Democratizing Quality Course Sequence Knowledge
Scope of Work

The proposed project will leverage statewide transcript data to improve persistence and completion among college students, particularly historically underserved (i.e., racially minoritized and low-income) students. Such an approach is designed to democratize knowledge pertaining to developing optimal or high-quality course sequences in higher education. In doing so, the proposed project aligns directly with the Guided Pathways pillar related to "ensuring that students are learning." Specifically, the project team will assess and enrich students' outcomes by providing evidence-based recommendations pertaining to how to optimize students' likelihood of successfully persisting and ultimately completing college with a high-quality credential. In addition, the information obtained through this expansive project can also inform and improve the Guided Pathways pillar of "helping students stay on their path," as the project team will provide actionable takeaways for ongoing intrusive advising to allow practitioners to inform students when those students are scheduling courses in an inefficient sequence. As a result, advisors can not only track at-risk students but also offer much-needed supports to improve all students' likelihood of persisting and graduating. The primary outcomes this investment will achieve are the establishment of (1) a body of quantitative evidence from statewide transcript data to inform technology-aided advising supports and (2) qualitative evidence exploring obstacles for students, advisors, and institutional leaders seeking to improve course performance and advising at scale. The proposed project will include, at a minimum, the following critical outputs: two research briefs outlining the high-level takeaways of the research findings, two online webinars intended for a wider audience (including practitioners charged with implementing our evidence-based recommendations), a data dashboard to visualize findings, and a final research report.

The overarching aim of the proposed project is to provide scalable, evidenced-based recommendations that outline optimal course sequences and thereby inform technology-aided advising support and institutional decision-making. Whether institutions are interested in how traditional-aged students perform in specific upper-level math courses relative to adult students or the specific online courses that work well for low-income or rural students facing time or location constraints, the proposed project will aim to conduct cutting-edge research as a mechanism to offer data-driven recommendations for all types of institutions in ways that can inform future decisions, interventions, and institutional strategies related to academic offerings.