

Guided Pathways: Findings from Student Interviews

Sub Headline

March, 2018

Pathways

Topic	Comment
Priority Registration	Priority registration is integral to students joining and continuing with pathways. In particular because of access to key courses and <i>better</i> professors to eventually transfer.
Inconsistencies in understanding of program structure and purpose	Utilization of counselors opposed to coaches; What is Pathways and what is PCC?
Experiences with coaches	Positive experiences with coaches; Limited knowledge of career-specific information; some continue with same coach, others don't.
Program requirements and opportunities for additional experiences	Dissatisfaction with certain requirements; lack of availability of opportunities (e.g. internships)
Major and career goal misalignment; unsure of path toward goals	Students experience confusion with pathways that link major objectives and career goals.

Pathways

Overall Sentiment

I feel like Pathways is a really strong resource to have. I mean, the **priority registration** is the biggest thing that attracts people to this program, because it's so **hard to get all of the classes** that you want in such a busy school, you know? And especially if you want to **transfer out**, which is the main goal of a lot of students in this program. You want to get all of the classes that you need, so I think that just gaining priority registration, guaranteeing the fact that you're going to get the classes that you need in order to do that, is really appealing. I also feel like that the guidance that they have here is really helpful, because they help answer all of your questions and help guide you in a way that you feel like you're not lost or like you don't know anything. I think that's a really big deal too. They also offer all of these free services that you can take advantage of. So I feel like it's **just a bunch of positives**. I can't really think of anything. Maybe the fact that you have to take a College 1 class, which is **kind of pointless**, but you've got to do it. So ... But even that, it's an easy class. It's not like it's some class that's there to throw in and make your schedule ten times harder. It's just another way of distinguishing Pathway students together, and in that class we talk a lot about goals and what we want for our future, and finances and weekly budgets. It's just stuff like that, that you wouldn't talk about in any other class. I think that kind of gets your mind going in that sort of sense. (171107_0012)



Experiences with coaches

Interviewer: No? What support service do you most frequently use on campus, if anything?

Student: Support service, I would say Pathways.

Interviewer: What do you find most helpful?

Student: In Pathways you are able to print five free pages every day and not only that, they have counselors, special counselors so you don't have to wait in the L building for a general counselor. You can go to Pathways and find a counselor. You also have a coach. A coach is basically like a counselor but they don't have the authority in PCC like a counselor. You can go to a coach with your problems, your questions but if you want to change something like your PCC profile you would have to go to an actual counselor. A coach is really helpful because if no one is there to listen to you or answer your questions, you know in the back of your head you have someone there that is willing to help you or answer your questions. That's really nice.

Experiences with coaches

- Interviewer: What about your experiences with Pathway staff? So the counselors, the coaches and the tutors. How have your experiences with them been?

Student: The coaches are all right. They answer questions, but sometimes they were like, "For this you have to ask counselor." They couldn't answer it. Resources wise, it's really good that they have a lab. (11-17.2)

Enhancing Requirements and Experiences

Interviewer: Is there anything that you think is important for the research team, PCC or Pathways, to know about how to best support students as they're making career choices or plans?

Student: I need one minute to think about this. Okay. I saw that students. You see what they did today right?[...]I don't know but I personally think it's a waste of time. It's a waste of resource to make students do this because I don't see any other people care about those things only the students in the [inaudible 00:29:55] class have to do the, have to visit the other presenter to do the paper. Only they do that but I don't see any other people besides the College 1 class go to each one and learn about what they doing. Yeah, it's waste of time. Yeah, I think priority registration and I think they have to ask students frequently about their career goal. Like, every month and supply them with the resource to get them more knowledge about transferring and yeah.

171114_006.docx

Enhancing Requirements and Experiences

- Interviewer: Do you think that Pasadena, or your academic program, or Pathways provides you with opportunities to grow these skill sets?

Student: Not really. For the field, not really. I think these programs provide more of transferring stuff, or just in general, just studying. How to maintain a good GPA or resources. (11-17.4)-

- Interviewer: Do you feel like PCC or Pathways provides you with experiences you need for your field?

Student: For my field? Actually, not for my particular field, but there's also other programs in PCC, like STEM. It's called STEM [inaudible 00:14:06]-(11-17.4)

Major and Career Misalignment

Student: Right now, all I'm trying to do is just go into the nursing program. That's my-

Interviewer: Your goal?

Student: Yeah. I'm just taking it a step at a time. That's my main concern right now.

Interviewer: Okay. So, your ideal career is to become a nurse?

Student: No.

Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me about your ideal career?

Student: I don't know.
(z0000026)



Pathways

Unsure of Path Toward Goals

- Interviewer: Okay. What obstacles have you faced or do you expect to face in pursuing this path?

Student: Pursuing which ... Going into a nursing program?

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Student: I don't know, the biggest obstacle has been my ignorance of how to go ahead and actually apply and stuff. I'm still figuring that out. For the most part, I'm on the same track, but I've already messed up once before. I was supposed to originally enter, or apply for, the nursing program for spring of 2018. Instead, I missed the due dates and stuff so I gotta wait until fall. (z000026)

Pathways

Unsure of Path Towards Goals

Interviewer: Can you tell me exactly what a financial analyst does? Is that like trading?

...

Student: I think I'm still not clear but so far what I know is like I think you get a program and let the programs run itself."

(11-17)

International Students

□

Topic	Comment
Employment opportunities while in school	Many students reported difficulty acquiring employment opportunities. If students did work, they tended to be employed as tutors.
Concerns about future employment	When asked about career choices students referenced needing employment sponsors and higher incomes to remain eligible as authorized immigrants.
Family influence in decision-making (both majors and careers)	International students report communicating consistently with their family about major and career choices. Family also heavily influences their major and career choices
Positive social and academic moments/moments	Students find schooling relatively easy compared to their home country; students develop positive friendships
English Language Development	Students discuss language as a barrier

International Students

Employment opportunities while in school

Interviewee: And, I also in process to be an accounting tutor for the previous accounting class. I applied in September, and the process is so long that I submitted my paper to HR exactly three weeks ago, and it was supposed to take two weeks and I still haven't heard back from them. So, it's kind of annoying because I applied in September, and basically by the time they'll hire me the semester is over.

Interviewer: Are you gonna be hired for next semester then?

Interviewee: I will apply, but I don't know how it works. I don't know if you have to reapply or anything like that, because I'm sure they will already have your paperwork so you don't need to go through the whole process again, but it depends if they need you or want you, I guess. I don't know how it works.

Interviewer: Besides HR, are you in communication with any other individuals about the job?

Interviewee: Yeah, the person who's, I mean, the coordinator for student workers, but she's new so she's kind of inexperienced. So, that's why it's also taking a little while. And, I'm actually probably gonna go see her tomorrow, or go to HR or something because I'm getting a little impatient, to be honest, because it's been three weeks.

Interviewer: Yeah. Out of the jobs you mentioned, which one do you think will prepare you the best for your career goals?

Interviewee: If I get hired as a tutor, that would be the best. Otherwise, none of those jobs really contribute to what I want to be in the future.



International Students

Concerns about future employment

“I knew for a ... well, I know for a fact that to get a work permit your salary has to be over 65K. So I knew that whatever job I wanted to do, if I want to insure my stay here, then I need to pick a job that's financially very secure. So that was a big part of my decision. So when looking through, that's why I had to rule out Psych, things like that. And I picked something like Comp Sci, which I knew I could probably get a job straight out. But then, I just figured I'd rather do something that I'd enjoy rather than something I don't and maybe not do so well. And I mean, just like, a lot of research. A lot of research went into this. Long hours.” - 170002_002.docx

International Students

Concerns about future employment

“Yes, because when a company want to hire you they need to consider the extra effort... They need to pay for your status. If there's a native employee...employer they compare you with...It will be more like cost that they need to consider when they choose to hire you as an international student.”

171117_004.docx

International Students

Family Influence in Decision-Making

- Interviewer: who has helped you most in making sure that you reach your goals?

Student: My uncle's been really helping me a lot. And since he's already in the science field [USC Professor], he has a lot of connections, too, so he knows a lot about that field. So whenever I have a question, I can ask him, and he can just directly tell me the answer. (11-17.4)

- Interviewer: Did you always want to do architecture, or how did you choose that? How did you even choose to go back into it after ...

Student: Architecture is actually my family business. I didn't have a really ... It's not like a hobby. It's like ... Okay, it's family business.

Interviewer: Mm. Okay.

Student: ... and my parents are forcing it (11-17.2)

International Students

Family Influence in Decision-Making

- Student: But I think I suffer more from parent's pressure than the kids here, because kids that grew up here, they get, like most of them get to choose what they like to do. And as long as it makes them happy, their parents will be okay with it. This is the first child, and my mom, my parents think that I do good in school, so I should pursue something that is like a professional job, like a doctor or a lawyer. So I don't really get to choose that much. [...] Okay. Which is sad, but you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, how do you feel about that? Like ...

Student: Kind of sad, but I think as long as it makes her happy, then I'm happy. Okay. (171108_001)

International Students

English Language Development

- Interviewer: can you tell me about how it was transitioning both socially and academically, from Korea to the U.S.?

Student: First of all, the language. My English wasn't bad in Korea, but still ... we learn English in Korea, but it's more like, it's not practical, right? [...] It's just reading and just like, vocab- [...] So, during the test, last year, I kind of had hard working on my English. And I tried to have more friends. Like, domestic friends- [...] To kind of improve my English. But it was kind of hard at first because everything's new. And it's a little bit different, culturally, because in Korea, we get close to friends kind of easily. Or we like to gather. But I kind of realized that here, in the class, it's okay. It's fine. But after the class, you just kind of disturb others, right? [...] But I kind of needed the kind of relationship with friends. But luckily, I had one other Korean friend, but she was born and raised here, but her first language was English. [...] But he ... I mean, she, knew how to speak Korean, too. So that was like- [...] So perfect for me. So, we've been friends since last year, and we've been best friends. (11-17.4)



Labor Histories

□
Topic

Comment

Current Employment

Experiences of students currently working: some misalignment with future career goals; some beneficial experiences; can be hectic juggling work and school

Family Employment

How family employment influences their goals; opportunities provided by family

Labor Histories

Family Employment

- (CS major) “Well, I've been like, coding since I was seven-ish. Mainly because my dad, he's a programmer, and he taught me back then. Since then, I've been working on it on my own, so it was just a natural choice for me to make.” (171109_004 (CS))
- “I wanted to just be a registered nurse, but my husband's family owns a pediatric office in Arizona. His uncle was like, “Get your masters and come work for us”, and stuff like that. He kind of pushed me” (171108_002)

Labor Histories

Current Employment

- And then like a few weeks ago, they'd give me closing shifts, and that was like 11:15 that they closed, 11:15 AM. So I want to get home to like 1:00, and then prepare myself to go to bed and everything, and prepare myself for the next day at school. I wake up at 5:00, like 5:00 to 6:00 I wake up just to go to school. So, I think that's another one where like my anxiety would get triggered in the beginning of school, like through the first few weeks because they were bad the hours they were giving me, because I only got like four hours of sleep, and I was basically depending on coffee. But then, at some point, the coffee just like started becoming too much that I started getting panic attacks and anxiety. So I had to cut down on the coffee, like not even drink coffee at all. After that, I had to like really talk to my work and tell them I can't be closing anymore, it affected my schoolwork and everything. And then I told them if I have to quit and find another job, I will do it because I told them my school comes first, and they can't be giving me so many hours. Physically working full time, I was studying full time, that's too hard for me, especially because I'm just new to this, so I didn't know how it really works. (171107_0008)



Networks: Who Informs their Decision-Making

Topic	Comment
Career Aspirations	Family plays an important role in influencing the career aspirations of students. Influential high school teachers and counselors and college professors and staff were also mentioned as being influential. Peers also seem to play a positive role in encouraging/inspiring students to transfer and achieve career aspirations.
Major	Family seems to play more of a role in supporting their student's college pursuits and career aspirations rather than influencing what specific major their student pursued.

Networks: Who Informs Career Decision-Making

Family Influence on Career Decision-Making

- Because, again I have nine aunts and uncles, and all my aunts, including my mother, went into the stem field, and then all my uncles went into the computer tech field. My aunts are very progressive. Whenever I have a question about it, I'll ask them. They're fairly young, they're like my age, just 10 years older than me, so they're fairly young, and they'll answer any question I need. (171107_005)
- I think it's mostly my family, I think that they play a huge role of supporting me and stuff like that. But yeah, that's probably where I would get the most inspiration or the most encouragement from, is my family. (171107_0012)

Networks: Who Informs their Decision-Making

Peer Influence on Career Decision-Making

Student: Mainly my friends, because they ... Most of my friends are into the STEM majors. So I guess my friends. I surround myself with people who are sort of similar to me, like engineering or science majors. They're really passionate about achieving those things and I am too, as well. So that really helps me a lot. (171106_010)

Networks: Who Informs their Major Decision-Making

Connecting with different counselors

- Student: Different. Yeah, there was one that was ... so I was also ... I'm in the honors program here, as well. So I met with the Pathways counselor first. I forgot their names. But I met with the Pathways counselor, and she was able to give me a general ... help me figure out my plan at first. And then after that, I met with the honors counselor. As a requirement, also, because I wanted to transfer to UCLA and what not. And she was able to outline what I really needed and what I could skip out on and I would be okay. That, and then that's it ...
And then recently, I met with a counselor just to change majors in the career center. It was very short.

Networks: Who Informs their Major Decision-Making

PCC, Pathways, and Peers Influence on Major

Student: Well, in order to become like I said, a doctor or medical field stuff, the coaches and stuff told me ... including my professors and my friends, told me that if you major in biology, you're in the sciences, especially like biochem, whatever, science related, that will kind of lead you toward your career, such as the medical field things. Or I mean, my friend is also a bio major, so she's also doing ... She would like to become a lawyer. So that's kind of like, pretty similar. But I mean basic GEs-wise, also. You have to take-

Interviewer: And you are doing, you're a biology major because that's the advice that people gave you?

Student: Yeah.

171106_013.docx

Overall Assets & Needs

Assets: Some students are very knowledgeable of resources and take advantage of them via Pathways and PCC. However, others seem to be very unaware of possible resources and where to access them.

Needs: Many students haven't tapped into networks/resources they know would be helpful. Students seem to perceive Pathways as primarily serving transfer and academic goals rather than career goals.