Speaker: John Fink

Topic: Guided Pathways Case Study

Fink: This was a case study profiling Lee College and one of their K 12 partners, Goose Creek ISD near the Houston area, and we profiled this because when we were studying guided pathways, you know, we saw colleges like Lee College, that we're doing whole college guided pathways reform, and not leaving the dual credit students out of that, and expecting to do the same thing for those students.

Like we're going to provide advising to those students. We're going to talk with each of them at key milestones to help them explore programs and develop their plans. And it really wasn't possible without a strong partnership with their school district and committed folks at the sort of principal and you know district level.

They invested in shared advising positions, so kind of 50-50 split of the advisor pay, and they were located in the high schools and helped both to recruit and get the word out about dual credit, but also meet with and help students plan their courses, and they really built on those successes over the years and started doing things like including dual credit courses into the default ninth to 12th grade course sequence for students, especially those in CTE programs of study.

In this partnership, in particular, I think more than 40% of their dual credit students were re-enrolling at the college after high school, and these it was really focused on students who might not otherwise go to any college, and and this was a really strong example of how guided pathways can help to improve dual enrollment and dual credit programs, expand access, and connect students to high opportunity pathways after high school.

Speaker: Davis Jenkins

Topic: Faculty and Teaching at South Puget Sound Community College

Jenkins: Community college students spend most of their time in classrooms. Most of them don't, you know, some join clubs and athletics and the like, but most students don't have time for that. The engagement is in the classroom with the faculty and that's why they're there.

What really distinguished South Puget Sound is that the whole guided pathways reform was led by faculty, and actually the initial impetus came out of their basic skills faculty, their adult basic education. And so it was the faculty who led the division of programs into, you know, academic and career communities. It was the faculty who helped get rid of prerequisite remediation and have contextualized supported education.

And it was the faculty who looked at a lot of prerequisite, not just developmental but college-level courses, that really didn't make sense. But more importantly, they really attacked from the start, in this broader sort of structural framework of these learning communities, students are helped to get on a plan.

The programs are much better defined. But as a central piece of this, built across programs, not just in math and English or science or some department that's doing innovative work, but across their programs,a systematic approach, faculty-led approach to improving instruction. And they have data at the program, class, and section level that everyone sees on the performance of students.

Speaker: Davis Jenkins

Topic: Experiential Learning at Western Technical College

Jenkins: One college that I found particularly inspiring is Western Technical College in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where they started about a decade ago doing community-based learning with an effort to try to connect it to students' field of interest, whether it was a technical program or more of a liberal arts and sciences program.

In 2017, they began to focus more on work-based learning, how to do that across, not just in the technical fields where it already was. And they have come out of that with a sort of a rubric of the kinds of experiences that students have.

Start very exploratory, starting to talk to people in a field that you might be interested in. Then a second one might be going out and doing interviews and the like.

And then a third one might be, would be, you know, something much more in depth, a work-based experience or a community learning experience where you're really doing things like with a CBO or you're with an internship. And they have systematically built this, again as a learning experience, a teaching experience, in a a small technical college with very limited resources across the curriculum.

Speaker: Hana Lahr

Topic: Educational Planning at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College

Lahr: One college that has done educational planning really well is Southwest Technical College in Wisconsin. They really redesigned this whole process a couple years ago, starting in 2023, where they redid the onboarding process with a focus on helping students explore careers,explore different programs of study with a survey that was then facilitated by conversations with someone at the college to help students,you know, think about what does this mean in terms of choosing a program.

So they had these conversations with students and then students were helped to build an education. You know, their sequence, their timeline for completion. But then alongside that they also help students build a financial plan as well. So looking at what are students' costs in addition, their college costs but also their out-of-college costs for rent and groceries and transportation and things like that.

And then they help students kind of determine what is their gap every you know, every semester, every year. And then the college actually stepped in with scholarship funds and funds that the college had available to help students actually fill that gap.

And the really important thing is that these plans are updated over time as well. And this is an important point about educational planning in general is that we can help students make an initial plan, but everyone's plan changed. My plan changed. Everyone's plans changed.