To paraphrase David Campbell’s book, if students don’t know where they’re going, they’ll probably end up somewhere else. Now, you all know that many students do come to us at college and they do have an idea of where they’re headed, and they know what kinds of courses they need to take to get there. But you also know that many, many more students don’t have an idea of where they’re going and they’re not quite sure how to get there.

Every student, regardless of whether or not they have a plan or they simply don’t know, can benefit by having a solid blueprint to help guide the way to where they might end up to their satisfaction. At Arapahoe Community College that pathway, that blueprint, is the guided pathways for our students.

One of the things that we know is that unless students are an engaged participant in their future, they won’t have a blueprint to help guide them there. So we wanted to make sure that the same way as when you’re putting a blueprint together to build a house where you bring together several concepts and constructs to create a whole, we wanted to do the same thing with our students so that they can create a concept, a whole, that will help them succeed.

So we did three things to help them build their blueprint. First of all, we created, we established, seven career pathways, and we made sure that we had expert counselors and coaches for each of those career pathways. And so the students are always engaging with someone who really does know what they’re talking about and is interested in them as an individual, not just as a student number.

Secondly, we created an environment for inclusive counseling and inclusive advising. Again, these are professionals who work directly with the students so that they can put a schedule together that will maximize their opportunity to reach their goals faster, make sure that they complete in a reasonable amount of time, and save some money along the way.

Third, what we did is we dig deeper into the data so that we can aim higher in helping our students who are not succeeding get the tools that they need. Again, not only are we working with numerical data and showing us what we know about students overall, but when we dig deeper, we are definitely able to single out the groups of students and the individuals who are not doing well and then work with them and talk with them individually to confirm what maybe our numerical data is showing us.

So benefits back to Arapahoe Community College. First of all, we now have students that have a higher level of confidence. Secondly, we were able this year to see an increase in the number of students who completed successfully their math courses in year one. And third, a benefit back to the college was we also saw an increase in our FTE. With a solid blueprint students can then plan successfully for their future.

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