**Episode 1**

**Three Colleges Highlight their Pathway Navigation Improvement Efforts**

**[Add the following SWP description to the Breakthroughs home page as a standard feature for every episode.]**

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| **Strong Workforce Program in SDICCCRC**  In 2016, California legislature incentivized the state’s 114 community colleges to better align their career education programs to the region’s labor market needs, which are rapidly increasing and requiring more skilled workers to fill them. To develop a 21st century workforce that can keep up with the changing economy, the state legislated the Strong Workforce Program (SWP)—nearly $250 million in recurring, annual funds to community colleges, charged with attracting and guiding students to complete awarded degrees and certificates that will lead them to employment in industry sectors that pay family-supporting wages, while helping to build a stable future for Californians.  Through SWP, the 10 community colleges of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Regional Consortium (SDICCCRC) are committed to improving the success outcomes of its students, while preparing more qualified graduates skilled and ready to enter the workforce. (*The full REPORT on the SDICCCRC’s implementation of SWP can be accessed here.)* [HYPERLINK TO THE PRESIDENTS’ ARTICLE.] |

**[CONTENT FOR THE EPISODE BEGINS HERE.]**

With the understanding that all 10 of the SDICCCRC colleges are in early stages of planning and implementing Guided Pathways through the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) initiative, staff from three colleges—San Diego Mesa College, Southwestern College, and Grossmont College—agreed to courageously share with their colleagues stories of the practices they are piloting at their campuses and the lessons learned, thus far.

* Insert Photo from CoP meeting

**Identifying the Focus on Student Experiences when “Entering the Path”**

The SDICCCRC’s Pathway Navigation workgroup is focused on improving and refining the practices concerning student onboarding—the early phase of the college experience once a student decides to enroll. At the start of their work, the Pathway Navigation workgroup wanted to understand how students navigate their way through the enrollment, planning, and course selection processes. For example, *Why do students enroll but don’t register for courses? What informs or impacts students’ course selections? How do students learn about career options and how to create an education plan to meet their goals? What do students do when they need help?*

To answer these questions, the workgroup gathered information by examining research from the field on college onboarding processes and conducting student focus groups, which yielded important discoveries:

* Students don’t know about available services on campus, and colleges don’t know which specific services their students need.
* Students need orientation information delivered via multiple ways.
* Students don’t know how to explore their interests and career options, nor how to build an education plan informed by those interests.

With their compiled and relevant information, the workgroup identified three research-based practices—all aligned with the Guided Pathway principles of the “Entering the Path” stage—that are critical to putting students on the right path at the start of their community college journey: Comprehensive Intake**, Differentiated Orientation**, and **Career Planning before Education Planning**.

[HYPERLINK THE 3 PRACTICES to A SINGLE POP-UP WINDOW. CONTENT BELOW.]

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| CONTENT FOR POP-UP WINDOW  **“Entering the Path” Onboarding Practices**  **Comprehensive Intake.** A method, often a student form, for gathering specific information from each student that informs the college of student needs and potential risk-factors for not persisting or completing. (e.g., financial aid, childcare, housing, disability services)  **Differentiated Orientation.** Based on information submitted through the intake process, the college targets students through an outreach email, telephone call, or in-person meeting about relevant services and programs available to them.  **Career Planning before Education Planning.** Students explore their interests and career options before developing an education plan, so that their long-term goals or aspirations can inform their plans. |

The implementation of these practices is an indication of colleges shifting their approach to how they serve students. No longer waiting for students to come to them for help, colleges are now proactively seeking information about the kinds of support students need to be successful, and intrusively connecting students to the support or program that would best help them navigate their personalized journey to completion.

**Three Onboarding Practices in Action**

At the first Pathway Navigation Community of Practice (CoP) learning session held in February 2019, 80 participants from across the 10 SDICCCRC colleges came together to learn from one another, exchanging experiences of onboarding implementation, while leveraging the collective knowledge of this community. An agenda of the all-day meeting can be accessed here. [HYPERLINK TO THE AGENDA.]

* Insert photo from CoP meeting

The first stages of Pathway Navigation work are underway as the colleges plan, implement, and test new or refined onboarding processes and systems at their campuses. With each college at varying states of readiness—some further along than others—it’s an opportune time to highlight the early progress and share lessons learned.

Learn how three onboarding practices are currently unfolding in three SDICCCRC colleges in the following vignettes.

**[NOTE: Hyperlink each strategy below to its vignette.]**

**Comprehensive Intake** at San Diego Mesa College

In an effort to create a more comprehensive intake process, San Diego Mesa College recently developed “Your Mesa Journey,” an online intake survey that both gathers critical student data and uses that data to recommend relevant student service programs to incoming students. To inform the design and functionality of this online process, a cross-sectional team of . . . (*Read more here*.)

* Video clips – Comp. Intake

**Differentiated Orientation** at Southwestern College

While Southwestern College has had success leveraging its orientation offerings to guide recent high school graduates through the registration process and program discovery, it has faced a substantial and persistent gap between the number of students who enroll and the number of students who register for classes in its overall population. To address this issue, the college has. . . (*Read more here*.)

* Video clips – Diff. Orientation

**Career Exploration before Education Planning** at Grossmont College

Grossmont College currently hosts a slew of initiatives to help students engage in the career exploration process at the very start of their postsecondary education, or to “think with the end in mind.” As they begin working to assess and refine these offerings, Grossmont seeks to emphasize . . . (*Read more here.)*

* Video clips – Career Exploration before Ed Planning

**Considerations for Further Learning**

**Change management strategies**

Guided Pathways implementation necessitates that all staff and faculty change an aspect of how they do their work—whether the change is to student programming or to classroom instruction. So, how information is communicated and how knowledge is built internally is critical to success and sustainability.

In particular, implementing new onboarding practices successfully includes building a shared knowledge about equity and an understanding about how some longstanding practices have been barriers to success for many students. For change to take root and become sustainable, stakeholders need to create a culture of transparent communication, build buy-in and value with faculty and staff, and demonstrate relevance for the change. Such practices are part of the change management process that Pathway Navigation teams might consider and explore as a topic of future learning.

**Key resources from the library** [use specific name for library (e.g., SWP Library, Guided Practice Library)]

**Webinars** (archived)

* The Mesa Journey
  + San Diego Mesa College
  + conducted on April 17, 2019
* Career Exploration and Integrating Career Before Education Planning
  + Grossmont College
  + conducted on April 18, 2019
* Differentiated Orientation
  + Southwestern College
  + conducted on April 24, 2019

**Upcoming Events**

* Webinar: New Student Experience Course and the Path to Getting There
  + Valencia College - Orlando, Florida
  + Tuesday, April 30, 2019, 10:00 am PST
  + Registration information (free event)