

# RUSTLERS RESEARCH

GWC OFFICE OF RESEARCH, PLANNING, AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

SPRING 2018

BUSINESS 201-206

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*Dear GWC colleagues,*

Welcome back to the spring semester! We hope that you are coming back refreshed, renewed, and ready to make positive differences in our students' lives. Since our last newsletter, I am happy to announce that we welcomed our new equity research analyst, Daniel Galvan, to the team. Daniel came to us from the University of Southern California and has been working hard on several equity research projects, including an in-depth focus on student experiences at Golden West College. The research was supported by GWC's executive team and members of GWC's "Leading From the Middle Academy" team. We've prepared a summary of the findings on the second page of this newsletter for your reading enjoyment.

Speaking of making positive differences in our students' lives, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) has recently allocated \$150 million dollars to fund Guided Pathways at all 114 community colleges. So what is Guided Pathways, and why do we need it?

Let's start off with the need. The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, educating more than 2.1 million students at 114 community colleges. While that is an impressive number of students we are serving, many students leave our institutions without attaining a degree or transfer outcome. Data from CCCCCO shows that, after six years, only 48% of students who intend to graduate and transfer actually do. Of course, we want to recognize the knowledge and skills that students acquired from attending our fine institutions, but we also cannot ignore the fact that we can and should do better. Enter Guided Pathways.

The Guided Pathways framework provides students with a set of clear course-taking patterns that promote better enrollment decisions and prepares students for future success. It also integrates support services in ways that make it easier for students to get the help they need during every step of their community college experience. (Fig. 1 Four pillars of Guided Pathways)

Although this may seem like yet another initiative coming from the state Chancellor's Office, Golden West College has already done a lot of the heavy lifting. For example, our "CSU in 2" course patterns provide clear pathways for students to transfer within two years, we have implemented multiple measures to increase the number of students ready for college-level coursework, and we have rolled out Civitas to identify students in need of intervention so that they can stay on their educational path. With that said, Golden West College is definitely ready to take on Guided Pathways and our success is dependent on all of us. I look forward to having more conversations with you on how we all can play a role in supporting student success.

*Kay V. Nguyen*

Dean of Institutional Effectiveness

## Four Pillars of Guided Pathways



Create clear curricular pathways to employment and further education.



Help students choose and enter their pathway.



Help students stay on their path.



Ensure that learning is happening with intentional outcomes.

Fig. 1 Four Pillars of Guided Pathways



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# Fall 2017 GWC Student Voices Focus Groups & Surveys Results

During the Fall 2017 semester a team of classified staff and managers, including members of the ORPIE office, conducted a yearlong campus project as part of the Research and Planning Group's Leading from the Middle (LFM) Academy. The GWC LFM Team used the opportunity to conduct a series of student focus groups and surveys to learn more about students' overall experiences at Golden West College, and specifically about their satisfaction accessing and utilizing student services on campus. This mixed methods study included interviews with managers and staff from various support service offices, six student focus groups with 40 students from various backgrounds, and two follow-up surveys that were sent to all GWC students to learn about their experiences. A total of 320 students responded to the surveys.



Some of the key findings from this study include:

- Students overwhelmingly feel welcomed at GWC and appreciate the genuine and caring faculty and staff on campus, as well as specific efforts to make them feel at home, such as the "GWC Welcomes You" signs throughout campus.
- Students generally feel engaged through involvement in clubs and campus activities, and also through the use of the GWC App, although there is room to increase student engagement further.
- Students appreciate when faculty and staff take the time to explain the resources that are available and where to find them, and they noted there are several particularly helpful faculty and staff who make an extra effort to help them.
- Students mentioned that the consistency of customer service could be improved on campus, as well as a need for additional outreach efforts to make them more aware of available services.
- Students also noted that signage and lighting across campus could be improved, as it's not always easy for them to navigate campus and it can be very dark in the evenings.

The LFM Team has shared detailed findings from the focus groups and surveys with the GWC Executive Team and Student Services Deans and managers, and the team will support the various student services offices with finding ways to further enhance students' experiences at Golden West College.

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## Nuventive TracDat is now Nuventive Improve!

### *New name, same great features !*

GWC's outcomes assessment system, TracDat, has been renamed to Improve. Improve will continue to provide transparency in sharing of outcomes assessment data. The enhancements to the system will help system administrators in creating more robust reports, which are used in Program Review to increase student success at the course, program, and institutional levels. Aside from the new logo and name, **the appearance and function of the system remain the same.** The web address for Improve is the same as before, <https://goldenwestcollege.tracdat.com>. Visit our website for more information on outcomes assessments, student learning outcomes and Improve at [research.gwchb.net](http://research.gwchb.net).

Improve is the preferred Outcomes Assessment reporting tool at GWC. We are working to fully transition from the traditional paper, 5-Step Model form, to the online system.

**Training and technical support** for Improve are provided by the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. Please contact Uyen Tran if you have any questions or to schedule a training.

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