–18, CSCU will focus on institutional self-assessment via the Community College Research Center’s Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Self-Assessment tool. Colleges across the country use the tool to better understand what it takes to implement guided pathways, document how they currently approach key aspects of the student experience, and plan for improvements.

Colleges new to guided pathways say the Scale of Adoption tool helps them understand how the guided pathways initiative differs from other reforms. Colleges that already have intensive work underway use the tool to document their progress in implementing guided pathways.

The CSCU Student Success Center and Guided Pathways Task Force

The CSCU Student Success Center, an established part of the CSCU system office, is one of 14 such centers nationwide. The Center fosters a collaborative process in which faculty, staff, students, and administrators work together to develop a culture of academic and personal success for CSCU students. The Center uses guided pathways as a framework for these efforts.

CSCU and the Center are undertaking a multiyear, collaborative guided pathways initiative that is committed to student success and equity in equal measure. All of the guided pathways work focuses on helping more students complete programs—and helping them do so more quickly.

The Center has assembled a Guided Pathways Task Force (GPTF) that includes CSCU faculty, staff, and administrators with diverse perspectives and skills. The Center and the GPTF will oversee the CSCU guided pathways initiative. As a member of the national Student Success Center Network, the CSCU Center will receive technical assistance from Jobs for the Future, which manages the network, as well as other leading national organizations focused on student success, such as the Community College Research Center and the National Center for Inquiry & Improvement.

CSCU Guided Pathways Timeline

Academic year 2017–18 is the first year of the guided pathways initiative. It will focus on institutional self-assessment. Current plans include the following:

August 9, 2017: Student Success Center Convening

Focus: College Completion and Guided Pathways

August to October 2017: Creation of Guided Pathways Working Groups (GPWGs)

Task: All 17 CSCU institutions create GPWGs to lead Scale of Adoption tool campus assessments

November 1, 2017: Student Success Center Convening

Focus: Guided Pathways and Scale of Adoption Tool

November 2017 to Mid-March 2018: Completing the Scale of Adoption Tool

Tasks:

- Campus GPWGs complete the Scale of Adoption tool
- GPTF meets with individual GPWGs to review completed tools

April 6, 2018: Student Success Center Convening

Focus: CSCU Guided Pathways Institutional Self-Assessment Summary and Next Steps

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