



California Guided Pathways

December 19, 2016

Greetings Pathways trailblazers!

Besides bringing to close another successful completion of a semester's instruction in critical thinking, exploration, and career preparation, this year's December had two major events that brought the California Guided Pathways project to the next level: the College Futures Foundation's approval to fund the project on December 6th and the first of the IEPI workshops on Guided Pathways held on December 7th and 8th.



Although many of us were expecting these things to happen, the year 2016 has shown us that expectations are one thing and what actually happens can be something very different. California Guided Pathways went from planning and expectation to official

approval and action. It's real and it's sustainable through wide support across the state. You know, that's a very good situation to be in! Yes (with requisite fist pump)! Although he doesn't seek the spotlight, I think we all owe [Shawn Whalen](#), Senior Program Officer at College Futures Foundation, a big "Thank You!" for all his work bringing us together, asking the tough questions, keeping the equity conversation front and center, and stretching the colleges for higher levels of performance. The day after the College Futures Foundation voted to help fund the California Guided Pathways project, the [Foundation for California Community Colleges announced the official launch of the California Guided Pathways project](#). In early 2017, between 15-20 community colleges will be selected to implement the California Guided Pathways Model from a competitive application and interview process.



The [application](#) and further details about the project are now found on the official California Guided Pathways website at www.caguidedpathways.org. **The application is due February 28, 2017.** Besides studying the materials on the California Guided Pathways website to find out how to make their applications truly competitive, colleges should attend one of the two IEPI workshops on Pathways.

The first workshop funded by the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative was held in Sacramento on December 7th to 8th. Couldn't make that one? The [second IEPI workshop on Guided Pathways](#) will be held in **Costa Mesa on January 26th to 27th**. Go to the Professional Development section of IEPI's website (<http://iepi.cccco.edu/professional-development>) to find out more and register for the January 26/27 workshop and see the presentations from the first workshop.



The wide-spread interest and support for making Guided Pathways a reality in California was very evident at the first IEPI workshop on Guided Pathways with 200 hundred people attending from 21 colleges and five higher education partners. [Davis Jenkins](#) from the Community College Research Center and co-author of “Redesigning America’s Community Colleges”, gave the [keynote](#) that laid out why we needed a guided pathways system and the challenges and successes in implementing guided pathways.

Some highlights for me from Jenkins’s information-rich presentation included: completion rates are very low across the nation; socio-economic status plays a stark role in completion rates; research shows that taking a course in their program of study in the first semester greatly increases completion rates; and research shows that if we can convince students to take more credits per semester (closer to a full load), the students will be much more likely to complete.



The panels and breakout sessions focused on the four pillars of the college GPS (Guided Pathways System): [Clarifying the Path](#), [Entering the Path](#), [Staying on the Path](#), and [Ensuring Learning](#). Extraordinary things are already happening across the state as we've laid the groundwork for the college GPS these past several years.

It was so gratifying to see the excitement of faculty, classified staff, and administrators as they shared their experiences in creating the components that make up the four pillars (e.g., SSSP, Equity, Basic Skills Transformation, the Strong Workforce Program, and California College Promise). The college GPS provides the framework for integrating all that work while still ensuring that colleges have the flexibility to implement the GPS according to their student and community needs.

While the presentation slides are all posted in the Professional Development section of IEPI's website, you need to attend the workshop for the explanation of the slides and the rich conversations that translate the theory to application. The [second workshop](#) is in Costa Mesa on January 26th to 27th. If you weren't at the first workshop, I hope to see you and your college's GPS team on January 26th and 27th!



With much warmth and collegiality,
Sonya

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