



Guided Pathways Meta Majors

Cañada College - Inquiry Phase

To begin: A little story about choice

The Jam Jar Experiment

In 2000, in a Menlo Park supermarket, professors of psychology from Stanford set up a booth with jars of jam.

Customers could taste as many jams as they wanted and received a coupon for \$1 off.

First offering: 6 flavors of jam.

Every few hours, they switched from offering a selection of 6 jams to a group of 24 jams.

On average, customers tasted two jams, regardless of the size of the assortment.

60% of customers were drawn to the large assortment, while only 40% stopped by the small one.

30% of the people who had sampled from the six-jar assortment decided to buy jam, while only 3% of those confronted with the two dozen jams purchased a jar.

What does this have to do with GP?

The “paradox of choice”:
Too many choices leads to
overwhelm, indecision, and
frustration.

Students entering into community college are overwhelmed with navigating the amount of choices available to them in what to study, which classes to take, what degree/certificate to earn, and where to transfer.



How is Cañada doing?

- *16% of students complete their degree/certificate in 3-years*
- *52% of students complete their degree/certificate in 6 years*
- *58% of students that fail English 100 (a common first-semester course) in Fall do not return in Spring.*
- *Students, on average, are attempting 118 units before earning a 60-unit Associate's Degree.²*

²Compiled by Cañada College's Office of PRIE

What is Guided Pathways?

College students are more likely to complete a degree efficiently¹ if they:

- ◆ choose an “Area of Interest”
- ◆ develop an academic plan
- ◆ follow a road map of the courses they need to take
- ◆ receive guidance and support to help them stay on plan

Most community colleges use a “cafeteria” model, allowing students to choose from an abundance of disconnected courses, programs, and support services.

Students often have difficulty navigating these choices and end up making poor decisions. Many drop out of college altogether.

¹ *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* by Bailey, Jagers, and Jenkins

1.

Meta Majors

Areas of Interest or Career Groups

What are Meta Majors?

Incoming students are given support to explore their “area of interest” based on potential degrees or careers, choose a program of study, and develop an academic plan based on program maps created by faculty and advisors.

Meta Majors group degrees and programs together thematically and help students to select one of the structured, educationally coherent program maps that align with students' goals for careers and further education.

What are Program Maps?

Program maps helps students complete their required classes in ways that are thematically aligned, building upon the student's stores of knowledge while preparing them to transfer successfully and/or enter the workforce.

Program maps are NOT:

- ◆ A highly regimented sequence of courses
- ◆ Favoring certain subjects over others
- ◆ "Pushing students through the degree factory"
- ◆ Inflexible: students can change pathways and even Meta Majors.

Benefits of Meta Majors and Program Maps

- ◆ Allow students to explore “areas of interest” before selecting a major.
- ◆ Help students understand, explore, and choose appropriate educational goals.
- ◆ Reduces units that don't help students reach goals.
- ◆ Provide support to determine/refine goal during first semester.
- ◆ Give students clear and efficient paths to reach those goals.
- ◆ Ensure those paths are available.
- ◆ Provide support and resources to keep students on those paths.



The Big Picture

What does this mean for Cañada?

How will Curriculum Committee be affected?

- ◆ Guided Pathways and Meta Majors are student-facing.
- ◆ The purpose is to take the existing curriculum and clarify the path to completion or transfer for students, saving them time and money.
- ◆ Over time, there will be more analysis and evaluation of how to make courses more aligned with student goals.
- ◆ It is possible that some courses will need to be revised to address student needs.

But why?

It's an equity issue



This Year in Meta Majors...

Objectives:

1. Create general categories of similar interest areas in which students can begin their career and academic explorations.
2. Use language that is accessible, clear, and inviting to students.
3. Consider meta-majors through the eyes and perspectives of our students, particularly through the experiences of students who are new to college, first generation college students, low income students, and student who may question whether they belong in college.



Characteristics of Meta-Majors:

- student-facing and student-centered.
- use language that is engaging, clear, accessible, and draws students in.
- give students options, a place to begin their explorations in an area that interests them.
- be inviting and welcoming, and help create a sense of belonging for students.



Non-Characteristics of Meta-Majors:

- does not replace departments, divisions, or degrees not a major.
- not a realignment of curriculum.
- does not determine transferability.
- does not limit students' choices or freedoms for academic/career explorations.



Thanks!

Any questions?

You can find me at wileym@smccd.edu

Meta Major Mondays: 1st and 3rd Monday of each month in Building 3, Room 142 from 2:30-4pm.

How will Science and Tech faculty be involved?

You've already done it!

Congrats.

Our team is interested in using the STEM model, including the resources like the STEM Center, Colts Con, STEM 3 and the clearly outlined program maps for majors in this division.

We still need your help!

The Guided Pathways team needs people with experience creating clear pathways to transfer or degree completion. Help us bring the success of Science and Tech to other divisions.