(MUSIC)

FEMALE: In a community college, everybody has a true opportunity. But at the end of the day our graduation rates aren’t as high as we want them to be.

MALE: Students graduating with 30, 40 hours more than they needed because they took the wrong class.

MALE: We’re trying to guide students very deliberatively toward their goals.

FEMALE: Guided pathways is an overarching way of looking at the student experience. It’s a big picture, transformational work, and it’s all about student success.

(MUSIC)

CLAYTON RAILEY: The history of the community college has been, “Well, we’ll just offer whatever people want.” And so if somebody comes and says, “I want a vet tech program,” or “I want an auto mechanics program,” or “I want a program in Spanish or biology,” sure, we’ll create it. And so over the years you have this tremendous accrual of programs that maybe only have two, three, four, five, seven students enrolled in them. And after a while it becomes unsustainable.

LAURA ELLSWORTH: When we found out that 53 percent of our students were enrolled in about 18 of our programs, given that we had 217 credit programs on the books, we knew we had work to do there.

SIR JARMOR: My first time coming here was for … I can honestly say it was just a home vibe, a nice feeling here. So that’s what made me, you know, further my career here and stay here.

(MUSIC)

CRYSTAL SMITH: I'm a native of the area. I went to high school here, middle school, elementary school here. But I'm also a first-generation college student. When I see them, I see myself in many ways.

There’s so much you don’t know, and you don’t know you don’t know until you don’t ... know. And then someone says, “Oh, did you know?” and you go, “No, I didn’t know.” And so I think my desire is to make that experience much less painful for them than it was for me.

CRYSTAL SMITH: How many classes do you have left to finish? You have another year, don’t you?

A’JA: Yeah.

CRYSTAL SMITH: Okay.

A’JA: I thought I was going to be graduating like next year. But I was kind of discouraged because I am going to have to take my … I'm not even in my college-level math yet. So I was like oh, more time here, because it’s a big sacrifice being a full time student and part time, you know, jobs. So …

CRYSTAL SMITH: Some of the barriers is that students would register for classes, and they didn’t necessarily have a conversation with an advisor. They didn’t have to. Then by the time they met with an advisor, we would go, “Why did you take this course?” And they would say, “Because the computer,” and they mean the system that we use, “Let me.”

So I was excited about guided pathways because it gives students an opportunity to complete their degree in a timely fashion. And it forced us to reevaluate kind of that onboarding process; what do we want to make sure they know? What do we want to do that’s intentional? What information do we need to change?

(MUSIC)

LISA PRICE: What I want to do is kind of do a recap of where we are with pathways. So Green is complete. Blue is in process. Red is either not started or we’re not clear. And we got all the way down to “implement universal application.”

MALE: Whether you’re a credit student, non-credit student, international student, that we want the process to be more consistent.

CRYSTAL SMITH: The current process you have a different application depending upon what kind of student you are. So this process would be that you would just, there will be one application that all students will complete, even if they have to be directed to another area. But they would start off in one place.

I was asked to be on the pathways project. I think we’re intentional to make sure we had people from all areas in meetings. We created teams, so I was over the advising team. And in that team you had someone from technology, you had some from enrollment. We began to understand the work that was done from other people and how it impacted us.

LISA PRICE: Any closing remarks from anyone?

CRYSTAL SMITH: Progress.

IN UNISON: Yes, yes. (LAUGHTER)

LISA PRICE: Team work.

LISA PRICE: Alright. Thank you so much.

CLAYTON RAILEY: I subscribe to the many minds theory. The more people we have in the room from across the college talking about what the issues are, the better solution we’re going to find.

(MUSIC)

CLAYTON RAILEY: The faculty had to really do some hard thinking. They had a number of criteria that they used to evaluate each program. What does the county workforce need? What kind of resources do we have here in the college to support that program?

CHRISTINE BARROW: So what we did is we took their specific data points, and we collected those data points about all of our academic programs, and then what we did is we looked to see which programs were still relevant to the regional market. And so once we identified which programs were still relevant, those were the ones that we mapped.

A’JA: What’s your major again?

SIR JARMOR: Accounting.

A’JA: Okay. And mine is business administration. I’m excited for the fall semester. It’s going to be my first time that it’s actually my classes for my career.

CLAYTON RAILEY: Rather than letting them take whatever course they wanted to whenever they wanted to, here we’re saying, “This is the sequence in which you need to take them because this is going to bring you to a better outcome.”

(MUSIC)

MAXIMUS FEDERAL EMPLOYEE: Good morning. It’s nice to see you.

CHRISTINE BARROW: It’s nice to see you again.

MAXIMUS FEDERAL EMPLOYEE: We’re going to head upstairs.

CHRISTINE BARROW: Okay. Let’s go.

CHRISTINE BARROW: A couple of years ago Maximus Federal approached us about an opportunity. They were looking for students who would be interested in job opportunities coming out of college. So we identified this pathway where students who are interested in computer science and computer engineering would in their last year would have an opportunity to apply for the employment position and then have paid training. And then once they finish with that paid training they could go immediately into working for Maximus Federal.

CHRISTINA BARROW: so one of the things I wanted to do today was to kind of talk a little bit about next steps for our partnership. And also of course find out how the students are doing.

SHERYL TAYLOR: We gave them assignments and they picked up so well that they were an integral part of our deliverables, and they’re fitting right in. We just promoted them all.

CHRISTINA BARROW: Excellent.

SHERYL TAYLOR: That was ahead of schedule. But they’re doing so well.

CHRISTINA BARROW: Are you still looking primarily for students with computer science backgrounds? Or has any of that changed any?

SHERYL TAYLOR: Calculus.

CHRISTINA BARROW: Right.

SHERYL TAYLOR: As well as the IT.

CHRISTINA BARROW: I don't think we’ll have any problems. We’ve done quite a bit over the course of the last two years or so to really expand our base of students with computer science, and guided pathways is all about how we make connections that are mapped to students’ end goals. And students’ end goals really are jobs. They’re looking for employment at the end of their educational path. And so these types of partnerships build very nicely in with the guided pathways and what we’re doing there. So thank you.

(MUSIC)

CHRISTINA BARROW: It’s that full circle. So we know where the students want to go when they come in, and then we create those pathways that actually get there.

(MUSIC)

CRYSTAL SMITH: So you have five classes. You’re doing I think three this semester and then two.

SIR JARMOR: Statistics and calculus. So it’s just a bunch of math.

CRYSTAL SMITH: Right. I was going to ask you …

SIR JARMOR: It’s my last two.

CRYSTAL SMITH: You could get away with that because you came in before we had pathways. Of course now you have to tackle your math first semester.

SIR JARMOR: Okay.

CRYSTAL SMITH: I will tell anyone who does this work, it’s a lot of change all at one time. There are some days it was, yeah, it was too much. But I think you do the best you can with just noticing that. It is definitely a process that requires a lot of work and a lot of long hours.

CRYSTAL SMITH: Would you show me?

SIR JARMOR: It’s an email.

CRYSTAL SMITH: I know I'm old I can’t see. I told you. You got the job. Yea! Awesome. You start July 1st?

SIR JARMOR: Yeah.

CRYSTAL SMITH: Oh, wow. So you know when you start your job you have to make sure that you let them know you’re taking classes. You have to make sure that you can balance the two. Congratulations.

SIR JARMOR: Thank you.

CRYSTAL SMITH: Alright. Well, you all know I'm here. So if you have questions, let me know.

CHRISTINA BARROW: I think we are all united toward a common goal now. And that doesn’t mean we didn’t have goals before and it didn’t mean that we weren’t united before, but it’s a different kind of feeling. That’s I think the value of pathways.

(MUSIC)

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