



# Degree Pathways Newsletter

Special Edition Newsletter June, 2021

## Faculty Pathway Leads--New Opportunity!

If you are looking for an opportunity to elevate your leadership experience and contribute to important changes at our college, the Faculty Pathway Lead may be the perfect position for you. Highline is undergoing an important shift in which students choose a pathway upon entry and refine their choice for a program of study within two quarters/by 30 credits. As a Faculty Pathway Lead, you will be working with the interim Associate Dean for Student Learning and Success to ensure all students have the support they need to explore career options, become part of a community, and complete programs efficiently. This is a chance to collaborate cross campus in the implementation of mandatory and intrusive (proactive) advising as laid out by the Four Phase Advising model developed by Advising Council and refined by the Degree Pathways Advising team.

Express interest by completing this [application form](#) by June 22nd 11:59pm. Thank you for improving the student experience and advising! Please reach out to [Aleya Dhanji](#) with any questions.

## New Pathways are Finalized

### What are the official pathways?

There are eight new pathways.

- Arts, Communication & Design
- Business, Hospitality & Tourism
- Education & Human Services
- ELCAP
- Exploratory Pathway
- Health, Wellness & Fitness
- Humanities & Social Sciences
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Math & Computer Science

These eight pathways act as the initial point for students in choosing an area of study. They are derived from the work done four years ago by Highline faculty/staff, student feedback collected at the beginning of the GP process, and after reviewing the pathways of 28 community colleges across the U.S. The programs, subjects, or majors ("programs" will be used as an inclusive term) within each pathway were taken from the college's [Programs A-Z list](#). To view which programs are under each pathway, go [here](#).

### What was the process to choose and name the pathways?

The new pathways are based on previous work done by Highline faculty/staff, from feedback collected from students, faculty and high school counselors and the review of colleges across the country. In December, 2019, 303 students provided feedback on Highline's current pathways model via an in-class survey, coordinated by **Emily Coates** in Institutional Research. View the [full survey report](#). While 91% of the students surveyed thought the pathways names made sense, they also had many suggestions for improvements to the model, including a strong desire for the addition of an Exploratory pathway and more clarity about the connection between pathways, degrees and careers. Two subsequent student focus groups were conducted as well as input gathered from faculty and high school counselors regarding the pathways names.

During spring and summer 2020, **Nikki Filler** and **Jack Harton** compiled the feedback gathered from students along with input collected from faculty and high school counselors and reviewed the pathways models of 28 colleges across the country. Of these 28 colleges, 13 had between 6-8 pathways, the most popular number range. Two colleges had 4 pathways (the low) and 2 colleges had 14 pathways (the high). The number of and names of these pathways are consistent with what most of the [other colleges](#) acting as comparisons are using. Most of these comparison colleges do not have a separate "Exploratory" or "Undecided" pathway. Instead, most emphasize the need for career advising and career interest tests or inventories for undecided students before entering a pathway.

### How were the program names and pathway groupings decided?

The decision was made to use the broad subject name (i.e. Computer Science, Art, Education) taken from the college's [Programs A-Z list](#) to keep the pathway choices as understandable as possible for students. The thought behind this was that being too detailed for each subject could get confusing. For example, the Education Dept. offers B.A.S., A.A.S., A.A. degrees, and certificates, and has specialized areas such as early childhood, elementary, paraeducator, etc. The World Languages Dept. offers six languages, including American Sign Language. The idea is that students investigating any program after choosing the pathway will at that point get the complete offerings and choices. Programs were assigned to the pathways, by looking for best fits between the two. For the most part this process was quite straightforward. Once the seven pathways with the program groupings were drafted, the proposed pathways were shared with students for their feedback (feedback included both surveys and focus groups). Adjustments to the pathways were made based on student input.

### What is the difference between the new pathways and the current Division structure?

The new Pathways don't perfectly align with the Divisions. Per Jack Harton, "Nikki and I thought more about the proper fit of the programs under the pathways than according to division structure. ... We were more concerned about students making sense of the placements than aligning with current division structure." The structure of Highline's Divisions is included in the HCEA/HC collective bargaining agreement. Changes to the Division structure would need to be negotiated..

A BIG **thank you** to **Nikki** and **Jack** for all of their work on identifying and organizing the pathways.

## The New Pathways Website is Live!

Learn more about the degree pathways on the recently launched [pathways website](#). Special thanks to **Helen Burn** and **Wendy Swyt** for their hours of line by line editing, to **Blake Stagner** for the web layout and design, to **Tony Johnson** for providing the images and to **Liz Word** for her leadership.

## Two Interim Associate Dean Positions Created

To support our work next year, we have created two Interim Associate Dean positions that will allow tenured faculty members to serve in full-time leadership roles within Highline's guided pathways work.

**Shawna Freeman** has agreed to serve as Highline's first **Interim Associate Dean for Student Learning & Success**. In addition to serving on the GP leadership team, Shawna will:

- Lead the team tasked with designing and implementing the next iteration of faculty advising aligned with the HCEA collective agreement, the work of the Advising Council, and the current work of the GP-Advising team in close collaboration with the new Dean for Academic Pathways & Partnerships
- Facilitate the development of an assessment plan for faculty advising
- Facilitate the development of tools and strategies to assist in connecting students with holistic supports, including exploring the use of a retention technology platform
- Lead the project aimed at revising the current discipline/program review process to center racial equity, help identify small, doable steps, and reduce the workload of coordinators in the review process
- Participate in Advising Council meetings
- Participate in Instruction Cabinet

**Liz Word** has agreed to serve as the first **Interim Associate Dean for Guided Pathways**. In addition to serving on the GP leadership team, Liz will:

- Lead the implementation of Highline's new college success course
- Lead the development and assessment of structured exploratory experiences for all students
- Lead the continued development and revision of program maps for all degrees and certificates
- Facilitate a process for ensuring maps are accessible, student-friendly, and that faculty and staff are comfortable using them
- Collaborate with colleagues in Institutional Advancement/Outreach on strategies for sharing pathways and program maps with external constituencies
- Participate in Instruction Cabinet

Shawna assumes her new responsibilities on July 1. Liz begins on August 1. Thank you to Shawna and Liz for agreeing to step into these leadership roles.

## New Faculty-In-Residence position within the LTC

**Aleya Dhanji** has agreed to serve as the first Faculty-in-Residence within the Learning and Teaching Center focused on advising and institutional research. In this role Aleya will:

- Create professional development opportunities (trainings/workshops/faculty inquiry groups/seminars) on advising for instructors and/or customized for departments with a goal of improving student completion and reducing equity gaps, encouraging instructors to share their own practices and learn from others.
- Update and expand GP Advising Canvas Course to keep aligned with best practices and incorporate participant feedback.
- Provide ongoing guidance and support for instructors in refining their advising practices both in and out of the classroom.
- Identify and support opportunities for informal learning and community building among instructors around the topics of advising as teaching, culturally responsive advising and assessment of advising.
- Support scaling and assessment of in-class advising.
- Support Institutional Research in collection and analysis of advising related data from surveys and student focus groups.
- Support Highline's Guided Pathways and student success work.

Aleya assumes her new responsibilities at the start of summer quarter 2021 and will remain in the role through spring quarter 2022. Thank you to Aleya for agreeing to step into this role.

## Guided Pathways Priorities for 2021-2022

The GP work plan for 2021-2022 is divided into three sections: implementing large scale change, pathway design, and student experience. This brief [overview](#) describes SBCTC's approach to GP for next year. It includes Highline's GP priorities for next year, the language from SBCTC about what those priorities mean, and budget allocations tied to those priorities. Work will be done over the summer to weave together the annual progress reports submitted by the GP work Teams, reviewing what has been accomplished and where we need to go next year.

## Learn More ...

The new [Degree Pathway website](#) helps make this year's work visible—please check it out, including the pathways presentations which can be found by clicking on the [Degree Pathways Series banner](#). If you have questions about the pathways or the program maps, please contact Liz Word. If you have questions regarding faculty advising please contact Shawna Freeman. If you have questions about advising professional development, please contact Aleya Dhanji. For general guided pathways questions, please contact May Lukens.