GUIDED PATHWAYS: OVERVIEW

ISSUE BRIEF

Guided Pathways

The Pathways Model is an integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guide each student effectively and efficiently from point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.
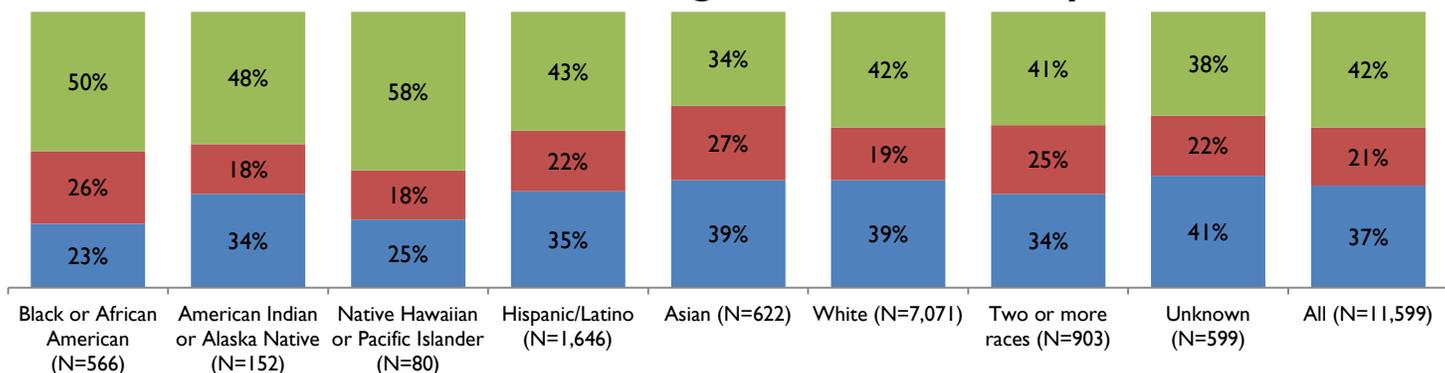
The problem: too few students complete their degree or certificate

Too many students leave college before earning a degree or certificate, or they're not able to complete their academic goal in a timely way. Three years after starting, four in 10 students leave college with no award. Another one in five are still in school but have not yet finished.

Completion, retention and stop-out rates by 2015

Students new to Washington's community and technical colleges in fall 2012.

How students who started college in fall 2012 fared 3 years later

	Black or African American (N=566)	American Indian or Alaska Native (N=152)	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (N=80)	Hispanic/Latino (N=1,646)	Asian (N=622)	White (N=7,071)	Two or more races (N=903)	Unknown (N=599)	All (N=11,599)
Non-completer, no longer enrolled anywhere	50%	48%	58%	43%	34%	42%	41%	38%	42%
Non-completer, still enrolled at same or different 2-year	26%	18%	18%	22%	27%	19%	25%	22%	21%
Completed in 150% of time and/or transferred to a 4-year	23%	34%	25%	35%	39%	39%	34%	41%	37%

■ Completed in 150% of time and/or transferred to a 4-year   ■ Non-completer, still enrolled at same or different 2-year   ■ Non-completer, no longer enrolled anywhere

Why don't students complete their degree or certificate?

Students start college with a goal, but face obstacles to reaching that goal. Common obstacles include:

- Confusion in choosing or even knowing about college programs

- Difficulty navigating a college's systems — what courses to take, what student support and co-curricular activities are available and when and to where to go to ask for help

- Remedial courses that require time and may not be aligned with students' program of study

- Not completing college-level mathematics, or not completing the appropriate math courses for their degree or certificate

Guided Pathways design principles

The four dimensions of the Pathways Model, together with essential practices under each, are the following[1]:

1. Clarify paths to student end goals (meta-majors)

- Simplify students' choices with default program maps — meta-majors — developed by faculty and advisors that show students a clear pathway to completion or transfer, further education and employment in fields of importance to the region.

2. Help students choose and enter a pathway (onboarding)

- Redesign intake, orientation, placement, and advising to help entering students choose a meta-major and enroll in a Program of Study as quickly as possible.

- Redesign traditional remediation as an "on-ramp" to a program of study, which helps students explore academic and career options from the beginning of their college experience, aligns math and other foundation skills coursework with a student's program of study, and integrates and contextualizes instruction to build academic and non-academic foundation skills throughout the college-level curriculum, particularly in program "gateway" courses.

- Provide accelerated remediation to help very poorly prepared students succeed in college-level courses as soon as possible.

3. Help students stay on path (advising and monitoring)

- Support students through a strong advising process, embedded and ongoing in the pathway experience and supported by appropriate technology, to help students make informed choices, strengthen clarity about transfer and career opportunities at the end of their chosen college path, ensure they develop an academic plan with predictable schedules, monitor their progress, and intervene when they go off track.

- Embed academic and non-academic supports throughout students' programs to promote student learning and persistence.

4. Ensure that students are learning (learning outcomes)

- Establish program-level learning outcomes aligned with the requirements for success in employment and further education in a given field and apply the results of learning outcomes assessment to improve the effectiveness of instruction across programs.

- Integrate group projects, internships, and other applied learning experiences to enhance instruction and student success in courses across programs of study.

- Ensure incorporation of effective teaching practice throughout the pathways.

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