

# **Clover Park Technical College 2018-19 Guided Pathways Evaluation Site Visit Memo**

**April 2019**

**Deena Heg and Bob Watrus  
Independent Evaluators for College Spark Washington**

This memo summarizes observations from our February 2019 Guided Pathways evaluation site visit. (It also takes into account Clover Park's College Spark Washington Guided Pathways grant application and Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment, completed in 2018).

**Leadership approach.** Clover Park's leadership—at multiple levels (e.g., president, vice president, dean, etc.)—is engaged in Guided Pathways throughout the organization/structure the college has created to advance the work (described below). Leadership is also voicing strong support for bold approaches to change.

One of the key lessons we learned about institutional change from our evaluation of Achieving the Dream in Washington is that institutional change requires leadership that is visionary, active, engaged, and ongoing. Another is that shared, distributed leadership is essential; this requires engaging leaders at all levels of the college. (Our College Spark Washington post-Achieving the Dream study issue brief on institutional change can be found at <http://collegespark.org/grantee-results/achieving-the-dream/>.)

**Organization/structure and engagement.** Clover Park has its Guided Pathways organizational structure in place, consisting of a core team and committees, along with workgroups tied to Guided Pathways essential practices.

The core team includes the president, vice presidents, deans, faculty, staff, and IR. It helps shepherd the work, keeping things on track in terms of progress. It also tackles cross cutting issues such as the Guided Pathways essential practices of faculty and staff engagement, communication, and technology.

Clover Park's Guided Pathways committees are:

- Outreach and recruitment (related essential practices: intake and advising).
- Retention and completion (related essential practice: program monitoring and intervention).
- Student learning (related essential practices: program/degree maps, exploratory sequences, and college math and English within one year).
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Committees are co-chaired by representatives from instruction and student services and include cross departmental, cross functional representation. The committees have work plans with goals from the Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessment, specific measures, and timelines.

Deans from both student services and instruction are actively engaged in the Guided Pathways work. This is one way to use the college's infrastructure to move the work out and forward.

Also part of Clover Park's organization/structure: school (meta-major) leads, program faculty who work with the programs and faculty within their schools to advance the Guided Pathways work, including curriculum redesign. School leads are provided release time and stipends, along with training.

Guided Pathways is integrated into the college leadership structure in the following ways: the college's Guided Pathways co-leads are cabinet members, Guided Pathways is on the agenda of cabinet meetings, and cabinet members provide leadership on the Guided Pathways committees.

During the site visit, it was reported that about 85 faculty and staff are engaged in the Guided Pathways work through the committees and related work groups.

**Technology.** Clover Park currently has Hobsons Starfish, but it's examining its usage and impact and exploring its technology options. As part of this process, it is visiting South Puget Sound, which also has Hobsons Starfish; and Peninsula, which has EAB.

**Equity.** Clover Park has an active, engaged Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. From the committee meeting held during the site visit, it appears its focus, at least so far, is on equity at the broad institutional level. This may be a necessary starting point, given where the college is at, but moving forward, it will be important to apply an equity lens to the Guided Pathways essential practices.

The college is also in the process of hiring a chief diversity officer.

**Meta-majors and mapping.** Clover Park has already identified its meta-majors or schools, with feedback from instruction, student services, and students. Schools are: Aerospace and Aviation; Advanced Manufacturing, Automotive and Trades; Business and Personal Services; Health and Human Development; Nursing; and Science, Technology, Engineering and Design. It's also aligned its programs with the schools.

The college's website highlights schools and related programs. For each program, information includes: program specifics; careers (employment and earnings, pathways, etc.); instructors; and information sessions. (Also on the website are case-making fact sheets on equity, completion, and developmental education.)

In terms of program mapping, the college has identified its guiding principles, which are:

- Completion of college math and English within one year of enrollment (more on this below)
- Hands on experience with programs early in the pathway
- General education courses embedded in the pathway
- Elimination of excess credits to shorten time to degree

- Elimination of equity gaps
- Data driven
- Cross-department/division collaboration to develop better systems/processes/pathways

The guiding principles address a real, genuine challenge—and opportunity—for technical colleges working to implement Guided Pathways: embedding college math and English as part of program maps. During the site visit, there was a good discussion among Student Learning Committee members of some of the associated challenges (e.g., impact of embedding math and English courses on program credits and program faculty).

We also heard about the extensive work being done on college wide assessment of student learning outcomes, including program learning outcomes. It's important that program learning outcomes inform program mapping.

**Exploratory sequences.** One of the essential practices the Student Learning Committee is starting to grapple with is the exploratory sequences for each meta-major. During the site visit, there was a good discussion of potential ways to address the issue of exploration – as part of a meta-major exploratory course, the onboarding and entry advising process, and/or the program information sessions that instructional programs conduct throughout the year (which could include making them more systematic).

**Onboarding and advising.** Clover Park's advising model has a number of features that are in line with the Guided Pathways advising essential practice (e.g., mandatory advising; advisors assigned to specific meta-majors; advisor-faculty collaboration; and regular, ongoing advising touch points); however, it was unclear from the site visit what changes, if any, are envisioned as part of the college's Guided Pathways efforts. We look forward to hearing more concrete information on this work in the year ahead.

**College math and English in the first year.** Clover Park has set for itself the bold goal of eliminating the developmental education math pathway. This includes redesigning placement, contextualizing math instruction to pathways, and implementing corequisite math. The vision is of just-in-time math tied to programs, with mandatory supplemental instruction. During the site visit, some challenges associated with this surfaced, including: impact of incorporating college math in the first year on program structures and course schedules; impact on faculty (e.g., credentials, workload, etc.); and faculty buy in.

In our College Spark Washington post-Achieving the Dream study issue brief on math reform (available at <http://collegespark.org/grantee-results/achieving-the-dream/>), we identified some lessons learned from Achieving the Dream and their implications for policy, practice, and systems. These include:

- Set goals that target college math completion.
- Take a comprehensive approach to math reform (e.g., placement, changes in curriculum and instruction, supports, etc.).
- Embed math reform in broader systems change.

- Focus not just on the “what” of change, but the “how.” This includes:
  - Active, engaged, intensely focused leadership
  - Shared distributed leadership, and broad, deep engagement
  - Case making for why change needs to occur in math (including examination of institutional data on outcomes, with data disaggregated to identify equity gaps)
- Evaluate math reforms as part of continuous improvement.

We were interested to hear that Clover Park is looking at data literacy and pedagogy as two areas for future work relevant to Guided Pathways and will look forward to hearing about how this work develops over time.

We were also very encouraged by Clover Park’s overall willingness to have frank discussions about real institutional change, its challenges, and different possible approaches to make change happen.