

# Guided Pathways & Equity Project Teams

## 2020-21 Final Report

### PROJECT NAME:

#### **Career-Focused Developmental Advising**

### DESCRIPTION:

Norco College Counseling is making a tectonic shift in the way that services are offered. Historically, “Counseling” was primarily focused on the transactional services of delivering what the student *thinks* they needed, an Education Plan. These Education Plans were distributed widely due to the state and federal funding that was associated with the number of plans that could be developed. The number of plans in students’ hands skyrocketed but the success and retention of our students did not dramatically increase. The focus on academic pathways without a defined and research end career goal left students without motivation and meaning for completing school. Thus, a new way of “Counseling” needed to be invented that included the identification of barriers that prevent students from making career decisions. As well as the inclusion of all resources on campus such as, Academic Affairs, Classified Professionals, Student Services, and many counseling theories to help our students identify and process the information that is needed to answer the vital questions along their journey to success.

In order to address the problem of student success, the Norco College Guided Pathways and Equity group focused on Career-Focused Developmental Advising to identify any research that had been done in regards to redesigning the student experience at the community college. We have used the research from sources such as [Redesigning Americas Community Colleges](#), [Melinda Karp](#), [Rob Johnstone](#), [Florida State University’s Cognitive Information Processing \(CIP\)](#), Kay McClenney, [Achieving the Dream’s Holistic Student Supports Redesign](#), and [Completion by Design’s Loss-Momentum Framework](#). These resources aided us in focusing our work on developing services and strategies that have not been invented, until now.

Guided Pathways at Norco College seamlessly weaves multiple new success strategies into the Career-Focused Developmental Advising and the onboarding for prospective students, we call it “Guided Onboarding”. Thus, it is impossible to explain the details and potential impacts of Career-Focused Developmental Advising without briefly explaining the connection to other parts of the Guided Pathways puzzle. Norco College’s “Guided Onboarding” begins when the student fills out the application, capitalizing on the height of motivation for the student. During their onboarding students are presented with multiple services and immediately after the overview of the service they are given a survey asking if they would be interested in taking part in that service based on their self-assessed need. They are also asked where they believe they

are with regards to their career decision. This data is then uploaded to the assessment coordinator and communication is sent to the various departments for the services that the student indicated they were interested in so they can reach out to the student personally. This creates a proactive and individualized approach to providing a unique and equitable student-college relationship. At the same time identifying and addressing the potential barriers that the student sees as an impediment to their success.

The career readiness question is addressed with an in-person meeting with an educational advisor (Classified Professional) that is trained in the decision-making process to confirm and validate a career goal for the student. This interaction is meant to pinpoint the service that that the student will need to help them progress to making an informed career and academic goal that will provide them their definition of success. The Educational Advisor will explain the decision-making process and deduce the appropriate next step for the student. These steps may include a meeting with a counselor regarding education/career/financial planning, assessment interpretation, multi-attribute evaluation, or addressing more counseling related predicaments using a cognitive behavioral therapy approach. The Educational Advisor, when appropriate, will provide resources and abbreviated semester academic plans to those students who have had the opportunity to explore and research careers while being able to corroborate their career/academic decision.

When referred to a counselor, it is the duty of the counselor to continue to use various counseling theories to ensure that the student knows and understands the reasoning behind the 7 step Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) method that is based on both the [CASVE](#) (Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, Execution) cycle and the National Career Development Association (NCDA) 7 Steps of the Career Planning Process The Career-Focused Developmental Advising method that Norco College Counselors are using with students is a [values-based approach to decision making](#).

1. Step 1 is designed to identify the students “why”. This step is supported using the [constructionist narrative approach](#) by identifying past experiences and future actions to reveal interests, values, and motivations. Step 1 is designed to pinpoint the student’s inability to identify these motivations due to negative career thoughts. These negative career thoughts can be narrowed to 3 areas of need, [decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict](#). A future goal is to implement an assessment ([Career Thoughts Inventory](#)) when a student is experiencing difficulty identifying their values, goals, and past motivations. Step 1 is vital to the long-term success of the student by setting the strong foundation of values-based decision making and helping the student identify and engage intrinsic barriers that could diverge or even prevent the continued progression of the student toward academic and career success.

2. Step 2 is designed to take the students situation and preferences into consideration formally through assessments (interest ability, and skills) ([Vocational Choice Theory](#), [Trait and Factor Theory](#)), requiring interpretation by a counselor, and informally by a counselor taking into consideration [Super's Career Development Theory](#) and where the student is in their life while recognizing the changes that people go through as they mature and [Krumboltz Learning Theory](#) to focus on future success and not occupational goals. This step is an opportunity for the student to understand and make the connection between their own personal interests, skills, and abilities to career options that they both have considered in the past and have newly identified as viable options.
3. Step 3 is designed to organize the historically arduous task of "exploring". This step has proven to be difficult for students due to the potential for decision paralysis or commitment anxiety based on the sheer number of options that the Step 2 assessments yield. Students in Step 3 are advised on how to organize the career results that were produced by their assessments and taught how to perform targeted exploration using trusted sources of information such as (Eureka.org and O\*Netonline.org). Students narrow their career options to "good options" and attempt to research one data point at a time in an attempt to make the exploration more digestible and less daunting. The goal of Step 3 is to rank and narrow the career "good options" to 7 or less to attempt and avoid any decision paralysis or avoidance.
4. Step 4 is designed to teach students how to evaluate decision options. In this step students utilize the [Multi-Attribute Utility Theory](#) (MAUT) in order to rank the different components of their "good option" careers from step 3. They revisit the previous research completed for those careers and rank the factors from most important to least important. This allows the student to assign a weight to what they believe is the most important part(s) of careers to them. By doing this we are attempting to provide an equitable and unique approach to evaluating the research that is based on the preference of the student. The goal of Step 4 is to not only revisit and review the research for a second read but also to allow the student to grade each data point and then be assigned a score based on the weight of the career factor and the grade that is assigned. The graded scale is from 3 to -1 (3-great, 2-good, 1- acceptable, Blank-unsure, and -1 – poor) and after the components are graded a numerical score will be provided. These scores will hopefully provide compelling evidence that there is a clear career choice, or a "best option" based on the students' personal preferences. Sometimes, the research scores can yield a statistical tie; when this is present the student will be recommended to complete a personality assessment (usually the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, MBTI) to attempt and break the tie. At this point in the decision-making process the student has an in-depth knowledge of their interests, abilities, and skills, as well as a wealth of knowledge of their "good option" careers. With this personal and career context it is appropriate to utilize a personality assessment here because the

student will be able to fictitiously place themselves into the successful life that they envisioned and outlined in step 1. It is important in step 4 to revisit the students' values to assess if this career will provide them their personal/unique version of *success*. After an interpretation of the MBTI assessment from an appropriately trained counselor paired with a conversation about the values that were set in step 1, the student will then be able to break the tie and progress to making the decision.

5. Step 5 is designed to provide the student with a sense of empowerment. In this part of the decision-making process the responsibility is turned back on the student to make the career decision. This allows them to experience the gratification, self-confidence, and self-respect, that comes with taking hold of their life and the path they will take towards their fully defined version of success. It is important in step 5 that the culture of the student is taking into consideration; many cultures lack the luxury of individualism that we in the United States experience. Thus, at this stage of the decision-making process the student is encouraged to consult with family friends regarding the previous steps and career options but is also advised that the decision should ultimately rest with the individual after consultation. The goal of step 5 is to have the student finalize the career and academic pathway and embrace the decision as their own.
  
6. Step 6 is designed to provide the student with the plans for success that is based on their career decision. There are 3 plans that are aimed at addressing the inequities that exist for our students when they enter college.
  - a. Plan for Education – this plan includes the path to obtaining their academic goal that will aid them in obtaining their career goal. A semester-by-semester academic course plan that incorporates transfer to university (if applicable) is provided. As well as a evaluation of any external transcripts or external exams taken prior to enrolling at Norco College.
  - b. Financial Plan – this plan includes uncovering the true cost of the education that the student will incur at Norco College and beyond to earn the needed education for their career goal. Paired with that hidden cost identification, students will be provided a financial literacy education that is presented by external financial advising professionals. This will provide the student with the knowledge and foresight to plan appropriately for the upcoming academic journey.
  - c. Career Plan – this plan includes knowledge of other skills or qualifications that will help the student to be more competitive in the job market when they are ready to join. By dissecting current job postings, students will see what other items or knowledge will be required to earn a position as their “best option” career. This can/will allow the student to see other potential technical skills and certifications that the industry is looking for and may add to the Plan for Education. This is also a plan that includes experiences such as identifying and

collaborating with “Mustang Mentors” (willing instructional faculty) that are available to share their personal and biographical information with the student. This may allow the student to make a connection with a professional in the field or obtain a contact to another “Industry Mentor” (Industry Professional) that has been screened and vetted by the college to provide knowledge and advice for the student based on their experiences.

7. Step 7 is designed to celebrate the success of the student and the college. Celebration and data collection happen in step 7 to measure the impact that Norco College has had on the career and academic preparedness/success of the student(s). Students are advised in that step 7 is also a time of reevaluation of step 1 and their goals/values. The student will need to take the time to ensure that the attainment of their academic and career goals provided them the *success* that they set for themselves. Within the teaching of this decision-making process the student is informed that life transition can/will happen at some point, which can potentially have an impact on their definition of success and/or their values. This transition theory is designed to identify the non-events and events that lead to life transitions and the need for change. Empowering the student with inevitability of change allows them to be less frightened and better prepared if/when life transition alters their path.

Students enter at different phases of the decision-making process and are supported with tools and resources to help them progress to a researched career decision. At each step, students may be referred to specialized assistance if needed, such as help with reframing negative career thoughts and connection with other specialized personnel on and off campus. This approach aims to address the individual needs of each student and provide them the knowledge and resources to fill the gaps that may prevent them from making the various important decisions that are needed to progress to success.

### PROJECT SPONSOR

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### TEAM LEAD(S):

#### Faculty Coordinators:

- **Team Cultural Competence:** Dr. Dominique Hitchcock (Associate Professor, World Languages)
- **Team Equity Data:** Dr. Courtney Buchanan (Associate Professor, Anthropology)

- **Team Program to Career:** Ashley Johnson (Associate Professor, Engineering)
- **Team Faculty Advising:** Brady Kerr (Associate Professor, Music Industry Studies)
- **Team Career-Focused Developmental Advising:** Jethro Midgett (Associate Professor, Counseling)

Team Members for **Career-Focused Developmental Advising** (Fall 2020-Spring 2021):

Jethro Midgett (Co-Lead, Faculty)

Elizabeth Lopez (Co-Lead, Classified Professional)

John Moore (Administrator)

Angelica Calderon (Student)

Anisha Salhotra (Student)

DELIVERABLES:

**The following guiding principles have led the work of this group:**

1. Career counseling should drive an integrated approach to advising.
2. Colleges should provide services to students based on their level of need.
3. Colleges should strategically deploy resources to allow for *developmental* advising.
4. Counseling and Advising should help students engage in exploration and decision making that leads to pathways and program
5. Careful exploration of life *and* vocational goals should precede and lead to program, course, and scheduling decisions

**The Career-Focused Developmental Advising group is focused on all students obtaining their definitions of success. This primarily will involve a three-pronged approach:**

1. Providing pre-enrollment services for students in the high school setting regarding Career decision making to ensure they come to college equipped to succeed in education with a purpose.
2. Providing Career decision making services for our non-traditional students that need assistance in making the connection between their education and a specific career(s).
3. Continuing career development and academic planning support throughout each student's college experience.

**High School Partnerships and professional development:**

To accomplish this, we will continue to need to maintain and create additional connections and partnerships with local high schools. This may involve the creation of new Career decision-making Guidance courses that will be offered in a Dual-Enrollment setting on the high school campus. There will also be a need for training for current counseling faculty and advising staff

on the decision-making theory to ensure a singular cohesive message across the campus. Additional team members include Mustang Mentors/Faculty advising (Current instructional faculty), the Financial Aid department, and Peer Mentors (Current Norco College students). Our efforts are intimately connected to the Educational Master Planning goals.

**Connection to Norco College Educational Master Plan goals:**

**EMP #1 - (Access) Expand college access by increasing both headcount and FTES.**

This will be met by expanding our reach directly to the high schools and providing connections to specific Norco College programs. Norco College providing a comprehensive education and workforce preparation plan, delivered by our student success teams, for all students will increase success. Student success then allows for growth in programs and support which then will lead to a more comprehensive college for our students. This increase in growth will allow for increased access and capacity for our current and future students.

**EMP #2 – “(Success) Implement Guided Pathways Framework.**

Our goal is to help the holistic student. Meeting them where they are in their education and career decision. We plan to achieve this by working with other pieces of the puzzle to provide the “just in time” service the student needs when they need it. In our decision-making theory we are linked to other puzzle pieces in guided pathways such as Mustang Mentors (previously Faculty Advising; to provide biographical and personal information to students regarding their life, education, and career) and program to career (to provide the connection between education and their future career options). Other services and referrals are built into the career decision-making wheel to provide comprehensive support for the student throughout their time at Norco College and beyond which will increase the number of degrees and certificates that are completed as well as lowering down the accumulation of excess units.

**EMP #3 (Equity) Close all student equity gaps.**

Career-Focused Developmental Advising bases all services on research and data to ensure accuracy and ensure success. We will be basing our own program on the successes of others in closing the equity gaps such as Georgia State University, who have successfully raised the success rates of their Black and Latinx students to be on par with their White and Asian counterparts. Career Counseling will be exploring predictive analytics to try and analyze what hot spots to concentrate on in order to pinpoint supports before they become overwhelming for a student. This will allow the college to provide resources for students when they need them proactively, whenever possible, whether the student is aware of the need or not.

**EMP #4 (Professional Development) Implement Professional Development Around Guided Pathways and equity framework; a culture of ongoing improvement.**

To enact institutional change, it is vital that the whole institution alters the mindset of what the institution does Career-Focused Developmental Advising is committed to providing this training in combination with the other Guided Pathways and Equity Leads at Norco College to ensure that the Institution (Faculty + Classified Professionals + Administrators + Students) are well informed and trained on the Guided Pathways and Equity framework that is being developed

and implemented. This will be done through various modalities via individual and group trainings, FLEX, conferences or institutes, and prerecorded videos.

**EMP #5 (Workforce and Economic Development) Reduce working poverty and the skills gap.**

Career-Focused Developmental Advising group will be working directly with the Career Center and Center of Workforce Development to create and maintain connections with employers to ensure that once a student starts to work on their “Career plan” they will not leave Norco College with just an education, but they will also leave with applicable experience in their field of study. This will allow students to obtain the experience needed to obtain higher paying wages in their field of study, in turn, making them more competitive applicants and in a better position to negotiate a higher annual wage.

The Career decision making theory also allows students to explore all education and career options by forcing the evaluation of different careers. This allows students to look at the data and demystify the myth that everyone needs a degree in order to be successful.

**EMP #6 (Community Partnerships) Pursue, develop, & sustain collaborative partnerships.**

Once Norco College has completed the Guided Pathways puzzle and the picture of equity has been unveiled the opportunity to share our knowledge and strategies with other educational institutions will be a byproduct of that success. This will also position Norco College as not only an educational leader in our region but in the nation. Our Career Decision making model will be provided to community members in need to help with reducing the recidivism in our prisons and with the reskilling of our community when needed or wanted.

APPENDIX

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