Lessons Learned from the Network Coaching Pilot

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NETWORK

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The Assessment, Research, and Coaching Pilot *began with 10 Student Success Centers (Centers) implementing a range of activities, including using the Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA) or other assessments to establish baselines; using assessment data to focus pathway development, improve programs, and target coaching; and developing coaching designs and strategies for organizational change. Over the last year, the Community College Research Initiatives (CCRI) team has gathered information to understand what the Centers are doing with coaching to support guided pathways implementation. A subset of Center Executive Directors (EDs) received targeted advisement from CCRI to support coaching on guided pathways reform. Some of the most salient lessons learned for future Center coaching efforts are presented below.*

LESSONS LEARNED

Leadership Influences Coaching Designs. College leaders at all levels – EDs and advisory members, college administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and coaches – use knowledge gained from past experiences and on-going relationships to assess what colleges need to do to change. Past experience with coaching in the American Association of Community College (AACC) Pathways Initiative has provided EDs and college leaders with a model from which to customize coaching to meet their own needs. In some instances, experienced AACC colleges were asked to model for new institutions.

Contextual Learning Supports Change. Contextual learning is recognized as important for students, but it is also important for college employees. Coaching strategies perceived as most beneficial are ones that develop a deep understanding of college context to generate relevant, meaningful, and effective solutions. Approaches to coaching that involve individuals working at all levels within colleges in problem-solving and hands-on learning to bring about change help to increase student success.

Coaching Builds Capacity. Coaching can be a form of capacity building when the Centers grow expertise within their states. Coaches who are subject matter experts on guided pathways, organizational change, student success and other critical areas can help colleges change in beneficial ways. Some of these coaches come from outside the state, but some work in colleges inside the state, providing an opportunity to grow local expertise that is often more readily accessible and cost effective than external national experts. The Centers that utilized a mix of coaches from outside and inside their state benefit from professional development to build connections and support a cohesive coaching strategy.

Comprehensive Reform Changes Everything. The guided pathways reform touches all aspects of colleges in a comprehensive reform approach. Comprehensive reforms are the most complex to implement but potentially the most impactful. Coaching that recognizes guided pathways as an all-inclusive reform operates on multiple levels to help colleges change in expected and unexpected ways, and also produces new understandings that promote change on an on-going basis.

Coaching Stimulates Shared Learning about Change. When beginning to implement a coaching design, the Centers often think about how to match a coach to a college for maximizing that college's success. These efforts are important because decisions about reform emanate from deep understanding of particular circumstances in which change is happening in a college. However, sharing lessons learned across coach-college efforts enhance opportunities for shared learning about change processes, for both what is working and what is challenging. Coaches and colleges that share lessons learned stimulate innovative thought and promote purposeful action.

What's Missing is Equity. The Centers report that their coaching designs are not yet robust and mature enough with regard to equity for meeting their colleges' needs to increase all students' success. Inadequate attention paid to equity in coaching designs is a problem, with requests to the Centers

to help colleges address inequities among student groups representing diverse identities and experiences. Coaches who do not represent the diversity of college communities and student populations may be challenged to fully understand the problems that students face and find workable solutions. Incorporating equity-minded approaches to coaching and college change processes may help to stimulate tangible improvements in student success.

COACHING STRATEGIES & PILOT SUMMARIES

Arkansas Community Colleges Center for Student Success

One of the first Centers to begin guided pathways implementation, their building block approach uses guided pathways as an overall organizing framework and as a means

COACHING DESIGN AND CENTER SUMMARY INFORMATION

CENTER	# COLLEGES IN PILOT	COACHES	SOAA & COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT
AR	Up to 22	• No coaches yet	• Invite all CCs to do online SOAA in fall '18, will self-report, will not validate
CT	All 17 (2 & 4yr)	• Four are ATD colleges & 12 will be ATD colleges by '19-'20 • *GP managers (on GP Taskforce, in systems office) & ATD coaches to champion GP work	• GPTF has ~30 members from the campuses and system office; the GPTF was expanded by 9+ members who can more regularly message to their campuses because the GP Managers are no longer on their respective campuses.
NC	17 of 58	• Cohort 1: 18 college employees as NIC Facilitators, subset of 8 to become coaches, all training with national & state experts	• SOAA completed by some institutions; opportunity for all to take in fall '18 • College leadership team with facilitator attends institutes
NJ	12 of 19	• Seven national or state-level expert coaches/consultants • Matching coach expertise to college needs	• All colleges completed SOAA • Coaching/ consulting activities, site visits and webinars • Center phone calls with coaches and college leads
NY	10 of 30	• Cohort 1: Two AACC Pathway national coaches to train five state coaches • Coaches supported colleges, and also became a "team"	• Cohort completed SOAA (ten out of 30 colleges); validated by Center prior to institutes • College leadership team attends institutes • Lead college with AACC Pathways experience
OH	15 of 23	• Five local coaches (three colleges each + senior advisor) for short-term, targeted coaching	• SOAA and KPIs annually • College team attends two institutes and coaching site visits • Coaches attend multi-campus affinity group meetings
OR	5 of 17	• Cohort 1: one lead coach, one senior campus leader	• Completed SOAA to be in cohort • College team attends two GP institutes per year + monthly calls and coaching site visit
TX	All 46	• External coaches active since 2016 • Coaching occurs in-person during institutes and remotely between institutes • Four Cadres	• Administered SOAA once. Validation/calibration complete for 13 colleges. Data analysis complete for these 13 colleges + an additional 33 colleges' uncalibrated SOAAs. • Semi-annually, college leadership teams complete cadre-specific advance work including KPIs, attending institutes, and creating action plans.
VA	All 23	• No coaches yet	• Formed statewide advising council to make recommendations on advising redesign
WI	All 16, in part	• Use system office education directors as coaches	• 16 completed SOAA; want to create 'high-impact student success strategies' from results

*GP=GUIDED PATHWAYS

to renew energy around reform. Within that framework, one section of the work is focused on and completed at a time (e.g. program mapping) to build on their successes. In fall 2018, the Center will begin a large project redesigning student services and all colleges will be invited to take the automated SOAA with the goal of translating results into targeted technical assistance.

Connecticut Student Success Center

Guided pathways planning began in tandem with consolidation into a one college system. 13 colleges and universities

completed the SOAA, followed by campus visits and a state convening to facilitate cross-college sharing. The Center also convened leaders to use the SOAA data to identify critical areas for focus, such as First Year Experience (FYE). The Center sees the SOAA as providing qualitative data that compliments the quantitative data of the KPIs that are used to report progress and identify improvement opportunities. There is support for guided pathways at the system level, which includes seven Guided Pathways Managers who are staff on loan from their

colleges, a 30 member guided pathways task force (GPTF) from the campuses and system office, and more than 100 people working in various groups who report to the GPTF.

North Carolina Student Success Center

The NC Guided Pathways to Success Network has developed a networked improvement community (NIC) approach to share current insights and innovations across the first cohort of colleges involved in coaching. The members of the NIC, called NIC Facilitators, are selected from each college in the cohort and their job is to assist colleges in using data, testing ideas, and improving processes. In addition, the Center convened the first training for the NIC Facilitators, identified college team members, and held their first of four institutes. Features of strategy design include: increasing statewide coaching capacity by learning from national and local partners to cultivate NC experts; grounding the work in evidence-based and theory-driven practice; and utilizing the NIC to inform systems- and college- level policy and practice-based reforms.

New Jersey Center for Student Success

The Center used an RFP process to identify how coaching could help colleges to advance guided pathways and college readiness. Coaches from inside and outside of the state were solicited, vetted and matched to colleges according to whose expertise would be beneficial to addressing the stated concerns of the colleges. The focus of coaching with the first cohort was college readiness and guided pathways, including advising and course redesign, program mapping, and career planning. An important component to this coaching design is formative evaluation where they use a standardized reporting process to document coaching and college accomplishments, challenges and shared learning. The Center also established a process to monitor coaching efforts via phone calls with coaches and college leads.

New York Student Success Center

Adopting the AACC Pathways Institute model for the coaching pilot, the Center's coaching design is maturing in terms of deploying coaching talent and meeting college needs at a reasonable cost. The coaching strategy evolved dynamically to incorporate supports for effective facilitation, relationship building, coach turn-over, and stakeholder buy-in. To establish baselines, the cohort completed and validated the automated SOAA prior to the institutes. Coaching and technical assistance services provided support, as did the lead colleges having previously completed the AACC Pathways Institutes. A team emerged among the coaches from relationship building that took place during calls, institutes, and mealtimes. Now that is part of the design strategy. Modifying the strategy with this and other lessons learned will be applied to future cohorts.

Ohio Student Success Center

The Center is leveraging coaching and change management resources to support a cultural shift in the colleges that positions the Center team and coaches as "connectors". These coaches are leaders among the Ohio community college educators and selected to serve as coaches for advising redesign and student support. The coaching design uses multiple touch points to track progress and identify change strategies. For example, through attending standing meetings on all campuses, coaches are listening for where their teams need support. To develop familiarity and instill credibility, at every institute, the coaches have specific and visible roles that tap their respective areas of expertise and build their standing with the colleges.

Oregon Student Success Center

The coaching design includes completion of the SOAA by all Oregon community colleges, and selection of the first cohort of five colleges through a competitive RFP process. SOAA results were used to prioritize where to focus guided pathways implementation efforts. College teams participate in the semi-annual Guided Pathways Institutes that are adapted from the AACC Pathways Institute model. Colleges receive services from an experienced lead coach and a senior leader whose college has experience with the AACC Pathways Initiative. The lead coach also engages campus leaders in coaching on change leadership and equity.

Texas Student Success Center

Texas Pathways adapted the SOAA from AACC Pathways model and used the SOAA to establish baselines, identify college needs, and target technical assistance and coaching to address college needs. Additionally, the Center produced a brief packaging this knowledge development to advance the learning in the Network. The SOAA plan has been to conduct it on a regular annual schedule, analyze and translate the results into meaningful technical assistance support. Other strategies supportive of guided pathways implementation include: Guided Pathway Institutes, regional meetings, a Board of Trustees Institute, and knowledge development.

Virginia Student Success Center

"Starting with the end in mind" was the motto for a framework the Center planned to create in support of a holistic advising model to define, and set policy, guidelines, and a foundational structure. A steering committee was created to focus on advising redesign with representation from many of Virginia community colleges. The group included multiple levels of leaders in the system that gave diverse perspectives in the process to help guide this work.

Wisconsin Student Success Center

The SOAA was administered to determine which colleges require technical assistance and coaching. The system office education directors were selected to be coaches, with nearly all colleges in the state being involved. The focus on data is extensive in this Center's coaching design, and includes developing and using a framework to guide data conversations that emphasize change processes, goal- and strategy-setting, data use, and equity.

Challenges

What it means to be a coach differs across the Student Success Center Network. Different definitions, goals and approaches for coaching are emerging, creating some confusion about how coaching should work to help colleges to accomplish their goals. Another challenge is the time and capacity that it takes to engage in coaching. Despite expressing strong interest, some colleges had difficulty finding time to work with coaches, resulting in delaying or cancelling meetings and slowing progress. To address this challenge, Center EDs and coaches provided concrete information about the time and effort that coaching will take, and how colleges can work expeditiously to benefit from coaching. Finally, the turnover of coaches was a challenge for some EDs, taxing their capacity to devote attention to recruitment and professional development of new coaches. A related challenge was ensuring coaches have the right mix of subject matter expertise on guided pathways and organizational change, and some coaches who had substantial expertise but new to coaching needed more training to serve as a coach. These coaches required encouragement and support. Overall, when these challenges were addressed from a learning perspective, including working collaboratively with coaches and colleges to find solutions, progress was made.

Strategic Coaching Design 2.0

CCRI is continuing work with the Network in phase 2.0 of the coaching for guided pathways implementation project. In this next phase the CCRI team will carry out Center support in the planning, design and implementation of coaching strategies with Centers who applied and were designated as recipients for this support. Three aspects of this important project for CCRI are detailed here.

Planning, Design and Implementation

With the launch of the new coaching program for guided pathways implementation, CCRI, in our roles as strategic advisors to grantee Centers, will assist the EDs in actualizing their coaching plan proposals and ensure the plan will do what is intended through multiple supports. CCRI will provide strategic advising on overcoming obstacles to implementation, growing current coaching capacity, aligning ATD training with the strategic coaching design in ways that continue to grow coaching expertise to advance the Centers' mission, vision, and goals.

Amplify Use and Impact of State Context Specific Strategies

CCRI will tailor consultation and support strategies for each Center to address one or two strategies most salient for amplifying the use and impact of evidence-based coaching for guided pathways implementation.

Sustain Evidence-based Coaching Consistent with a Data-Driven Culture of Improvement

CCRI will advise Centers on operationalizing evidence-based coaching strategies that sustain college-level continuous improvement. CCRI will guide Centers in documenting these activities and provide support in utilizing developmental evaluation and applied research to document and disseminate models, promising practices and lessons learned that enhance organizational change and student success.

CCRI Role

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