

Centering Students in GP Design

Madera Community College

Their Approach

As Madera Community College became an independent college instead of a center associated with Reedley College, it began to reassess its progress on guided pathways implementation and realized it needed a reboot. College leaders worked with Career Ladders Project (CLP) to identify a way forward that would build capacity for creative student-centered problem solving and increased buy-in from college constituent groups. To achieve their goal of deeper integration between student services and academic affairs, college leaders knew that they needed more champions and more voices at the table.

What They Did

Madera Community College worked with a range of constituent groups—from the executive leadership level through the faculty and staff—to plan a leadership training based on design thinking that could be applied in all of the guided pathways design teams. Bringing together leaders at every level from both guided pathways and equity teams, leaders were trained in human-centered design using the experience of a veteran student before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Leaders learned ways to focus on building empathy for the student experience and developing a deep understanding of challenges they face. They brainstormed solutions that were creative; even if some ideas were out of reach, the group considered how they might provide windows into workable solutions. The team will take this training and apply it to the design work they are doing to clarify the paths available to students, support student exploration and learning, and build proactive supports along the way.

What They Learned

Madera Community College leaders learned that it is never too late to step back and take inventory of what is working and what is still needed even when that may feel like pushing pause on progress. Recognizing where their change efforts still needed buy-in and participation helped them to bring separate teams together to focus on student-centered design that will guide their work moving forward.