



# GUIDED PATHWAYS

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THE SCALE OF ADOPTION IN MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS  
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January 2018

After a decade of college completion reform, compelling evidence has emerged on what works to help more students persist and succeed. Leading community colleges, state systems, and policy, research and advocacy organizations have shifted from piloting isolated interventions to designing and implementing unified, connected solutions. They have embraced Guided Pathways as a coherent approach to achieving institutional transformation.

One of the leading national pathway initiatives, the [American Association of Community Colleges Pathways Project](#), describes guided pathways as an *integrated, institution-wide* approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence. These experiences guide each student effectively and efficiently from her/his point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.

The Michigan Center for Student Success received a grant from The Kresge Foundation in 2014 for a series of institutes focused around the principles of the emerging Guided Pathways movement. The institutes included a self-assessment that colleges could use to gauge their readiness for and progress in this work, and ongoing technical assistance from a team of national experts from the Community College Research Center (CCRC), the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement (NCII) and Public Agenda.

With additional guidance from the Student Success Center Network at Jobs for the Future (JFF), MCSS recruited 23 colleges for its Guided Pathways Institute. The first cohort of 12 colleges started their work in February of 2015, while the 11 colleges in the second cohort began work in December of 2015. MCSS hosted

over 600 college participants at six institutes between November 2014 and June 2017.

## Purpose, Methods and Organization of this Report

This report shares the Michigan Guided Pathways story, describing the colleges' progress over three years in implementing practices in the four broad areas of Guided Pathways as defined by the Community College Research Center.

Observations from the national work indicate that it typically takes five years or more for colleges to implement Guided Pathways at Scale (Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins, 2015). However, after 18 months to three years of planning, piloting and initial implementation, Michigan colleges in both cohorts have established a strong foundation and have begun to put practices in place that can serve as examples for other colleges undertaking this work. In collaboration with our national partners at CCRC and NCII, this report also offers recommendations for Michigan colleges to address common challenges as MCSS embarks on the next phase of its Guided Pathways Institute.

### The Scale of Adoption Assessment

In 2014, CCRC developed the Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA) to measure the implementation of Guided Pathways practices. The purposes of the assessment are to:

- ✓ Help colleges reflect on where they are and develop a plan for next steps
- ✓ Gather information about colleges' activities, practices and challenges
- ✓ See what other colleges are doing and learn from other colleges

- ✓ Design coaching, workshops and technical assistance activities
- ✓ Track colleges' progress over time; re-assess college needs and challenges

It is worth noting that the assessment is not intended as a tool to evaluate college practices and is not used in this manner in this report.

Michigan colleges first completed a very early version of the assessment at the Guided Pathways Institute Orientation in 2014 as a planning tool to help decide whether to get involved in Guided Pathways. In June of 2016, the 12 colleges in Cohort I completed the assessment again, this time rating themselves, and the Cohort I leads participated in a follow up discussion with MCSS, CCRC, NCI and Public Agenda to allow them to reflect on their progress after 18 months. A summary of this discussion is captured in this [brief](#), prepared in partnership with CCRC. The 11 colleges in Cohort II completed the SOAA in fall 2016 after 12 months of planning and initial implementation. These 2016 administrations were used as a baseline in the charts below showing progress on each practice.

In summer 2017, all 23 colleges who participated in the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute completed the most recent version of the [SOAA](#). For this administration, MCSS staff conducted follow-up calls with each college following a protocol developed by CCRC. During the calls, college teams were prompted to share more detail about how they were approaching the practices outlined in the assessment. Information obtained from the ratings sheets and telephone calls has been supplemented with materials from the 2017 Michigan Student Success Summit and anecdotal data from informal conversations with college team members.

*Prior to participating in the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute, Cohort I colleges estimated that they were not systematic on most practices. After participating in the Institute, colleges made significant progress toward adopting the essential practices at scale.*

*--MCSS, FALL 2016*

### Organization of the Report

This report provides an overview of colleges' overall progress in adopting Guided Pathways practices as illustrated by the difference in their self-ratings between 2016 and 2017. Brief highlights from the colleges summarize innovative or exemplary practices in each of the four broad areas of Guided Pathways, followed by guidance to address common challenges from MCSS and our national partners. Finally, we briefly discuss how Michigan colleges are leveraging the SOAA, student performance metrics and lessons learned from other state and national initiatives to maintain momentum as they seek to transform their policies, practices and culture following the Guided Pathways model.

## Overview of College Progress in Scaling Guided Pathways

When MCSS launched the Guided Pathways Institute in 2014 there were very few ways to measure the impact of the project. Since then, the Community College Research Center has developed and refined the Scale of Adoption Assessment (SOAA). The SOAA asks colleges to rate the extent to which the college has adopted the 19 essential practices at scale in the four main practice areas. The assessment scale includes Not Occurring (1), Not Systematic (2), Planning to Scale (3), Scaling in Progress (4), and At Scale (5). Figure 1 below provides more detail for the meaning of each rating. Colleges completed the scale of adoption self-assessment at least twice during their participation in the Institute.

Figure 1.

Scale of Adoption	Definition
1. <i>Not occurring</i>	College is currently not following, or planning to follow, this practice
2. <i>Not systematic</i>	Practice is incomplete, inconsistent, informal, and/or optional
3. <i>Planning to scale</i>	College has made plans to implement the practice at scale and has started to put these plans into place
4. <i>Scaling in progress</i>	Implementation of the practice is in progress for all students
5. <i>At scale</i>	Practice is implemented at scale—that is, for all students in all programs of study

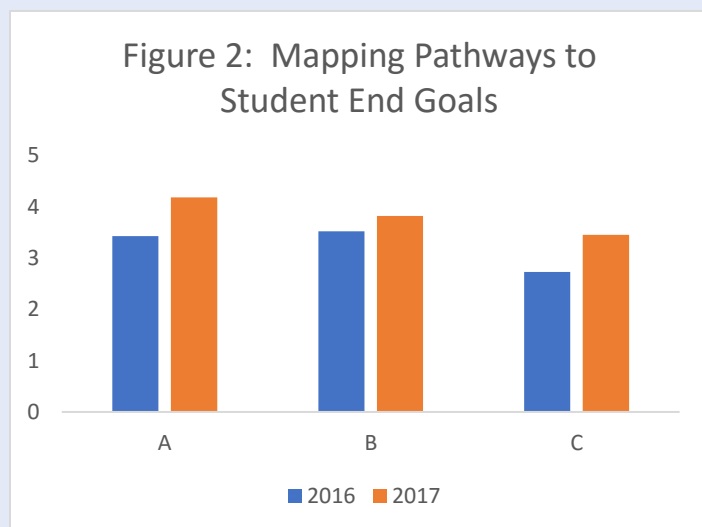
In Summer 2017, all 23 participating colleges completed the SOAA again and participated in individual follow-up phone calls with Jenny Schanker and Erica Orians. These calls allowed MCSS to confirm the colleges' self-rating and discuss how the college implemented the practices. Figures 2-5 below show the change in the average self-assessment ratings of the Michigan colleges in three of the four essential practice areas between SOAA administrations during 2016 and Summer 2017. Figure 5 includes only 2017 responses for practices in the 4<sup>th</sup> area, Ensuring Students are Learning, due to substantial changes in this area of the rubric between the 2016 and 2017 assessments.

### Mapping Pathways to Student End Goals

*A. Every program is well designed to guide and prepare students to enter employment and further education in fields of importance to the college's service area.*

*B. Detailed information is provided on the college's website on the employment and further education opportunities targeted by each program.*

*C. Programs are clearly mapped out for students. Students know which courses they should take and in what sequence. Courses critical for success in each program and other key progress milestones are clearly identified. All this information is easily accessible on the college's website.*



## Helping Students Choose and Enter a Pathway

A. Every new student is helped to explore career/college options, choose a program of study, and develop a full-program plan as soon as possible.

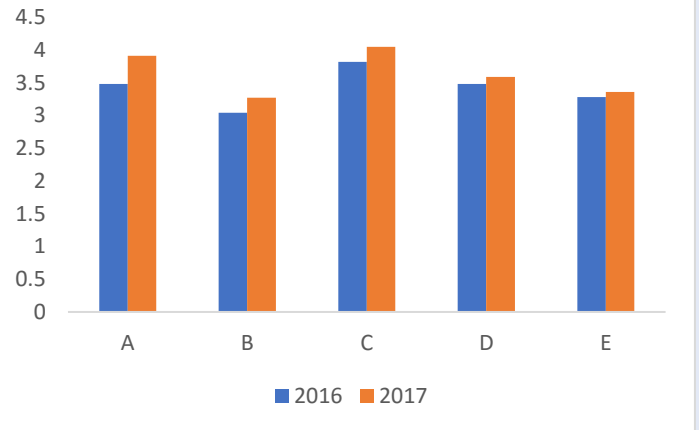
B. Special supports are provided to help academically unprepared students to succeed in the “gateway” courses for the college’s major program areas—not just in college-level math and English.

C. Required math courses are appropriately aligned with the student’s field of study.

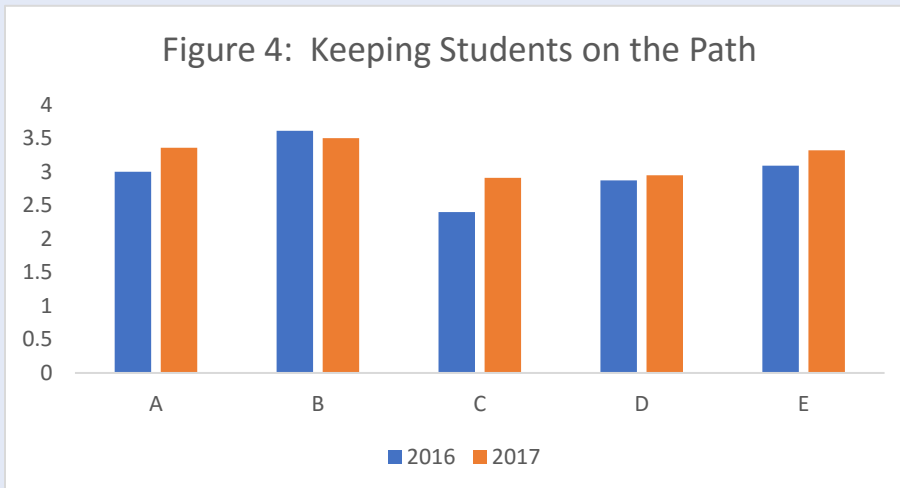
D. Intensive support is provided to help very poorly prepared students to succeed in college-level courses as soon as possible.

E. The college works with high schools and other feeders to motivate and prepare students to enter college-level coursework in a program of study when they enroll in college.

Figure 3: Helping Students Choose and Enter a Pathway



## Keeping Students on the Path



A. Advisors monitor which program every student is in and how far along the student is toward completing the program requirements.

B. Students can easily see how far they have come and what they need to do to complete their program.

C. Advisors and students are alerted when students are at risk of falling off their program plans and have policies and supports in place to intervene in ways that help students get back on track.

D. Assistance is provided to students who are unlikely to be accepted into limited-access programs, such as nursing or culinary arts, to redirect them to another more viable path to credentials and a career.

E. The college schedules courses to ensure students can take the courses they need when they need them, can plan their lives around school from one term to the next, and can complete their programs in as short a time as possible.

## Ensuring Students are Learning

A. Program learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements for success in the further education and employment outcomes targeted by each program.

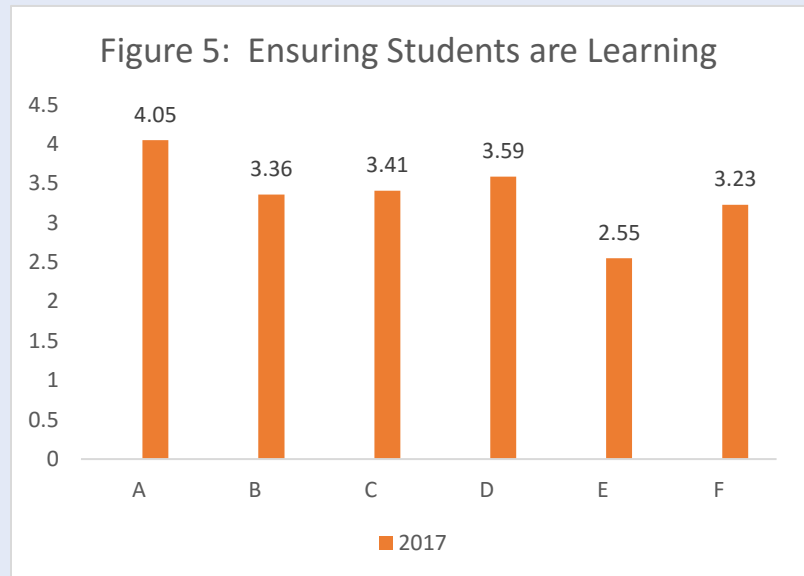
B. Students have ample opportunity to apply and deepen knowledge and skills through projects, internships, co-ops, clinical placements, group projects outside of class, service learning, study abroad and other active learning activities that program faculty intentionally embed into coursework.

C. Faculty assess whether students are mastering learning outcomes and building skills across each program, in both arts and sciences and career/technical programs.

D. Results of learning outcomes assessments are used to improve teaching and learning through program review, professional development, and other intentional campus efforts.

E. The college helps students document their learning for employers and universities through portfolios and other means beyond transcripts.

F. The college assesses effectiveness of educational practice (e.g. using CCSSE or SENSE, etc.) and uses the results to create targeted professional development.



## Progress Continues towards Scale

Reflecting the initial emphasis of the support provided by the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute, the colleges feel they have made the most significant progress in program mapping, with all but two of the colleges indicating in summer 2017 that they were either “At Scale” or “Scaling in Progress” in designing programs that prepare students to enter employment and further education. Colleges are also making progress in making program maps accessible to their students on their websites, with a number of colleges moving from “Not Systematic” to “Planning to Scale” in this area.

Colleges also feel they have progressed in helping new students explore their options, choose a program of study and develop a program plan, with three-quarters of the colleges indicating either “Scaling in Progress” or “At Scale” for this practice. Ensuring that advisors are alerted when students are at risk of falling off their program plans and intervening to help them get back on track was another area where colleges feel they are moving forward, though for this practice the movement was more often from “Not Occurring” or “Not Systematic” to “Planning for Scale” as colleges began to wrap their heads around what is required to monitor students at this level. One practice even showed a slight decrease in ratings as colleges began to understand what would really be required to enable students to monitor their own progress through their programs of study.

## Pathways in Practice

The sections below provide an overview and examples of the ways in which Michigan colleges are addressing challenges and making progress in implementing practices within the four broad areas of Guided Pathways.

### Practice Area 1. Mapping Pathways to Student End Goals

Mapping pathways was the first area of emphasis in the support provided by MCSS and its national partners for both Cohort I and Cohort II. Colleges have made the most significant progress here, grappling with issues such as why and how to organize programs into meta-majors, mapping out course sequences, gathering career and transfer information and making it all easily accessible to students along the way.



*There is a misconception out there that mapping is simple—once you get started, there is a lot more to it than you think!*

Illustration 1. Meta-Majors at Bay College


### Grouping Programs into Meta-Majors

The concept of the meta-major, classifying similar programs under a common umbrella, is a central tenet of Guided Pathways. Enrolling in a meta-major allows students who know they are interested in an area such as business or health science to take 1-2 semesters of coursework that can apply to more than one program of study before they select a major. Michigan colleges have taken on the challenge of creating meta-majors in a variety of ways, beginning with changing the terminology. Whether they are calling them *Academic Pathways*, *Areas of Study* or *Career Communities*, colleges have typically clustered their programs into 7-10 broad categories designed to catch students' interest. **Macomb Community College** even involved students in the branding process, eventually settling on *Area of Interest* after that term resonated most strongly with student focus groups.

Colleges are working closely with their IT and marketing departments to translate program maps and career and transfer information into student-facing resources that are easily accessible from their websites. **Bay College** leveraged the Jenzabar advising trees to communicate degree requirements, academic maps and course descriptions along with employment details on a [single web page](#) linked to printable PDF documents.

#### GRCC Programs by Academic Pathways

[Print this Page](#)



Beginning Winter 2018, the academic programs at GRCC that lead to associate degrees and certificates are organized by Academic Pathway, which are listed below. The academic programs within each Pathway are organized by Pathway Program, Transfer Programs, Career Programs, and Career and Transfer programs. For more details about the individual Academic Pathways and program options, please select from the list below.

- [Art, Architecture, and Mechanical Design](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Computer Information Systems](#)
- [Culinary Arts, Hospitality, and Brewing](#)
- [Health and Exercise Sciences](#)
- [Human Services, Education, and Social Sciences](#)
- [Humanities, English, Language, and Communication Studies](#)
- [Manufacturing and Applied Technology](#)
- [Math, Science, and Engineering](#)
- [Music and Theater](#)

Illustration 2. Academic Pathways at Grand Rapids Community College



**Grand Rapids Community College** launched its *Academic Pathways* for all students in winter 2018. Each of the ten pathways include career programs and transfer programs as well as a “pathways degree” for students who have not yet identified a specific major. A student selecting a pathways degree program will be prompted to enroll in a set of Priority I courses including math and English composition along with at least two courses applicable to all programs in the pathway. Once s/he has completed the Priority I courses, the student can either move into a certificate or degree program within the pathway, or continue in Priority II and Priority III courses to complete the Michigan Transfer Agreement. If the student intends to transfer into a discipline for which GRCC does not offer a program of study, s/he can work with an advisor to complete an associate degree in the pathway before transferring.

The [pathways degree with a business concentration](#) at GRCC is designed for students who are interested in business, but undecided about the specific career program or transfer pathway. As seen in Illustration 3, the pathway directs students to complete four priority courses including English Composition and a mathematics course along with Introduction to Business and Marketing. These courses allow students to explore the pathways and still meet associate degree requirements.

## Priority I Courses

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- EN 101 - English Composition-1 **Credit Hours:** 3
- BA 103 - Introduction to Business **Credit Hours:** 4
- BA 270 - Marketing **Credit Hours:** 3
- Mathematics General Education - Elec (Must meet MTA requirements) **Credit Hours:** min. of 4

Illustration 3. GRCC Priority I Courses in business concentration.

The illustrations on the pages below highlight some additional approaches to marketing with meta-majors.

**HENRY FORD COLLEGE**  
FUTUREDRIVEN

Programs / Paralegal  
Paralegal Studies H264 1080p



**About Our Program**

HFC's Paralegal Studies program offers a solid foundation of skills and knowledge to help you succeed professionally as a paralegal. After completing our program, you will be well-prepared to begin your paralegal career or continue studying at a four-year university Paralegal Studies or Pre-Law program.

The Paralegal Studies program at HFC teaches you to critically analyze and research a variety of legal issues ranging from business to personal injury law, and to present your conclusions orally and in writing. We offer core courses in legal research, writing, contract and property law, as well as specialty courses in topics such as Immigration and Family Law. Classes are hands-on; you will prepare legal pleadings and may participate in a mock-trials or simulated client interviews.

**CATALOG PROGRAMS**

- Associate in Business Paralegal Studies
- Certificate of Achievement Paralegal Studies, Certificate of Achievement

**INTERESTED IN OUR PROGRAM?**

[CONTACT RACHELLE LOOMUS](#) [APPLY TO HFC](#)


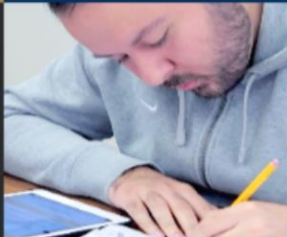

	<b>\$50,240 AVERAGE SALARY</b> regional average	<b>8% PROJECTED JOB GROWTH</b> nationally
<b>\$24.15 HOURLY WAGE</b> Regional average		<b>EASILY TRANSFER TO PRE-LAW</b> at a four-year university
<b>PARALEGAL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>FACULTY CURRENTLY IN THE FIELD</b> 	<b>HFC PROVIDES WESTLAWNEXT TRAINING</b> advanced legal research engine

Illustration 4. [Henry Ford College](#) includes informational videos and highlights featured courses on its program pages.

## Public Safety

Contained within this area of interest are those careers selected by individuals who would knowingly risk their life to save another. Modern day heroes and heroines, they are the first responders to emergencies and the hands in which the health and safety of communities are placed. Macomb offers pathways to several of these careers, with post-career training available as well. Discover which one is right for you!

Take one of Macomb's exploratory courses, designed to give you a better understanding of what a field involves, and discover if it matches your interests and goals.

**Exploratory Courses**

- Emergency Medical Services: EMSA-1215, Basic Emergency Medical Technician Lecture; EMSA-1220, Basic EMT Lab; EMSA-1250, Clinical Rotation for the Basic EMT
- Fire: FIRE-1000, Philosophy of Fire Protection
- Law Enforcement: HLND-1100, Introduction to Homeland Security; LAWE-1100, Criminal Justice

**Academic Programs (Degrees and Certificates)**

- Emergency Medical Services - Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic
- Emergency Medical Services - Paramedic/Firefighter
- Fire Science
- Fire Science with Fire Academy
- Homeland Security
- Law Enforcement
- Law Enforcement with Police Academy

**Workforce & Continuing Education Programs**

- CPR/AED
- Police Academy

**Transfer Pathways**

- Discover more Transfer Pathways in our Transfer Database!

**Explore Your Career Options!**

Not Sure?

Contact Counseling





Illustration 5. [Macomb Community College](#) developed 10 areas of interest.

Once students click on an area of interest, they can review a brief description of the area of interest along with a list of all of the programs offered at Macomb Community College. In the example of Public Safety, the college provides information about exploratory courses, a list of all academic programs (degrees and certificates), workforce and continuing education programs, and transfer programs. Each page includes an icon for “undecided” on each program page which takes students to a page about counseling services at the college.

### Biology ☆

More Information
Talk to LMC

Apply to LMC

Overview
Salary
Skills

Related

**Overview** Top ^

If you are considering a career in biology, then ask yourself these questions:

- Are you interested in scientific research?
- Do you enjoy learning about how science impacts modern society?
- Would you enjoy studying about and solving current ecological problems?
- Can you imagine taking part in discovering new treatments for disease?
- Are you intrigued by the revolutionary fields of genetics, molecular biology and/or biotechnology?

If any of these questions sparked your interest, then explore the many career avenues that the Biology transfer program at Lake Michigan College has to offer.

Click here for program courses and sample sequences.

**Salary** Top ^

O\*Net provides the Annual Median Salary for the occupations mapped to this major.

Occupation	Annual Median Salary
Biologists	\$72,220.00
Microbiologists	\$67,550.00
Molecular & Cellular Biologists	\$75,150.00
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$71,640.00</b>

**Skills** Top ^

- **Basic Skills**
  - Reading work related information
  - Listening to others, not interrupting, and asking good questions
  - Using scientific rules and strategies to solve problems
  - Thinking about the pros and cons of different ways to solve a problem
- **Problem Solving**
  - Noticing a problem and figuring out the best way to solve it

**Related Majors** Top ^

- Medical Assisting
- Physics
- Chemistry

### Chemistry ☆

More Information
Talk to LMC

Apply to LMC

Overview
Salary
Skills

Related

**Overview** Top ^

As the global economy becomes more science based, the demand for people who understand the principles of chemistry is increasing. From technical positions working in a lab testing environment to chemists who work toward formulating new products through sciences, the variety of jobs in the field fills a wide range. Start your career in science and technology at Lake Michigan College.

Click here for program courses and sample sequences.

**Salary** Top ^

O\*Net provides the Annual Median Salary for the occupations mapped to this major.

Occupation	Annual Median Salary
Biochemists & Biophysicists	\$82,150.00
Chemistry Teachers, Postsecondary	\$75,060.00
Chemists	\$71,260.00
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$76,156.67</b>

**Skills** Top ^

- **Basic Skills**
  - Reading work related information
  - Writing things for co-workers or customers
  - Using scientific rules and strategies to solve problems
- **People and Technology Systems**
  - Thinking about the pros and cons of different options and picking the best one
  - Figuring out how a system should work and how changes in the future will affect it
- **Problem Solving**
  - Noticing a problem and figuring out the best way to solve it

**Related Majors** Top ^

- Medical Assisting
- Biology
- Physical Science

### Undecided (Science - Transfer) ☆

More Information
Talk to LMC

Apply to LMC

Overview
Related

**Overview** Top ^

The Associate in Science - Undecided is a transfer program for students in the sciences who are undecided on a major but wish to transfer to a four-year school upon graduation.

Click here for program courses and sample sequences.

**Related Majors** Top ^

- Applications Development
- Mathematics
- Welding Production Technology - Level 1 Certificate




Illustration 6. [Lake Michigan College](https://www.lake-michigan.edu) offers students the option to compare up to three programs of study, including an overview, salary, skills and related programs.

## Making Information Accessible to Students

The college website is often the primary vehicle for delivering information about meta-majors. However, trying to retrofit an existing website to make the information easily accessible to students can present a challenge. A section of the **Mott Community College** website [lays out the overlap](#) between the Michigan Career Pathways, a career exploration and planning framework used by Michigan K-12 districts, and the national Career Clusters framework overseen by Advance CTE (formerly the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium) to help students make informed choices. As of this writing, the college had not yet linked the careers to the academic program pages where the college has [merged its program information pages](#) with data from EMSI's Career Coach and highlights the math requirement for each program of study.

**MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE** Search MOTT

Mott CC >> Fine Arts & Social Sciences Division

## Psychology

### Associate in Arts

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. It is the mission of the psychology discipline at MCC to provide an effective learning environment where students develop critical thinking skills which lay the groundwork for future educational experiences. A wide variety of psychology courses are offered in order to provide students with the psychology foundation necessary to complete a two-year degree here at MCC as well as to prepare them for transfer to a four-year institution.

### Career Possibilities

- Psychology Teacher Post Secondary
- School Psychologist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Neuropsychologist
- Mental Health Counselor

**emsi Career Coach**

Career Coach is designed to help you find a good career by providing the most current data on wages, employment, job postings, and associated education and training for your region.

**QUESTIONS**

Contact Us:  
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☎ (810) 232-8003  
✉ rachel.laimon@mcc.edu  
🏠 Mott Memorial Building MMB2123B

**FINE ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION**

🏠 Mott Memorial Building

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- ✉ Joi.Callahan@mcc.edu

🏠 Faculty & Staff

More & Directions

Illustration 7. Mott Community College links to EMSI Career Coach.

### *Some Mapping Challenges*

**Henry Ford College**, after building the “Explore Programs” pages highlighted above, reviewed its website analytics and was surprised to find that most users navigate back to “all programs” to find the information they are looking for, rather than clicking through the meta-major icons.

Simply clustering the programs on the website can mask some of the complicated work colleges are doing behind the scenes to make meta-majors work. Some program clusters include certificate and degree programs along with non-credit workforce development, distinctions that may be invisible to students but are very real to colleges. **Macomb Community College** is one example of a college that has integrated degree, certificate and certification programs representing Workforce and Continuing Education into its meta-majors, which it refers to as Areas of Interest.

As an alternative to a robust meta-major design, a few colleges have chosen to approach mapping from a program-by-program perspective, especially when mapping highly structured occupational programs. **Schoolcraft College** has been deeply engaged in curriculum redesign for several years and has nearly completed a competency-mapping process for all occupational programs. The college is now aligning certificates and degrees so that all programs will contain stackable credentials.

## Practice Area 2. Helping Students Choose and Enter a Program Pathway

Implementing Guided Pathways challenges colleges to rethink how they interact with new students to help them connect to a program of study early on. Examples below illustrate how Michigan colleges are helping students make early connections, providing support for underprepared students, and working to build pathways that reach into high schools.

### *Making Early Connections*

One common approach to helping students make early connections is to expand the first-year experience course and make it available to or required for all new students. These courses typically cover career exploration, building an academic plan, financial literacy, time management and study skills. Several colleges have adopted or are considering a common course syllabus for this first-year experience course and requiring training for instructors to improve their ability to support students.

**Montcalm Community College** has fully scaled its College Success course for all new students. Hand-picked, trained instructors, recruited primarily from student services administrators and staff, teach from a common syllabus and serve as resources for the students throughout the semester. The course description indicates that the course “provides students with the necessary tools, guidelines, principles, and insights for a successful educational experience. It also equips them to become lifelong learners and engage in effective preparation for career development.” The college has successfully integrated the course into its culture, first requiring it in 2012 for students who placed into developmental education, then scaling it up to all students in 2015.

At **Northwestern Michigan College**, assisting students with decision-making is central to the work of academic advisors. The college has developed a “[decidedness assessment](#)” (illustration 8) which helps both students and advisors analyze a student’s level of commitment to a program of study. Communications and intervention are targeted toward students at different levels, accelerating committed students into program-specific courses while supporting students who are less certain of their pathway through career advising and other services.

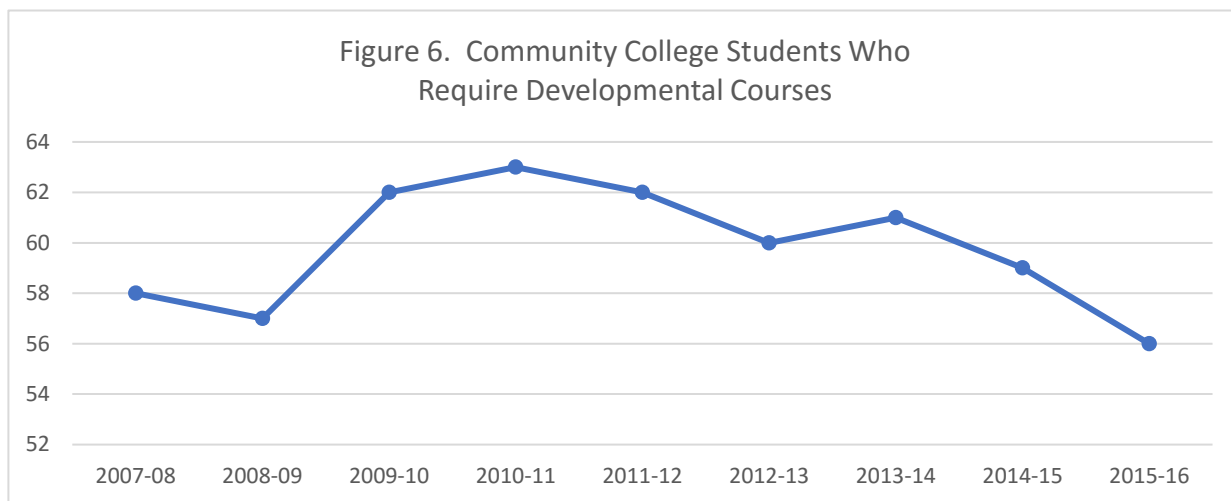


Illustration 8. Northwestern Michigan College Decidedness Assessment

**Jackson College** has revamped its intake process to include proactive outreach from advising staff and the creation of the “New Student Profile,” an intake assessment combining questions from the Big Five Personality Assessment, pathways interest questions and additional questions that relate to direct services for Jackson College students. Students complete the profile online, and then discuss the results with their Student Success Navigator prior to enrolling in classes. In their first semester, all students enroll in SEM 140, a 3-credit course required of all degree-seeking students. Most sections are attached to a pathway, forming pathway cohorts. Part of the course is to further explore careers and build an education plan.

*Supporting Underprepared Students*

In 2015, 56% of new Michigan community college students placed into at least one developmental education course.



Source: [Michigan’s Education Dashboard](#)

Although this percentage has declined steadily from a high of 62% in 2010, the volume of underprepared entering students still presents significant challenges for colleges implementing Guided Pathways. A [2017 brief](#) from CCRC points to research suggesting that increasing students’ “gateway momentum”—defined as taking and passing *pathway-appropriate* college-level math and college-level English in the first academic year—may give students a better chance at earning a credential within six years. Colleges are tackling this challenge by revising placement practices and experimenting with new models for delivering developmental education. While Michigan colleges are still struggling to build robust pathways for underprepared students, two MCSS initiatives are helping colleges take some of their efforts to scale.

In 2012, MCSS partnered with the Community College of Baltimore County to support colleges who were interested in piloting the *Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)*, allowing students who place into developmental writing to enroll in college-level composition while simultaneously taking a companion course that provides extra academic support. Twenty of Michigan’s 28 colleges have experimented with this co-requisite approach, with over 2000 students enrolling in ALP composition courses between 2013 and 2015. Seventy-two percent of the students enrolled in ALP passed the college-level course, over 50 points higher than the rate for students in the traditional two-semester sequence. In response to the most recent survey in March 2016, 11 Michigan colleges indicated that they had converted two-thirds or

[Guided Pathways: The Scale of Adoption in Michigan](#)



more of their developmental writing sections to the ALP model. At **Jackson College**, where ALP has been fully scaled since fall 2016, significantly more students of color and students receiving financial aid are now passing college composition, compared with students from those groups who took the traditional developmental writing course between 2011 and 2013.

% of Students	With Financial Aid	Without Financial Aid	Black Students	White Students
Fall 2016 ALP (fully scaled)	69%	81%	58%	81%
Traditional Dev Ed (Fall 2011, 2012, 2013)	28%	49%	24%	35%

Source: Jackson College

On the math front, Michigan joined the Dana Center’s [Mathematics Pathways to Completion](#) initiative in 2014. By acknowledging that not all programs will require advanced algebra skills, the mathematics pathways approach has shown promise in helping underprepared students complete college level mathematics by ensuring that students enroll in the math that aligns with their program and providing supports to accelerate completion of college-level courses. The primary goals for Michigan’s Right Math at the Right Time (RM@RT) project are to align learning outcomes and ensure transferability for the first college-level course in each of three mathematics pathways, improve completion of college-level mathematics for students who place into developmental math and recommend appropriate math pathway courses for inclusion in transfer pathways. In December 2017, RM@RT working groups, which include math faculty from 13 community colleges and eight universities, recommended common learning outcomes for the initial college-level mathematics courses in Quantitative Reasoning, Introductory Statistics and Preparation for Calculus. As a next step, the 43 public colleges and universities participating in the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) will be asked to *adopt* the recommended learning outcomes in their own course, *accept* courses that meet the recommended learning outcomes for transfer, and ensure that the courses *apply* to students’ programs of study. In Fall 2018, a group of RM@RT colleges and universities will be piloting co-requisite supports for these courses.



### *Building Pathways from High School to College*

While colleges are taking steps to better support the underprepared students who arrive on their doorsteps, they are also strengthening connections with K-12 to align expectations for college readiness and build awareness of the importance of Guided Pathways before students leave high school. Several colleges including **Jackson College** and **Lansing Community College** have aligned their meta-majors with the [Michigan Career Pathways](#), a career exploration and planning framework used by K-12 districts in Michigan, and have begun having conversations with high school counselors, students and their parents about the relationship between the Michigan Career Pathways, guided pathways and college majors.

With the goal of helping more students enter directly into college-level courses in their selected programs after high school, some colleges are connecting high school and college faculty directly to facilitate mutual understanding of college readiness. For example, seven years ago **West Shore Community College's** Communication Division faculty and area high school Language Arts faculty created the Literacy Network with the objective to create continuity in the high school to college curriculum, while at **Monroe County Community College** mathematics faculty work with high school math teachers to align curriculum in mathematics. **Schoolcraft College** invites area schools to serve on a Collaboration Council which meets twice a year to discuss issues and concerns in programming for incoming high school students.

Other colleges have focused on partnerships for testing, advising and orientation. To help students bypass developmental education, **Glen Oaks Community College** offers free Accuplacer testing for high school students on an appointment or walk-in basis. Students can take the placement test twice a semester, with opportunities to study in between using free peer tutoring and online resources from Kahn Academy. At **Muskegon Community College**, most high schools in the service area are invited to campus in spring prior to enrollment for placement testing, advising, orientation and scheduling. This initiative went from five schools in 2016 to 15 schools in 2017. More schools will be invited in 2018.

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## **Michigan Career Pathways**

Arts and Communications

Business Management/ Marketing & Technology  
Engineering, Manufacturing & Industrial Technology

Health Sciences

Human Services

Natural Resources and Agriscience

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### Practice Area 3. Keeping Students on a Path

Supporting students throughout their college experience, rather than concentrating services at intake, is an important aspect of Guided Pathways that, if enacted successfully, would fundamentally change the business model for community college student services. Making this shift is challenging, and Michigan colleges are moving forward in small steps, concentrating on leveraging technology to develop course schedules and monitor students' progress, enhancing resources in advising and counseling and providing viable alternatives to popular selective admissions programs.

**Jackson College** has developed a matrix to show each course, every program it is part of, which general education requirement it fulfills and which semesters it will be offered over four academic years.

**Macomb Community College** employs an electronic catalog including certificate, degree plans and program sequences for all programs and is working to integrate these with their recently implemented yearlong schedule. The college has launched a marketing campaign focused on the importance of following a defined program of study, and has begun notifying students receiving financial aid when they register for courses that are not part of their declared programs. The email messaging invites students to visit the Counseling and Academic Advising Offices to either select a course that will apply to their program plan or update their program of study if their plans have changed.

Also on the technology front, colleges are also working with resources within their enterprise systems to make information on their progress more accessible to students. At **St. Clair County Community College** and **West Shore Community College**, customized audit processes in Colleague and Jenzabar have made it possible for students to monitor their progress toward a degree.

Michigan colleges are also wrestling with staffing challenges in shifting from the traditional, intake-intensive model of student support to a case-management approach where every student has a specific assigned advisor and advisors work with students in a caseload. **North Central Michigan College** has hired two new advisors—beginning in fall 2018 every student will be assigned to an advisor who will follow him/her throughout her time at the college. **Oakland Community College** is working to redefine the role of professional counselors to focus on diagnosing issues and connecting students to resources when they experience difficulties in their academic lives.

The volume of students seeking entrance into popular selective admissions programs, particularly in Health Sciences, presents a challenge when colleges are unable to admit more than a fraction of the potential applicants. At **Kellogg Community College**, academic advising, admissions and occasionally program coordinators facilitate pre-admissions sessions (mandatory for all nursing applicants, and optional for allied health applicants) for selective programs throughout the semester, where students can learn more about the specific programs and prerequisites. When a student is unable to meet the admission requirements for selective programming, the student will be referred to either counseling or advising to discuss alternatives. To smooth the transition for students who switch programs, the Allied Health Program Director at **Glen Oaks Community College** attends the Nursing Advisory Board meetings to ensure that the programs are aligned and students who are not likely to be admitted to the nursing program can readily move to allied health program paths.

## Practice Area 4. Ensuring Students are Learning

The researchers at CCRC recognized from the outset that student learning must remain at the heart of any community college reform effort, and in 2017 their research efforts in this area led to a revision of the SOAA to focus on the role of experiential learning and the use of learning outcomes assessment to strengthen programs of study.

When the Cohort I and II colleges in Michigan first completed the SOAA in 2016, there were five practices focused on the definition, alignment and assessment of program learning outcomes. In the 2017 version, the practice descriptions specifically address knowledge and skills developed through projects, internships, co-ops, clinical placements, group projects outside of class, service learning, study abroad and other active learning activities as well as documenting this learning through portfolios and other means beyond transcripts.

In following up with the colleges, MCSS found that when colleges completed the 2016 version of the SOAA, they tended to point to processes developed to address the learning outcomes assessment required for accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission, while the 2017 version prompted a deeper discussion of what it means to intentionally embed the wide variety of available experiential learning activities within programs.

Not surprisingly, occupational programs tend to lead the way when it comes to assessing outcomes from experiential learning activities, with many incorporating internships, portfolios and capstone projects in their assessment plans. At **Macomb Community College**, some programs have even used prior learning assessment to articulate credit between workforce development certifications and credit-bearing degree and certificate programs.

To facilitate more extensive use of internships in all of its programs, **Mid Michigan Community College** is developing a toolkit for faculty who are interested in developing internships and hopes to use the toolkit to engage more deeply with employers.

*It is really a new idea for us to “intentionally embed” experiential learning within non-occupational programs!*

*--Jackson College*

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College** is working to create more of a “program mindset” across the campus, especially when it comes to experiential learning. While internships and other active learning opportunities have traditionally happened at the department or discipline level, there is now an expectation that all new pathways will assess course, program and institutional learning outcomes, including outcomes from internships, clinical placements and practicum projects, that ensure that students are prepared for employment or transfer.

When it comes to experiential learning in transfer programs, service learning is a popular strategy. The transfer-oriented A.A., A.S. and A.G.S. programs at **Kellogg Community College** all include a service learning requirement. At **Delta College**, where service learning is required in all A.A. and A.S. programs, over 500 students received credit for service learning or civic engagement projects during the 2016/17 academic year.

## Leveraging Other Initiatives

Michigan has gained some traction since 2014, but the colleges are well aware that they have a long road ahead of them in implementing the systemic reforms. A common thread across the Michigan colleges is an acknowledgement of the power of Guided Pathways to knit together previously discrete and disparate efforts across the institution. In a 2017 study, a sample of colleges in Cohort I found that the ability to build from and expand on work that was already underway was the strongest facilitator for success in implementing guided pathways. Colleges are leveraging grant-funded initiatives, accreditation projects and other statewide efforts to support their Guided Pathways efforts.

Title III funding will help **Glen Oaks Community College** connect students in developmental education courses with peer mentors to increase success and momentum toward program completion.

**Lake Michigan College** will also use its recently awarded Title III grant to enhance its student success efforts. The college will scale up its Start to Finish program, which is currently supported by grants from United Way and the LMC Foundation. Students who place into developmental reading and at least one other developmental course are automatically enrolled in a program that allows them to complete the first four weeks of a college success course prior to being billed. The college covers the cost of the textbook through a partnership with its foundation, and students who are in good standing at the end of the fourth week have their Title IV aid applied and can continue their coursework with support from the college's Start to Finish program. The program has shown success in helping students "try before they buy," reducing the number of

students who withdraw early on and owe a balance on their aid.

**Delta College** and **Oakland Community College** are among several colleges who have aligned their accreditation work with Guided Pathways, especially in the practices related to student learning. **Delta** began assessing new general education requirements within programs intended for transfer in 2016. For its Higher Learning Commission Persistence and Completion Project, **Oakland Community College** selected three major areas of Guided Pathways yet to be fully realized at the institution: 1) For New Student Intake, improve assessment to diagnose areas where students need support, 2) For Academic Program Structure, fully map out programs and use programs to create predictable schedules, and 3) For Student Learning and Progress Monitoring, define and measure engagement, or the extent to which students are absorbed into the institution such that they are motivated to achieve their goals.

**Washtenaw Community College** is leveraging a state initiative to develop special supports to help academically underprepared students in developmental English and Introduction to Business courses. Washtenaw, along with **Lansing and Kalamazoo Valley Community College**, is participating in the John N. Gardner Institute's Michigan Gateways to Completion project. Funded by a grant from The Kresge Foundation, MiG2C supports colleges in redesigning courses with high failure rates, including critical program courses in biology, calculus and English composition, to increase student success.

## Common Challenges and Insights from the Field

The 23 Michigan Guided Pathways colleges are part of a broader national movement which began with Completion by Design and later came to include the 30 colleges in the AACC Pathways Project along with statewide efforts by Complete College America in Georgia, Indiana and Tennessee as well as the other states in the Student Success Center Network managed by Jobs for the Future. As part of this growing cadre, Michigan colleges can point to some notable progress after three years, but they continue to face significant challenges in scaling Guided Pathways to their full student populations. This section of the report highlights some common challenges that emerged from our research at MCSS, some of which are universal across all Guided Pathways colleges, and some of which seem unique to Michigan. Guidance in addressing these challenges is provided from existing literature and consultation with our team of advisors and technical assistants.

### Make guided pathways fully accessible for underprepared students

Thanks to the influence of Achieving the Dream and related initiatives, Michigan colleges have been working to improve outcomes for underprepared students for nearly a decade, so it is not surprising that there is a lot of activity going on in this arena, from scaling up co-requisite options in math and writing to rethinking testing and other placement policies and practices. However, in implementing Guided Pathways, Michigan colleges are struggling to bridge the gap between the needs of underprepared students and their new program maps, which are still largely oriented toward students who are considered college-ready.

In its 2017 report [Implementing Guided Pathways: Early Insights from the AACC Pathways Colleges](#), CCRC found that the key challenge facing most of the colleges was how to move away from the “get them through developmental education” mindset and instead enable poorly prepared students to “[get with the program](#)” and succeed in college-level coursework as soon as possible. A key to this is ensuring that all students, regardless of their readiness, are helped to explore options and

interests from the start and are not forced to go through the gauntlet of developmental education courses as a prerequisite to beginning a program of study. Strategies such as co-requisite courses and math pathways can shorten and simplify requirements to help students make progress early on.

Colleges should also consider that students who are not well prepared for college are not just academically weak, they also lack direction and the motivation that comes from having a goal and a plan. Colleges should use meta-majors and reexamine prerequisites to ensure that all students have access to a full program plan and courses that are applicable to their program of study in the first semester.

### Focus on full program plans when mapping pathways for part-time, anytime students

With well over half of new community college students attending part-time, adapting Guided Pathways to serve these students presents a considerable challenge to colleges. At the outset, Michigan colleges focused on sequencing courses for students who take at

least 12-15 credits per semester, but with these initial maps largely complete, colleges are beginning to grapple with how the sequences can be made to work for students who must attend part time, including reviewing options for day, evening and weekend-only schedules. For students who can only take a class or two each semester, every course needs to count toward timely completion. To serve these students well, colleges should focus on building a full program plan in the first semester for every student, regardless of college readiness or enrollment intensity, and make use of scheduling software to ensure that program-related courses are available each semester.

### Bring two and four-year partners together to simplify transfer pathways

While most colleges have strong relationships with local employers and advisory boards for their occupational programs, nearly all colleges report struggling to develop clear and consistent maps for transfer students. This difficulty is exacerbated by Michigan's autonomous higher education environment where universities are not confined by traditional regional service areas. For example, a student attending a community college in Grand Rapids or the Detroit area has the opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree at most of Michigan's public universities without having to relocate. As a result, Michigan community colleges currently maintain nearly 2000 separate articulation agreements, and advising students for successful transfer may mean consulting more than 15 separate curriculum guides.

In 2017 the Michigan Community College Association and the Michigan Association of State Universities received a \$1.025 million

appropriation from the State of Michigan to improve transfer. The outcomes for this three-year project include a new online transfer portal and development of a faculty-led process to create multi-institutional articulation agreements leading to statewide transfer pathways in the top programs of study. The Michigan Transfer Steering Committee hopes to develop pathways in the top 10-12 bachelor's degree programs in the state by 2020.

### Provide reliable access to labor market data

At its core, Guided Pathways is about helping students choose and enter a program of study that eventually leads to a credential of value in the labor market. However, accessing the labor market data needed to design programs and to keep students informed is a significant challenge in Michigan. Since Michigan law currently impedes the collection of wage data for graduates by prohibiting linking Social Security numbers with educational records, colleges typically rely on a combination of aggregated state and national trend data along with input from local employers to monitor the effectiveness of their occupational programs. To help colleges gain access to this data for reporting and program improvement, the Michigan Community College Association is supporting a set of bills allowing the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) to make individual wage data available for course or program planning, grant applications and other purposes, as well as for use in connection with research projects of a public nature. The legislation has passed the house of representatives and is expected to pass the senate in 2018.

## Consider the special needs of rural community colleges

Rural community colleges face some additional challenges with providing transfer and employment information. For students who must leave home to complete a bachelor's degree, the stakes (and costs) of taking courses that may not be applied to their program are higher. Rural colleges also struggle with how to share accurate and relevant information about local employment opportunities where state and national data do not reflect the true picture. The actions above may provide some measure of relief to rural colleges and their students.

## Use Guided Pathways to bring coherence to high school collaborations

From recruiting visits and early assessment to early/middle college, technical education partnerships and dual enrollment, Michigan colleges and their high school partners have a lot going on. Colleges should consider using Guided Pathways as an umbrella to bring coherence to collaborations with high schools, including clear communication about meta-majors and skills required for success in

programs of study. Colleges should also consider partnering with high school counselors to provide pathways advising for students participating in dual enrollment and including branded meta-major information in all presentations and marketing materials they share with high schools.

## Only connect...experiential opportunities, programs of study and student learning outcomes

Like colleges and universities everywhere, Michigan community colleges offer a wide variety of experiential learning opportunities ranging from required clinical placements in health science fields to service learning and study abroad. Too often, though, students view these experiences as optional, and as Kay McClenney has famously said, "Students don't do optional." When designing or revising pathways, colleges should include active and experiential learning as well as co-curricular activities such as internships as part of the curriculum, ensuring rich, high-quality academic experiences through explicit attention to active, experiential and co-curricular learning opportunities.



## Next Steps: Maintaining Momentum in Michigan


In late November 2017, MCSS launched phase 2.0 of the Michigan Guided Pathways Institute. All of the 23 original colleges have opted to continue in the Institute, and they will be joined by three additional colleges who were previously following the work from the sidelines. To maintain Michigan's momentum, MCSS plans to continue bringing colleges together in a learning network and working with national partners to track their progress in this transformational effort.

Over the past several months, colleges have acknowledged the value of participation in the Guided Pathways Institute, and the Scale of Adoption Assessment process in particular. One college even likened the follow-up call to a therapy session. For most, it was an opportunity to reconnect as a team and review and reflect on their progress so far, and MCSS, with support from the Student Success Center Network at Jobs for the Future, will repeat this process twice in the upcoming three years. To provide another view of the colleges' progress, MCSS will also partner with AACC's Voluntary Framework for Accountability, which is in the process of adding reports on college trends in "early momentum" metrics that CCRC and others have identified as useful leading indicators of the effects of Guided Pathways reforms.

The most frequently referenced need for support among the 23 Cohort I and II colleges is in the area of monitoring student progress and intervening to keep students on a pathway. Colleges are already experimenting with technology-supported early warning systems to alert college personnel when students are struggling in coursework or go off their path. To be able to do this most effectively, every student needs to be on a full-program plan early on, and there need to be mechanisms in place for students to change their plans as they change their minds or need to redirect to a more fruitful path.

To help colleges put all of these pieces together, MCSS is currently partnering with [Jobs for the Future's Student](#)

[Success Center Network](#) and Achieving the Dream to provide in-person institutes, webinars and other online resources detailing lessons learned from the [Integrated Planning and Student Support](#) (iPASS) initiative as the Michigan colleges work to redesign advising and student support in a Guided Pathways context.



THE MOST FREQUENTLY REFERENCED NEED FOR SUPPORT AMONG THE 23 COHORT I AND II COLLEGES IS MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS AND INTERVENING TO KEEP STUDENTS ON A PATHWAY.

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