

## **GUIDED PATHWAYS FAQ**

### **What is Guided Pathways?**

Guided Pathways is a framework for community colleges to help students navigate the process of enrolling, select a program of study, complete required and elective courses in an efficient manner, and achieve their goals of degree completion, certification, or transfer to a four-year institution. Students are more likely to earn a degree in a shorter time frame when they have a clear path towards their future goal or intended career. Guided Pathways takes the existing structures of a community college and breaks down the barriers that prevent students from understanding the requirements of their degree program. In addition, Guided Pathways intends to break down the barriers of community college silos, encouraging greater collaboration among faculty, staff, counselors, and support services.

### **What does Guided Pathways look like?**

When students enter a community college that has adopted Guided Pathways, they are asked to declare an area of interest, known as a “Meta Major” in Guided Pathways. The student is counseled to select a potential program that has a clearly defined program map or they can select “Exploratory” major within their larger area of interest. The program maps are developed in collaboration with faculty in that discipline to provide a suggested academic plan for the student. There is still room for the student to make selections of various elective courses, but all courses in the program map count towards transfer credit to help the student achieve their goals in a timely manner. The student can change majors and even Meta Majors, but the courses they have taken will not be extraneous. They will simply follow a “guided” path to eventually selecting a major.

### **What is the process of implementing Guided Pathways?**

The process is intended to take five years. We are currently in the inquiry phase, which will last until the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. This year the steering committee is engaged in high-level planning, research, and **student inquiry**. Next year in 2019-2020, we hope to move forward with developing the Meta Majors and program maps. Our anticipated “launch” for students entering into Cañada’s Guided Pathways will be the 2020-2021 academic year. The following year, 2021-2022 will involve refinements and expansion of Guided Pathways reforms. The last year of the implementation process, 2022-2023, will evaluate and refine further before **assessing ongoing support**.

### **What is the budget allocation for Guided Pathways? How is this funded?**

## **How will Guided Pathways affect curriculum?**

Modifications to curriculum is not one of the goals of Guided Pathways. Guided Pathways intends to look at existing curriculum and degree programs to create clear maps for students with a “default option” for their first year at Cañada that allows students to explore their area of interest, select their classes from a more manageable suggested pathway, build a community with fellow students in their Meta Major, and persist toward their goals more efficiently. GP does not create new courses, but rather takes the existing course catalog and provides a framework for students to navigate.

Course syllabi and program maps show students how the components of their program fit together to build skills relevant to their goals; the process of program mapping allows faculty to work together to create instructional program coherence.

## **Will my classes be cancelled?**

No, Guided Pathways is not a streamlining of courses nor does it favor certain pathways more than others. The purpose is to give students a framework for exploring their area of interest with concrete steps along the way such as entering the college, determining their area of interest or “Meta Major”, selecting a major, beginning to follow the program map, and completing milestones along the way to their degree completion and/or transfer. In this way, the students who are in your discipline’s Meta Major will be given greater exposure to the various disciplines within that Meta Major. Any exploration through electives will be guided so the student is earning their IGETC requirements and progress toward their stated goal without running the risk of dropping out due to lack of progress toward a degree/transfer.

## **How can I get involved?**

- Email Maureen Wiley at [wileym@smccd.edu](mailto:wileym@smccd.edu) or Denise Erickson at [ericksond@smccd.edu](mailto:ericksond@smccd.edu)
- Sign up for our FLEX day session in January.
- Attend our Meta Majors “Sorting Day” at the March FLEX day in 2019.

## **How can I learn more about Guided Pathways?**

*Redesigning America’s Community Colleges* by Bailey, Jaggars, and Mitchell of the CCRC Institute provides a comprehensive look at all the various pillars of the Guided Pathways model. It’s a great read!