



Guided Pathways Model at Access-Oriented 4-Year Institutions: A Student-Centered Approach to College Access and Success

Our [Guided Pathways Model for 4-Year institutions](#) is grounded in the student experience. The model is oriented toward postsecondary leaders and practitioners seeking to adopt strategies and catalyze institutional transformation to better support learner's access into and success within 4-year institutions. We use a placed-based collective impact approach to undergird the model which seeks to leverage multiple stakeholders in a community to achieve common goals working across sectors with mutually reinforcing activities. We apply this concept in terms of leveraging internal cross-campus collaborations and external cross-community collaborations to activate and sustain student success.

Modifying Completion By Design's Loss/Momentum Framework

(<https://www.completionbydesign.org/s/cbd-lmf>), the Guided Pathways Model at 4-Year Institutions prioritizes an asset approach to leverage Partners, Processes, Interventions, and Policies to mitigate Pressure or Friction points in many students' academic journeys and create Asset Points to sustain success. These domains are considered across the student journey phases from important on-ramps to aid Recruitment, through the college experience with Early and Advanced Progress, and extending beyond completion as students Transition into the workforce and/or graduate studies.

Aspects of the Model

Student Phases

The model presents four phases for institutions to consider when developing guided pathways. While these phases seem linear, their boundaries are in fact somewhat amorphous. In this model, we seek to stretch the focus of institutional leaders to consider the opportunities to build asset points prior to entry and beyond degree completion. Our hope is for institutional leaders and practitioners to use this model as a framework in which they may input their own institutional contexts as aligned with the identified content as a guide.

- **Recruitment** refers to the phase just prior to entry when an institution is seeking to identify and enroll prospective students. We encourage institutions to consider building multiple onramps into their academic community by leveraging partnerships across industry, 2-year colleges, K-12, and community partners. System-wide and regional articulation agreements are especially important for the recruitment of transfer students.
- **Early Progress** refers to the phase when an institution is developing students' acculturation to the academic community and attending to broad cognitive domains-

often through about the first third of students' academic journey. Many institutions may structure this phase of students' academic journey to focus on exploratory and core courses or where students may garner prerequisites to gain entry into a specific major.

- **Advanced Progress** refers to the phase when institutions are preparing students' deep study within a specific discipline (often referred to as upper division courses). Many students increase the focus of their education's application in postcollegiate contexts such as the job market or graduate school (e.g., intern/apprenticeships, undergraduate research, etc.).
- **Transition** refers to the phase when an institution is helping to prepare students to complete their courses of study and often move into the workforce or onto graduate studies. This phase can-and should-overlap significantly with the Advanced Progress phase and many institutions may consider opportunities within this phase to build lifelong relationships with these students as alumni and prospective returning adult students for future studies. In this model, we parse the "Transition Phase" from the "Advanced Progress Phase" to draw concerted consideration toward career exploration and postcollegiate outcomes.

Model Domains

Model Domains include both tangible processes and practices along with context for discrete aspects of the student experience. Below are brief summaries for each domain which may provide guidance for leaders and practitioners to build their own institutional map as aligned with 4-year guided pathways framework.

- **Asset Points** refers to the student feeling positively supported along with associated target outcomes and/or conditions that lead to momentous student success outcomes (e.g., greater enrollment, retention, completion, etc.). These points should be interpreted as recommended 'states' in which institutions may redesign and change their organizational capacity.
- **Partners** refers to both the internal and external partnerships salient to student success with respect to a given student phase. Partnerships may be native to the institution (e.g., department, unit), within the community (e.g., community colleges, K-12), or national associations or vendors.
- **Processes** refers to the various approaches and change management techniques that build to/develop asset points as well as mitigate and/or eliminate pressure points. Processes are often larger in scale, systemic, and require wholesale integration of a set of interventions and programs.
- **Interventions** refers to specific, evidence-based programs or initiatives that help to develop/support asset points and mitigate and/or eliminate pressure points. These may also be nested and integrated into broader processes (see above) for inclusive, and equitable student success reforms. Interventions may target a given subpopulation of students or scaled to all depending on the level of need and available resources.
- **Policies** refers to common institutional-level policies that reflect the lived experience of students. The policies referenced serve as evidence-based examples that work to

achieve asset points and mitigate/eliminate pressure points. Policies may be a reflection of institutional internal culture (“commitment to course delivery on time”) or external catalysts (federal and state policies).

- **Pressure/Friction Points** refers to common barriers and challenges experienced by students. These points reflect barriers and challenges that commonly result from either or both inefficiencies in institutional design of services (lack of partnerships, outdated promotion/tenure systems, limited articulation/transfer systems) and/or external factors such as a decrease of state funding.
- **Essential Institutional Capacities** refers to operational capacities that are particularly salient to a given phase. Three functional capacities are identified as essential and require a slightly different focus with respect to each phase. These capacities include 1) Institutional Research & Information Technology (IR & IT); 2) Strategic Finance (SF); and, 3) Leadership & Culture (LC).

Intended Use of the Model

This [model](#) is intended for use by institutional leaders and practitioners. The model is designed to be incorporated into everyday tasks and interactions as a means of conducting learning-oriented practitioners work based on research that examines the impact of guided pathways on educational outcomes. Further, the model should create a continual context for exploring and implementing policies, programs, and practices. The model intends to shape how institutional leaders and practitioners think about the student experience through the lens of guided pathways.

Understanding the phases and domains allow users to adapt the model for their particular institutional contexts and for particular subgroups of students. For example, an institution who is particularly interested in developing guided pathways for veteran students might use the model to consider asset and friction points particular to veteran students across their postsecondary journey. The institution could then consider ways to build assets for veteran students through partners, processes, interventions, and policies. We encourage users to, therefore, consider this model's use at the macro and micro levels.

[Return to the model](#)

Suggested Citation:

York, T. T., Rodriguez, A., Looney, S., & Cole, A. (2019). Guided Pathways Model at Access-Oriented 4-Year Institutions: A Student-Centered Approach to College Access and Success, Washington, DC: Association of Public & Land-grant Universities.

