



# North Central State College Quality Highlights Report

FALL 2018

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## Mission and Vision

Providing individuals with the knowledge, skills and inspiration to succeed in their chosen path. North Central State College is committed to being a leader in affordable quality higher education and a partner in achieving greater community prosperity and better quality of life.

### A. Introduction

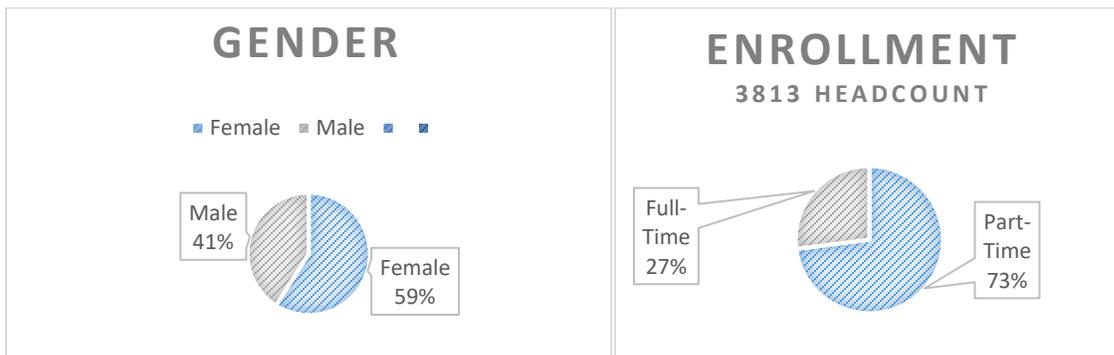
North Central State College is a two-year college chartered by the state of Ohio, through the Ohio Department of Higher Education and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The College’s service to the community can best be understood by its mission statement to “provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to succeed in their chosen path.” The three strategic focus areas of the institution are: Access, Success, and Resources.

To accomplish the mission to help our students succeed in their chosen path, the college offers over 60 degrees and certificate programs by leveraging the talents and resources of the very community it serves.

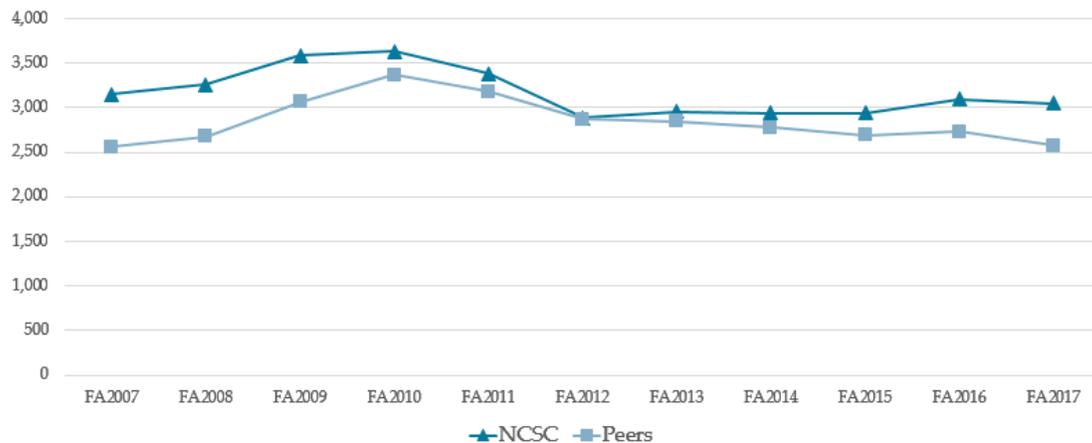
The college is based on a 600 acre wooded campus in Mansfield Ohio, 70 miles south of Cleveland Ohio, and 70 miles north of the state’s capital, Columbus.

The college has three academic divisions, 99 full time-staff, 40 part-time staff, 47 full-time faculty and approximately 100 adjunct faculty. Academic programs range from the field of health sciences to transfer degrees, professional services, workforce training, and business and technology degrees. The college enrolls 3800 credit students annually and another 400 students in non-credit programs. The college partners with area high schools to offer CCP (College Credit Plus) courses both on campus and at local high schools.

Figure 1- Demographic Chart



# Headcount enrollment vs. similar OACC



The State of Ohio moved to a 100% performance funding model in 2014 for state subsidy. This shift impacted the community colleges in Ohio, and has caused a re-evaluation of how best to meet the needs of the communities served, by balancing the “access” mission of community colleges with the need to successfully graduate many of the underprepared students who enroll in our institutions. Thus, the college has narrowed the focus of the institution to three strategic goals which guide every decision from academic programming, to hiring, to infrastructure planning and capital expenditures. These three strategic goals are Access, Success, and Resources. These strategic goals have concrete performance indicators which are monitored, updated, and evaluated [annually](#).

## B. Systems Appraisal Feedback

The college received ratings of ‘strong, clear, and well presented’ on all five criterion. Nonetheless, the institution is committed to continuous quality improvement. Therefore, the analysis of the systems appraisal was used as the starting point for a number of improvement efforts within the past five months.

This report will address **two** categories of issues and **two** components of feedback identified within the systems appraisal.

The **two** categories of issues are:

- A. True/genuine areas in need of improvement which must be addressed with interventions
- B. Areas which are strong, yet perhaps not well presented in the portfolio

The **two** components of feedback are:

1. Strategic challenges (6)
2. Core component areas displaying opportunities for improvement (8)

### Strategic Challenges Identified in the Appraisal

1. *“The College provides an ad hoc approach to training for ethical behavior and integrity. The College may want to consider its outcomes, then plan an approach that can be deployed that is focused on these outcomes.”*
2. *“As NCSC continues to move forward in technology and campus-level facility decisions, the College may need to consider specific outcomes aligned to performance measures.”*
3. *“The College may need to strategically exam the influence of state legislative and governor intervention in practices, processes and programs at NCSC.”*
4. *“The College uses a variety of surveys to gauge student engagement and satisfaction. The College is encouraged to continue to use these data to make improvements. The College is expected to have a developed and deployed process for student complaint data. The College is encouraged to exam this area for deployed processes and results.”*
5. *“As the College continues to offer opportunity to employees, the College is encouraged to consider how external training and development opportunities can enrich all employees.”*
6. *“The College provides information on its current state. Yet, processes could be further developed. The College is encouraged to continue to consider its key process, measures, and targets for Valuing Employees.”*

### Core Components Areas of Opportunity

*Please note: All core component areas were rated as “strong, clear, and well presented.” However, the college has isolated statements of opportunities the college leadership believes should be addressed.*

1. *“The College collects information from students, employers, and employees to make changes to student learning outcomes. The College is encouraged to identify new and emerging student groups as a result of these data collected.”*
2. *“The institution does not have a clear process and documented activities in regards to human diversity. Clearer definitions on diversity would assist the institution in this sub-component.”*
3. *“The college-wide outcomes are communicated in a variety of ways, including faculty and staff updates during in-service meetings on the trends of student achievement in the five college-wide outcome categories and through faculty communication with their advisory committee. College-*

*wide outcomes are listed on all syllabi. Still, how the College assesses the appropriateness of the general education program is not clear.”*

4. *“The college has student success interventions, such as mediated course drop, guided pathways to success, and developed Meta majors. But the College does not address how effective teaching is aligned to courses or programs in the pathways.”*
5. *“College has detailed curriculum maps which map VALUE rubrics to the College Wide Outcomes (CWO) at the course level and has data on mean score for each of the CWOs over several semesters. The college has been modifying the process for collecting samples to assess each term and has set thresholds for meeting the outcomes. In latest year sampled, the average score met the threshold for all 5 outcomes. The college does not clearly describes next steps or what improvements it made with the CWO assessment data.*
6. *”NCSC has stated goals for student learning and effective processes (effective in that they are collecting and analyzing data and reviewing and revising processes for improvement); the institution assesses achievement of learning outcomes for curricula programs; NCSC looks to be using information gained from assessment to improve student learning for program outcomes but it is unclear if they are doing it for course outcomes or VALUE rubrics; and processes and methodologies are reflective of good practices and has wide participation of faculty and administration. NCSC is just beginning to develop co-curricular goals. Goals are limited to leadership and there is no apparent process for assessing student learning of these goals. It appears to be a series of events and activities aimed at promoting leadership skills for students”*
7. *“Program reliance on grants may be a concern if no sustainability plan is created to keep or maintain new programs and services after the life of the grants.”*
8. *“The College has dedicated resources to growing the dual credit population. As a result, as an incentive to persist and finish after completing dual credit, the College offers free-tuition to students who continue full-time after completing dual credit. The College acknowledges that this could pose a fiscal threat and is working to create revenue streams to cover these costs.”*

## **C. Strategic Challenge Improvements**

In March 2018 the college received feedback on the November 2017 systems portfolio. The document was analyzed at several levels within the institution and the analysis was communicated widely to all constituencies on campus. The following pages (sections C & D) will address each of the six strategic challenges identified, and each of the eight core component statements that seemed to indicate need for improvement.

## 1. Ethics Training

Ethics training was identified in the strategic challenges area. Some of the deficiency cited was in the presentation within the portfolio. From the decision to invest time and energy into annual training of the Board of Trustees in relation to the ethical guidelines for leadership, to the inclusion of ethics training at the time of orientation, the college has shown a commitment to ethics training. However, the learning outcomes for the staff/faculty ethics training have never been explicitly agreed upon or communicated. This has been an oversight primarily because our policies already outline in each instance what ethical behavior will look like. Nonetheless, the college has taken seriously the team's review and has submitted through President's Staff the outcomes we expect in ethics training in these areas. The outcomes are guided by the Ohio Ethics Commission. The college has created a schedule of training for the upcoming year that will be integrated into the annual professional development cycle. The annual employee evaluation has been changed to include a place where supervisors can indicate that the employee has attended at least one college sponsored or approved ethics training within the previous year. The outcomes are measurable and will be reviewed annually within the strategic planning cycle. Please see [Appendix A](#) for the internal training syllabus, which describes outcomes and indicates the inclusion of ethics training in our annual professional development schedule.

## 2. Specific Outcome Measures for IT and Facilities

This is one of the strategic challenges where the college is indeed strong in relation to the activities and outcomes related to IT and facilities, however it was not well documented in the portfolio.

In 2013 a strategic plan was created for both IT and facilities based upon the understanding of our current situation, which was an outcome of competing priorities when the college went through the 2012 semester conversion. The college, in an effort to keep the cost of college reasonable for our students, inadvertently underfunded the IT department to the detriment of future development and competitiveness. The first step for enacting this IT/Facilities strategic plan was to form a strong alliance between the two departments to help them plan effectively. The directors of IT and facilities conducted internal audits of all current systems. As an outgrowth of these audits several strategic directions were decided upon and implemented:

- I. The college invested a significant amount of its annual budget towards the upgrade of the information technology infrastructure for the institution. The expenditures have averaged approximately one million dollars per year since 2013.
- II. The college repurposed excess space by renting it to outside constituents. We also collaborated with our co-located partner, the Ohio State University-Mansfield, on a plan to move operations out of a shared building into the main NCSC administration building at the same time fostering deeper collaboration with them in the use of technology in the revamped shared library.
- III. The college leveraged grant funding and state capital funding to update critically needed IT functions, and refresh facilities with an eye toward seamless IT functionality and cutting-edge pedagogical design.
- IV. Finally, the college investigated and implemented SSO (Single Sign-On) as well as essential cybersecurity systems, updated ongoing identity protection training for all employees, moved key digital services to the cloud, and created a feasible system of on-campus redundancy.

### 3. Strategic Plan to Address State Mandates

While external mandates are not always knowable ahead of time, it is possible by careful engagement with state and national professional groups and boards, for the college's leadership team to not only know the coming mandates, but also shape the policy from which those mandates spring.

With that understanding the administrative team, faculty and staff have been engaged on various state and national groups:

- The Ohio Association of Community Colleges, with working groups for college presidents, chief academic officers, chief fiscal officers, financial aid officers, registrars, and controllers. Additionally, the college participates in the OACC facilitated SSLI (Student Success Leadership Institute).
- The Association of Community College Trustees- The president, the board secretary, and most trustees attend the annual conference for training and networking.

- Faculty and staff attend a myriad of professional organizations’ annual conferences and trainings to keep abreast of trends. These updates are then shared through standing committees, President’s Cabinet, and monthly department meetings.

With this input from each of the strategic groups, state or federal policy changes/discussions are placed on the agenda for discussion at the President’s Cabinet monthly meeting.

Additionally, it must be noted that the Director of Grant Development Administration and Government Relations is charged with consistent relationship building not only with state representatives, but also at the national level with congressional representatives at annual meetings in Washington, D.C. This increase in duties for the Director of Grants was enacted in 2015 in response to the need for the institution to keep abreast of trends, and plan in light of the changing political and economic landscape.

#### 4. Centralized Complaint System

While the institution has followed its published policies related to complaint processing and resolution for employees and students, the system was not optimized for the consistent analysis of trends. Consequently, the decision was made to adapt the current software used for gathering other survey data from constituencies, to better track and analyze complaints/issues/feedback. The definition of this feedback was widened based upon a number of discussions with faculty, /staff/administration to include feedback from community members, as well as the creation of a self-service system that would bridge the gap between extensive formal complaints and informal feedback.

This system was created in Spring Semester 2018, and deployed at the beginning of Fall Semester 2018. The digital feedback tracking form can be found on the college’s “[Consumer Information](#)” webpage. Please see [Appendix B](#) for a PDF copy of the form.

#### 5. Encouraging and Funding External Training

In light of feedback from the system’s appraisal, the college has reestablished the department budget line for professional development for staff for FY 2019. Additionally, members of the Management Advisory Council have been directed to include specific external training plans for the upcoming year for employees. Professional development plans are monitored through the annual evaluation process, and goals are set for subsequent years. External professional

development planning has been ongoing despite the absence of the budget line. We believe including this budget line back in for managers will raise awareness among staff of the importance of substantive, mission focused, external training opportunities.

It must be noted that the institution's commitment to professional development is evidenced by a consistently assessed, systematic, internal professional development system which includes:

- One In-Service day every semester for staff and faculty
- One presidential open forum every semester
- Two-day convocation in Fall Semester
- Monthly joint division meetings with all academic units which include topics related to the scholarship of teaching and learning, technology, communication, and safety
- External professional development through the Title III grant
- Teams of 8-10 faculty, staff, and administrators attending multiple times throughout the year, the OACC sponsored (SSLI) Student Success Leadership Institute meetings. This institute is patterned after the national AACC Guided Pathways Model.

## 6. Set Key Measures for Valuing Employees

With the use of the campus quality survey and employee exit survey data collected by the department of Human Resources, President's Staff continues to analyze key measures for valuing employees. Several areas have been identified for improvement and are currently undergoing a refresh:

- The employee recognition system: President's Staff is currently polling employees on ways to update the system-please see [Appendix C](#)
- A renewed budget process and training
- The reestablishment of budget line specific for external professional development activities for staff

## D. Core Component Improvements

The college updated several key areas within the last six months, either in response to the feedback given in the systems appraisal or as part of the ongoing plan of continuous quality improvement. The following areas have been targeted for improvement.

## 1. Identifying New Student Groups

The College has recently reconfigured the standing committee for “Access” to include a working group solely devoted to the analysis of potential new student groups that the institution may target for enrollment. The group, in collaboration with the institutional research department isolated several potential community groups. These groups are the adult student population and the online student population. While the college currently has services in place to address the enrollment needs of these students, the Access working group audited the current services, examined options for improvement, and are currently creating an updated comprehensive student services model that would support these students in an increasing manner throughout their student life cycle. It must be noted, the college is not creating a new host of services for these students; online and adult student-focused services have been in place for decades. However, the needs have changed, and it has been several years since the college set about to reimagine the online and adult student experience with a focus on continuous quality improvement.

The process the access team sub-group follows is systematic and informed by the institutional research office, with input from each of the academic and nonacademic divisions.

The needs of student groups, from enrollment to graduation are examined, and focused step-by-step plans are created within the sub-group, using employee input from each of the areas these students will progress through during the student life cycle.

## 2. Diversity

While the college has maintained a diversity initiative since 2010, it was a shared services team with Ohio State University-Mansfield, and the leader of the committee was not previously a member of President’s Cabinet. In 2017 the committee was reinstated as a solely North Central State College team, and folded into the standing committee structure of the President’s Cabinet. The chair was given the charge of working with all internal and external constituents to outline a plan for the institution to work toward an inclusive, equitable environment.

The first task of the new team was to update the current diversity language within the college’s strategic plan, as well as to update policy language. In conjunction with these changes the committee was asked to lead college-wide efforts within the 2018-2019 academic year to raise awareness of the institution’s blind spots in the area of diversity, and chart a course for addressing the short-falls identified by employees. During the fall 2017 convocation an external

speaker was engaged to begin the discussion surrounding implicit bias. This was followed up with a college wide discussion surrounding implicit bias and equity which began in earnest at the spring 2018 in-service.

One of the morning sessions for fall 2018 convocation was dedicated to the internal team to kick off the yearlong introduction of shaping the shift in culture, which is needed on campus.

While the Human Resources Office (through embedded practices to reach diverse populations), and the institutional executive leadership have been committed to a robust system of inclusion, the culture of the institution has not shifted significantly toward that objective.

### 3-5. Assessment-Closing the Loop

In spring 2018 it was decided that the assessment programs within the academic divisions were sufficiently mature enough to move to the next level of engagement with the college-wide outcomes. Since 2013 the assessment team has consciously kept separate the reporting of program outcome results and the reporting of the college-wide outcomes results. The purpose of the separation was to increase simplicity. Additionally the assessment program was redesigned in light of the previous confusion where the two types of outcomes were concerned. In 2013, only a small handful of the faculty or program directors completely understood the difference between the program outcomes and the college-wide outcomes. Over the years the mixing of terminology left many faculty confused. Thus, the assessment team decided to focus on the terminology used, the technology that would be deployed to assist faculty, and the essential nature of assessment that has meaning.

Consequently, the assessment committee spent three years training faculty at in-services and convocations on how to map their curriculum to help identify gaps or significant overlaps in outcome introduction, reinforcement, and mastery. Additionally, faculty were given opportunity at these meetings to work with each other to ‘tune’ assignments to the VALUE rubrics used for the college-wide outcomes, and discuss their agreed upon philosophy related to when to report out the assessment results.

This left two areas unattended for several years: the assessment committee feedback to programs in relation to their program assessment reports, and the addition of the college-wide outcomes on the program assessment reports to give faculty a holistic view of their students’ assessment achievement.

Spring 2018 began the project to integrate the college-wide outcomes into the program assessment reports. These holistic reports were reviewed with faculty during fall convocation and will be refined in the coming year. An example of the new TASK reports (Total Assessment of Student Knowledge) can be found in [Appendix D](#). This appendix includes a link to the public repository of these outcome reports.

Fall 2017 saw the restart of the assessment committee's focused review and feedback to faculty in regard to their annual program assessment reports. The process is similar to the review that takes place in curriculum committee and program review. The faculty members/deans are scheduled to present to the assessment committee. The discipline program assessment report is distributed prior to the meeting and the assessment committee reviews the report through the lens of standardized questions. See [Appendix E- PARS Questions](#)

## 6. Co-curricular Assessment

One area addressed in the system's appraisal was the lack of co-curricular assessment activities. Therefore, the college has sought to broaden assessment to activities which support the academic work. Additionally, several of the co-curricular groups on campus have submitted their most recent assessment activities within their programs. While this is helpful, and has been included on the institution's [Consumer Information page](#), college leadership agreed with the systems' appraisal report, and has formed a standing co-curricular assessment committee patterned after the academic assessment committee and the program review committee. However, the long term plan for this committee includes the joining of the co-curricular assessment committee with the academic assessment committee. This will take place once the co-curricular committee has charted a course, formed the working framework, has several years' worth of data to examine patterns of student achievement, and has completed the alignment of the co-curricular activities with the general education/college-wide outcomes for the institution. This joining of forces, will increase the integration of all aspects of assessment.

## 7. Grant Funding Process

The grant funding process was another area identified as a strategic issue, which is in fact an area of strength for the college and fell prey to anemic writing in the systems portfolio. The philosophy of grant funding at the college is "the utilization of external grants to shift campus

culture on important fronts while working to sustain change efforts after the grant ceases.” The office of Grant Development, Administration and Government Relations works with offices across campus to make decisions to pursue grant funding. The initial investigation is headed by the campus grant writer. Once a potential grant has been identified the information is sent to the division dean/director for input into the grant’s applicability to any strategic issue within the division. If the dean/director sees a possible confluence of grant goals and institutional goals, a team is formed to work through the college’s grant rubric. Considerations within the rubric include sustainability and mission fit. Please see [Appendix F](#) for the Grant Funding Rubric.

The college has been quite successful in obtaining grant funding, as is evidenced by the college having been granted over 18 million dollars in five years. Additionally, the college has deftly utilized short term grant funding to shift culture at the institution toward a focus on student success. The most successful of these has been the Title III grant, which is in its third year.

#### **Title III Grant**

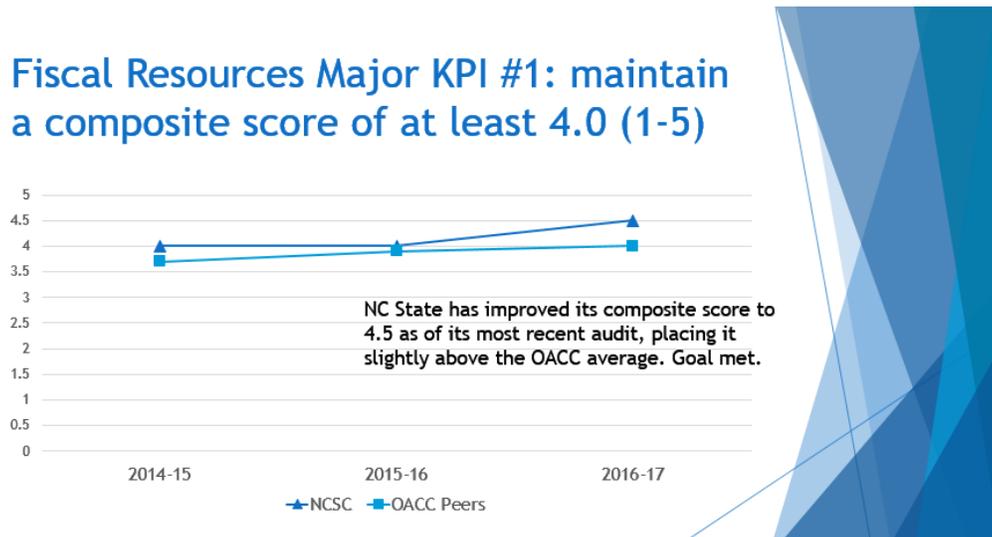
The Title III grant is the most prominent example of the college’s common practice in relation to the processes, philosophy, and measurement of success for any grant to move the institution forward.

As can be seen from the rubric, mission alignment and sustainability are two of the key criteria for the pursuit of a grant. In terms of mission, the opportunity for the Title III grant came at a time when the institution had established a number of academic changes to increase student success in keeping with the Board of Trustees’ resolution in 2012 to increase graduation rates, and the subsequent shift in focus to “Success” as a key lynchpin in all planning. Additionally, the action project born out of that resolution, - the “First Year Experience, Powering Up” action project, (which will be discussed in detail under section E), was winding down, and the momentum for the vision of consumer and relationship focused student services needed to be maintained. However, relationship building is only possible if employees have time to devote to the activity. Consequently, an assessment of workload for advisors was conducted and a series of planning meetings involving President’s Staff, Student Services, and the Academic Council were held. These meetings focused on brainstorming ways to utilize the Title III grant to change the way students experienced the advising system at NCSC.

## 8. Financial Venture Outcomes

Despite a reduced pool of potential traditional age college applicants, and a state mandated shift to performance funding, the college has achieved the near impossible task of maintaining enrollment. At the same time increasing our composite ratio score from 2.70 in 2012 to 4.50 in 2017; increasing our primary reserve from 5% in 2012 to 20% in 2014, and up to 30% in 2017; avoiding a wide-spread reduction in force; sustaining an appropriately credentialed faculty workforce; and securing grants within the past 5 years totaling more than 18 million dollars.

*Figure 2 Fiscal KPI*



The college launched an aggressive mission focused initiative to significantly increase the dual enrollment student degree completion in the service region (College Credit Plus- CCP), and offer tuition freedom (Tuition Freedom Scholarship TFS) to all post-secondary students who after being dually enrolled, chose to matriculate to the North Central State College immediately after high school graduation.

This venture has paid off for not only the college, but the residents of the communities we serve. Educational attainment has increased by 2% in one county of our service region. This county, known as Crawford, had previously been one of the lowest post-secondary educational attainment regions in Ohio.

Through careful planning and attention to success as well as quality, which led to the increased success of our student population, the college was able to secure \$282,682 (3.63%) more in resources for academic year 2018 through the state share of instruction.

Through the CCP and TFS initiatives, as well as the 2015 developmental math action project discussed [in detail below](#), the college has reversed the decade-long trend of decreasing success rates.

## **E. Leveraging Action Projects for Culture Change**

A number of AQIP action projects were completed since the last comprehensive review. These action projects have had lasting impact on the culture of the institution.

### **First Year Experience Action Project**

The first action project after the institution's last comprehensive quality review began in June 2012. The name of the project "First Year Experience, Powering up" had as its impetus two significant events. The resolution by the North Central State College Board of Trustees in 2012, to increase the success of our student population by making "success" a focused, measured, performance indicator used not only as a measure for the institution, but a performance measure for any president the board of trustees would hire. This call to action came at the same time the state of Ohio was moving toward the 'success funding' model which allocates funds to institutions based upon student progress through specific sequences of courses which would yield "success points" for the institution.

It was this action project more than any before that harnessed the external mandates and propelled the college forward into a significant culture change. The champion of the action project, the program coordinator for developmental education and first year experience, decided to submit her project for approval as an AQIP action project because she felt that, despite the move by the board to "revise the College mission statement to reflect a focus on student success", the College's current organizational design "fostered a culture in which faculty remained focused on course content and proficiency." She continues, "According to the 2011 Community College Survey of Student Engagement, NC State students believe they have less interaction with faculty than do their peers at other institutions." In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Thus, "a paradigm shift from the traditional college academic-focus to a coordinated, student-centered environment is needed."

This action project, started in 2012 is still making an impact across the campus as can be seen in Figure 3 below which displays the most recent [KPI data- Figure 3](#) presented to the President’s Cabinet, the Board of Trustees, and the college community at the July 2018 strategic planning session.

*Figure 3 - Success KPI*

### Seeing improved leading indicators...

Entering Cohort	Count #	Fall 1 Credits Attempted	Fall 1 Credits Completed	% Course Completed	Fall GPA.	% Complete 12+ Credits
FA2013	655	10.2	7.4	73%	2.4	29%
FA2014	534	10.4	8.1	78%	2.6	34%
FA2015	534	10.7	8.6	81%	2.9	37%
FA2016	561	11.0	8.9	81%	2.9	46%
FA2017	540	11.6	9.8	85%	2.9	51%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2824</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>39%</b>

#### Focused Funding Action Project

Less than a year after the launch of the action project described above, the college attended a strategy forum in which the “Resource Allocation”, action project created at the forum, catalyzed the focus of budget allocation on the two strategic goals of Access and Success. While the original declaration of the action project was not followed exactly, the spirit of the action project was developed into a budget philosophy that is still active and has helped the college make unparalleled gains in fiscal stability as evidenced by the narrative and [Figure 2](#) referenced above on page 14.

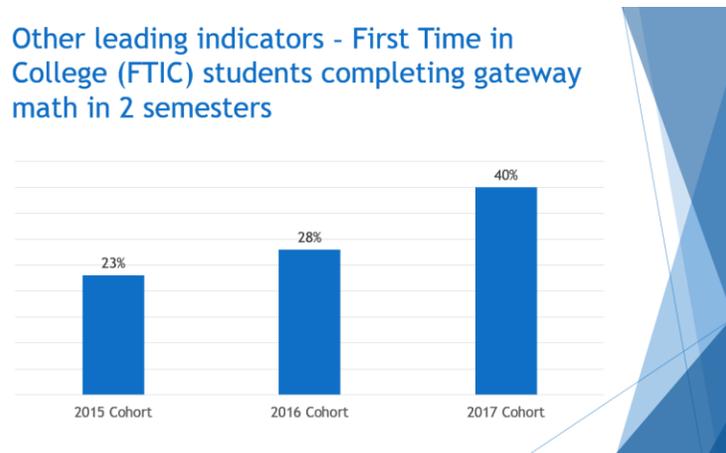
#### Developmental Math and English Action Project

In 2014 an action project was launched that focused on redesigning entry level statistics, math, and English, to allow students’ swifter completion of gateway courses, while enhancing the support for those courses through embedded tutors and companion pre-requisite courses for students in need of remediation. The math component of the project involved the “reworking of developmental math education in order to increase student success and expedite the developmental math course sequence for students in non-STEM areas of study.” The faculty

member who championed the project, developed a “supplemental algebra course to be taken concurrently with the college-level statistics courses to eliminate a semester of developmental algebra.” Many of the normal parameters for developmental math were kept constant. The decision was made that Basic Mathematics and Pre-Algebra would still be required for students testing into that level. However, the Introduction to Algebra course could be replaced with a supplemental algebra course taken concurrently with Statistics.

As can be seen from Figure 4 below, this action project led to a swifter completion of developmental and subsequent gateway courses.

*Figure 4- Gateway completion*



These gateway completions can then be viewed in the context of the overall success rates of our students which has seen significant gains within the last three years, with the three-year and two-year graduation rates increasing 8% and 6% respectively. Please see Figures 5 and 6.

*Figure 5-Three-year graduation*

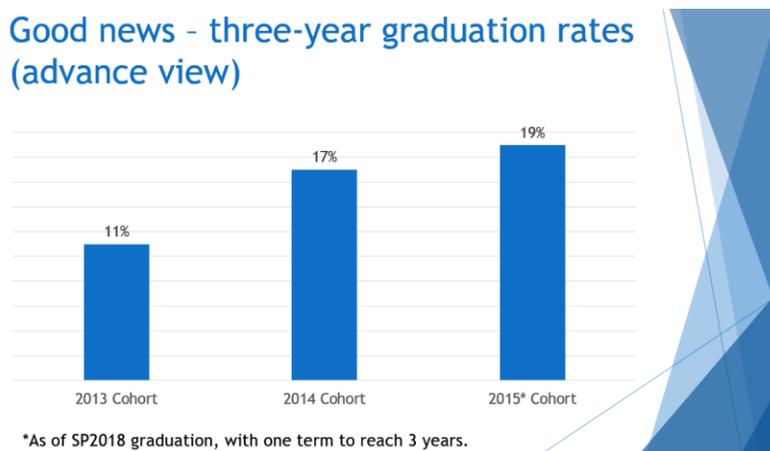
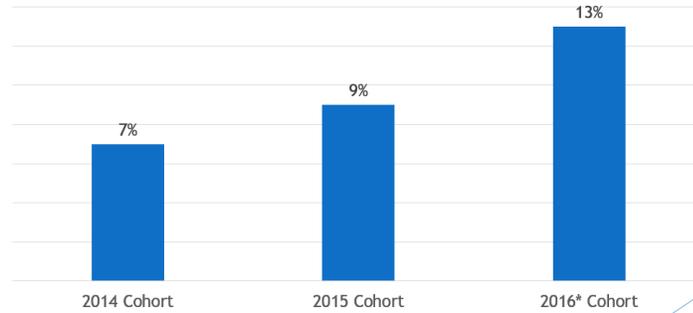


Figure 6- Two-year graduation

### Even better news. Two-year graduation rates (in advance)



While these increases are heartening, the college continues to look for ways to leverage action projects to reduce any barriers to success for our students.

#### Curriculum Integrity Action Project

Since spring semester 2013 the college has consolidated all curriculum on campus into a single repository. A curriculum and catalog management system has been purchased, and training will commence Fall Semester 2018, with full deployment Spring Semester 2019, to further assure curriculum integrity.

The “Curriculum Integrity” and the “Enhancing the Student Experience from Applicant to Graduation” projects are two of the most recent action projects. These were created to remove barriers to student success by streamlining complex processes, assuring cross-office communication, assuring accuracy in all program information, and focusing on the student as consumer.

#### Enhancing the Student Experience Action Project

In spring 2018 the president of the college presented the academic and student services plan, which was an outgrowth of the institution’s action project created during the HLC Strategy Forum in February 2017. The action project, “Enhancing the Student Experience from Application to Graduation”, was the basis for the comprehensive academic and student services

plan. The plan as outlined below seeks to address any process issues that have traditionally increased barriers for students throughout the student life cycle.

The framework for the plan is as follows:

### **Academic Services Plan**

1. All majors within a program or a department have the same set of courses to take during the first semester.
2. General education courses are aligned across the curriculum to meet employer needs (soft skills), cultural diversity, and college-wide outcomes.
3. All program and course options will be more structured and minimized (including electives).
4. Curriculum sheets are established for both full-time and part-time students with clear milestones and gateway courses, as well as identified stackable certificates. Also the curriculum sheets will show:
  - A. Number of credits to be earned in the first year = 30
  - B. Number of program tech credits to be earned in the first year: at least 9
  - C. Completion of gateway math and English in the first year
  - D. Reduction of prerequisites being replaced by co-requisites.

### **Student Services Plan**

1. The student will have the same advising team throughout the student journey (one in student services for the first year, and the other in the division for the second year). Every team member is trained to be both a generalist, and a specialist in one division.
2. CSI/Focus 2/ Career Coach and program/major are identified before student starts the first semester. Educational plan is automatically generated and locked. Student needs to see advisor to change. If major must be delayed, it cannot be delayed past the end of the first semester.
3. Orientation and FYEX (2 cr.) are required, complementing one another while emphasizing the college-wide competencies of financial literacy and professional/soft skills.

4. Every advisor is entering notes in Advisor-Trac. Alerts sent to faculty 25%, 50%, and 75% into the semester (75% is one week prior to withdrawal date).
5. Part-time advisors to help students prevent the run-around and minimize visits to campus. Financial aid processes will be given first priority in the process to prevent future delays. Feedback from students on the reasons for run-around need to be addressed.
6. Automate processes for auditing students getting off pathway, and for issuing degrees/certificates.
7. As possible, encourage students to take more credits (15/semester for FT, 9/semester for PT), or one more course by showing the financial benefits of graduating early.
8. Ensure students are taking at least 9 credits in their major in the first year, and college level math and English in the first year.

## **F. Other CQI Efforts**

### **Equity/Web presence**

The college is in the process of updating the institution's web presence to meet WCAG 2.0 guidelines which ensures accessibility for all students and employees. In spring 2018 the Marketing department conducted an audit of the website, and subsequently mapped all primary, secondary, and tertiary webpages for compliance. This has led to the investigation and subsequent license agreement for a new web hosting platform which will facilitate strict adherence to ADA guidelines. The deployment of the new system is planned for December 2018, with college-wide training of all page masters and content developers from August 2018 through the deployment of the system in December; with ongoing training to continue every semester to keep page masters updated when changes to guidelines are introduced.

### **Data Planning and Analytics**

In April 2018, the President established the Systems and Analytics standing committee of the Cabinet that included IR, IT and technology personnel. The charge of the committee was to:

1. Lead the college in a contextual analysis of the use of data analytics to enhance the strategic goals of student access and success, and implementation of the integrated pathways of academic and student services.

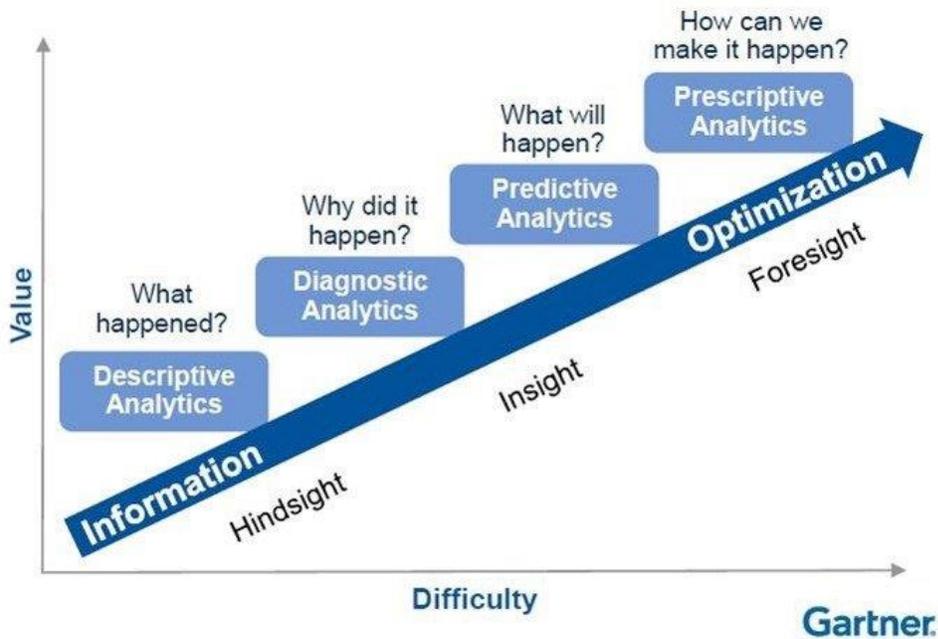
2. Ensure that the enterprise systems, programming, and software applications are aligned and utilized college-wide.
3. Provide professional development and training related to the above topics.

The two key reasons for the establishment of the above committee include:

1. The importance of deep data analytics in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the college in fulfilling its mission of student success.
2. The importance of programming and software in enhancing the enterprise systems across the college infrastructure and its wide utilization in the different divisions and departments.

Despite limited resources, the college continues to strive to help employees make data-informed decisions. The Gartner Group provides a model for data analytics maturity as shown below.

Figure 7-Gartner model



The college believes it has achieved the diagnostic level. For example, every academic program and administrative office undergoes a comprehensive review before a committee of peers at least every three years. The Institutional Research Office not only gathers data to support the review, but provides contextual analysis back to the department on condition, cause, effect and potential

solutions. The IR Department often meets with the program or office to communicate issues in helping them develop the review. Moreover, the reviews are comprehensive in providing information about demand, program performance, productivity and financial viability.

On a larger scale, the IR Department provides insightful data at a variety of levels to guide annual monitoring and planning efforts. At the highest level, the college has identified a handful of key performance indicators as the primary board-level dashboard as shown below. The Department distills these into several sub-indicators delivered during brief presentations at the annual employee planning day attended by management as well as representative staff and faculty. A shorter presentation is offered at the annual Board of Trustees planning retreat. In both settings, the Department provides analysis and context on drivers of the data. Finally, the department prepares a cascading metric “fact book” with three-year trend data, charts and narrative analysis at a very detailed level. The Department then schedules meetings with key division managers to review these details.

Figure 8-KPI chart

Major Key Performance Indicators		
Goal (percent over previous year)	Metric	Current data (how we did over last year)
Access: increase headcount and FTE by 1% traditional age (under 25), and 0.5% non-traditional (over 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual credit hours</li> <li>Annual head count</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>credit hours increased by 2% (from 50,990 to 52,042)</li> <li>headcount decreased by 2% (from 3,892 to 3,813)</li> </ul>
Success: increase 3-year cohort success rate (graduation + transfer + still enrolled) by 2.5% on each and overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chose 3-year to compare to external benchmarks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased by 6% over last year</li> </ul>
Resources: Increase reserve by 2%, and maintain a composite ratio of at least 4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reserve</li> <li>Composite ratio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased reserve by 11% (31%)</li> <li>Increased composite ratio by 13% (4.5)</li> </ul>

In the past year, the college has begun efforts to improve the quality of student-level data provided to advisors in order to prioritize outreach efforts. For example, the IR, Registrar, and IT Departments collaborated on a project to convert voluminous batch degree-audit data into a simple report showing percentage of program completion. Another effort involved aggregating

mid-term grades into a cumulative GPA at mid-term, and then providing advisors a report by their caseload. Finally, the college has been actively using software to build predictive models of student cohort retention, which assigns a percentage likelihood of persistence that has proven very accurate. Advisors are currently receiving training on different outreach strategies based on students' risk level.

The college is moving toward the “predictive analytics” level, displayed on the Gartner chart. Some of the barriers to using data come in the form of issues with logistics and issues of philosophy.

Data input integrity is foundational to any analysis. Thus, the college is committed to data input integrity, through ongoing training and a consistent campaign of awareness. The Institutional Research Department is charged with continuous improvement in the way that data is communicated and visualized within context. Consequently, the IR department uses a method of informal feedback from the leadership team to consistently refine how data is presented.

However, data input and visualization are only one part of the barrier to benefit from data analytics equation. There is still a barrier to this use from a philosophical perspective.

Philosophically, the use of data to map the likelihood of attrition is not without opponents. The fear is that we will move to a model where we profile students in such a way as to create, albeit unwittingly, a self-fulfilling prophecy for these students. This fear is not unfounded and is currently being addressed with steps planned to mitigate this danger. The purpose of the data review is to help the college develop outreach approaches tailored to the students' risk levels but not profile students in such a way as to prejudice anyone toward their ability to succeed.

## **G. Conclusion**

As can be seen from the above narrative, the college takes very seriously the pursuit of continuous quality improvement. This pursuit is integrated into all the college does, and is reinforced continuously by all levels of the institution.

Thus the feedback from the commission in the system's appraisal will continue to be used to guide our activities in the coming months.

## Appendices

[Appendix A](#)- Human Resources Ethics Syllabus

[Appendix B](#)- Formal Feedback Form

[Appendix C](#)- Update to Employee Recognition Survey

[Appendix D](#)- Sample Assessment Report and Link to repository

[Appendix E](#)- Assessment Committee Review Questions for the Program Assessment Reports

[Appendix F](#)- Grant Rubric

[Appendix G](#)- CCRC research

## Appendix A-Human Resources Ethics Syllabus



North Central State College  
Internal Training Non-Credit Syllabus  
2018-2019

- A. Department: Human Resources
- B. Topic Area: Ethics
- C. Course Number and Title: ETHICS-1010 Annual Ohio Ethics Commission Training
- D. Course Coordinator: Doug Hanuscin
- E. CEU's if applicable: N/A
- F. Prerequisites: None
- G. Syllabus Effective Date: Fall, 2018
- H. Written Material/Text:  
  
Provided
- I. Workbook(s) and/or Lab Manual: None
- J. Course Description: This course is an overview of the Ohio Ethics Commission law as well as an overview of the field of ethics as applied to public employees.  
This course is presented annually to all employees at North Central State College. The course will review all of the topics included in the current Ohio Law Commission Ethics training, with added material as deemed appropriate by the Human Resources office, President's staff, or the college's legal counsel.
- K. Course Outcomes and Assessment Methods:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student shall:

Outcomes	Assessments – How it is met & When it is met
1. Describe all components of the Ohio Ethics law, including but not limited to rules/laws as they apply to the following: Nepotism, Gifts, Conflict of Interest, Post Employment, Sales to Agencies, Confidentiality.	Passage by at least 70% of the Ohio Ethics Commission e-learning course.
2. Analyze various ethical scenarios presented which are indicative of what may be experienced as a public employee.	Passage by at least 70% of the Ohio Ethics Commission e-learning course.
3. Compare and contrast different approaches to the variety of ethical conflicts that may arise during public employment.	Passage by at least 70% of in house created training modules, deployed either at convocation, or by division.
4. Conduct business in an ethical and legal manner at all times.	Passage by at least 70% of in house created training modules, deployed either at convocation, or by division.

Outcomes	Assessments – How it is met & When it is met
5. Seek out advice when legal or ethical issues appear to be confusing or answers to the issues are seated in what might be considered a ‘gray area’ of ethics.	Passage by at least 70% of in house created training modules, deployed either at convocation, or by division.

M. Topical Timeline (subject to change):

- Overview of the field of ethics
- Ohio Ethics Laws- Nepotism, Gifts, Conflict of Interest, Post Employment, Sales to Agencies, Confidentiality.
- Kohlberg’s stages of Ethical Development.

N. Course Assignments:

1. Completion of the Ohio Ethics Training- Annual Submission of Ohio Ethics Training Certificate to the office of Human Resources.

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## Appendix B- Formal Feedback Form

### NCSC Formal Feedback Form

1.

This is a form to allow formal feedback to the college. Your response will be routed to the appropriate person(s). Please expect a response within two business days. If you feel comfortable doing so, you are encouraged to speak directly with the instructor/staff member to remedy your issue/concern prior to submitting a complaint. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, OR if you have made an attempt to resolve the issue and are not satisfied, please complete this form in its entirety.

1. If you are filling this form out for yourself as the person with the complaint, please click on the "Self" button below.

If you are an employee filling out this form for a student/employee/guest for tracking purposes, please click the "Tracking" button below.

Self

Tracking

### NCSC Formal Feedback Form

2.

\* 2. Please enter your name and contact information

Name

Address

City/Town

State/Province

ZIP/Postal Code

Email Address

Phone Number

### NCSC Formal Feedback Form

3.

3. Please submit the date and time of the incident that prompted this complaint

Date

MM/DD/YYYY	hh	mm	-
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4. Location where the incident occurred?

5. Your role at the college?

6. Is this complaint a/an

7. More specifically what is the nature of the complaint?

If "other" please elaborate

8. This complaint involves which department of the college?

9. Please list the faculty/staff members involved in this complaint.

10. Describe your complaint in detail (be as specific as possible).

11. Have you made an attempt to resolve this issue with the individual/department involved?

12. What outcome do you hope to achieve after talking with the appropriate college official?

\* 13. Name of person completing this log

\* 14. Complainant Name

15. When was this complaint received?

Date / Time

MM/DD/YYYY	hh	mm	-
------------	----	----	---

16. What is your position on campus?

17. Which department received this complaint?

18. Was the person who submitted the complaint

19. Was the complaint

Comment

20. What was the nature of the complaint?

21. Please give details on the nature of the complaint.

22. Please describe how the complaint was resolved.

23. When was the complaint resolved?

Date



Your complaint has been received, however these types of issues must also be addressed with the on-campus Title IX representative. If this involves a student please email Dr.

Karen Reed at [kreed@ncstatecollege.edu](mailto:kreed@ncstatecollege.edu) or call 419-755-4538.

If this involves an employee please email Mr. Doug Hanuscin [dhanuscin@ncstatecollege.edu](mailto:dhanuscin@ncstatecollege.edu) or call 419-755-4871 - Please make the subject line of your email - Discrimination Complaint

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## Appendix C- Update to Employee Recognition System Survey

### Update to Employee Recognition System

The current employee appreciation dinner and award ceremony held in December is under review. The reason for the review is because of feedback received informally and within the most recent "Campus Quality Survey". The purpose of the recognition dinner is to acknowledge and show appreciation for everyone who works for NCSC. We are interested in your feedback and look forward to hearing from you.

1. What is your position on campus?

Part-Time Staff

Full-Time Staff

Faculty

Administration

Other (please specify)

2. How well do you know the process for selecting employees for recognition?

Extremely familiar

Very familiar

Somewhat familiar

Not so familiar

Not at all familiar

3. How many times in the past have you won an employee award at North Central State College

Three times or more

Twice

Once

Never

4. If you have never won an award, why do you think you have not won an award? Select all that you think apply.

- I do my job but I am not in the spotlight
- My supervisor does not like me
- I am not in management
- I don't care to win awards
- I am not sure why
- This is not applicable for me, I have won awards
- My supervisor does not really know what I do
- I do not think there are enough award categories
- I am not in the main administration building, consequently my work is not visible
- Other (please specify)

5. How important is it to you to keep the recognition dinner/format in place?

- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Not important

6. If you could change the employee recognition format/dinner, how would you change it?

7. Should we:

- Hold the recognition dinner but present the awards another day
- Hold the recognition dinner but discontinue giving awards
- Discontinue the dinner but present the awards in a different setting
- Discontinue both the dinner and the awards
- Keep the current system with no changes
- Other (please specify)

8. Should we consider more variety in the awards? What might they be?

- Yes
- No

Other (please specify)

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## Appendix D – Sample Program & College-Wide Assessment Report

[Link to the repository Program & College-Wide Assessment Reports](#)

Program & College-Wide Assessment Report North Central State College - Criminal Justice – Law Enforcement (Police Academy)  
Data from Academic Year Fall 2016 & Spring 2017

College-Wide Outcomes	College-Wide Outcome Data Gathering Details	College-Wide Outcome Results	Discussion of College-Wide Results/Improvement Items	Program Outcome	Program Outcomes Data Gathering Details	Program Outcome Results	Discussion of Program Results Improvement Items
<p>Double click on the radio box <input type="checkbox"/> for the College-Wide outcome you are addressing in the second row.</p>	<p><b>Please note:</b> Anywhere your syllabi display a college-wide outcome assessment, you must deploy the VALUE rubric for that outcome in the semester the course is taught.</p>	<p>What % of your students reached the benchmark? Please include the "N" - number of students within the sample.</p>	<p>Identify how results are used and shared. List any recommendations or action items.</p> <p>*</p>	<p>Please state the program outcomes with proper blooms verbs for graduation level skill.</p>	<p>This is where you will plan which courses/assignments the outcomes will be assessed in, what the benchmark should be, and which faculty member will gather the data</p>	<p>What % of your students reached the benchmark? Please include the "N" - number of students within the sample.</p>	<p>Identify how results are used and shared. List any shifts in teaching, changes to curriculum in light of the data.</p> <p>*</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Written Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Information Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Intercultural Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Skills	<p>CRMJ 2170 Terrorism &amp; Homeland Security</p> <p>This course ran 2 sections in Spring 2017.</p> <p>Data was collected in one section.</p>	<p><del>2016-2017</del> 100% of the students met the benchmark of 14. N=13</p> <p>2015-2016 100% N=13 2014-2015 83% N=12 2013-2014 100% N=16</p>		<p>Apply the core criminal justice foundation concepts of juvenile justice, criminology, constitutional law, corrections, private security, and U.S. Judicial and Criminal Justice systems in solving and defending logical arguments and applications in the field.</p>	<p>Course: CRMJ1110 Assessment: Case Analysis – Crime Scene Benchmark: B or Higher Faculty: Strouth</p>	<p>Threshold Benchmark Met: Average was 89%</p>	<p>All students will receive a B or higher on the final case analysis – "processing a crime scene" OPOTA rubric will be used. Great tool to use to measure this outcome. Results were lower than last year as students struggled with the evidence collection-tagging component. Will need to implement change in how this piece is taught in the course. Will add a few more hands on assignments so that students have more practice. Implementing this change should increase the scores for next year. Continue for next year.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Written Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Information Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Intercultural Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Skills	<p>CRMJ 2090 Defensive Tactics</p> <p>This course ran 2 sections in Spring 2017.</p> <p>Data was collected in one section.</p>	<p><del>2016-2017</del> 100% of the students met the benchmark of 14. N=13</p> <p>2015-2016 100% N=13 2014-2015 No Data 2013-2014 No Data</p>		<p>Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in writing and speech.</p>	<p>Course: CRMJ2210 Assessment: Practical Final Scenario and Report plus Presentation Benchmark: B or higher Faculty: Strouth</p>	<p>Threshold Benchmark Met: Average was 88% - 4% for 8.1 Writing score was an 83% the oral was 86% (both minimal decreases)</p>	<p>Students will earn a B or higher on the final practical scenario in unit 8 topic 1 Assignment. WAC Rubric will be used on the writing portion of the scenario and students will receive a B or higher on the oral presentation piece of the scenario SPAC rubric used. Changes were made last year which increased the scores, however, this year they declined by 4%. Will again implement more writing and speaking exercises into the scenario rubric used.</p>

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## **Appendix E-Program Assessment Report Review Questions**

### **Questions to ask when reviewing program assessment reports**

1. Are the outcomes measurable?
2. Why is the benchmark set where it is?
3. What specifically in the assessment used is valid for measuring those outcomes?
4. Do the comments show a substantive process of thought and grasp of what is actually going on?
5. Have they discussed any alternative assessment?
6. Do the comments speak to improvements or changes?
7. Are the numbers sufficient to get an idea of what is really going on in the program?
8. If coupled with the college wide outcomes do they generally hit everything you would want in an associate degree?
9. Are the outcomes based upon external benchmarks? If so the language may be set.
10. Are all of the outcomes assessed?
11. Do we have consistency in terms of assignment/faculty member gathering data/class evaluated?  
If not, why?
12. Are there any outcomes missing that are glaringly obvious to an outsider?

**Appendix F- Grant Rubric**

**GRANT CONSIDERATION RUBRIC**

**RFP Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Funding Source:** \_\_\_\_\_

Consideration	Decision Basis	Relative Importance	Points Assigned (1 to 5= highest)
Fits Goals of Board			
Fits President's Objectives			
Fits Division Objectives			
Administrative Support			
Appropriate Personnel			
Fits w/ Existing Programs			
Fits w/ Other Grants			
Fits Student Demographics			
Fits Growth Direction			
Community Support?			
Faculty Support?			
Sustainability			
Odds for Funding			
Requires Travel to Bidders' Conference? Or Other Preparation Costs?			
Less than 50 = More than 50 =	Very Questionable Look at Additional Considerations	TOTAL POINTS	/70 max.



Additional Considerations	Determination (Yes/No/Possible)
Is there evidence need exists for project? (Data, recent reports, etc.)	
Can proposal be completed in timeframe allotted?	
Does proposal require "collaboration" or "partnerships" to achieve maximum potential results?	
Are signature requirements (board resolution, etc.) possible within time frame?	
Is "match" amount and type affordable?	
Does project require college resources outside grant budget?	
Are reporting requirements reasonable?	
Will project enhance college reputation and/or careers of faculty/administrators involved?	

**DECISION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G- CCRC Research



# Building Blocks: Laying the Groundwork for Guided Pathways Reform in Ohio

Davis Jenkins, Hana Lahr, & John Fink

September 2017

In 2015, with support from Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) launched the Student Success Leadership Institute (SSLI). One main objective of the SSLI was to help the state’s two-year colleges develop “completion plans” required by the state as part of a push to improve Ohio public college graduation rates. Through the SSLI, OACC held a series of six workshops for all of the state’s 23 two-year colleges and provided coaching on data collection and analysis to help colleges formulate completion plans that were submitted to the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) in spring 2016.

In summer 2016, OACC, in partnership with ODHE and the Community College Research Center (CCRC), secured additional funding from Great Lakes to provide technical assistance to help colleges implement their completion plans. OACC and its member colleges decided to embrace the “guided pathways” model as the framework both for the colleges’ student success efforts and for the technical assistance that OACC would provide to them. They did so because the guided pathways model provides a holistic framework with which to integrate and leverage the multiple improvement strategies the colleges set forth in their completion plans.

CCRC’s 2015 book, *Redesigning America’s Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success* (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015b), has provided a blueprint for guided pathways reforms nationally. As part of the grant from Great Lakes, CCRC is partnering with OACC and ODHE to conduct applied research to learn how the colleges in Ohio are approaching guided pathways reforms, how the reforms are affecting student outcomes, and what barriers to implementation colleges are experiencing.

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This research was conducted as part of a project funded by Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates. We thank our partners in the project, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges and the Ohio Department of Higher Education, for their guidance and support. We are also grateful to the faculty and staff from Ohio’s 23 public two-year colleges who participated in this research. In addition to the authors, the CCRC research team included Michael Armijo, Maggie Fay, Porshéa Patterson, and Madeline Joy Trimble. Thomas Bailey of CCRC and Laura Ritter and Cody Loew of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges provided feedback on drafts. Kim Morse, Amy Mazzariello, and Doug Slater of CCRC edited and produced the report.

Under the guided pathways model, community college faculty and advisors map out educational programs in consultation with employers and partnering four-year institutions. They specify course sequences, co-curricular requirements, and progress milestones that guide students through programs and on to employment and further education in their chosen field. New students are helped from the start to explore career and academic options, choose a program of study, and develop a customized academic plan based on the college's program maps. Both advisors and students monitor students' progress on their plans to ensure that they make timely headway toward their education and career goals, and advisors intervene when students struggle or fall off path. The program maps provide a framework to help faculty define and assess essential competencies and ensure that as students progress through their programs they are building the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in further education and employment.

A handful of Ohio community colleges are leaders in the guided pathways movement nationally. Lorain County Community College, Sinclair Community College, and Stark State College participated in Completion by Design, an initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that pioneered guided pathways ideas. Three others—Columbus State Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, and Zane State College—were selected in late 2015, along with 27 other colleges nationally, to participate in the American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) Pathways Project, which is seeking to further the development and adoption of the guided pathways model by community colleges. Before joining the AACC Pathways Project, these three colleges had not launched full-scale guided pathways reforms, and most of the remaining 17 Ohio community colleges had not formally started implementing guided pathways before OACC adopted guided pathways as the framework for the SSLI in fall 2016. We confirmed this in fall 2016 when CCRC conducted a baseline assessment using CCRC's (2017) *Guided Pathways Essential Practices: Scale of Adoption Self-Assessment* and found that most of these 17 colleges, while they had pieces of the guided pathways model in place, had not yet begun to undertake the more systemic changes involved in guided pathways. The goal of the current phase of the SSLI is to help colleges across the state plan and begin to implement full-scale redesigns of programs and student supports following the guided pathways model, building on the foundations they have laid in their reforms to date.

## The Purpose of This Report

This report describes how the Ohio two-year colleges are approaching guided pathways reforms. It is based on our research on the guided pathways reform efforts by these colleges during fall 2016 and spring 2017. Although a handful of Ohio colleges are leaders in guided pathways reforms, our focus in this report is on colleges that are just beginning to engage in such reforms. Implementing guided pathways is a complex endeavor involving changes in both practice and culture. Based on our observations from work nationally with colleges implementing guided pathways reforms, we find that it takes a long time—typically five years or more—to implement guided pathways practices at scale, not including the time required to lay the groundwork for such a comprehensive institutional redesign (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015a). Nevertheless, as colleges in Ohio and across the country embark on guided pathways reforms, it is critical to understand that they are not starting from scratch. Ideally, colleges should look at guided pathways as a means of integrating and aligning their sometimes disparate student success efforts. In this initial report on our research on guided pathways reforms in Ohio, we focus on innovations Ohio colleges have implemented in recent years that can serve as building blocks as they seek to transform their policies, practices, and culture following the guided pathways model.

## Research Methods

This report is based on two strands of research. First, we conducted a baseline analysis of the extent to which the Ohio two-year colleges have adopted guided pathways practices using CCRC's scale of

adoption self-assessment. OACC asked all of the colleges to fill out the self assessment in preparation for a statewide meeting in Columbus in September 2016. This meeting was attended by teams from all 23 colleges and marked the formal launch of the Ohio guided pathways work. College teams were given time during the meeting to refine their responses to the self-assessment and begin to formulate plans for scaling up guided pathways reforms on their campuses. After the meeting, CCRC conducted follow-up telephone calls with representatives from each college to discuss in more detail how colleges were approaching the essential guided pathways practices outlined in the self-assessment, what challenges they were encountering, and their plans for the coming months.

Second, we conducted on-site interviews and focus groups at six of the Ohio colleges that were in the early stages of formally launching guided pathways reforms: Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Clark State Community College, Edison State Community College, Lakeland Community College, Marion Technical College, and North Central State College. We selected these colleges to provide variation in terms of size and urbanicity. In total, we interviewed 234 faculty, administrators, staff, and students at these six colleges, as is summarized in Table 1.<sup>1</sup>

In these interviews we asked participants to describe their college’s progress in the four main areas of practice in the guided pathways model: mapping pathways to student end goals, helping students choose and enter a program pathway, keeping students on path, and ensuring that students are learning. We also asked them about how their college is implementing these reforms, what challenges they have faced, and what recommendations they may have for other colleges.

**Table 1. Interview and Focus Group Participants at Ohio Colleges**

College	Interviews	Focus Group Participants			Total
		Faculty	Advisors	Students	
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College	17	5	4	4	30
Clark State Community College	18	7	5	4	34
Edison State Community College	29	6	7	6	48
Lakeland Community College	20	16	6	7	49
Marion Technical College	12	7	7	7	33
North Central State College	18	6	6	10	40
Total	114	47	35	38	234

## Organization of the Report

In the following section of this report, “Building Blocks for Guided Pathways in Ohio,” we describe innovations the Ohio colleges have already implemented that can serve as building blocks as they continue to implement guided pathways more broadly. We rely primarily on our interviews at the six colleges where we conducted site visits to describe these innovations, as we were able to study their practices in greater depth than we were the others’. The task for these and the other Ohio colleges is to build on and better align these innovations in ways that help students choose, enter, and complete programs of study that are designed to prepare them to succeed in employment and further education. In the second main section, “Recommendations for Ohio Colleges Embarking on Guided Pathways,” we recommend steps colleges might consider taking to facilitate the implementation of guided pathways reforms, drawing on our field research at the six community colleges as well as our analysis of the colleges’ self-assessments and follow-up telephone interviews with representatives from all 23 Ohio two-year colleges. We conclude with a brief description of the next phase of our research with our Ohio partners.

## Building Blocks for Guided Pathways in Ohio

Below, we describe innovations in practice implemented by the six Ohio colleges that were the focus of our fieldwork. We focus on innovations that can serve as building blocks for more systemic guided pathways reforms. We have organized these descriptions under the four main areas of practice in the guided pathways model: (1) mapping pathways to student end goals, (2) helping students choose and enter a program pathway, (3) keeping students on path, and (4) ensuring that students are learning.

### Mapping Pathways to Student End Goals

Central to the guided pathways approach are efforts to more clearly map out pathways for students to the completion of credentials, career advancement, and further education. To help students make sense of the many programs typically offered, colleges are organizing their programs into career-focused “meta-majors.” The following are examples of ways the six Ohio colleges we visited have laid the groundwork for program mapping and meta-majors.

**North Central State College** has reorganized its program webpage (<https://www.ncstatecollege.edu/cms/degrees.html>) to show its certificate and applied associate degree programs under three broad meta-majors, or what the college refers to as “career fields”: health sciences, business and engineering, and public service. Transfer programs in specific fields are shown under a fourth heading. Clicking on a program icon leads to the program’s webpage, which in most cases has information about jobs in the field, including statistics on entry-level salaries and local job growth. Figure 1 provides an example (for the full page, see <https://www.ncstatecollege.edu/cms/degrees/criminal-justice>).

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Figure 1. North Central State College's Criminal Justice Program Webpage

**North Central State College**

# criminal justice

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## criminal justice

Graduates of the Criminal Justice program may find employment with city, county, private and state agencies who are involved with the enforcement of laws, the investigation of criminal acts, corrections, probation, and parole. Positions are also available in the private industry where security and loss prevention are paramount. Some graduates will continue to pursue a bachelor's degree, which expands the employment market to include state and federal agencies.

The qualities that a person should have to be successful include: keen powers of observation; mental alertness, emotional stability; ability to work within prescribed rules and regulations; and the ability to handle responsibility and discipline. As the field of criminal justice becomes more sophisticated and complex, advanced training and education become more critical. The two-year curriculum includes courses in forensic science, juvenile delinquency, drugs and narcotics, family violence, criminal and constitutional law, criminology, and criminal investigations.

### Where You Could Go

Common work settings include police/ sheriff's departments, juvenile facilities, city/county probation, correctional facilities, private security agencies and loss-prevention (retail). Many graduates transfer credits to another college or university bachelor degree program.

NC State has over 40 agreements with four-year colleges and universities, to provide a smooth transition for students who want to pursue a bachelor's degree; some of which are offered on the NC State campus or online.

### Job Demand

There are a variety of career choices for criminal justice graduates. The field is stable and generally offers good job security, along with advancement opportunities with further training and education.

**6.9%**  
Local Job Growth

Data provided by our Career Coach website. Percentage reflects the predicted job growth over the next 5 years in the North Central Region\* of Ohio.

**\$27,165**  
average  
Entry Salary Range

\$24,190

\$30,140

Data provided by our Career Coach website. Salary range is calculated for the North Central Region\* of Ohio and includes jobs that may require a bachelor's degree.

 [Curriculum Worksheet](#)  
Courses Plan by Semester

 [Required Courses](#)  
Descriptions of Courses

  
**Law Enforcement**

This option incorporates the Ohio Peace Officer's Training Academy

**Career Coach**

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Faculty and advisors have worked together to create “curriculum worksheets” for each program, which map the sequence of courses students need to take to earn the credentials offered in each. These program maps, available for both full-time and part-time students, are posted on the college’s website. Some program webpages also list key program learning outcomes. For transfer programs, the website provides curriculum maps that list the courses students should take each semester to prepare for transfer within given fields (see, e.g., the map for the associate of arts for transfer in social work: <http://media.ncstatecollege.edu/curriculum-worksheets/AASW1718.pdf>).

North Central’s academic departments are working to identify critical gateway courses for each program. The college’s institutional research staff provide the faculty with drop/fail/withdraw information to help them identify such courses. These courses will eventually be highlighted on the curriculum worksheets, and departments in each career field will work to find ways to strengthen academic support for students taking these courses.

All new students at North Central develop a two-term plan before they register for classes for the first time. Students and their advisors work from the program maps to customize students’ plans based on previous credits they bring to the college and their particular career and academic goals.

**Cincinnati State Technical and Community College** has similarly organized its programs into “career interest groups,” which are listed with photos on the college’s home page (<http://www.cincinnati-state.edu/>). These interest groups include business, computers, culinary, education, engineering, environment, health and fitness, multimedia and design, public safety, and transportation. Clicking on any one of these fields leads to a list of programs. For each program, the site provides a brief description, a summary of potential employment and transfer opportunities, a curriculum map, and contact information for specific individuals on campus— often the program chair and the cooperative education (co-op) coordinator—who can provide more information on the program. Information on transfer-oriented programs and online programs is also provided under separate icons on the college’s home page.

Cincinnati State has worked with its two main public transfer partners, the University of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky University, to map out articulated transfer pathways for the most popular majors. This has been done in a way that ensures that credits earned at Cincinnati State will be accepted toward junior standing in the given major. The University of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky University provide the college with data on how well students who have transferred from the college are performing. Cincinnati State uses this information as part of the program review process to refine these transfer programs. Cincinnati State has industry advisory boards for all of its associate degree and certificate programs, and the college regularly surveys employers about how well prepared students they have brought on as co-op participants from the college are for employment in their industry. In these surveys, the college asks about how well prepared students are in both technical and soft skills. Of the six colleges we visited, Cincinnati State seems to do the most to actively involve both employers and transfer partners in defining program requirements.

**Clark State Community College** has organized its 120 programs under 10 career-oriented “program clusters.” College faculty and staff conducted focus groups with students to gain feedback on two potential program groupings: one with four clusters, and the other with 10. Based on students’ feedback on which made the most sense, college leaders selected the 10-cluster grouping. The college plans to use

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these clusters to organize program maps on its website, along with other information intended to help prospective students understand the college's offerings and to help current students to better navigate program options. Each program page will include a tab with information on related career and transfer options and requirements.

Clark State is creating "curriculum guides" that map out course sequences and other requirements for every program (see Figure 2 for an example). For instance, the college's management department reorganized its programs so that all students take the same core courses in the first year. In the second year, students specialize in one of four focus areas: general management, human resource management, logistics and supply chain management, or marketing. The management department conducted focus groups with employers and used their recommendations to design the curriculum both for the core management program and for the four focus areas. Management faculty have also mapped their programs to the bachelor's degree programs in business at Wright State University (one of the college's main transfer partners) and created marketing materials for use by both current students undecided on a major and prospective students. Faculty in the Division of Arts and Sciences are using these management programs as a model and are beginning to develop "curriculum sheets" that lay out a suggested sequence of courses for students planning to transfer within particular major fields.

To create better defined pathways for transfer programs, faculty at **Lakeland Community College** have developed recommended sequences of courses, or "roadmaps," for major fields that the college calls "concentrations." To do this, they analyzed the requirements for particular majors at common transfer destinations. They found that because major requirements vary by institution, they had to customize the maps to particular four-year destinations. For example, when creating maps for prospective English literature majors, English faculty found that Cleveland State University accepts up to six 2000-level courses, while other common destinations accept only four. Faculty therefore recommended that all prospective English majors take two 2000-level history courses—because history courses provide important background for British and American literature courses—and two 2000-level English courses. The map indicates that students transferring to Cleveland State can take two additional 2000-level English courses at Lakeland and still be able to transfer the credits toward a degree in the major. Lakeland's marketing department has used these maps to create highly informative brochures for each concentration. The next step for the college will be to begin to use these maps more systematically in recruiting new students and advising current ones.

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**Figure 2. Clark State Community College Curriculum Guide**

		<b>EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION</b> <b>2016-2017 CURRICULUM</b>		CPE 0100 _____   CPE 0500 _____ CPE 0200 _____   CPE 0600 _____ CPE 0300 _____   CPE 0650 _____ CPE 0400 _____   CPE 0700 _____
COURSE #	COURSE NAME	CR	PREREQUISITES	
<b>FALL 1ST YEAR</b>				
_____ ECE 1101	Professional Development for Educators	1.00	Pre CPE 0100; Pre/Co CPE 0200, ECE 1102	
_____ ECE 1102	Child Development and Education	3.00	Pre/Co CPE 0200, CPE 0300	
_____ ECE 1105	Language and Literacy in Education	3.00	Pre/Co CPE 0200, ECE 1102	
_____ EDU 1110	Introduction to Education	3.00	Pre/Co CPE 0200	
_____ ENG 1111	English I	3.00	Pre CPE 0300 with B or CPE 0400 with C; Pre/Co CPE 0200	
_____ FYE 1100	College Success	1.00		
<b>Total Credit Hours Fall 1st Year</b>		<b>14.00</b>		
				
<b>SPRING 2ND YEAR</b>				
_____ ECE 2110	Family, Community, School	3.00	Pre ECE 1102, ENG 1111, Pre/Co ENG 1112	
_____ ECE 2120	Leadership, Management, Mentoring in EC	3.00	Pre ECE 1102, ECE 1115, ENG 1111	
_____ ECE 2135	Practicum Field II	2.00	Permission Required	
_____ ECE 2137	Seminar II	2.00	Pre ECE 2130, ECE 2133; Co ECE 2135; Instructor Permission Required	
_____ EDU 2216	Technology for Educators	3.00	ITS 0800 and ITS 0810	
_____ EDU 2217	Individuals with Exceptionalities	3.00	Pre ECE 1102 or EDU 1110, ENG 1111, Pre/Co ENG 1112	
<b>Total Credit Hours Spring 2nd Year</b>		<b>16.00</b>		
<b>TOTAL CREDIT HOURS</b>		<b>65.00</b>		
<p>*BIO 1410, Fundamentals of Biology; BIO 1105 Fundamentals of Anatomy and Physiology; GLG 1131, Physical Geology, GLG 1129, Survey of Earth Sciences (For additional courses, see list under Physical/Natural Sciences in front of catalog)</p> <p>**Suggested courses: MTH 1050, Math and Today's World; MTH 1060, Business Math; MTH 1280, College Algebra; STT 2640, Elementary Statistics I</p>				
<p><i>Note.</i> This image comes from Clark State's curriculum planning sheet for the early childhood education degree for full-time students. For space, the spring first year, summer, and fall second year terms have been trimmed from this image. A separate version of this curriculum sheet is available for part-time evening students and lays out a recommended schedule with only 7–9 credits per term over four years.</p>				

### Helping Students Choose and Enter a Program Pathway

Implementing guided pathways requires that colleges rethink the student intake experience with the goal of helping new students explore, choose, plan, and successfully enter a program of study that is a good fit

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with their interests, talents, and aspirations. In this section, we describe the groundwork in building program “on-ramps” for new students laid by the six Ohio colleges we visited.

### **College/Career Exploration and Planning From the Start**

Students entering **Edison State Community College** are evaluated by their SAT/ACT scores and high school grade point averages in combination with their ACCUPLACER scores for placement into developmental or college-level math and English. However, the college does not simply rely on these measures to assist students with identifying their aptitude to excel in a chosen major or career path; students are also asked to complete a Holland career interest assessment during new student orientation. The college also relies on the recommendations of professors for placing students into the correct level of math or English courses. After taking the Holland assessment, students meet with an advisor to discuss the educational path they would need to take to pursue careers of interest to them. College staff admit that this works well during orientations offered in the spring and early summer but becomes less feasible during the enrollment rush in the final weeks before the start of classes in the fall.

At one time, Edison State offered career services through a separate career center; however, the college has moved to a new model in which success advisors, who advise all entering students, are cross-trained as career advisors. Other career resources are available in the library, and the college still has a career advising coordinator who can help students with resumes. This person is also responsible for updating information on careers on the college’s website.

In 2012, Edison State began requiring all new students to develop an educational plan through the first two semesters. The college is now building on its prior work with student educational plans to implement full-program plans based on program maps developed by faculty and advisors. Since the college already has maps for all programs that include a recommended sequence of courses, it is easy for students to see what courses they need to take in each semester of their plan.

### **Math Pathways**

**North Central State College** has developed two math pathways: statistics and algebra/calculus. All new students at the college are required to choose a major or career field when they enroll, and the math pathway students take is determined by what field they choose to pursue. For example, students in nursing and allied health programs take statistics. In the past, most students were assigned to an algebra track; now nearly 75 percent take statistics. In addition, the college has implemented co requisite support for nearly all of its math courses. About two thirds of students pursuing the statistics pathway are required to take a two-credit co requisite essential algebra skills course taught by the same instructor as the college-level section in which they are enrolled. North Central is one of the only community colleges nationally CCRC is aware of that has implemented both math pathways and associated co requisite supports for nearly all degree-seeking students. The college has seen a substantial increase in the rate of students passing college-level math in the first year. Based on the key performance indicator (KPI) reports that CCRC produced drawing on data from ODHE, the percentage of first-time-in-college students at North Central who passed college-level math in their first year jumped from 20 percent in 2010 to 34 percent in 2015, the year the college first implemented the math pathways with co requisite support.<sup>2</sup>

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**Lakeland Community College's** math department looked at the learning outcomes of its three developmental courses and found that the Intermediate Algebra (MATH 0950) developmental course was an unnecessary prerequisite to Statistics (MATH 1330 or MATH 1550) and Survey of College Mathematics (MATH 1600). Effective fall 2016, students advised into the college's statistics pathways who are not deemed college-ready have one less developmental prerequisite to take before enrolling in MATH 1330, 1550, or 1600. Students majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) who are planning on taking College Algebra (MATH 1650) or higher level math courses may still be required to take MATH 0950 based on their placement scores. The development of a statistics pathway and the elimination of the lowest level of developmental math for students in majors requiring statistics may be the reason that the rate at which first-time students took and passed college-level math in their first year increased from 12 percent in 2010 to 21 percent in 2015, the year the college made these changes.

## **Co requisite Acceleration**

**Lakeland Community College** has been offering a co requisite English Composition course similar to the Community College of Baltimore County's Accelerated Learning Program<sup>3</sup> for a long time. This may be the reason that the rate at which first-time students complete college English in one year at Lakeland is 20 percentage points higher than the Ohio average for two-year colleges.

**Clark State Community College** is in the process of scaling up developmental education reforms with the goal of implementation at scale in the fall of 2018. The new model will use co requisite courses and acceleration to provide all students, with the exception of those who place into the lowest levels of developmental education and those who intend to follow a STEM-transfer track, the opportunity to take and pass college-level math and English in their first term.

## **Building Pathways Into High Schools**

All of the colleges we visited enroll substantial numbers of high school dual enrollment students, referred to in Ohio as College Credit Plus (CCP) students. Two years ago, **Marion Technical College** started to build programmatic pathways in collaboration with local high schools. Students are bussed to the campus to take the courses. The college has partnered with Honda of America and other area manufacturing companies, including Whirlpool, to develop an engineering pathway program, which will include activities that expose students to engineering careers. The program is designed so that students can complete an occupational certificate or applied associate degree while in high school. The college is working with other employers in its region to create similar pathways for high school students in medical assisting, criminal justice, and business. The legislation that established CCP two years ago (and has resulted in a more than twofold increase in the number of Ohio high school students taking college courses) called for "15- and 30-credit pathways" for students. The pathways that Marion has started with its local schools seem to be a promising model for such pathways.

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**North Central State College** is also partnering with local high schools and career centers in Ohio to create more well-defined pathways to college and careers for high school students, starting with its CCP students. Particularly promising is the college's work with the Pioneer and Ashland Career Centers, which is focused on enabling high school students to earn college credentials in high demand technical fields. North Central has established the Tuition Freedom Scholarship program for CCP students who continue their education at the college after high school. Those who earn at least six credits through CCP and a minimum 2.5 grade point average can apply to the program, which will pay for up to 64 credits at North Central as long as the student attends full-time. Tuition Freedom Scholars must meet with their advisor once a term to ensure they are on path. Connecting financial incentives such as this and CCP pathways holds special promise for increasing the rate at which lower income students enroll in postsecondary education directly following high school graduation.

In order to create pathways to college for high school students (including those enrolled through CCP), **Clark State Community College** has begun to extend selected program clusters and pathways at two high schools, with plans to scale to all of its high school partners. Leaders at Clark State surveyed local high school counselors to identify students' top four-year college destinations and majors of interest. The college is currently using results from these surveys to create customized pathways for local CCP students that lay out the courses to take at Clark State while in high school and once enrolled at Clark State following graduation. These pathways are designed to allow students to transfer to a particular four-year institution and graduate with a bachelor's degree in specific majors with no loss of credits.

### [Keeping Students on Path](#)

Colleges implementing guided pathways need to rethink and redesign their advising systems to help students make timely progress on their program plans, intervene when they are struggling, and help students consider a new direction when they change their minds or fail to make progress on their initial path. All six of the Ohio colleges we visited are exploring ways to redesign advising that align with their efforts to better map programs and create student plans.

Over the past couple of years, **North Central State College** has built an advising model consistent with the guided pathways model. Student Success Center advisors (called "success coaches") work with all new students for the first semester or until they complete any remedial requirements. During the first semester, the success coaches meet with all new students to create a two-term plan. Provided they have completed remediation, students are then transitioned to "academic liaisons" who are embedded in each of three main program areas—health care, business and technology, and liberal arts. The academic liaisons help students complete a full-program plan in their major field of interest. If students intend to transfer to a four-year institution, the liaisons help them figure out what courses they need to take to prepare for their intended transfer destination and major.

Once students complete 30 credits in their program, they are assigned a faculty advisor to provide field- and career-specific guidance, although the academic liaisons often also provide higher level advising to students in their program area. The faculty members we interviewed all spoke enthusiastically about the academic liaisons, noting that they are knowledgeable about financial aid, transfer requirements, and other details faculty are not necessarily as familiar with. At the same time, the liaisons are experts in the requirements of the programs in their respective fields. While the college is seeking to refine its overall advising model, we heard generally positive feedback about the current model in our interviews with

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students and faculty. The combination of initial meetings with a student success coach followed by those with a field-specific liaison and the connection to a faculty member in the student's field of study ensures that students are helped to choose a program direction and receive specialized advice and connections in their chosen field when they need it along their path to completion.

North Central will put in place an electronic early-alert system that not only will notify students and their advisors of areas of concern that may require corrective action but also will provide encouragement and praise when students are progressing on their plans.

Department chairs at **Marion Technical College** assign new students to either first-year advisors or faculty advisors. Students deemed to be in need of more intensive support are assigned to first-year advisors. The determination of which students need more support involves several factors, including placement into one or more developmental education courses, recommendation by an admissions advisor or faculty member, student requests for additional support, and enrollment in a pre-health program. Students are typically transitioned to a faculty advisor once they are accepted into a limited-enrollment program or when they successfully complete their first year of coursework. However, first-year advisors can delay this transition if they believe that the student would benefit from continued intensive support. Until they complete 15 credits, all students are required to meet with their assigned advisor (whether a first-year advisor or faculty advisor) to register for classes. Because some faculty are more interested in advising than others, Marion is moving toward a model in which faculty who are interested are assigned to be advisors; those who are less interested in advising have an option to play other roles, such as tutors.

First-year and faculty advisors at Marion are using the alert system within Aviso to generate alerts based on attendance and midterm grades, and to track alerts so that advisors are kept up-to-date on students who are struggling. A few advisors have also chosen to receive alerts on students who have created academic plans using Aviso software but have chosen an off-plan course. We encouraged the college to consider how it could expand this monitoring to all students.

## [Ensuring That Students Are Learning](#)

A key goal of guided pathways reforms is to ensure that students are building essential skills and knowledge across programs, not just in individual courses. Here we describe how the Ohio colleges we visited are working to strengthen teaching and learning across programs.

**Lakeland Community College** faculty, supported by college-wide committees and program review processes, regularly clarify and assess student learning across programs and use results to improve student learning. Student learning outcomes are assessed at three levels: course-level outcomes, general education outcomes, and program-level outcomes. Assessment of program level learning outcomes occurs not only for career-technical programs but also for pre-transfer programs. Faculty in liberal arts and sciences departments set program learning outcomes by outlining what students should know about their subject area as a result of completing the most commonly taken course or sequence of courses in their department. In addition, a faculty committee organizes in-depth assessments around one of the college's general education learning outcomes each year, which encourages college-wide conversations germane to the learning outcome in focus. Results from these assessments are used during program review and in faculty in-service events to improve teaching and learning. The college uses Taskstream software to keep track of learning outcomes by course and program. The software is used during the

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program review process to examine results from assessments of general education, course, and program learning outcomes along with data on course enrollments, grades, and instructor evaluations.

**Cincinnati State Technical and Community College** requires that students participate in at least one paid four-credit-hour cooperative education (co-op) experience in order to graduate. Co-ops provide academic credit for a structured job experience and are required of students in all programs, including liberal arts and humanities. This powerful model can help students explore career options, connect with job opportunities in their field of study, and gain real-world experience that enables them to apply what they are learning in class. The college has 16 coordinators who develop co-op opportunities with employers and help students individually and in required seminars to create resumes and prepare for interviews. The coordinators also work with students and employers to set learning goals for each student's experience. Feedback from students who have participated in the program is glowing. Students we interviewed said that coops provide real-world experience that makes use of skills related to their chosen program. Although Cincinnati State has been offering co-ops since long before the field started talking about guided pathways, co-ops align with the guided pathways model in that they help ensure that programs are designed with preparation for careers in mind and that learning outcomes are embedded in program coursework. Feedback from co-op employers is invaluable, since it enables the college to quickly find out when it is not preparing students adequately.

## Recommendations for Ohio Colleges Embarking on Guided Pathways

Adopting guided pathways is a complex process requiring major changes to institutional practice and culture. In our recent report on the work of the 30 AACC Pathways Project colleges (Jenkins, Lahr, & Fink, 2017), we examined the challenges colleges face when implementing guided pathways reforms and how they are approaching these challenges. One key finding is that the colleges that have made the most progress have devoted a great deal of time and effort to laying the groundwork for guided pathways reforms.

The Ohio colleges have done impressive work to lay the groundwork for guided pathways. The recommendations below, which are based on our research in Ohio and nationally on guided pathways, are intended to provide ideas for how Ohio colleges can build on their ongoing efforts to help students explore and progress through programs of study, and to successfully transfer or find employment in their field upon graduation. These recommendations address a number of practices, including program mapping, math pathways, academic planning, advising, developmental education, CCP, and performance metrics. We hope these recommendations will be useful to colleges at different stages of planning and implementing guided pathways reforms.

### **Continue to develop meta-majors and use them as a framework for program marketing and recruitment, new student intake, and program improvement.**

All of the six colleges we visited and several of the other Ohio colleges are moving to organize programs into broad fields that we generically refer to as “meta-majors” (though colleges are generally using other names more intuitive to their students and other key audiences). We encourage Ohio colleges to continue to use meta-majors as a framework for marketing programs, recruiting and orienting new students, and improving curriculum and instruction in programs. Colleges should consider convening department

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chairs, faculty, and professional advisors to begin building academic and career communities within meta-majors. These communities could undertake activities such as:

- working with college marketing, high school recruitment, admissions, and advising staff to coordinate efforts to recruit and orient new students to the college's programs in each meta-major (for example, inviting high school students interested in a particular field, along with their parents and counselors, to events featuring college faculty, employers, and four-year partners providing information on college and career opportunities in a given meta-major field);
- developing college and career success courses (or adding units to introductory college courses) with the goal of exposing students to career opportunities in the field and giving them a taste of their field of interest in the first term;
- organizing professional development for faculty (including adjunct faculty) in the meta-major to better equip faculty members to discuss academic and career pathways with students interested in their field; and
- helping organize internships, service learning, class-based projects, and other active learning experiences for students in a meta-major's academic programs.

### **Involve employers and partnering four-year institutions in reviewing and validating program maps.**

All of the colleges we visited are taking steps to more clearly map out their programs. Most are asking employers to review maps for their career-technical programs and seem to rely on state and local transfer agreements to validate maps for transfer programs. While such agreements are a good place to start, we strongly recommend involving the academic departments of four-year institutions directly in the review process. One reason is that bachelor's program requirements change, and these changes are not always reflected in transfer agreements (including those established locally, which vary in specificity and need to be updated regularly). Consulting with colleagues at four-year institutions on their major requirements will also help to build relationships among faculty and others that are crucial for strengthening curriculum and teaching at both the community college and the four-year institution.

### **Continue to strengthen efforts to help all students explore career and college options from the start.**

Most of the Ohio colleges are taking steps to help new students explore college and career options from the beginning of their college experience. Colleges are organizing their new student orientation and other intake activities around meta-majors to expose students to programs and the career and further education opportunities connected with them. Some are customizing first year experience courses to particular fields so that students can explore a given field in more depth. Ideally, students should also be able to take an introductory course in a field of interest in their first term so that they can begin to see if the field is a good fit. This is a major change in conventional practice at community colleges, where the focus of the intake and advising process is typically to determine whether students are "college-ready" and help students schedule classes for their first term.

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We encourage the Ohio colleges to continue to move in the direction of making career and college exploration an essential part of the new student experience for *all* incoming students. This will help motivate students and greatly increase the chances that they will find a program pathway that is a good fit for them and not have to spend an undue amount of time doing so. We believe that this will be especially beneficial for students who arrive poorly prepared to succeed in college work. At most colleges, such students typically have to go through a term or more of developmental courses before they can begin taking courses in their field and exploring their interests. Even once they complete remedial courses, students are often encouraged to take general education courses that may not relate to their interests. Colleges are beginning to see the benefit of ensuring that all students, including those who are poorly prepared for college, are able to enroll in a course in a program of interest in the first semester and receive help exploring associated careers and college programs from the start.

### **Rethink the new student intake process to help students develop a full-program plan by the end of the first semester.**

An important part of the onboarding process should be to help students create a full-program educational plan that is based on the program maps created by faculty and advisors and customized to each student's prior credits, academic support needs, goals for transfer and employment, and desired timeline for completion. These plans can be helpful to students, advisors, and the college. Once all students have a plan, colleges are much better able to predict course demand further in advance and can move to a full-year schedule based on the courses in students' plans. This change in scheduling practices will help ensure that students are able to take the courses they need on their plan when they need them—and can also help reduce the number of course sections cancelled due to low enrollment.

At the same time, once students' customized plans are stored in a program such as DegreeWorks or Colleague Student Planning, students and advisors should be able to more readily follow students' progress and know when they are "off-plan" and thus require intervention. Students we interviewed at **Lakeland Community College** said that they used the degree-audit function in the college's DegreeWorks system to make sure they were taking courses that would count toward their intended degree, to see how much further they had to go to complete their program, and to conduct "what-if" audits to explore alternate program paths. Lakeland updates its DegreeWorks system annually to reflect curriculum changes. While the positive feedback from students using these tools is encouraging to hear, Lakeland and other colleges need to make sure that the program maps in these systems are up-to-date and accurate—and that all students know how to use them.

Students at **North Central State College** who have completed any needed remediation are required to meet with an advisor specific to their chosen field to develop a full-program plan. Although this strategy seems to be working well, we urged the college to work with *all* new students, including those who need academic support, to develop full-program plans—ideally by the end of the first semester. The program maps being developed by faculty and advisors should serve as guides to students and their advisors in developing these plans, and helping students develop a plan should begin at orientation and extend through the first semester. To facilitate this process, some colleges are requiring all incoming students—including dual enrollment students—to take a first-year experience course in which a key assignment is to explore career and college interests and to develop a full-program academic and financial plan.

**Marion Technical College** and other Ohio colleges are implementing student information systems that will allow students and advisors to create a plan and use it to track students' progress. In the system Marion is developing, when students speak with an advisor to develop a plan or register for courses, the system auto populates their plan with the courses they need to take based on the curriculum guides (the college's term for program maps) created by faculty. One of the key next steps for colleges that are completing their initial mapping of programs is to use the program maps as the default curriculum that students and advisors can use to create a customized plan for each student.

### **Continue to scale math pathways and expand co requisite courses—and connect these with program pathways.**

As mentioned, **North Central State College** and **Lakeland Community College** have implemented math pathways nearly at scale—that is, for all degree-seeking students. Both colleges are currently offering two math pathways: statistics and algebra/calculus. Most Ohio colleges are piloting co requisite remediation and other strategies for helping students take and pass college-level courses in math, English, and other critical program subjects in their first year. Lakeland has offered co requisite English for a long time—we believe this may be why new students at Lakeland are on average far more likely to take and pass college-level English in their first year than are students in other Ohio community colleges. Of the six Ohio colleges we visited, only North Central has implemented math pathways with co requisite support at scale. **Marion Technical College** plans to implement math pathways for all students beginning fall 2017, and **Clark State Community College** plans to implement math pathways and co requisite support in math and English by fall 2018. We would encourage the other Ohio colleges to follow their lead.

A key reason that North Central was able to scale math pathways is that students are required to choose a major or exploratory major (similar to a meta-major) upon entering the college. Which field they choose determines which math pathway (algebra or statistics) they will take. Thus, it is not possible for advisors to recommend, for example, that students pursue an algebra path when they are seeking to major in nursing and allied health or criminal justice, both of which require students to take statistics. We recommend that other colleges emulate this process by assigning students to a math pathway based on the major or meta-major they are interested in pursuing.

In general, we think it is a mistake to separate students into those who are college-ready and those who are not. This practice discourages students who are deemed not college-ready and overlooks the fact that many students who pass placement tests or complete remedial sequences nevertheless struggle in college courses and need help finding direction. We believe that colleges should assume that virtually all new students are not necessarily college-ready; students may need not only academic support but also help in setting goals and making plans, mastering college success skills, and coping with a learning culture much different than they may have experienced in high school. Thus, students' entire first-year experience should be organized around helping students get off to a strong start.

### **Continue to rethink advising roles and processes to help students at key decision points as they enter and progress through a program of study.**

Colleges should continue their efforts to rethink how best to advise students at different stages of their time at the college. For example, at intake, students need help exploring career and academic program options. Once they have chosen and entered a program, students should receive regular feedback on their progress. Some may need help if they lose momentum or need to redirect to another path—for example, pre-nursing students who are passing their courses but are not receiving high enough grades to be

accepted into a nursing program. Students may need help finding internships during their programs and preparing for job placement and transfer to a four-year institution when they near completion.

To develop strategies for advising students effectively at different stages of their college career, we encourage colleges that have not already done so to facilitate conversations among faculty, advisors, and other student services staff about key decision points along students' pathways at which they tend to need support, what supports students need, and who should provide it.<sup>4</sup> Whatever approach a college chooses to guide students into and through programs and beyond, we recommend that advising be mandatory and proactive rather than optional and reactive. Students should not be allowed to register for classes for the next term without approval from an advisor. Some colleges and advisors are accomplishing this via an electronic approval for students who are making steady progress along their plans, freeing time for advisors to work with students who are struggling or want to change course. We encourage colleges to continue to explore how to expand their advising capacity. As we have seen in other colleges nationally, this conversation will need to address how to accommodate increased workloads associated with scaling up proactive student advising, and how to use technology to support the process.

**North Central State College, Marion Technical College,** and other colleges are in the process of upgrading their student information systems to flag when students have fallen off-plan. Implementing such systems takes time, in part because to be effective colleges must reorganize roles and business processes and provide the necessary training to ensure staff preparedness in new roles. Moreover, this strategy requires that every student have a plan that is stored in the student information system. Chief information officers we interviewed said that it is critical to involve user groups when implementing a new system. The chief information officer at **Lakeland Community College** said that when the college first implemented DegreeWorks, there were issues with accuracy. As a result, counselors were reluctant to move from the existing paper-based system. As counseling staff became involved and started providing feedback on the new system, it became more accurate, and counselors we interviewed said they now love it. As an interim solution for colleges that are in the process of implementing a new software system to monitor students' progress on their plans, we suggest running batch reports to help advisors and others identify students who are off-plan or otherwise potentially in need of support.

### **Encourage and support College Credit Plus students and career center students to explore and plan college programs, not just take courses.**

Colleges should encourage CCP students and their families to think more strategically about CCP as an entry point to college programs and related transfer and career paths, rather than just as an opportunity to take college classes.

Colleges can do this in a number of ways, such as partnering with high schools to educate students, counselors, and parents about the importance of exploring career and college options and the benefits of starting on a program path while in high school. Although students will likely change their minds about what field they want to pursue at least once, the opportunity to explore career fields while in high school at no cost to students and their families is invaluable. The high cost of college for students and states makes extensive exploration less feasible and affordable once students graduate from high school and enroll in college.

Another strategy is for colleges to expand and highlight 15- and 30-credit CCP pathways in particular fields, emphasizing that students can get on a degree and career path in high school and save money by completing lower division work at the community college before transferring to a bachelor's degree

program in their desired major. Early such efforts by **Marion Technical College** and **North Central State College** are described in the previous section.

Finally, colleges should continue to build paths to college programs from the Ohio career centers. Some career center students may need extra academic and nonacademic support, but once they are on a path to a degree and a career, we think they will be highly motivated to complete programs— particularly those that are closely tied to in-demand jobs. Recruiting and retaining more of these students would help to increase colleges’ revenue from financial aid–funded tuition.

Because colleges do not receive tuition and fees for CCP students, it is important that they recoup their investment by ensuring that a larger number of CCP students transition to the community college right after high school and complete their programs before they transfer to a four-year college. Right now, many Ohio colleges do not regularly monitor how many former CCP students matriculate at their institution after high school, and they may be underestimating the number of dual enrollment students who enroll post–high school. When we asked colleges what percentage of former CCP students enrolled at their institution after high school, their responses ranged from 10 to 20 percent. CCRC’s forthcoming analysis of National Student Clearinghouse data (Fink, Jenkins, & Yanagiura, 2017) indicates that around 42 percent of former dual enrollment students in Ohio first enrolled at a community college after high school. Forty-nine percent first enrolled at a four-year college, while only 9 percent were not enrolled at all in college when they were 18–20 years old.

Based on these observations, we recommend that Ohio colleges monitor more closely the rates at which CCP students matriculate at their institution right after high school and go on to earn a certificate or associate degree from the college. Colleges should review historical trends and set goals for increasing this rate through activities such as those described above. Increasing enrollment among former CCP students will help the colleges generate tuition and fee revenue as well as state subsidies through improved performance. It will also help to increase students’ and Ohio taxpayers’ return on investment in the state’s community colleges.

### **Measure the effects of reforms by tracking first-year momentum.**

We recommend that colleges evaluate the effectiveness of pathways reforms by measuring “early momentum” indicators. Research by CCRC and others indicates that students who gain momentum in the first year in college are more likely to complete their programs and to do so at a lower cost to themselves and taxpayers (Jenkins & Bailey, 2017). We encourage colleges to focus on three measures of early momentum in particular:

1. *Credit momentum*—defined as attempting (not necessarily completing) at least 15 semester credits (developmental and college-level) in the first term, or attempting at least 30 credits in the first academic year. An emphasis on credit momentum focuses students and the college on the time it will take students to finish their programs and hopefully motivates efforts by both to minimize that time.
2. *Gateway momentum*—defined as taking and passing pathway-appropriate introductory college-level math and English in the student’s first year. Measuring gateway momentum draws attention to the content of credits students take and encourages colleges to remove barriers created by

traditional prerequisite remediation by integrating academic support into college-level coursework rather than offering it through a prerequisite sequence.

3. *Program momentum*—defined as taking and passing at least nine semester credits (three courses) in the student’s field of study in the first academic year. A focus on program momentum encourages colleges to help students choose a field of study early on and indicates the potential effect of reforms such as program maps and redesigned intake advising on student outcomes. This indicator will be more meaningful if the college’s programs are coherent and well organized (another reason why we encourage colleges to continue to develop meta-majors and program maps).

These metrics provide a relatively simple set of leading indicators of longer term success that can be measured over the first year for each student cohort and compared year-to-year. In addition, focusing on these first-year metrics motivates colleges to introduce practices that create the initial conditions necessary for subsequent success. Prior to the February 9 OACC SSLI meeting at Columbus State, the Ohio colleges received a set of KPI reports that CCRC produced using data provided by ODHE. These included measures of both credit and gatekeeper momentum. Program momentum is best measured by colleges themselves, as the program mix and critical courses are often college-specific.

## Next Steps in Building Guided Pathways in Ohio

Over the next year, OACC will continue to hold SSLI workshops where college teams can learn about guided pathways practices and update their plans for implementing guided pathways reforms. CCRC will continue to assist OACC in conducting these workshops. CCRC will also continue to study and develop knowledge to inform guided pathways reforms in Ohio. We have requested de-identified student unit record data from ODHE, which we will use to conduct in-depth baseline analyses of student progression patterns by college. We will consult with ODHE, OACC, and college leaders in conducting these analyses. We will work with ODHE to produce another set of early momentum KPI reports for each college in early 2018. We will also administer the CCRC guided pathways scale of adoption self-assessment to all 23 Ohio two-year colleges (with follow-up phone calls to each) in spring 2018.

## Endnotes

1. For these interviews, we used protocols based on two frameworks, one developed by CCRC that reflects CCRC’s (2017) *Guided Pathways Essential Practices: Scale of Adoption Self Assessment* and another based on Kotter’s (n.d.) eight-step process for leading change; copies are available on request.
2. As part of the SSLI, CCRC developed a set of KPIs using data from ODHE. These data were distributed to all colleges at the February 2017 SSLI meeting.
3. See <http://alp-deved.org/> for more information on this program.
4. For a more detailed discussion of key decision points, see Jenkins, Lahr, and Fink (2017, pp. 29–32).

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