This Inquiry Guide was developed with the intention of guiding CA Community Colleges through the Inquiry stage of guided pathways as defined by the CCCGP Self-Assessment Rubric. Colleges that are new to guided pathways can use this to facilitate early collegewide inquiry and knowledge-building.

### Self-Assessment Outline

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Early Adoption Inquiry Guide

What is the guided pathways framework and what is my role in it?

Early Adoption Inquiry can help to build trust and teams while building knowledge about guided pathways, your college, students, and colleagues. Try using a shared facilitation model in cross-functional teams.

➔ How do guided pathways impact the student’s experience of college?

◆ Probes:
  ● Guided pathways are designed to allow student exploration that is intentional, furthering students toward their goals. How will students have opportunities to explore and change their minds in a guided pathway?
  ● Guided pathways have proven to close achievement gaps. How are equity gaps addressed with the guided pathways framework?
  ● Community college students struggle with a variety of barriers. What barriers that impact students are guided pathways meant to address?
  ● Are guided pathways for all students? Will lifelong learners and skill builders still have a place at the college?

➔ What are guided pathways and how are they different from current career pathways?

◆ Probes:
  ● Guided pathways maps are comprehensive with General Education, basic skills, and non-academic milestones clearly identified. How is this different than current degree and certificate program maps? How do we decide where to include General Education requirements and non-academic milestones? How can we build maps knowing that many students change their majors?
  ● What is the difference between guided pathways, career pathways, and learning communities? How can we build on the work we have done with career pathways and learning communities to design meaningful and supportive guided pathways to career and transfer?
  ● Many career pathway programs are not connected to transfer degree maps. If guided pathways are asking us to map all degrees and certificates to careers while incorporating transfer requirements, will we still be able to meet the needs of skill-builders and job certificate seekers? How can we build guided pathways with these students in mind?
  ● How can we take the best of both career pathways and liberal arts education to design comprehensive pathways for all students seeking degrees, certificates, or transfer?
What is the role of faculty, staff, students, and administration?

◆ Probes:
  ● How can we ensure all functional roles at the college are included in the inquiry, design, and implementation? Are their hierarchical systems in place that limit institutional cross-role dialogue?
  ● Building trust and empathy across functional roles and departments is necessary for open and honest dialogue. How can we build empathy for all roles at the college through knowledge-sharing?
  ● How can administrators create and participate in the dialogue without being an authoritative presence that restricts open dialogue?
  ● We know student voice and experience is central to having difficult discussions about college processes and outcomes. How do we capture student voice in meaningful ways?

What are some best practices and lessons learned?

◆ Probes:
  ● Cross-functional inquiry led by a leadership team from various organizational levels can help set the stage for shared leadership and collective empowerment. How can we further ensure inclusivity across the college?
  ● Many colleges undergoing transformational change efforts spend time building trust and orienting the leadership teams to the goals of the work. How can we engage in meaningful team building to establish trust in discussing institutional barriers to students success? How can shared leadership identify sensitive topics and prepare to facilitate open dialogue about these topics?
  ● Having a shared understanding of your goals and purpose is grounding to group discussions. Will a collective problem statement or goal help focus our discussions? How can this collective vision help to manage the change process?
  ● Horizontal and vertical leaders are needed for transformational change to maintain momentum. Who should lead these change efforts at your college? Who can help to manage the change processes through clear communication and support?
The questions in this inquiry guide were gathered at the Fall 2017 CCCGP Self-Assessment Workshops attended by participants from all 114 CA Community Colleges. Participants were asked to respond to the question: “What do you wonder about guided pathways?”

Scaling in Progress Question Focus:
How does this all come together?

**What are the stages for implementation and how long will it take?**

- **Probes:**
  - CCRC’s integration timeline shows a 5-7 year timeline for inquiry, design, and implementation. Does that seem reasonable for our institution? What are some existing initiatives that we can leverage?
  - Inquiry and design need to happen for elements of guided pathways, but before inquiry focused on specific elements of guided pathways occurs institutions should understand the guided pathways framework and why it is shown to increase student success. Where should the inquiry start for your institution? Is there a general understanding of the guided pathways framework at your college? If not, where are their opportunities for institutional learning and engagement with the research?
  - Many colleges start the design process with developing inclusive decision-making structures and embarking on all college mapping of meta-majors to student end goals. What is your institution’s starting point and where can you find energy and momentum in designing elements of the guided pathways framework?

**How will we get more integration, communication and planning to happen across committees, programs, and constituent groups?**

- **Probes:**
  - How inclusive are decision-making structures now? Can you identify gaps in the current communication loop that may help bridge relevant roles? Can you identify gaps where area experts should be included but currently are not?
  - Do you have a college committee that brings in representatives from all constituent groups? Are there ways to build from this committee to broaden the voices to include cross-functional roles within these groups?
  - Are their barriers to attending meetings for specific constituent groups? What are some ways to remedy this issue?
  - Do you have a college-wide newsletter or communication system that you can leverage to provide regular updates on the guided pathways work?
How will Guided Pathways impact me, my role, and my program?

- **Probes:**
  - In a guided pathways college, everyone is responsible for student success and equity as defined by your local disproportionate impact studies. What is your role at the college and how do you help students succeed in reaching their goals?
  
  - What department, program, or service are you affiliated with and how does your program serve students? Where do you see natural opportunities to collaborate with other programs or service areas to provide students with a more supportive experience? What do you imagine that collaboration looks like from the student, faculty, and staff perspectives?
  
  - Are there resources on campus that you often refer students to? Can you imagine a way to collaborate with those resources to provide a more seamless support network for students?

How can we learn from our peers while building a framework that works for our institution?

- **Probes:**
  - Every college embarks on the transformational change of guided pathways in a slightly different way. What element of the guided pathways framework do you feel your college is most ready to tackle? How have other colleges approached this element? What can you take from that and apply at your college?
  
  - Cross-functional inquiry and inclusive decision-making have proven critical to success of guided pathways redesign. Can you identify fundamental values at your college that will help to stabilize these teams?
  
  - Do you have structures in place to document your change process in order to better reflect on your own lessons learned in this work? How can you build that into your guided pathways design?
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Full Scale Inquiry Questions:

How do we get started?

➔ How do we dedicate time to guided pathways given existing workload and staffing limitations?
  ◆ Probes:
  ● Do you have existing committees that are integral to guided pathways work? Can you plan ways for these groups to include guided pathways inquiry into their work where it aligns with their goal to increase student success? Can you build communication and collaboration structures to include the inquiry of these committees into your guided pathways inquiry and design work?

  ● How can you work to ensure all functional roles are provided the opportunity to participate and share their expertise? How can you budget release time for faculty leaders? How can you provide staff and administrators time to participate in the work?

  ● Do you have upcoming Flex Days or college hours that could be dedicated to guided pathways inquiry and design work?

➔ How do we effectively engage in meaningful and productive inquiry with people concerned about the effectiveness of guided pathways to improve the student experience?
  ◆ Probes:
  ● What are the main points of concern from people skeptical of guided pathways at your college? How can these perspectives help you to ensure that you are considering all angles and moving forward thoughtfully and productively?

  ● Can you identify data points that can provide an opportunity to engage in difficult conversations about the student experience? How can you present that data in a way that the broader college community can engage with it?

  ● How can you structure a forum in which you directly address concerns and engage in productive dialogue, learning from each other? How can the questions and concerns be used as an opportunity to deepen and improve your inquiry and design processes?

  ● Championing change requires balanced perspectives. Where can you leverage the concerns to help ensure that you are remaining open, honest, and inclusive?
Are students included in your guided pathways inquiry? How can you better prepare and empower them to speak about their experiences in open forums?

→ **What data can we use to help motivate people?**
  
  ◆ **Probes:**
  
  ● **Equity Data:** How many and which of your students are reaching their stated goals of degree or certificate attainment or transfer? What percentage of students successfully complete key gatekeeper courses in their major? When you drill down into completion data, do you see any groups disproportionately impacted?

  ● **Basic Skills and AB 705 Data:** How many of your incoming students place into basic skills English, Math, or ESL? How many of those students make it to transfer level? What support systems are in place to identify struggling students?

  ● **SWP Data:** Are students able to find employment in their chosen field after completing their degree or certificate? Are they successful in their employment? Do they see a wage gain?

  ● How many semesters does it take students to complete a degree or transfer at your institution? How many units have students acquired by graduation? Do these units count against their financial aid unit cap? How do students earned units compare to their attempted units? How many units do students earn beyond the requirements of their educational goal?

→ **What are some strategies for incrementally making change and managing the change process with intentionality and empathy?**
  
  ◆ **Probes:**
  
  ● How can you leverage the energy and drive of change agents at your institution? What does your college need to build a culture of change that is safe and open? Can you identify past pain points at the college when implementing change?

  ● Can you find starting points in your college-wide integrated plan that will build off current work and create some early successes?

  ● Do you have effective communication systems with the larger college community? Are there areas in your communication systems that need refining to ensure that everyone in the community is informed and included in collegewide discussions and decision-making?
Shared Facilitation

Shared facilitation helps your team ensure that all voices are heard, everyone is comprehending the discussion, and important takeaways are recorded.

1. Facilitator
   - Manage agenda and time
   - Observe
   - Listen
   - Ask questions

2. Level Setter
   - Invite quieter voices to participate
   - Ensure dominant voices allow other voices to be heard

3. Translator
   - Check for comprehension
   - Make sure everyone at the table understands
   - Ask clarifying questions when necessary

4. Closer
   - Record main takeaways
   - Note clear next steps
   - Share notes from the discussion
Cross-functional Inquiry
Tips to help you facilitate productive discussions

**Take inventory**
- Who do you have at the table?
- Who are you missing?
- What constituent groups or roles are not represented?

**Share facilitation**
Ask for volunteers to help facilitate. Assign volunteers roles:
1. **Translator**: Checks for comprehension
2. **Level setter**: Ensures all voices are heard
3. **Closer**: Records main takeaways

**Discuss in groups**
- Identify inquiry questions that meet the group where they are
- Focus on one or two key points of inquiry--dive deep, hear all voices
- Report out to larger group
A Guide to Leading an Inquiry Session

1. Ice Breaker
   Consider starting your inquiry session out with an ice breaker even if everyone knows each other. Ice breakers can help the group get to know one another informally.

2. Set goals
   Establish some confidence in your inquiry session by setting some clear goals: What do you want to learn, discover, or brainstorm together?

3. Cross-functional team check
   Who is in the room? Make note of who you have and who is missing. This will help you to gather input from missing groups later and identify where their voice is really necessary.

4. Establish roles
   Establishing new roles for the group focused on ensuring productive discussion, can help to make your discussion more inclusive. Roles can include translator, level setter, and closer.

5. Brain dump
   As a group, jot down one list of what you already know about the set goals and one list about what you want to learn.

6. Start the inquiry
   Using the inquiry questions from the "Questions From the Field" or those tailored to your institution, engage in small group discussion.

7. Share the takeaways
   Share out to the larger group. Synthesize major takeaways from the group inquiry.

8. Maintain your momentum
   Keep your inquiry alive by planning where you go next. What are some follow-up questions? Where might you need more information or data to keep moving forward?

9. Engage stakeholders
   Engage the larger community by sharing your inquiry processes, topics discussed, and major takeaways. Give constituent groups opportunities to provide input.