

# Guided Pathways (GP) Organizational Structure

## Task Force Recommendations

6 March 2023

### What is Guided Pathways at Santa Rosa Junior College?

The Guided Pathways framework is a vehicle for directing and organizing system transformation and strategic efforts. Guided Pathways organizes the institution in such a way that it consistently and persistently engages in change that improves student learning and educational goals, closes achievement gaps, eliminates student friction points, and works together in reaching these objectives. Guided Pathways uses four foundational principles to organize the work:



#### CLARIFY THE PATH

Colleges map pathways to students' end goals and make sure they align with meaningful occupations available in the region.



#### HELP STUDENTS GET ON A PATH

Colleges help students explore career options and interests, develop an academic plan early on, and have a clear road map of the courses they need to earn a credential.



#### HELP STUDENTS STAY ON THEIR PATH

Colleges provide ongoing guidance and support, including support for students who choose to change pathways.



#### ENSURE STUDENTS ARE LEARNING

Colleges engage students with high-impact teaching, program-relevant applied learning experiences, and clear program learning outcomes that lead to credentials, further education, and/or gainful employment.

There are several key elements that characterize Guided Pathways work at a college. They include but are not limited to:

- **Programs that are fully mapped** out and aligned with further education and career advancement while also providing structured or guided exploration for undecided students;
- **Redesigning and integrating basic skills/developmental education classes** to support students to college-level classes;
- **Proactive academic and career advising** from the start through completion and/or transfer, with assigned point of contact at each stage;
- **Structured onboarding processes** including improved placement tests and co-requisite instruction that provide students with clear, actionable, and usable information they need to get off to the right start in college in programs such as FYE, Summer Bridge, and Intercultural Center Programs;
- **Responsive student scheduling and tracking systems** aligned with interventions and resources to help students stay on the pathway, persist, and progress such as block and student-centered scheduling strategies and strategic enrollment plans; and,
- **Instructional support and co-curricular activities** aligned with classroom learning and career interests.

## Recommendations for Guided Pathways Organizational Structure

### Challenge:

Throughout the Task Force deliberations of how to structure GP work, discussions revolved around two main challenges:

1. How can GP be both centrally led with sufficient institutional authority to implement proposals?
2. How can GP be widely distributed with faculty and staff working together and throughout the District without being sidelined or siloed?

### Our recommendations are guided by three premises:

1. Guided Pathways and equity initiatives like it must be championed and charged from the highest executive levels;
2. We need institutional authority like Vice Presidents (VPs) to implement equity initiatives, and we need investment and innovations to emanate from all areas of the college community; and,
3. We need an administrative structure that shepherds, supports, and sustains GP work until it is fully integrated into the organization of the college.

### Rationale of the recommendations:

1. Executive-level administrators have the power to allocate money, hire people, reorganize staffing, reassign resources, and put the weight of the institution behind innovations; and, only executive level administrators have the institutional authority to implement GP innovations.
2. Beyond centralized institutional authority, SRJC requires a widespread, shared vision of what equity looks like locally that respects (among other things) the:
  - unique culture of SRJC and Sonoma County;
  - unique constituencies through the District;
  - unique disciplines and clusters of disciplines as well as programs and projects throughout the District; and,
  - shared governance and labor negotiations processes.

### Recommendations for GP Organizational Structure (*four aspects total*):

**One: Create a strong centralized authority** that demonstrates the District's commitment to Guided Pathways and the empowerment of constituencies by:

- (1.a) Incorporating GP work into the job descriptions of the VPs of Academic Affairs and Student Services; and,
- (1.b) Creating a cabinet-level position to serve as GP Administrator/VP/Dean/*specified role* and establish an Office of Guided Pathways, whose goals are to:
  - Create a culture of shared collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Services;
  - Develop an accessible set of GP principles ("the GP lens") that is integrated at all levels of the District;
  - Advise VPAA, VPSS, and other institutional entities on how to utilize the GP/Equity lens on large scale projects like reorganization; and,
  - Support GP leadership and project implementation as described below and as already ongoing in the District.

**Two: Incorporate Shared Governance and Leadership**

- (2.a) Create a quad-leadership model embedded in the Office of GP that collaborates with the GP Administrator (see above) in the coordination of communications, completion of required administrative/logistical tasks, and other responsibilities as described below.
  - Drawing from establishment of a Faculty Coordinator by the Academic Senate and pending negotiation, the Task Force recommends, in total, four leadership roles as follows:
    - 1 GP Administrator
    - 2 GP Faculty Coordinators (*one Academic Affairs and one Student Services*)
    - 1 GP Classified Coordinator
- (2.b) Establish the following principles and values within the Quad-Leadership model in the Office of GP by supporting policies and processes that:
  - Shepherd GP projects already approved (and future ones) to full implementation;
  - Work with other groups throughout the District to inventory, design, integrate, and implement GP and equity projects such as Student Equity Plan 2.0, the Strategic Enrollment Management Implementation Workgroup, and the Caring Campus Initiative (among others); and,
  - Devise an accountability process which tracks and assesses the implementation and effectiveness of various GP initiatives.
- (2.c) Establish a GP SGA Student Leadership Panel that is...
  - Supportive of a SGA GP VP that leads the coordination of the SGA Leadership panel in partnership with the Quad-Chair Leadership;
  - Consulted regularly as part of the SGA process as initiated by the GP Leadership structure described above;
  - Reflective of the student-centered goals of our institution, programs, and curriculum; and,
  - Respects the 9+1 student participation governance roles.

**Three: Establish a GP Innovation Hub**

- (3.a) Led by the quad-chairs in the Office of GP and supported by members of the rotating implementation team (see below), the Innovation Hub provides multi-level support for GP projects **with the goal of implementing GP projects from every academic cluster by...**
  - Facilitating departments, programs, and clusters to apply for project support;
  - Conducting Inquiry, Design, Implementation of GP proposals and projects;
  - Helping with data coaching; and,
  - Supporting review, shared governance, and accountability processes.

**Four: Create GP Implementation Teams**

- (4.a) Over the next 3-5 years, the GP Leaders (VPAA, VPSS, Quad Leadership, SGA GP VP) will facilitate and support District-wide, multi-constituency, cross-functional GP implementation teams in order to distribute GP innovation and leadership **throughout**

**all academic clusters** in the District as based on proposals and projects adopted through the GP Innovation Hub (as introduced above).

- The implementation teams will represent a mindful culture of shared collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Services, with participants as recommended by Academic Clusters, Student Services Offices, and Student Government and as supports the unique needs and goals of each GP project/proposal.
- Implementation teams will bring projects and proposals to their integrated, supported goals as supported by GP leadership and inclusive of participation from all relevant groups as necessary for success.
- Teams will be disbanded once permanent processes are put into place, and new teams will be formed based on emergent needs and proposals.
- **An example of a current GP Implementation Project which would benefit from a fully implemented team approach: Renew academic clusters – also known as academic interest areas or pathways** – in a design that reflects the [GP-related efforts already underway in the Curriculum Office](#) and acknowledges academic disciplines as student-facing. The goal of this ongoing design would improve accessibility, comprehension, and exploration of academic majors and programs, which if fully supported by an implementation team as described above, could also include the following elements:
  - Lead goal setting, inquiry, design, and implementation of equity projects within the project;
  - Organize data coaching;
  - Implement peer coaching;
  - Embed Academic Counseling specific to their cluster's pathway;
  - Embed Academic and Student Services Support Programs; and,
  - A review and audit process facilitated by the coordinating group.

*This is just one, brief example of how an implementation team might operate at SRJC.*

## Potential Limitations

We are aware we made a comprehensive proposal within a short timeframe, and are also aware we cannot anticipate all the complexities known and unknown. These ideas and questions (*non-exhaustive*) were left pending in our final analysis:

- As the college reorganizes, the integration of GP should, in our estimation, take center stage.
- How do we address the need for increased participation from classified, staff, faculty, and students across the college given recent trends of decreasing participation?
- When we proposed the idea of a GP Administrator/VP/Dean/*a specified role*, some faculty expressed opposition to creating a *new* position but offered no solution to the consensus around the need for strong leadership.
- It is suggested that sufficient, front-loaded release time (early on) and/or negotiated pay to accomplish GP work is crucial to the success of GP, from start to finish.
- Structures, policies, procedures, and negotiated working conditions will be needed to support the recommendations in general, and the Innovation Hub and implementation teams specifically.

## Why is Guided Pathways Important?

SRJC is known for its dedication in providing excellent instruction and student support, **and** there is still a good deal of room for improvement in student outcomes. As you will see in the following performance indicators, over the last three years our students are successfully:\*

- Passing their classes (with a grade of C or better) at an average rate of **39.4%** (credit courses only from 2021/22 (FA&SP));
- Completing college-level math courses within their first year at an average rate **12.1%** (new 2021/22 credit students);
- Completing college-level English courses within their first year at an average rate of **29.9%** (new 2021/22 credit students);
- Completing their first semester and returning in the very next semester an average rate of **62.2%** (new FA21 credit students & returning SP22);
- Completing their first semester and returning a year later at an average rate of **51.9%** (new FA21 credit students & returning FA22); and,
- First-time college students transferring to a four-year institution within three years at a rate of **13.0%** (3yr transfer rate for all new 2019-20 credit students).

*\*data from the SRJC Office of Institutional Research*

Of further importance is the disparity in outcomes within groups of students at SRJC. The college [Student Equity Plan 2.0](#) process identified [disproportionately impacted outcomes for many groups](#), most notably part-time students, first-generation college students, foster youth, males of many ethnicities and races, as well as Hispanic-identified students.

Even further, [the District's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#) looks to Guided Pathways to address systemic barriers to student completion at SRJC. Achieving the goals of Guided Pathways is anticipated to positively impact enrollment and successful retention and completion by SRJC students.

In sum, it is important to recognize both our incredible efforts and successes in better meeting the needs of our students in instruction and support **and** our need for persistent work in evolving the institution to further improve these outcomes.

## SRJC Guided Pathways to Date

- SRJC adopted an Academic Senate-led approach ([go here to see the history of Senate activity on Guided Pathways](#)) (2017 - 22) that eventually focused on five major areas of improvement as currently being implemented:
  - Academic Support Backpacks;
  - Interdisciplinary First Year Experience (FYE) Course;
  - Program Mapping;
  - FYE Program; and,
  - Student-Facing Website Redesign.
- Current projects are being implemented through an ad hoc process led by Matthew Long and John Stover, and progress to date has provided even further evidence of the need for

significant, integrated organizational resources in staffing, and the development of processes that best supports the overall goals of Guided Pathways as described above;

- It has also become apparent that the current individual projects, as first developed in distinct workgroups with discrete goals, require the institutional authority and facilitation by a coordinating group connecting constituencies throughout the District in order to reach their full, holistic potential for student support and success.
  - For example, the Academic Support Backpack materials are being integrated into the SRJC Connect web-based resources; and,
  - The Student-Facing Website Redesign group is about to share ideas that could improve multiple aspects of our SRJC website(s), including the SRJC Connect-Academic Backpack project mentioned above.

## GP Organizational Structure Task Force Charge & Membership

The charge of this Task Force was: **“To develop recommendations for a [college organizational] structure for future GP work,” which “will help integrate GP work into the college in support of our students’ educational goals and in a manner that reflects contributions from all constituencies.”** *Its composition included:*

### *Five Faculty members*

- 1 Academic Senate Executive Committee (ASEC) GP liaison – John Stover
- 3 appointed by Academic Senate – Jessica Bush, Michael Hale, and Phyllis Usina
- 1 appointed by AFA – no appointment made

### *Four Classified Professionals*

- 3 appointed by Classified Senate – Maria Banachowicz, Regina Mahiri, and Debbie Weatherly
- 1 appointed by SEIU – Greg Drukala
- Two Students appointed by Student Government Assembly – Dori Elder and Melissa Ramirez

### *Three Administrators*

- 1 GP Administrator – Matthew Long
- 2 appointed by the President – Byron Reaves, Roam Romagnoli

### *One representative from the office of Institutional Research*

- 1 appointed by the President – Jeremy Smotherman

[You may access the Task Force Meeting Materials here.](#)

*Thank you for your time and consideration*

*[End of Recommendations Report]*