

“CtCC SmartPathways process helps all faculty see their fundamental role in their preparation of students for the world of work.”

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IEBC’s CURRICULUM TO CAREER CHOICES (CtCC) SMARTPATHWAYS

Make Guided Pathways Count

Increase Student Engagement in Their Learning

Faculty Align SLOs with Career-Derived Competencies

IEBC’s Curriculum to Career Choices (CtCC) SMARTPATHWAYS is a **faculty-led process** that assists community colleges in developing and implementing Guided Pathways that ensure their students are college AND career ready. The IEBC-facilitated CtCC SMARTPATHWAYS model supports Guided Pathways with meaningful learning outcomes *aligned with career-based competencies* to help students realize their career aspirations and participate fully in the economy.

Why is CtCC SMARTPATHWAYS needed?

General Education requirements account for anywhere from one-half to three-quarters of courses in Pathways programs, yet the role of general education coursework in supporting Pathways lacks attention. Colleges tend to merely reshuffle general education courses within their Pathways without a clearly defined framework for incorporating the student learning outcomes (SLOs) that support their purpose. Moreover, they pay almost no attention to linking general education SLOs with career expectations within a pathway. While SLOs *should* be the central focus of these efforts, a recent national study by IEBC found that faculty are inconsistent in articulating SLOs and vary in their capacity to develop and use well-crafted SLOs as part of their pedagogy (Horowitz, Phillips, & Yopp, 2016). IEBC’s CtCC SMARTPATHWAYS process supports faculty in their work to thoughtfully engage in how best to consider and integrate career-specific competencies that employers expect into the SLOs of their courses.

How does CtCC SMARTPATHWAYS work?

Step 1 Faculty determination and IEBC analysis of occupation-specific entrance and exit learning expectations

Occupational Information Network (O*NET¹) descriptions of career knowledge, skills and abilities serve as the basis for a facilitated and faculty-driven collaborative process for creating SmartPathways’.

After analyzing and considering regional and national needs, based on national, state, and local economic forecasts, IEBC facilitates selections, in consultation with the institution, of occupations/careers and industries best suited for the Pathways’ development. IEBC facilitators then work closely with the local institutional leaders and team championing the endeavor. This ensures that the teams are supported by their institutions.

¹The Occupational Information Network (O*NET) is the nation’s primary source of occupational information containing information on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. O*NET is being developed by the North Carolina Department of Commerce under a grant from the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration. The data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other relevant employment sources. It is endorsed by virtually every disciplinary, professional, and national educational association.

Step 2 Identification and determination of SLOs' alignment, misalignment, or absence compared with O*NET-based career-specific learning expectations

Faculty meet over the course of a semester, facilitated by IEBC experts in a process adapted to the local educational context, to dive deeply into the development

and alignment of skills, knowledge, and abilities employers expect of students. They then scaffold the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) identified among courses within each pathway to desired program-level outcomes with the goal to identify gaps to achieve alignment with career expectations.

Step 3 Development of strategies for closing the identified gaps

Once gaps are identified, faculty then create detailed plans to address them, ensuring that the alignment goes beyond simple semantic alignment of words on a page, to representing the breadth, depth, and rigor that is actually taught in the classroom. Further, because gaps and misalignments are addressed, many potential obstacles to student success are overcome and students learn what

they need for transfer and career success. Because general education faculty work to include these courses in the alignment process, Pathways programs are able to identify exactly where, when and how students will attain all needed competencies for career success. Student engagement increases because they now understand how their general education coursework supports what they need to know in the workplace and in life.

Who benefits from CtCC SMARTPATHWAYS?

- **Participating faculty** gain the skills needed to develop *and use* contextualized learning outcomes linked to the careers supported by the institution's identified pathways.
- **Institutions** gain a process for designing general education and pathway-specific SLOs that can make their Guided Pathways work career relevant.
- **Students** gain an understanding of the rationale for what they are learning and graduate prepared for the next step in their college and career path with the knowledge, skills, and abilities students *and* employers care about.

What are educators saying about IEBC's CtCC SMARTPATHWAYS?

- ✓ *We could not have done this work without IEBC!*
- ✓ *The work has grown. We now have even more engagement of faculty across all of our Pathways.*
- ✓ *Faculty finally feel that their SLOs matter.*

How do we get started?

Contact IEBC, info@iebcnow.org, to schedule a free consultation about your institution's needs and readiness. To view an introductory webinar go to: <https://vimeo.com/212646197>



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