Inspire

Engage Students from the Start by "Lighting the Fire" for Learning

Hana Lahr

Inspire happens when students are excited about and engaged in what they are learning, inside and outside of the classroom.

Remember your favorite course in college?

How would you describe it to someone?

What made it so memorable?

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Inspire in the Context of Guided Pathways

Pillar 2 of the guided pathways framework focuses on onboarding students into a **program of study** (not just college generally).

Getting students excited about and engaged in what they are learning is key to successful program onboarding, <u>which is key to retaining students and helping them complete their program</u>.

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Inspire courses are exciting and engaging because they…

- Facilitate students' exploration of interests
- Provide active learning experiences relevant to career goals
- Build a community of learners consisting of other students, faculty, and practitioners in a field of interest
- Help students develop a sense of self-efficacy, potential, and the confidence to tackle future coursework

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Inspire Courses: Four Issues

Course content

Pedagogy

Scheduling

Advising

Why *Inspire* Matters

An *Inspiring* Goal:

Every student will take at least one well-taught, college-level course on a topic that interests them in their first term.

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What courses are students in our programs taking in their first term?

General Studies (7606) (*N* = 316 students)

Rank	Course Title	Course ID	# of program students who took the course	% of program students who took the course
1	English Composition I	ENGL 101	141	44.6%
2	Effective Speaking	COMM 101	83	26.3%
3	General Psychology	PSYC 101	55	17.4%
4	College Algebra	MATH 103	38	12.0%
5	Intro to Software for Business	CIS 105	37	11.7%
6	Critical Connections: Rdg/Wrtg	ENGL 057	36	11.4%
7	College Success	FS 100	34	10.8%
8	Intro to College Experience	FS 102	31	9.8%
9	Healthful Living	HLTH 101	26	8.2%
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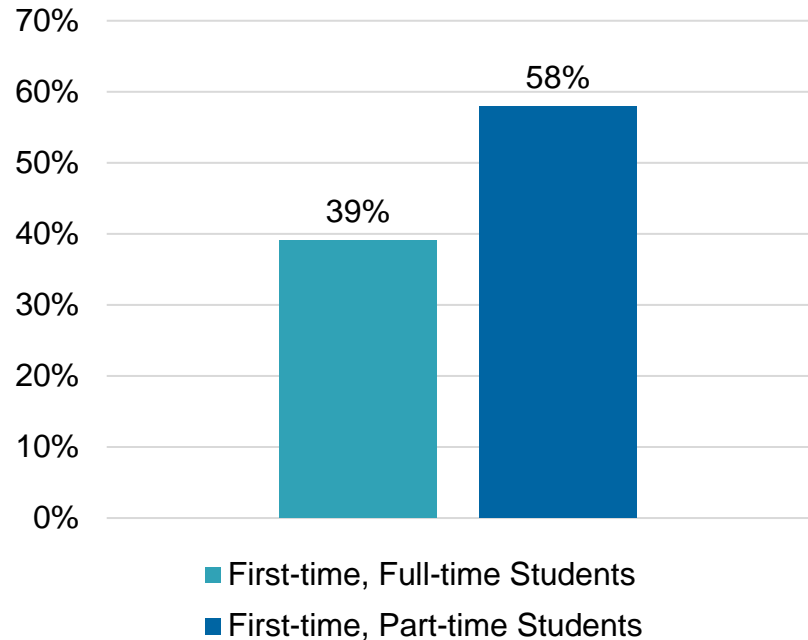| Rank	Course Title	Course ID	# of program students who took the course	% of program students who took the course
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Inspire **is an onboarding and retention strategy.** Inspiring experiences that get students excited about what they are learning give students a powerful motivation to stay enrolled.

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Putting *Inspire* into Practice

….at the lecture, assignment, course, and program-level

Teaching that actively engages students in learning on topics of interest is a powerful motivator and equalizer

New students are more likely to persist and thrive in challenging programs like STEM if they can **take courses in their first term that engage them with course material on topics of interest** through discussions, problem-solving, case studies, role plays, and other "active learning" activities. The benefits for students with poor previous education and low social capital are especially strong.

On My Own

The Challenge and Promise of Building Equitable STEM Transfer Pathways

XUELI WANG
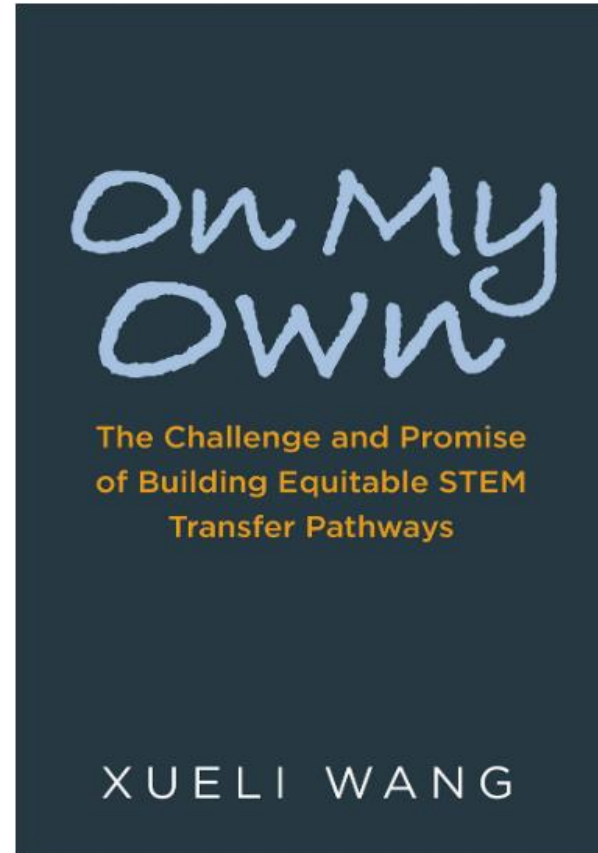
What are your ideas for how you could *Inspire* students?

Principle 1:

Link course content to students' lives.

Helping students make connections between their own lives and goals and what they are learning in their courses can promote program engagement and retention.

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Principle 2:

Link course content to programs and careers.

Professors can light students' fire for learning by connecting students' interests and aspirations to academic programs and career goals.

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Principle 3:

Invest in structures that give faculty the time and resources to deliver *Inspire* courses.

Administrators, advisors, and staff play a role in "lighting the fire" through creating the structural and cultural conditions to support inspiring teaching and learning.

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Findings from CCRC's Evaluation of the AACC Pathways Project

Innovating at Scale

Guided P
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Hana Lahr |

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RESEARCH BRIEF

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Engaging the College Community in Guided Pathways Reforms

Advice From Project Leaders at AACC Pathways Colleges

By Hana Lahr

Implementing guided pathways to improve the college experience for all students, not just selected groups, requires new ways of thinking about leading large-scale reform efforts at community colleges. Colleges that have fully embraced the guided pathways model approach the associated reforms not as a set of discrete interventions targeted at particular groups of students or one aspect of the student experience, but as a framework and a set of principles for redesigning practices across the college that enrich the entire student experience—from onboarding to completion—in and beyond the classroom.

This attention to the change management process and to the need for faculty, staff, and administrators to shift their mindsets to embrace whole-college reforms is as important as the specific implementation practices that are undertaken. But how do college leaders help people within the institution make these mindset shifts? What follows in this brief is advice from project leaders—including college presidents, senior administrators, faculty, and staff—who were involved in planning, overseeing, or coordinating guided pathways reforms at the 30 colleges that participated in the AACC Pathways Project. The colleges joined this national initiative in 2016 and have since sought to transform their institutions using the guided pathways model. We interviewed the project leaders at all 30 colleges in spring and summer of 2022—more than six years after the colleges launched their guided pathways efforts—to learn what has worked best for them in building a college-wide commitment to adopting whole-college student success reforms at scale.

Their advice fell into two categories: (1) how to facilitate commitment to and engagement in implementing whole-college reforms at the start of the work and (2) how to sustain momentum in the work over several years. Much of this advice reaffirms what CCRC learned through interviews with eight of the colleges in fall 2018—two years into the AACC Pathways Project—about how leaders were managing the guided pathways reforms at their colleges (Jenkins et al., 2019). Four years later, college leaders involved in guided pathways, including some

Guided Pathways Change Management Advice From College Reform Leaders

1. Initiate a sense of urgency around how the college has fallen short of helping students achieve their goals.
2. Keep the focus on students, especially those from underserved populations.
3. Listen to students' perspectives and get their input on proposed reforms.
4. Give faculty an integral role in the planning and implementation work.
5. Develop a communications strategy and share out often about reform plans and progress.
6. Be ready for difficult conversations with faculty and staff.
7. Aim for stable presidential and project leadership.
8. Develop and support guided pathways leaders across the institution.
9. Establish cross-functional teams that include academic and student affairs staff.
10. Be patient and accept that progress is often nonlinear.

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Thanks!

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Bonus Resources

References: Sense of Belonging

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