



Serving 58 Community Colleges



## NC Guided Pathways to Success (NC GPS) Network

### College Application for Cohort I: 2018-2019

(Revised November 30, 2017)

**Submission Deadline: January 10, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.**

#### I. Overview

For more than 50 years, North Carolina's community colleges have consistently embraced our mission to help individuals gain access to credentials that lead to gainful employment and further education. Our graduates demonstrate the capacity to learn and think critically, to deploy technical and professional skills, and to leverage knowledge and expertise that prepare them to obtain meaningful work, achieve economic mobility, and become active and informed citizens. Historically NC community colleges have served many students well and have contributed much to the economic and cultural fabric of our communities and our state. Now we are called to help even greater numbers of North Carolinians complete post-secondary credentials. Amid multiple challenges and competing demands, our colleges are now charged with leveraging resources and redesigning our institutions to assist more of our students—including new populations—with completion of credentials.

Our mission has never been more important to the individuals and the communities we serve. Indeed, nationally and state-wide, the urgency of workforce demands as well as disparities in economic opportunities for many Americans have led two- and four-year colleges to examine student outcomes and determine how best to redesign for student success. For nearly a decade, practitioners and researchers have been studying these challenges and experimenting with an array of success strategies, including those developed by Achieving the Dream and Completion by Design. These important initial efforts have continued to evolve, resulting in the [Guided Pathways](#) framework. Led by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and other national partners, the Guided Pathways model of comprehensive, integrated, and adaptive [practices](#) offers the most promising approach to helping greater numbers of community college students attain credentials. Notably, our own Stanly Community College was selected to participate in the first AACC Pathways Project, joining the student success work of many colleges in NCCCS through SuccessNC, Completion by Design, the Student Success Learning Institute, and multiple state improvement efforts.

In this landscape—the national [Student Success Center Network](#) (SSCN) was established to help state systems and associations develop the capacity to implement these radical changes while informing researchers and practitioners of advances as the work progresses at colleges and within states. In 2016, the grant-funded NC Student Success Center joined the SSCN to serve as a resource hub for shared learning, technical assistance, idea generation, and policy advocacy for all 58 colleges in the NC Community College System. The Center's goals include assisting colleges with advancing, scaling, and sustaining student success, learning, and completion with equitable outcomes for underserved and low-income students.

In its first year, the Center collaborated with multiple state-level teams; met with faculty, staff, student, and leadership groups; and conducted surveys, visited colleges, and hosted workshops. These engagement activities and the feedback of NCCCS colleagues and students, along with research and practice from the 14-state Student Success Center Network and other state and national partners, helped inform the Center's [NC GPS Plan 2018-2019](#).

The NC GPS Plan will help leverage student success innovations currently underway at many colleges and will provide much-needed coherence, alignment, and direction for the System. NC GPS will also provide a way for colleges and employees across the System to work collaboratively as a community of practice, sharing their insights, talents, and commitment to equitable outcomes in student learning, success, and completion of credentials.

The first cohort will receive two years of targeted support, technical assistance, and professional and organizational development, including

- Four NC Guided Pathways to Success Institutes (1½ days each) and online learning opportunities;
- Development of an action plan and interim reports;
- NC GPS coaches/consultants (state and national experts) to assist with strategies and implementation;
- Support for a college networked improvement community (NIC); and
- Extensive training and all travel costs for the NIC Facilitator at each college.

Institute and NIC training costs (consultants, meals/breaks, and materials) will be provided by the NC Student Success Center. Colleges will be responsible for any team members' additional expenses to participate in the four institutes including mileage, some meals, and lodging (if necessary.) *Pending available funds, the Center will attempt to cover as many of these costs as possible. We will work to assist colleges with additional funding if needed.*

Additional cohorts of colleges will be added in 2019, pending continued funding for the NC Student Success Center. Every effort will be made to make these services available to subsequent cohorts of colleges that may wish to participate in 2019 and 2020.

## II. College Capacities for Implementation of NC Guided Pathways to Success

Community colleges with [equitable gains in student persistence, learning, and completion](#) through Guided Pathways have achieved these outcomes through thoughtful planning and resource allocation to implement comprehensive, integrated redesigns of program maps, student engagement and supports, career planning and advising, and improved student learning outcomes.

Institutions with the greatest likelihood of success are prepared to undertake the challenges and opportunities of implementing NC Guided Pathways to Success practices effectively and at scale. Preparation for this important work is demonstrated by

1. College leadership commitment to and capacity for managing and sustaining comprehensive, transformational change;
2. Broad and authentic engagement of college faculty and staff from all divisions (including Curriculum, Workforce CE/Career Credit, Basic Skills, and others) in the design, implementation, evaluation, and ongoing improvement of career planning, program maps, advising and student support services, credit and career credit alignment, and student learning outcomes;
3. Institutional will and capacity to use data and evidence to design academic and career pathways, monitor student progress, structure student supports, provide appropriate academic and non-academic interventions, and implement needed improvements over time;
4. Commitment to developing a culture of continuous inquiry, learning, and improvement with targeted professional and organizational development; and
5. Allocation of resources—human, fiscal, and time—to successfully implement Guided Pathways at scale college-wide, a process that will evolve over the course of five or more years.

To help ensure the success of participating colleges, the selected institutions will demonstrate these capacities (or the willingness to develop them) by responding to the questions on pages 4-5.

### III. Cohort Colleges Implementation Support

To assist colleges with advancing and sustaining effective change for student success, cohort colleges will receive customized support and resources to implement [NC GPS Essential Practices](#) and to develop a culture of continuous inquiry, learning, and improvement, including:

1. Program mapping and alignment (Curriculum/Credit and Workforce CE/Career Credit);
2. Advising and student support redesign;
3. Equitable outcomes for underserved (minority, low-income) students;
4. Effective transfer practices and partnerships;
5. Data and research capacity across the institution;
6. Faculty development and professional learning;
7. Financial support for students and colleges;
8. Demonstrated student learning outcomes; and
9. Use improvement science strategies to create a networked learning community.

Examples of NC GPS Essential Practices at NCCCS colleges are available [here](#). Improvement science and networked learning communities are described [here](#).

### IV. Expected Benefits to Cohort Colleges

Nationally, colleges that have implemented comprehensive Guided Pathways innovations have demonstrated improvements in many measures of student success. Read more about these gains [here](#). Colleges that participate in the NC GPS Network may expect the following benefits:

1. Increased number of program credits earned in first year (progress toward credential);
2. Increase completion of gateway English and math in first year (progress toward credential);
3. Improved credential completion rates;
4. Increased student learning outcomes;
5. Greater alignment of program outcomes with local industry and four-year transfer partners;
6. Greater numbers of full-time students enrolled;
7. Increased enrollment (headcount and FTE);
8. Greater efficiencies and cost savings (return on investments) for the college and students; and
9. Improved college-wide capacity to collect, analyze, and apply data, using consistent metrics and reporting.

### V. NC GPS Plan Cohort College Activities

Cohort colleges will participate [in a coaching and practitioner-facilitator model](#) for targeted technical assistance, professional development, change management, and organizational development in a networked improvement community (NIC) with a series of institutes, online learning and communication opportunities, and related support during 2018-2019.

1. Each college will organize a NC GPS Team with **6-10 members\***, including, but not limited to,

#### **Required participants:**

- a. **College President**, who will direct and provide oversight of the project with support from a senior administrator, preferably the Chief Academic Officer;
- b. **Chief Academic Officer**, who will serve as the primary college contact for the project;
- c. **Faculty member** ([at least one](#) full-time instructor); and
- d. **Minority Male Success Initiative Coordinator** (or leader whose role includes diversity/inclusion)

**Strongly encouraged participants:**

- e. **Workforce Continuing Education/Career & College Ready/Basic Skills representative;**
- f. **Student Development/Student Affairs representative;**
- g. **Advising Center liaison (or person with primary advising responsibilities);**
- h. **Institutional Research/Institutional Effectiveness representative; and/or**
- i. **Instructional or student services staff member** involved in student success efforts.

*\*One team member will serve as the **NIC Facilitator** for the college, a position that may involve up to 8 hours per week in on-campus facilitation and off-campus and online training and preparation. The NIC Facilitator should demonstrate the capacity for visionary/design thinking, innovative solutions, and collaboration with diverse groups.*

2. College teams will participate in NC GPS Institutes (1½ days each) as follows:

<b>Institute I</b>	<b>Mapping pathways to student end goals</b>	<b>May 29-30, 2018</b>
<b>Institute II</b>	<b>Helping students choose and enter a pathway</b>	<b>November 2018</b>
<b>Institute III</b>	<b>Keeping students on a pathway</b>	<b>March (or May) 2019</b>
<b>Institute IV</b>	<b>Ensuring students are learning</b>	<b>October 2019</b>

- 3. **Coaches (state and national experts) and NIC Facilitators** will meet with college teams during the institutes and will serve as consultants throughout the cohort timeline.
- 4. The **NIC Facilitator** from each college team will receive preparatory and ongoing training in the principles of improvement science, networked improvement communities (NICs), and Guided Pathways Essential Practices.
- 5. **College teams and NIC facilitators** will collaborate in a **cross-college NIC** with access to shared resources and tools for co-learning and continuous improvement across the cohort.

## VI. Application Questions

Please provide a written response to the six questions below in 10 pages or less (total for all questions). Answers should be complete and concise with specific examples. A one-paragraph response for each will be sufficient.

For a copy of the application in Word format, please send a request by email to [newtonr@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:newtonr@nccommunitycolleges.edu).

- 1. What is your vision of student success at your institution? What do you hope to achieve through participation in the NC Guided Pathways to Success Network?
- 2. What student success practices have you already accomplished, what are you best prepared to tackle, and what presents the biggest challenge? Why is this the right time for your college to implement NC Guided Pathways to Success?
- 3. Briefly describe the college's most recent Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) or your Strategic Plan and how it supports learning, success, and completion with equitable outcomes for low-income and underserved students.

4. Provide an example of how your college used disaggregated student outcome data (including by race, gender, and/or socioeconomic status) to make changes to policy and/or practice in instruction or in student support services. Were equity gaps reduced because of these changes? What equity gaps have you targeted and what are your equity goals for your college? If applicable, briefly describe the college's Minority Male Success Initiative (MMSI) 2017-2018 Plan of Action and summarize your 2016-2017 outcomes. How might your current MMSI goals align with the NC GPS project? For more insight into the system data report, click [here](#).
5. Briefly describe your current advising model and how you provide support for advisors. What changes do you think will help improve your students' advising experiences?
6. Describe how your institution engages with students to understand their experiences in curricular, extra-curricular, and co-curricular learning.

## VII. NC GPS Team Member

Please list the team members from your college as described below. Also, please identify which of these individuals will serve as the college's NIC Facilitator.

### **Required participants:**

College President \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Academic Officer (or other senior administrator) \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Minority Male Success Initiative Coordinator (or diversity officer) \_\_\_\_\_

### **6 additional participants from these groups (strongly encouraged):**

- Workforce Continuing Education/Career & College Ready/Basic Skills representative
- Student Development/Student Affairs representative
- Advising Center liaison (or person with primary advising responsibilities)
- Institutional Research/Institutional Effectiveness representative
- Other instructional or student services staff member

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position/department \_\_\_\_\_

**Which person listed above will serve as NIC Facilitator?** \_\_\_\_\_

## VIII. College Participation Agreement

YES, I understand and agree that participation in the NC Guided Pathways to Success Network involves specific and serious commitments, as outlined below. On behalf of [**insert name of institution**], I affirm our decision to abide by these commitments:

1. Designate the President to oversee the work with support from a high-level cabinet officer (preferably the Chief Academic Officer), who will also serve as the primary institutional contact person for work related to the project.
2. Undertake institution-wide change involving guided pathways at scale. Pathway design and implementation will involve curriculum alignment and program mapping from high school, basic skills, and workforce/career credit to technical and university transfer programs and the labor market; support for developmental education as an accelerated and contextualized onramp to programs of study; ongoing advising and monitoring of student progress; comprehensive and integrated academic and non-academic student support services; integrated approaches to improved learning in contextual, work-based, and applied outcomes; and alignment of co-curricular learning opportunities.
3. Develop a five-year plan for college-wide engagement in pathway design and implementation and to providing needed and timely professional development for faculty, staff, and college leaders.
4. Collect, review, and periodically submit baseline and progress data on standard metrics depicting student connection, progress, learning, and completion. Participating colleges will be asked, as part of the project evaluation, to submit the specified data for three years after the formal end of the project in 2019.
5. Full participation of a designated 6-10-person institutional team throughout each of the four 1½-day project institutes on guided pathway design and implementation. **Participation of the President in institutes is critically important, expected, and required.** Dates for the first institute are confirmed; others are tentatively scheduled as follows:

<b>Institute I</b>	<b>Mapping pathways to student end goals</b>	<b>May 29-30, 2018*</b>
<b>Institute II</b>	<b>Helping students choose and enter a pathway</b>	<b>November 2018</b>
<b>Institute III</b>	<b>Keeping students on a pathway</b>	<b>March (or May) 2019</b>
<b>Institute IV</b>	<b>Ensuring students are learning</b>	<b>October 2019</b>

6. Composition of NC GPS Team membership as described on pages 3-4. Experience demonstrates that a diverse, cross-divisional team that includes faculty and staff is important for effecting meaningful change on campus, and the [active, visible leadership of the President is critical to making comprehensive changes](#) needed to support student success at scale over time. The state of Washington's College Spark change leadership project is described [here](#).
7. Identifying a team member who will serve as the college's Networked Improvement Community (NIC) Facilitator. Essential to providing sharing strategies and implementing tools for continuous inquiry and improvement, the NIC Facilitator will work closely with the President, the NC GPS Team, and all divisions at the college. He or she will be involved in initial training for several months (February – May 2018) and will earn a [master's level certificate in improvement science](#). For at least the first year of the project, the NIC Facilitator's involvement will average 8 hours per week. The NIC Facilitator will also participate in an inter-institutional network for ongoing learning across the cohort.

8. Completion and timely submission of structured planning and preparation activities in advance of each institute; and regular meetings of the NC GPS Team prior to each Institute for review and discussion of the assigned work.
9. Completion during each institute of a college action plan identifying next steps, timelines, and responsibilities for work on designing and implementing NC GPS practices for students. Timely submission of the completed action plan to project staff following the Institute is expected.
10. Sharing of organizational learning and initial outcomes of pathway-related work at the college in informal presentations, webinars, and other opportunities to collaborate and learn across the NC GPS Network.
11. Payment of travel expenses (mileage, some meals, and lodging if needed) for team members to participate in the institutes. The NC Student Success Center will cover all onsite institute expenses for team members, including site rental, consultants, coaching, materials, and meals/breaks. The Center will also pay all travel and training costs for NIC Facilitators for each college, and pending available funds, will cover additional team member expenses if possible.

I further understand that the benefits of the project for the college are the institute learning experiences; development of NICs; coaching and technical assistance; collaborative learning with other colleges engaged in similarly challenging work; and the opportunity to contribute to building capacity for change across the NC Community College System. The ultimate beneficiaries will be our students who progress to completion, employment, and transfer.

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Signature of President [may be electronic]

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Date

**Please submit all application materials via email attachment by January 10, 2018 to Roxanne Newton, NC SSC Executive Director, at [newtonr@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:newtonr@nccommunitycolleges.edu).**

**Selection of cohort colleges will be announced on January 19, 2018.**

**NIC Facilitator training will begin in late February 2018.**