(MUSIC)

FEMALE: In 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.

TREG: I originally signed up for Vol State. I came and I signed up for all my classes, and I just didn’t go. I was like, “Oh, I'm just going to work.”

MALE: We’re cutting this next.

TREG: Coming in doing the same thing again and again. It’s a lot of physical labor, and I wanted to kind of push myself into the direction of not having to live like paycheck to paycheck because I want to provide like my kids with everything they need and more. So, I mean, I’ve worked for the past six years, and I was like I think it’s time to go back to school.

(MUSIC)

TERRY BUBB: When I first started here, we were pretty much a 100 percent walk-in institution. So we lived by our catalogue. So essentially a student would walk in, we’d point out all the classes that the student needed to take. But what semester would you take those? What were the nuances of the degree path?

GEORGE PIMENTEL: If you just give them a list of 20 classes and say “Take ten of these,” that’s not very helpful. They get confused and they’re not sure they’re making the progress they need to do to get, to graduate.

TERRY BUBB: And so then we gradually moved in the direction of all the departments came up with a logical sequence, you know, that was the first step. But then we started making templates, or pathways, for every degree program.

(MUSIC)

RENEASE PERKINS: At Vol State, e call our guided pathways degree plans. We use a system called Degree Works, and the students can log into their individual Degree Works page. It gives that outline of the classes that they need. They see exactly what choices they can choose from with the given category. And it’s just a timeline to let them know, like I said, this is everything that I need to graduate.

TERRY BUBB: We can go down and around.

TIM AMYX: Okay.

TERRY BUBB: Hey, Renease.

RENEASE PERKINS: How are you?

TERRY BUBB: Thanks for meeting us. We appreciate it so much.

TIM AMYX: Good morning.

TERRY BUBB: It’s so tricky because most of these students are going to be part time, and our templates are built for full time.

RENEASE PERKINS: Right.

TERRY BUBB: So how do we cater that?

TIM AMYX: So I think if we were to move to part time it wouldn’t just be about setting up an individual plan for a particular academic program, but it would be something that we would have to look at across the board. There is a feature that we can turn on that will allow Degree Works to sort of go out there and load out into tables what are the possibilities for a student to complete their program. So instead of having to rely on the plans, we can rely more on what the degree audit says the students need to take.

(PAUSE)

GEORGE PIMENTEL: 2015 is when we moved our schedule from the typical Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Tuesday/Thursday format to Monday/Wednesdays, Tuesday/ Thursdays.

TERRY BUBB: From an advising perspective it’s definitely helped, because students who only want to go to classes two days a week for work reasons have another option. And so that was a game changer.

(MUSIC)

TREG: I come to school two days a week. Makes it very easy for people that work full time to still have time to come to school and learn.

Nursing kind of interested me, because I’ve always been like a caring person, and I decided to go into pre-nursing because I can get an associate’s in nursing, and then I can kind of fast track to a BSN.

MARYAM FARSIAN: I going to put the slide on the stage. One thing to keep in mind as you’re looking through these organs you’re looking at today. So remember an organ is different types of tissues. So I'm looking in here, I'm seeing the epithelia tissue. I also see connective tissue.

(MUSIC)

KELLY ORMSBY: I want to show you one additional resource that’s available. I put the link here on the course home page for you, and click on career options. There are some really great reliable resources that you can go to to learn more about your career. For example, the jobs and employment around the country. And a way that you might use this in your essay, for example, is perhaps staying close to home is really important to you, so you want to be sure you choose a field where you’re going to be able to find employment in the greater Nashville area, right? We’re going to be using today to think about your essay structure, as well as your interview questions.

MALE STUDENT: Thank you.

KELLY ORMSBY: You’re welcome. Basically we are starting off with a career paper where students look at their degree path, they interview a person in the field to get some direct experience information to include in the paper, and then they also look at the educational requirements for the job so they are actually visiting college websites for four year schools, looking at what opportunities are there, what that path is going to look like in terms of years and classes and just making sure that they’re on the right path.

MALE STUDENT: Yeah…

KELLY ORMSBY: How’s it going guys?

MALE STUDENT: Good.

MALE STUDENT: So I did an interview with Troy Nunn, which you recommended me to.

KELLY ORMSBY: Yes.

MALE STUDENT: He told me all about his career, his back story, and how he got his job. He did internships with Disney and got a full ride scholarship to Western Kentucky.

KELLY ORMSBY: Yeah, so you already got some introduction.

MALE STUDENT: Uh-hmm. Some.

KELLY ORMSBY: You’re thinking about how you’re going to pull your audience in. I really like that.

MALE STUDENT: Quotes, yeah, from an interview.

GEORGE PIMENTEL: Several of our students come to us underprepared for college. Their reading scores, writing and math scores are not as high as they need to be. And so we had developmental studies years ago where a student would be accepted to college, and then essentially what we would do is tell them, “Well, you’re welcome to Vol State. You have to take these four or five other classes because you’re not college ready.”

Now, that has a psychological impact on students. So where the co-requisite remediation comes in, they’re co-enrolled with a regular credit-bearing class.

KELLY ORMSBY: So you have some writing today?

FEMALE STUDENT: Yeah, it’s not a lot. I'm going to add more.

KELLY ORMSBY: We’re taking these in stages, right? Writing is a process.

FEMALE STUDENT: And then she made some comments.

KELLY ORMSBY: Yeah.

FEMALE STUDENT: To improve.

KELLY ORMSBY: Thank you, Alex, very good.

KELLY ORMSBY: We do talk about growth mindset at the beginning of the semester. We introduce that idea to them about intelligence being malleable. How the effort that they put in is going to really make a change in their ability to learn. The other thing we try to do is normalize struggle. We really talk about the fears about writing and all of the trepidation, the things that would normally isolate a person. We try to make that a community-building opportunity. And that really is reassuring to the students to help them believe they can do it.

KELLY ORMSBY: I'm going to have very high expectations of a productive class on Thursday with lots of paragraphs written by the end of class. Okay? So let’s be ready for that.

MALE STUDENT: See you tomorrow.

KELLY ORMSBY: Alright. See you, Cortrel.

KELLY ORMSBY: In fact for last year our students succeeded in Comp One at 83 percent. They actually outperformed the non-co-rec students. So we’re really proud of the program.

GEORGE PIMENTEL: The English Department was leading the way. And once you start seeing their success it was very easy then to say, you guys in this other area, can you take a look at this and how can you, you know, prepare and move that up.

(MUSIC)

TREG: In high school I didn’t study for anything. I would just listen in class, and it all just kind of clicked. Now I'm having to kind of dig a little deeper in myself and, you know, force myself to go home and do homework and all this stuff.

MARYAM FARSIAN: That’s your lung. That’s what we’re looking for right there. Good. Excellent. Excellent.

TREG: Maryam Farsian, she actually has us write out a study log for the first two weeks of class. That actually helped me a lot, because I look back and I notice like, man, I really could be studying more, you know, I could go out less and be focusing on this more. Because it’s not something that I'm not going to use again. It’s something that I'm going to use every day in my career.

(MUSIC)

KELLY ORMSBY: The faculty here are very dedicated. We’re encouraged to think reflectively about our own teaching, to look at the results that we’re getting and to have plans for making improvements to student success. It’s very deliberate, and it’s something we’re still working on. It’s definitely a work in progress.

(MUSIC)

TIM AMYX: Pathways are the default. So it can never be complete because any time that there’s a new academic program ... I mean we know that students that are in eighth grade right now are going to have jobs that haven’t been invented yet. So how can that work ever be done?

To us, pathways are every day. There isn’t any such thing as a non-pathway at Vol State. So that’s driving all of us. How can we make this process better for the student? How can we facilitate it?

TREG: I always see teachers and staff talking to each other, and it seems like it goes a little deeper than just education during that because they genuinely love teaching and they love helping people.

(MUSIC)

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