Paris Junior College has nurtured and cared for students for 95 years, but the implementation of guided pathways took us to a whole new level in caring about our students. As our faculty were working on identifying pathways, and they identified seven, and then they went in and they developed program maps for every program at the college. These program maps as they were laid out not only identified the courses that a student would take each semester, but it identified the program learning outcomes that that student would master by the time they completed that program. It identified marketable skills that they would attain during the work in completing the program. It identified career opportunities that they might think about upon the completion of the program. And it talked about transfer opportunities.

We even had the opportunity because of our work with pathways, our regional university, Texas A&M Commerce, invited us to come over in on a bus and spend a day with their faculty, departmental chairs, deans to make sure our maps were perfect for transfer to their university. So as a student comes in, first thing they have to do is to select a pathway and a program map. At the same time we were implementing pathways, we were implementing a new student information system. Talk about overload for our faculty and staff. But in the long run, it worked perfect by doing it together because we moved our advising model from a faculty‑driven advising to student success coaches.

When a student is admitted to the college, they are assigned to a student success coach. They cannot enroll the first semester until they’ve sat down with the student success coach, identified a pathway, identified a program within that pathway.

At the same time, these student success coaches were tasked with a project of tracking milestones for all of the students that had been assigned to them. We implemented a retention alert within our new student information system. Faculties could very easily go in to their portal and submit retention alerts that went directly to that student’s success coach. The student success coach then made contact with their student and discussed the issue to where they could determine if we needed to get them tutoring, help financially, transportation, whatever the issue.

We also put in with milestones retention alert, we had our faculty start taking attendance, mandatory attendance taking for all faculty. And in their portal for that class they marked those students that were absent from class. They could submit a retention alert at the same time, but if a student missed six classes and that faculty had not submitted a retention alert, it automatically triggers a retention alert to the student’s success coach.

We also implemented midterm grades. And I was amazed at how students responded to midterm grades. So through all of this we took that caring to a whole new level. We not only expect faculty to make contact with those students that first week of class, if they’re not attending, if they haven’t signed in online, then the faculty member is expected to email or call that student.

We’ve taken it a step further with intrusiveness throughout. At the end of each long semester, I do town hall meetings for our students on all of our campuses. And where prior to pathways I went in and just let them talk, I go in now and I ask questions to where I prompt the students on talking about their experience at the college. It gives us a way each semester to assess how well we’re doing and what we need to tweak, but it also lets our students know that we care. Every employee at the college cares about them and cares about their success. Thank you.

**[END OF FILE]**