

# Research Brief #179

August 2018

## **Guided Pathways Institute #4 Redesigning Student Intake and Support: Flowcharting the Student Experience**

Vida M. Manzo, Ph.D., Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D., and Barry C. Gribbons, Ph.D.

At the request of the Guided Pathways Institute, the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness conducted analyses to aid in completing California Guided Pathways Institute #4 Advance Work Exercise: Flowcharting the Student Experience. This exercise focused on analyzing issues within the college that directly affect “first time in college students” (FTIC). The purpose of this exercise was to record each step:

- Step 1- from the student’s first showing interest in your college
- Step 2- through his/her pre-enrollment activities.
- Step 3- into and through the first quarter/semester of classes.
- Step 4- ending in enrollment for the second term (see appendix Figure 1).

Specifically, the homework requested that our institution utilize data results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), to inform the homework #4 exercise. The CCSSE can be utilized as a diagnostic tool; identifying areas in which a college can enhance students’ educational experiences. It can also serve as a monitoring device, documenting and improving institutional effectiveness. The Guided Pathways Institute specifically requested that we review the most recent CCSSE data on the student experience and consider the following questions:

- What are students saying about their intake experience?
- How does what the students are reporting about their intake experience align and not align with the flowchart?
- Where are the gaps within our colleges’ systems and structures?

To answer the above questions the analyses and results will focus primarily on the following outcomes:

- New student registration and First Year Experience (Step 1).
- Orientation and financial aid services (Step 2).
- Academic counseling and faculty office hours (Step 3).
- Transfer credit assistance and career exploration with faculty (Step 4).

### **Method**

Students completed the CCSSE survey during the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the spring term of 2015. In the months prior to the administration of the survey, the Institutional Research team in collaboration with a CCSSE Campus Liaison worked together to effectively select the sample of courses and plan the administering of the surveys.

For all results presented further below, sample size Ns may vary depending on multiple factors. The total count of respondents in an institution's raw data file will differ from the numbers reported in institutional reports due to intentional exclusion of certain surveys in the online reporting system. Reasons for exclusion of respondents from the institutional reports may be due to any one or all of the following reasons:

- The respondent did not indicate whether he or she was enrolled full-time or part-time at the institution.

- The survey is invalid (invalid if a student does not answer any of the 19 sub-items in item 4).
- The respondent reported that their age was under 18.
- The respondent indicated that he/she had taken the survey in a previous class or did not respond to item 3.
- Oversampled respondents are not included in online reports.

The survey included 42 items and students could skip any questions they did not want to answer. For some items, the comparison group for data is the **2015 CCSSE Cohort**, which includes all colleges who participated in the CCSSEE survey in 2015. For certain “special-focus” items, some institutions (including College of the Canyons) opted to partake in adding these extra items to their survey. In cases where the result pertains to these “special-focus” items the comparison group is **2013-2015 Promising Practices Respondents**.

## Results

### Survey Demographics

The overall completion rate was 43% and the within class completion rate was 66%. The targeted number of surveys based on the IPEDs size of College of the Canyons, was 1,200. The adjusted survey count was 845, not including the oversampling of 342 extra students (for a total possible 1,187 student responses).

#### *Step 1: A Student First Shows Interest in College of the Canyons*

For step 1, we assessed the students’ experience with registration and First Year Experience (FYE). The CCSSE data provided results for outcomes relating to Step 1 of the flowchart. Specifically, for what the student experience was in relation to registration and FYE around the time that a student first shows interest in possibly attending College of the Canyons. The CCSSE survey asked students their level of agreement with the following statement: “During the current term at this college, I completed registration before the first class session(s).” Students selected one of the possible response options below:

- Yes; I was registered for all of my courses before the first class sessions.
- Mostly; I was registered for most of my courses before the first class sessions.
- Partly; I was registered for some of my courses before the first class sessions.
- No; I was not registered for any of my courses before the first class sessions.

The results illustrate that the majority of College of the Canyons students within the CCSSE sample (84.9%) registered for classes before the first class sessions. Only 1.9% of these CCSSE College of the Canyons students reported they had NOT registered for ANY of their courses before the first class sessions (see Figure 1).

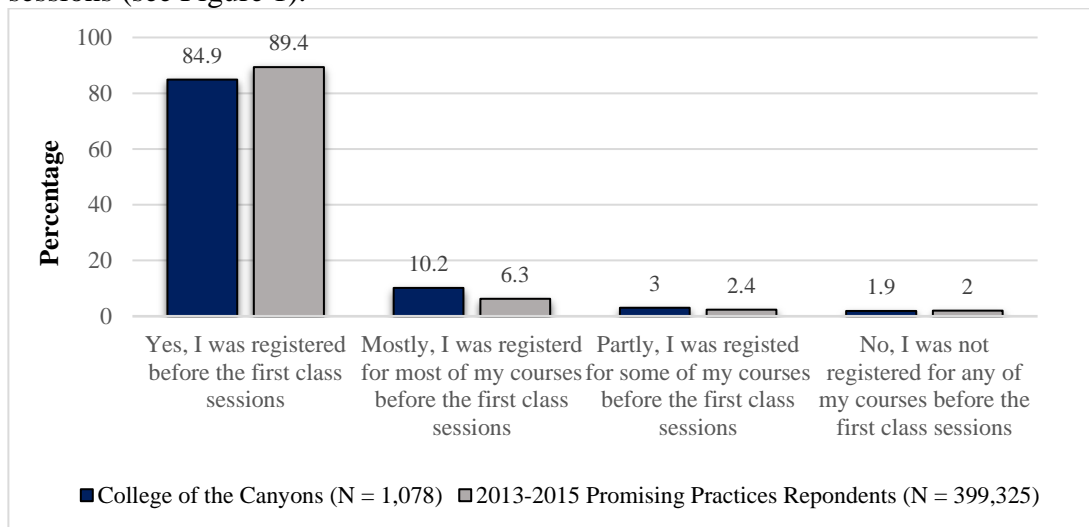


Figure 1 Completion of registration prior to the first class session.

The CCSSE survey asked students their level of agreement with the following statement: “During my first term, I participated in a structured experience for new students (e.g., freshman seminar or FYE).” Students selected one of the possible response options below:

- Yes; in my first term at this college.
- Yes: in my first term and one other term.
- Yes; but not in my first term at this college.
- No; I did not.

The results illustrate that the majority of College of the Canyons students within the CCSSE sample (74.5%) did not participate in a structured experience for new students (see Figure 2). Further, this percentage of College of the Canyons students who did not participate in a structured FYE program is higher than the comparison group of **2013-2015 Promising Practices** respondents (67.1%). The percentage of College of the Canyons students who did participate in an FYE-like experience (18.1%) is lower than the comparison group of 2013-2015 Promising Practices respondent (25.2%) who participated in an FYE-like experience.

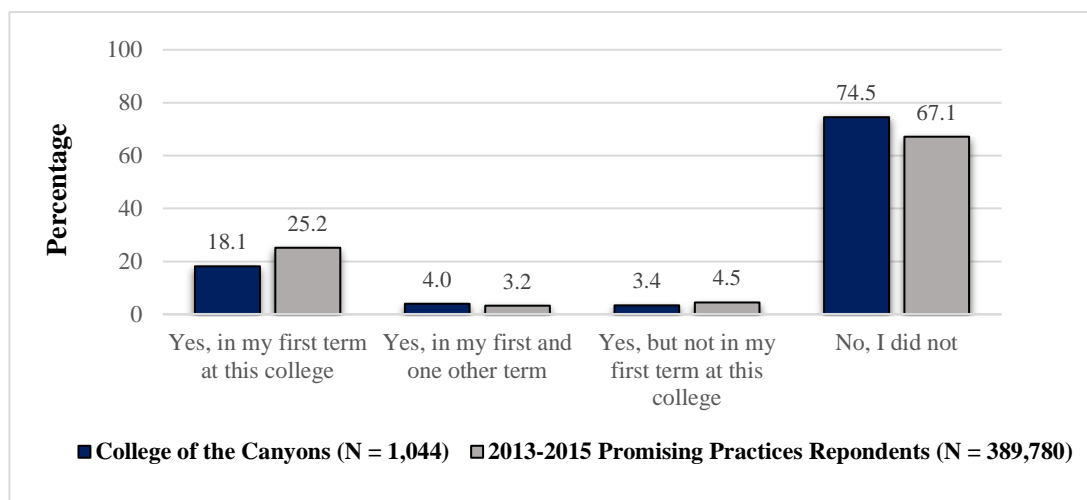


Figure 2 Participation in a structured experience for new students (e.g., freshman seminar or FYE).

### Step 2: Through His/Her/Their Pre-Enrollment Activities

We assessed orientation and financial aid services for step 2. The CCSSE survey asked students their level of agreement with the following statement: “The one response that best describes my experience with orientation when I first came to this college is:”

- I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes.
- I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes.
- I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first term at this college.
- I was not aware of a college orientation.
- I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.

The results illustrate that over half of the students at College of the Canyons (57%) took part in an online orientation while only 12% of students from the 2013-2015 Promising Practices Respondents comparison group took part in an online orientation. Conversely, 43.3% of Promising Practices Respondents took part in an on-campus orientation while only 18% of College of the Canyons students did (see Figure 3).

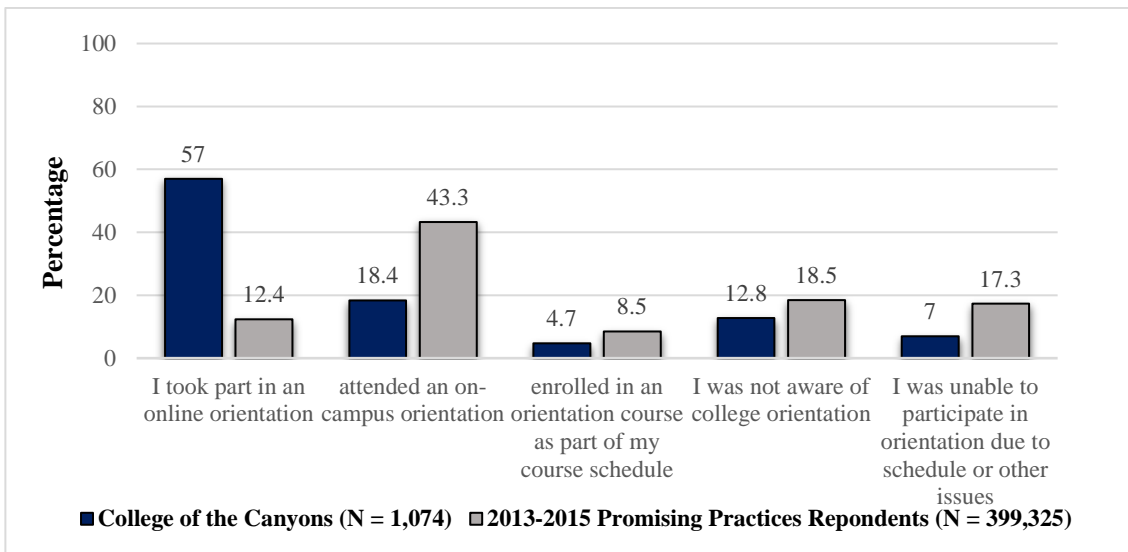


Figure 3 Best description of experience with orientation at this college.

To assess student satisfaction with the financial aid services provided by College of the Canyons the CCSSE survey asked students: “How satisfied are you with your college’s financial aid advising?” The possible responses were:

- N.A.
- Not At All
- Somewhat
- Very

Those students who marked N.A. (n = 280) were excluded from proportion analyses as they did not need or never used financial aid advising. The following proportions on satisfaction are only for those students who utilized financial aid advising. The results illustrate that 41% of students at College of the Canyons who utilized financial aid advising were very satisfied. This was more than the proportion of students within the 2015 CCSSEE cohort who were very satisfied (30.6%) with their institutions’ financial aid advising (see Figure 4).

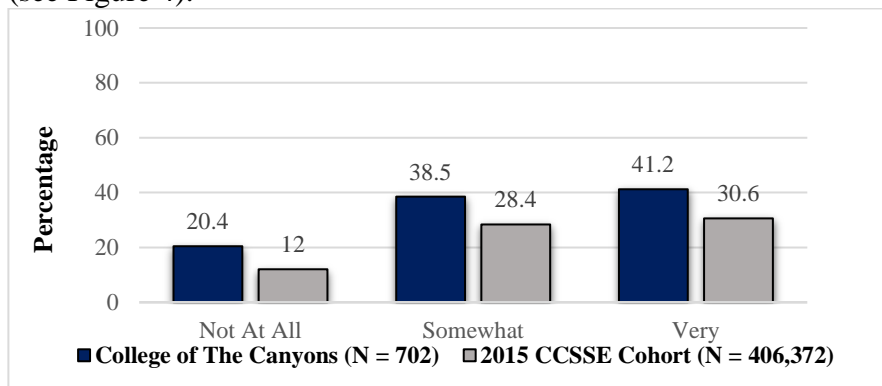


Figure 4 Satisfaction with Financial Aid Advising.

The CCSSE survey asked students: “How often do you use the financial aid advising at your college?” The possible responses were:

- Don’t Know
- Rarely/Never
- Sometimes
- Often

Those students who marked “Don’t Know” (n = 229) were excluded from proportion analyses as they did not know if they had utilized financial aid advising. The results illustrate that 46% of students at College of

the Canyons reported rarely/never using financial aid. This was more than the proportion of students within the 2015 CCSSE cohort (30.6%) who reported never using financial aid advising (see Figure 5).

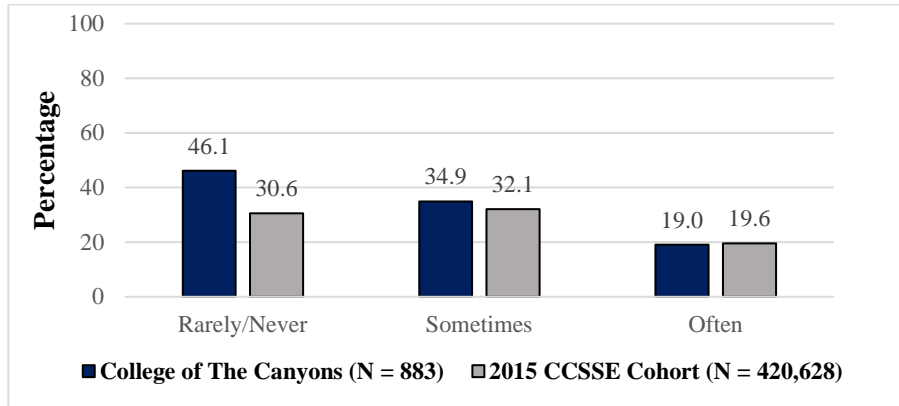


Figure 5 Frequency of utilizing financial aid advising services

### Step 3: Into and Through the First Quarter/Semester of Classes

We assessed the student experience with academic advising and faculty-student interactions for step 3. The CCSSE survey assessed multiple factors relating to academic advising such as the importance, frequency of use, and satisfaction. The CCSSE survey asked students the following questions: “How **important** is academic advising to you at this college? How **often** do you use academic advising at this college? How **satisfied** are you with the academic advising at this college?” The possible responses to each of the questions respectively were as follows:

- Don’t Know/N.A.
- Not At All//Never/Not At All
- Somewhat/Sometimes/Somewhat
- Very/Often/Very

Considered together, the results illustrate that while 62% of students from College of the Canyons feel academic advising is “very important” only 14.2% of students report “often using” academic advising, and only 28.4% of students are “very satisfied” with the academic advising (see Figure 6).

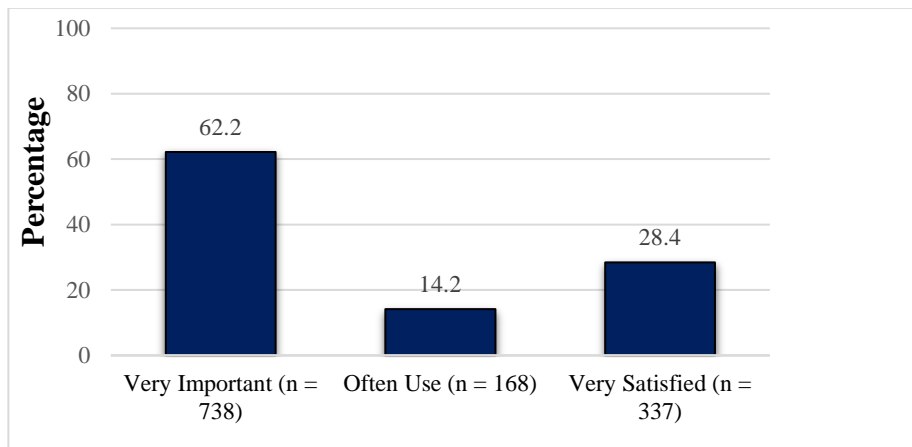


Figure 6 Importance, frequency of use, and satisfaction with academic advising

Due to these findings, we further assessed the relationship between **frequency** of use of academic advising and **satisfaction** with academic advising. The analyses aimed to assess what proportion of students who rarely, sometimes, or often utilize academic advising, find the advising to be not at all, somewhat, or very satisfactory.

Results illustrate that the greatest proportion of students who are “very” satisfied with the advising are among those who utilize it “often”. Conversely, the largest proportion of students who are “not at all” satisfied with advising are among those who utilize it “rarely/never” (see Figure 7). While we cannot test for causal effects this suggests that those who use the academic advising more often tend to come away more satisfied and/or, those who are more satisfied with the advising utilize it more often.

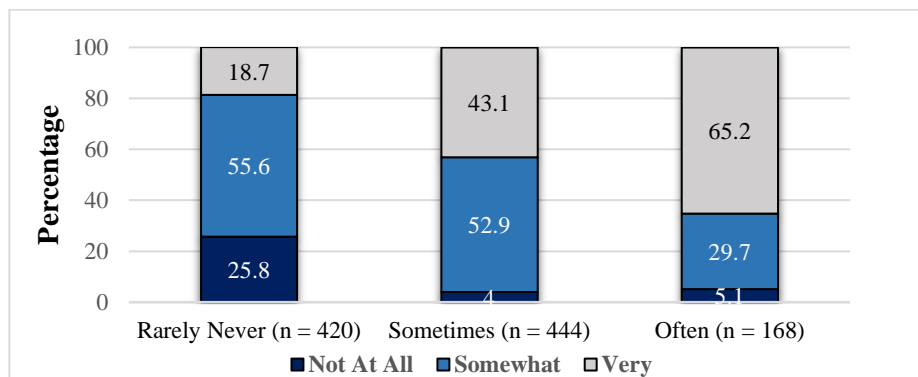


Figure 7 The relationship between frequency of academic advising and satisfaction of academic advising.

CCSSE assessed student-faculty interactions. The two items asked: “In your experiences at this college during the current school year how often have you discussed grades or assignments with an instructor? How often have you used e-mail to communicate with an instructor?” College of the Canyons performed the least favorably relative to the 2015 CCSSE Cohort on measures of student-faculty interactions (see Figure 8). For instance, 54.6% of College of the Canyons students, compared with 65.2% of the CCSSE cohort, responded “often” or “very often” to having used email to communicate with an instructor (see Figure 8). Further, 15.7% of College of the Canyons students, compared with 18.8% of the CCSSE cohort responded “often” or “very often” to “discussing ideas from your readings or classes with instructors at office hours or outside of class”.

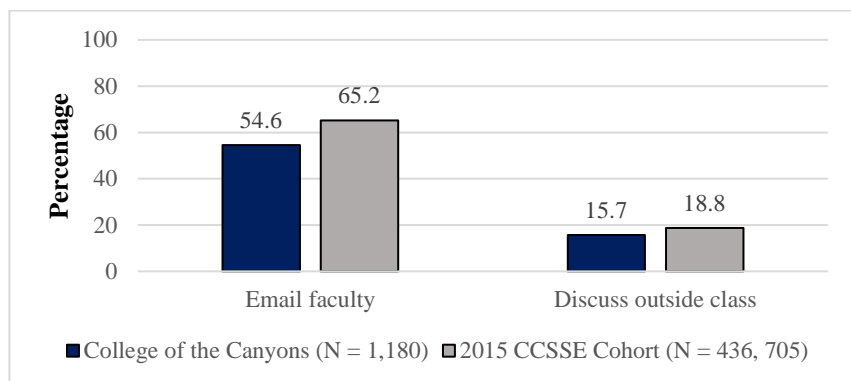


Figure 8 Student faculty interactions.

#### Step 4: Ending in Enrollment for the Second Term

We assessed transfer credit assistance and career exploration for step 4. The CCSSE survey asked students the following questions: “How **important** is transfer credit assistance to you at this college? How **often** do you use transfer credit assistance at this college? How **satisfied** are you with the transfer credit assistance at this college?” The possible responses to each of the questions respectively were as follows:

- Don’t Know/N.A.
- Not At All/Never/Not At All
- Somewhat/Sometimes/Somewhat
- Very/Often/Very

Considered together, the results illustrate that while 51.6% of students from College of the Canyons feel transfer credit assistance/services is “very important” only 11% of students report “often using” transfer credit assistance, and only 21% of students are “very satisfied” with the transfer credit assistance (see Figure 9).

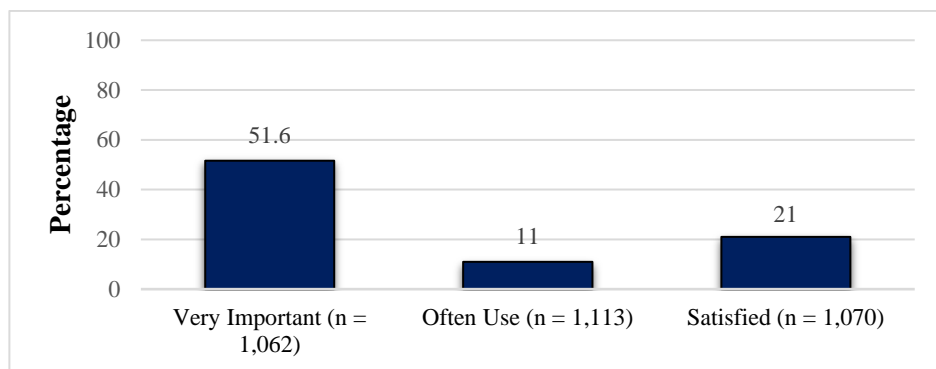


Figure 9 Importance, frequency of use, and satisfaction with transfer credit services.

Due to these findings, we further assessed the relationship between frequency of use of transfer credit assistance/services and satisfaction with transfer credit assistance/services. The analyses aimed to assess what proportion of students who rarely, sometimes, or often utilize transfer credit services, find the assistance/services to be not at all, somewhat, or very satisfactory.

Results illustrate that the greatest proportion of students who are “very” satisfied with the advising (71%) are among those who utilize it “often”. Conversely, the largest proportion of students who are “not at all” satisfied with transfer credit assistance (30.1%) are among those who utilize it “rarely/never” (see Figure 10). While we cannot test for causal effects this suggests that those who use the transfer credit assistance/services more often tend to come away more satisfied and/or, those who are more satisfied with the transfer credit assistance/services go on to utilize it more often.

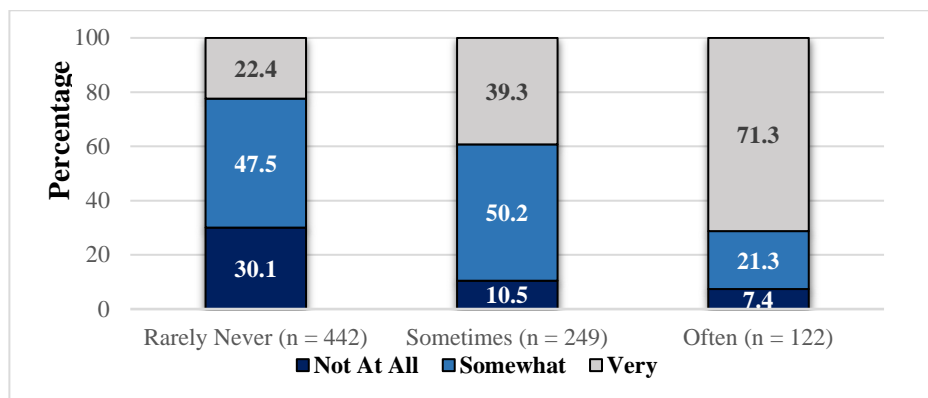


Figure 10 The relationship between frequency of use and satisfaction of transfer credit services.

Last, CCSSE assessed student career exploration in the form of discussion and interaction with faculty. Importantly, faculty members and students both completed this measure thus, allowing us a comparison of faculty vs. student experiences. The CCSSE survey asked the following question to faculty: “How often do students talk about career plans with an instructor or advisor?” The survey asked students: “How often do you talk about career plans with an instructor or advisor?” The possible responses were as follows:

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very Often

Results illustrate a discrepancy in the perception of the frequency of faculty-student career discussions depending on the perspective of a faculty member vs. a student. 53% of faculty believe that these

interactions occur “often” or “very often” whereas only 27.1% of students report these interactions occurring “often” or “very often” (see Figure 11). Further, while only 2% of faculty believe these discussions “never” happen, 32.3% of students perceive these discussions to “never” happen.

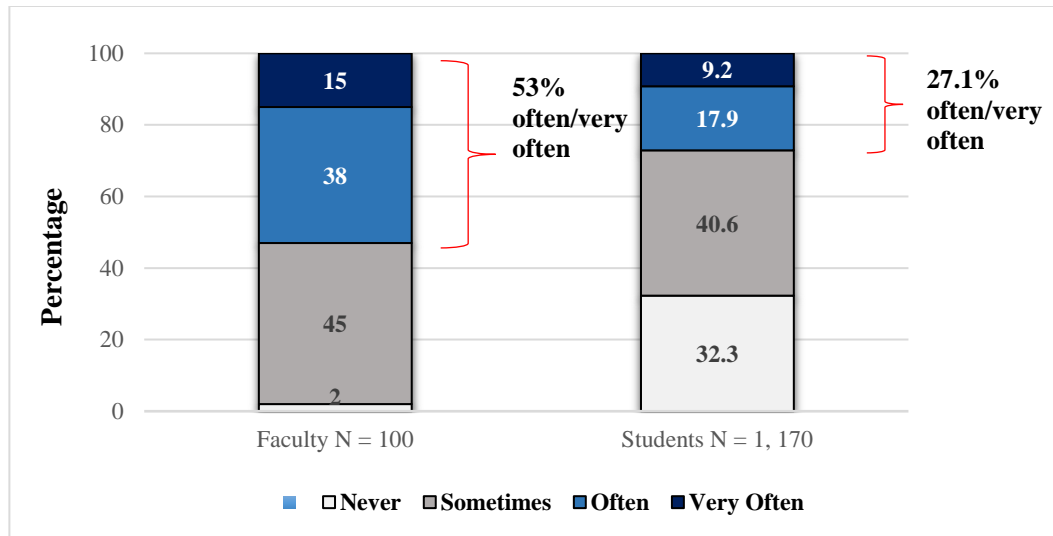


Figure 11 Frequency of career exploration with faculty student discussions/interactions.

## Recommendations

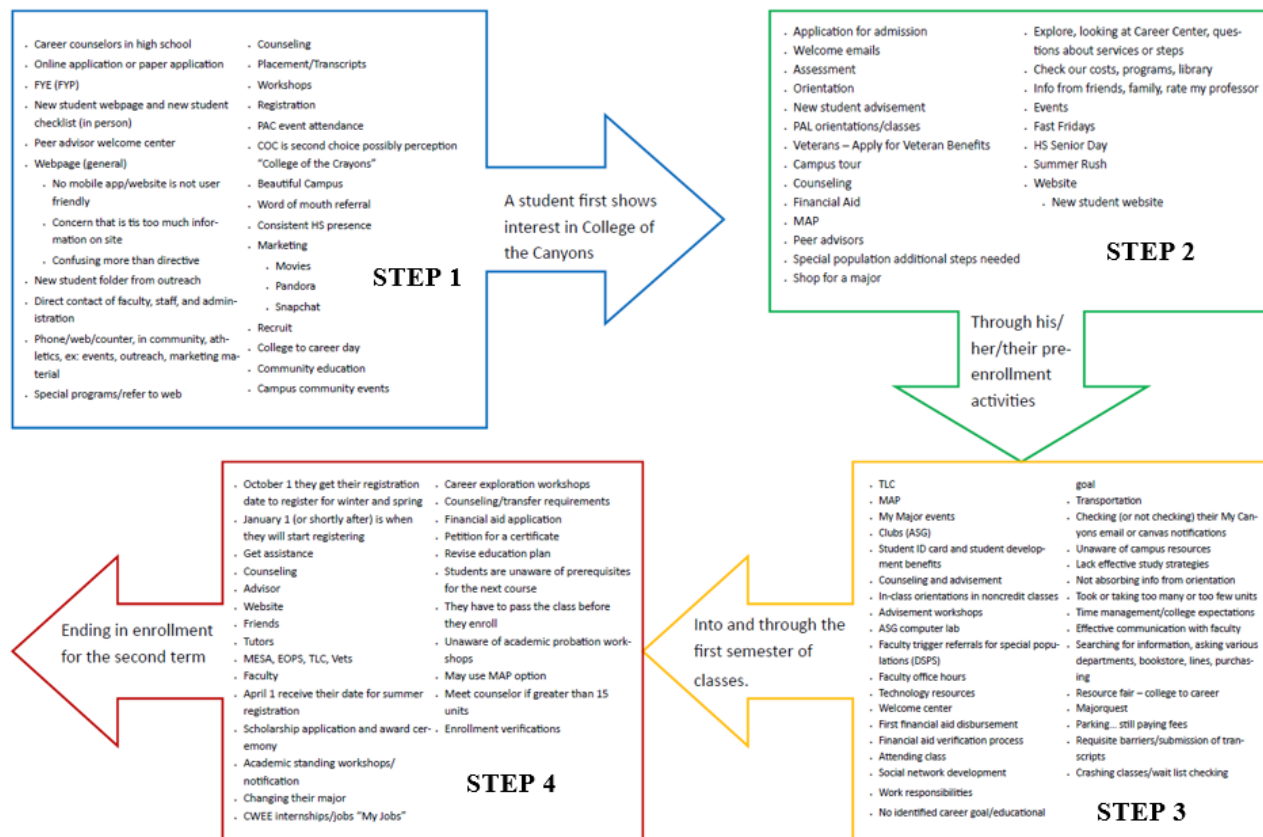
Upon review of the CCSSE data, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- For step 1, College of the Canyons excelled at ensuring its students registered before the first class sessions. However, only 18% of new students participated in an FYE-like program compared to the Promising Practices Respondents (25%). Based on these results it is recommended that we increase our ability to assist full-time first time students. It is likely that this population will increase in the coming years as the FYP/FYE budget has increased to accommodate a greater number of students beginning in fall 2018.
- For step 2, College of the Canyons ensures that the majority of its students took part in an online orientation. College of the Canyons could improve the number of students that attend an actual on-campus orientation, as their proportion (18%) was lower than the rest of the CCSSE cohort (43%). This on-campus orientation could assist students in feeling comfortable with their education environment sooner and with an overall increased sense of belonging. Data illustrated that the financial aid office does an amazing job at advising. However, we suggest increasing more rigorous advertising and outreach to recruit more students who need financial assistance.
- For step 3, we recommend further inquiry into what the obstacles are to students successfully utilizing academic advising. The data illustrated that those students who utilize academic advising the most often are the most satisfied with it however, a majority of students “rarely/never” utilize academic advising so, finding a way to increase students’ visits with academic advising would be useful.
- For step 4, results suggest that it is necessary for further inquiry into the obstacles preventing students from partaking in transfer credit services. Results also illustrated there was a discrepancy in faculty versus student perception regarding career exploration with faculty members. Faculty perceive discussions with students regarding career exploration to be occurring more often than the students themselves report/perceive. Perhaps, faculty can incorporate these discussions more explicitly into their syllabus and class time.
- Overall, College of the Canyons provides all of the necessary resources (e.g., transfer assistance, financial aid, orientation, and academic advising/counseling and faculty assistance) however, College of the Canyons could work further to ensure that students are in fact utilizing them as/when needed.



## Appendix

Figure 1. Student Enrollment Flowchart CAGP Institute #4



For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness office located in BONH-224, or contact Vida Manzo, Senior Research Analyst at 661.362.5871, or Daylene Meuschke, Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.