

Transcript of Video 2: Pillar 1 – Clarify the Path

Hey, it's Greg Kemble, again. This is the second video in a series designed to address basic questions about the Guided Pathways framework.

In the previous video, I mentioned in passing that there are four pillars to the Guided Pathways framework. This video is about the first pillar, but here are all four of them:

FOUR PILLARS OF GUIDED PATHWAYS



This is a metaphor that organizes the concepts and work of the Guided Pathways framework. These four pillars—Clarify the Path, Enter the Path, Stay on the Path, and Ensure Learning on the Path—help us approach, and discuss, a wide range of strategies and tactics that could build on the framework.

The first pillar—Clarify the Path—involves making sure we have developed clear pathways for students to reach their goals in a timely manner.

So what are we talking about?

First, and probably foremost, we're talking about clarifying *curricular* pathways.

We're talking about mapping course sequences for programs of study, which creates predictable schedules for both students and the institution.

For the institution, it helps us schedule courses over an extended period of time, and to base decisions on when students will actually need classes, not simply when we want to teach them.

It helps students know which courses they need to take, and when, and where they are in their educational journey—how close they are to reaching their goal.

We're also talking about mapping the (horribly named) “meta-majors”—I hope we don't call them that—mapping course sequences not just within individual programs, but within areas of interest, to help students who come to us without knowing what they want to do—to help them

explore possibilities in a way that doesn't make them lose several semesters once they make their decision.

There are other pathways that we can clarify, which aren't related directly to curriculum—outreach, placement, financial aid, information about careers, transfer possibilities.

The important thing to remember—and this is what makes a framework different from an initiative—is that each college, our college, has the power (and the responsibility) to decide what Guided Pathways will look like for us.

Think about SSSP, which pretty much forces specific activities--think the abbreviated and comprehensive ed plans, for example.

Guided Pathways isn't like that. Colleges are asked to assess where they are, to look at their own data--not the state's data, but their own data about student achievement, about equity—how we are (or are not) making sure that all students have the support and guidance they need to succeed. And based on our analysis of that data, and our priorities, our strengths, our needs, we are asked to develop our plan—a Yuba College plan—to implement practices based on the Guided Pathways framework.

Sometimes it's hard to see the need at an institutional level. In the classroom, or behind the counter, or across the desk—at the level of your or my personal experience—things may seem fine. I'm a teacher so I'll talk about what I see: I have a reasonable pass rate. I have lots of stories of changed lives—students who have had breakthroughs in my classes, or have returned to tell me how important my class turned out to be in their lives. And that's all important.

But those aren't the only voices I need to listen to. Here are some other student voices:

Okay, they'll say this is what you need to get this degree. The counselor will sign you up for that degree because you're excited. And then when you get to, then there will be like an A, B, C class, and they never offer the C class. But you have to have it for the degree.

Or:

I want to take a Human Service class. They're all offered at night. I work every single night.

These are our students, from the student focus groups last semester. And it's not just one or two students; according to the RP Group's report, students “repeatedly reported trouble accessing key courses needed” to complete their goals, or they “described having to ... rearrange their education plan to accommodate infrequently offered courses.”

I hope you can see that this is precisely type of experience that the first pillar of the Guided Pathways framework—Clarify the Path—allows us to address—mapping and scheduling courses around our students' needs.

Okay. In the next video, I'll talk about the second pillar—Stay on the Path. See you then.