"Understanding" Guided Pathways: Designing Academic Maps

Sharon R. Duhart – Center for Academic Advising & Success

January 27, 2017

Guided Pathways and Complete College America & Georgia

Navigating the complicated path through college is a difficult task for far too many. All students need step-by-step roadmaps and intrusive guidance to on-time completion — saving time and money — and significantly boosting their success.

What is Guided Pathways?

- A National Initiative through Complete College America with Structured Pathways which aid in quality advising and significantly increasing college graduation rates.

The Problems - Too Much Time and Money — and Too Few Graduates

1. Too few students ever graduate — even fewer on time.
   - 34% - Bachelor's Degree – *On Time*
   - 10% - Associates Degree *- On Time*

2. Students earn unnecessary credits.
   - The average bachelor's degree graduate in the United States earned more than *136 credits when 120 credits* is usually enough.
   - Associate degree holders earned nearly *80 credits instead of the expected 60.*

3. Billions of dollars and millions of hours are wasted on unnecessary courses.
   - ***$19 Billion is wasted each year ($8 Billion Students, $11 Billion Taxpayers)***

The Reasons -"Credit Creep," Broken Policies, Uninformed, and Overwhelming Choices

1. POOR CHOICES: Credits earned that don't count toward degrees often represent unwise choices.

2. UNAVAILABLE COURSES: When needed courses aren't offered, students get stuck in costly holding patterns.

3. EXCESS CREDITS: Withdrawals and no-credit repeats are very costly.

4. LOST TRANSFERS: Broken transfer policies undermine student progress.

5. UNNECESSARY CREDITS: Too many programs require too many credits, wasting time and money.

Too Easy for Students to Get Away with Poor Course Withdrawal Decisions

Slipping Through the Cracks

Students have many reasons for choosing to withdraw from a course

SOME ARE "GOOD" REASONS

"I'm avoiding a failing grade"

"I'm overwhelmed and worried about my grades in other courses"

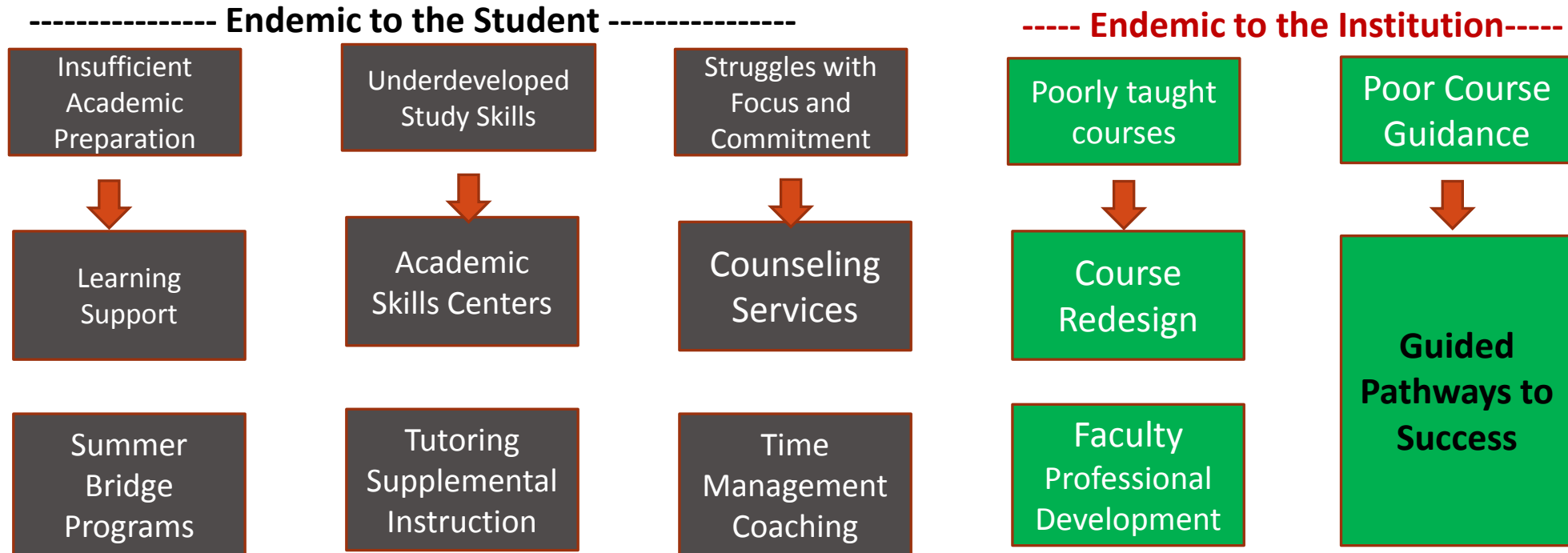**MANY ARE "BAD" REASONS**

"I'm not earning the grade I want"

"I dislike the instructor"

"I don't want to get up this early"

"I've lost interest in material" "I just want more free time"

Sub-optimal advising practices let too many students make "bad" choices. Absent a meaningful conversation, many students do not understand the long-term implications of their withdrawal decision

What more can we do to combat Course Failure?

Insufficient Academic Preparation	Underdeveloped Study Skills	Struggles with Focus and Commitment	Poorly taught courses	Poor Course Guidance
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Learning Support	Academic Skills Centers	Counseling Services	Course Redesign	**Guided Pathways to Success**
Summer Bridge Programs	Tutoring Supplemental Instruction	Time Management Coaching	Faculty Professional Development	

Cafeteria Model (Status Quo)	Guided Pathway Model
• Paths to student end-goals are unclear.	• Programs are fully mapped out and aligned with further education and career advancement.
• Program requirements are confusing; guidelines for progression are not clear and consistent.	• Critical courses and other milestones are clearly identified on program maps.
• There is a lack of curricular coherence across courses, and students may not acquire needed skills.	• Student learning outcomes are specified across programs.
• Course schedules are unpredictable and often set to accommodate college needs, not student needs.	• Predictable schedules are set based on analysis of courses students need to progress on their plans.
• Curriculum in high schools and other feeders is not aligned to college requirements.	• High school and other feeder curriculum is designed to prepare students to enter college programs in particular fields.
NEW STUDENT INTAKE	
• Career and college planning is optional.	• Academic plans, based on program maps, are required.
• Undecided students are allowed to explore on their own.	• Students are required to enter exploratory majors and choose specific programs on a specified timeline.
• Assessment is used to sort students into remediation or college - level courses.	• Assessment is used to diagnose areas where students need support.
• Prerequisite remediation is narrowly focused on college algebra and English composition.	• Instruction in foundation skills is integrated into and contextualized with critical program courses.
INSTRUCTION	
• Learning outcomes are focused on courses, not programs.	• Faculty collaborate to define and assess learning outcomes for entire programs.
• Instructors are often isolated and unsupported.	• Faculty are trained and supported to assess program learning outcomes and use results to improve instruction.
• Metacognitive skills are considered outside the scope of instruction.	• Supporting motivation and metacognition is an explicit instructional goal across programs.
PROGRESS MONITORING AND SUPPORT	
• Student progress is not monitored, or there is limited feedback on progress.	• Student progress on academic plans is closely monitored, with frequent feedback.
• Students do not have a clear idea of what they need to do to complete program requirements.	• Students can see how far they have come and what they need to do to complete programs.
• Students' performance in critical program courses is not closely monitored.	• Early warning systems identify students at risk off ailing critical courses and initiate timely interventions.
• Communication between advisors and academic departments is poor; advisors lack accurate program information.	• Advisors work closely with program faculty, with a clear division of labor for monitoring student progress.

Keep it simple…

Right Courses
Right Time
+ Specific Sequence
Graduation on Time

Key Questions when designing Academic Maps

CLARIFYING PATHWAYS TO STUDENT COMPLETION GOALS:

- Are our programs designed to guide and prepare students to enter further education and employment in fields of importance to our institution?

- Are further education and employment targets clearly specified for every program?

- How clearly are our programs mapped out? Do students know which courses they should take and in what sequence? Are the courses that are critical for success in each program clearly identified?

Keeping Students on Path…

• How well do faculty advisors monitor students' program choices and progress toward completing their program's requirements?

• Do students know how far along they are in their programs and what they have left to do to complete them?

• Are faculty advisors able to identify when students are at risk of deviating from their program plans? How effective are we at intervening to help students get back on track?

• Will the way courses are scheduled enable students to take courses when they need them, plan their lives around school from one term to the next, and complete their programs on time?

Useful data and tools …

CREATING ACADEMIC MAPS:

- Academic Catalog
- Core Curriculum
- Prerequisites
- Learning Support
- What to include vs. what not include
- Trends vs. Common Practices vs. Best Practices
- Where do your students go?
- What type of monitoring system do you have? (bricks & mortar vs. automated)
- 1st Worksheet THEN Academic Map

Questions to think about …

CREATING ACADEMIC MAPS:

- Selecting the right professors
- Course Offering Times
- Student Choices
- Lock & Key
- Undecided/Undeclared Students
- Program of Study/Major Change(s)
- How do they think?

Questions to think about …

CREATING ACADEMIC MAPS:

- Documenting Results
- Stackable Program Maps
- Meta-Majors
- Part-Time vs. Full-Time
- Full-Time vs. Full-Load
- Special Groups (Adult Learner, Veterans, MOWR, etc.)
- Administration and/or Faculty changes
- Milestones (Stackable Maps, Changing the Culture, etc.)
- AM I? (**A**ssessment – **M**onitor – **I**ntervene)

The working group …

CREATING ACADEMIC MAPS:

- Vice President/Provost

- Academic Deans/Department Heads

- Director of Academic Advising

- Registrar

- Program Coordinators/Faculty

- Professionals in the Career Field

- The big controversy (Student Affairs???)

Get the word out …

CREATING ACADEMIC MAPS:

- Documentation

- Getting the word out
  - New Student Orientation
  - FYEX 1630 Presentation
  - FYEX 1630 Assignment
  - Center for Academic Advising & Success
  - Financial Aid
  - Posting in each Academic Division

- Challenges (policy changes, undated maps, student fails, class cancels, etc.)

Questions to think about …

CREATING ACADEMIC MAPS:

AM I?

A - **A**ssessment

M - **M**onitor

I - **I**ntervene

"Understanding" Guided Pathways: Designing Academic Maps

Sharon Duhart – Center for Academic Advising & Success

404-756-2746

sduhart@atlm.edu