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Good morning, everybody. Rhianna Johnson, Guided Pathways Director here today, welcoming you to our *Penguin Pathways Podcast* where we talk about all things happening with Guided Pathways and learn about all the good work we're doing for student success. Excited to have Mike Law in the office today, and we'll get started shortly.

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Welcome, Mike. It's great to have you in the studio. How are you doing today?

I'm doing great. Thanks for the invite.

Wonderful. So I want to get us started today by just giving a little bit of an overview about the impetus for creating areas of study within Guided Pathways. And then we'll talk a little bit about how coaching is related to that. So when Guided Pathways sort of got off the ground, one of the things that the college did was to identify areas of study, or meta majors, that group different industry clusters to help students get on a pathway that is centered on what their career goals and outcomes are going to be in terms of industry.

And within that, we decided to create a program for coaches to be tied towards those areas of study to provide guidance and support in the context of those industry clusters. So today we're going to be talking a little bit more about what that entails and how it all unfolds and what you've seen with the program. So can you tell us a little bit about the Student Success Coaching Program at Clark?

So yeah, like you mentioned, coaches are organized and connected by their area of studies. And really, we're trying to address the SBCTC direction and Clark College's priority of leading with racial equity. So that's providing holistic, culturally relevant, anti-racist support for all students, and particularly systemically excluded students and those who are first generation and low-income.

That's wonderful. So can you tell us a little bit about how we're partnering with the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion to really intersect with Guided Pathways and the goal of increasing outcomes for students who've been historically excluded in higher ed?

Yeah, first, before I jump into that, if you don't mind, I'll kind of talk about maybe what an individual appointment looks like and what students can expect if they are going into a coaching appointment.

Great.

So they get to know you as a student, as a person, help you navigate higher education, work together with you to access supports, life resources-- things like that. So it's just this one-on-one coaching session that helps with both academic and personal success. They'll equip you with developing skills, connect you to different workshops.

It's free. It's confidential, private, so students can see coaches via Zoom or in-person-- whatever they're comfortable with, arranged around their schedule. And it's really just they meet as many times as they want. So it could be just a couple of times. It could be throughout the term to kind of progress in different skill building.

So it really just kind of depends on the student. So it's that nice individualized support, giving the student what they need, essentially. Some of the things that they help work on is skill building, habit formation-- so helping them with time management, organizational strategies, strategies around procrastination, different study skills. They also help them connect and network to different departments.

They'll help them talk with faculty. They'll help them access clubs, activities, events, advisors-- things like that, basically getting them connected to campus. They'll also help with problem solving-- so if they need help communicating with faculty or just communicating with other resources around campus. They can help someone write an email, or they can help them communicate with those folks. They'll also help work with any sort of academic or personal challenges that they're having.

To talk more about why the coaching is specifically tied to ODEI, we're looking at this from a framework of culturally relevant and anti-racist coaching-- something that we talked about at the beginning. So this is looking at things from a strength-based approach, listening to and validating lived experiences, naming systemic barriers and oppression, and just advocating for students. So one of the things that the coaches are utilizing is the community cultural wealth model from Yosso.

So it's really validating those experiences and that cultural capital that folks are bringing to their community college experience. So these could be things like linguistic capital, social capital, family capital, aspirational capital-- all these different sorts of things that maybe folks don't necessarily recognize as real strengths and trying to help validate those strengths and help them utilize those strengths in their college career.

That's fantastic. I think it's a lot of big words in there. But essentially, the listeners can take away that we're really giving resources and guidance to students who may not be familiar with higher education, who may not come from families who have knowledge of higher education and who need that sort of support to help navigate these different systems and bureaucratic processes that we sometimes put up as barriers. So how do students get connected to coaches? How do they find out about this program?

Yeah, so we've been doing a lot of outreach campaign throughout this entire fall. We've built the program-- so we started in January. That's when most of us were hired on.

And then since about March or so, we've been kind of getting out there and trying to talk with faculty, talk with students, talk with different staff members, and just kind of get the program out there. So we have a website. We also, with the work of Chandra Chase, created this wonderful video that has kind of made them rockstars on campus. So we have that video, which is getting out there.

We also have the ability for folks to make appointments through the website. So they can schedule through bookings. They're also welcome to just stop into the Diversity Center and chat.

We have drop-in hours. They're welcome to email. So basically, students can really, I think, connect with coaches in multiple different ways. And it's really more trying to meet students where they're at and however they feel that they would best connect with a coach. So we're trying to be very flexible in that and just meet a student where they're at.

Oh, that's fantastic. That's really a great benefit to our students. And I know in Guided Pathways, and at Clark in general, we're really trying to be data-informed and trying to really focus on measuring our successes and our outcomes. So what are some of the successes that you've already seen?

You and I have talked about this. And I know that you are doing a great job at capturing that. So tell us a little bit about what you've already seen in terms of outcomes.

Yeah, so one of the things that I think has been important is to kind of track who we're seeing, how often we're seeing folks, and basically get some demographic data as well. So we've been pretty diligent about having the coaches enter data after meeting with students, so we can get a sense of who we're seeing, and are we meeting the outcomes that we're really hoping to meet. So when we've taken a look at the numbers, we are meeting with students on a much higher basis proportionately for systemically non-dominant students, which is really the goal of the program.

We're trying to focus on students who need these supports. So when we look at the numbers, the numbers are much higher-- in terms of demographics, much higher proportionately when we're looking at systemically non-dominant students, which are students with disabilities, queer students, and students of color. So we're really seeing successes in that avenue.

I actually just looked at some rough numbers the other day. And the frequency that we're seeing with students in fall has just absolutely exploded. I think we've increased by, like, 50% of how many students we've seen from spring and summer to then fall. It was just like it skyrocketed.

One of the great things, I think, that helped lead to this was the outreach program that we had. So we're tabling at Welcome Week. We're making presentations to faculty members. We've been participating in a lot of different activities, partnering with Student Affairs, making classroom visits, letting students know about resources. So all these different ways that we've been reaching out to the community, I think, has really reaped a lot of benefits in terms of getting that visibility out there and having folks access the program.

That's amazing. I'm just so impressed with the work that you're doing. So before we wrap it up, what's one thing that you'd like to see really increase or expand in the next year that you think will be most impactful for students in this program?

Yeah, I mean, I really think that we're just hoping to grow the program. With all these numbers-- and that's why this data is so important, is to track the increase in students, increase in student visits. So hoping to expand the program, maybe get some more coaches-- we'll kind of see. But that would be the ideal, I think, is just to keep serving the students that we're serving, increase that, and help support students as much as we can and keep the program moving forward.

That's incredible. Well, Mike, I really appreciate you being here today to share with us a little bit about those holistic supports that you're providing to our students. Keep up the great work, and hope to have you back on the podcast soon.

Thank you so much for having me.