

## **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.<sup>1</sup> Guided Pathways redesigns the way community colleges serve their students 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.” The student is counseled to select a potential program that has a clearly defined program map with support for exploration within or beyond their 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 be less extraneous to their degree completion. In the Guided Pathways model, the students follow a “guided” path to eventually selecting a major, with milestone courses and regular checking in with counselors to stay on their path.

### **What is the timeline for implementing Guided Pathways at Cañada?**

The process is intended to take five years. Cañada College’s Guided Pathways steering committee is 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, researching, and collaborating with faculty and students to incorporate their needs. Next year in 2019-2020, we hope to move forward with developing Cañada’s 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.

<sup>1</sup> *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* by Bailey, Jagers, and Jenkins