When reflecting on pathways at Stanly Community College, I couldn’t help but think of the timeless classic *A Christmas Carol*. Who doesn’t love Dickens? And when reflecting on pathways, instead of having the ghostly image of Christmas past, Christmas present, Christmas future, I thought of pathways past, pathways present, and pathways future because that’s really what excites Stanly Community College about where we are headed.

 You see, prior to pathways work, five years ago or so, Stanly Community College students were completing, but were they completing to the level that we really wanted them to complete? No. Five years ago Stanly Community College’s graduation rate was 18 percent. Students who were completing, some of those students were completing with over 100 credit hours on their transcripts. Is that satisfactory? No.

 So enter pathways. Pathways present saw Stanly Community College undertake this monumental work. And we have undertaken quite a bit of work as you know. Stanly Community College is now at scale with all of our defined pathways for all of our programs. Our student experience has drastically changed because students now have that defined path. They understand what it takes to obtain that credential they are seeking.

 That’s not all that pathways has seen Stanly Community College undertake though. Sure, it was a monumental effort to put all that together, get all the programs to agree these are the defined paths, but there is more to it. You see, pathways present also saw Stanly Community College come to the realization that the word *mandatory* isn’t really a bad word. So while undertaking the pathways work, Stanly Community College instituted a number of mandatory student activities. New student orientation is now a mandatory requirement for all of our incoming students.

 Additionally, students are required to see their advisor. Students in the first 30 hours of their programs are required to meet with their advisor prior to registering. What that does is that ensures that students are remaining on the path, that defined pathway. Now we’re wanting to make sure that they are getting the advice to know that they are in fact staying on their pathway.

 So we already have seen results from the work. Our graduation rate has more than doubled in this time. The number of hours our students are completing have lowered. So Stanly Community College is seeing significant success as it relates to our pathways present. So that’s a great thing. However, is it enough?

 Well, enter pathways future. We really are excited about what pathways means for our students as we enter the future. And that’s where we think about the pathway to a new advising model. For, you see, while undertaking the pathways work, as we began to get to scale with our pathways, the question became what more can we do. Sure, having the defined pathway, having the defined path is -- there’s a finite amount of work, but what more can we do? That became an advising question. How can we ensure that students truly are staying on path?

 We had a traditional faculty-advising model. Our students try to make appointments with faculty. The faculty are in class. They’re in committee meetings. They may be off campus. It’s a frustrating experience for our students. Stanly Community College less than one year ago undertook a new advising model. Now we have what we call success coaches. Think of these as a concierge for each individual student because these success coaches are in fact the primary point of contact for each student at Stanly Community College. They are advising, but it’s more than just an advisor.

 You see, these success coaches are also working with outreach. So when students express an interest in pursuing study at Stanly Community College, those prospective students get a phone call from the success coaches. They work them through enrollment, and that’s their single point of contact during their entire tenure at Stanly Community College.

 Furthermore, they’re working with our outreach department to try to ensure that students are in fact aware of all of the wraparound services that are provided. They get the early alerts when faculty realize that students may be struggling. The success coaches understand what wraparound services and what tutoring services are available.

 So Stanly Community College has truly seen the ghastly past of student success, but now we truly are excited about the transformative work that is taking place at Stanly Community College, and we really are excited about what it’s going to mean for our students in the future. Thank you.

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