

Students in the Fall '15 and Fall '16 cohorts were strongly encouraged to complete the program. Results show that students who used PathwayU at MCCC indicated that the tool was most useful in helping respondents feel confident in their major and career choices, and in helping them understand themselves and their career goals. Results of additional internal analyses show that PathwayU users at MCCC have higher GPAs and greater program persistence.



For 50 years, Montgomery County Community College has grown with the community to meet the evolving educational and workforce development needs of Montgomery County.

The College's comprehensive curriculum includes 100+ associate degree/certificate programs, as well as specialized workforce development training and certifications.

The College provides associate degree, certificate, & professional development programs that lead to transfer, employment & enrichment.

Students enjoy the flexibility of learning at the College's thriving campuses in Blue Bell and Pottstown, online through an extensive array of e-Learning options, or at the brand new Culinary Arts Institute in Lansdale.

Background

Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) is 1 of just 24 institutions in the country to be awarded up to \$225,000 in funding from EDUCAUSE as part of a recent iPASS grant competition. Participating institutions must launch comprehensive iPASS technologies by 2018, with the goal of *increasing year-to-year student retention by at least 10 percent*. The goal is for every new degree-seeking student to complete education, financial and career plans within his or her first semester at the College, and that *these plans will lead to improved retention, progression and completion*.

In fall 2016, MCCC implemented **MyCareerPlan** as part of the College's iPASS work. MyCareerPlan is the College's branded name for **PathwayU** – an online assessment tool that provides users with a battery of validated assessments pertaining to personality, values, interests, and workplace preferences. Once users complete the assessments, they are provided with a list of vocational pathways that are well-matched to their profile and additional information related to those professions.

Initially, protocols implemented by the College required new, degree-seeking students to complete MyCareerPlan during their first semester. This protocol was later revised to require students to complete MyCareerPlan as part of their onboarding process. (All students not *required* to complete MyCareerPlan are also provided access to the tool.) As part of the evaluation of the MyCareerPlan initiative, a survey was designed for students who had completed the assessments. This case study discusses results from the survey as well as additional internal analyses.

MyCareerPlan / PathwayU®

PathwayU was created from years of research and development in the area of predictive analytics pertaining to curriculum and vocational paths. The results of these analytics help develop strategies that students, alumni, and job seekers can implement to identify and pursue career paths that fit them well. The end-goal of this process is to *foster student success and help job-seekers build satisfying and purposeful careers.*

The product is a SaaS-based user portal containing assessments, personal reports, a job matching instrument, and “how-to” tools designed to help students and job-seekers find a vocational path that fits them well, make informed choices about education and career options, navigate the job search and interview process, and shape their work in ways that make it meaningful.

The online tools are the perfect complement to services that faculty, academic counselors, career services centers, and alumni career path programs offer. When provided as an overlay to the services schools already deliver, PathwayU extends the school’s reach and helps the school serve a broader array of students and alumni by offering 24-hour access to assessments, tools and support they can use on their own or with the help of an available service provider.

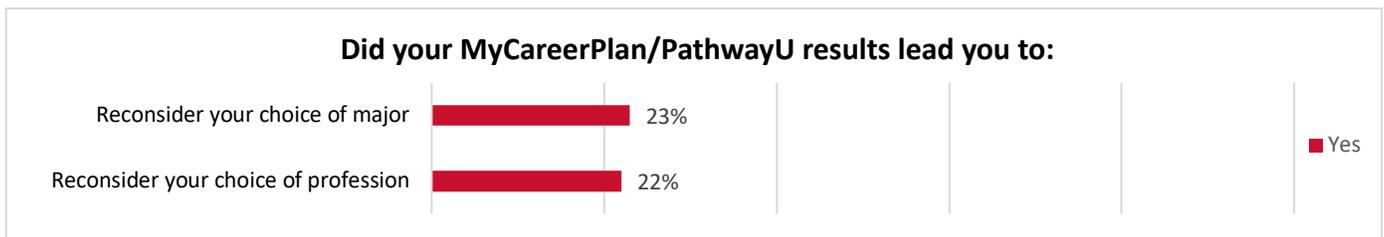
Data Parameters/Analysis

On May 1st 2018, the MyCareerPlan Survey was launched via SurveyMonkey to all students registered for the spring 2018 term who had completed the suite of assessments in MyCareerPlan as of April 30, 2018 (excluding those without an email address or who had opted out of receiving surveys). One reminder was sent during the initial administration. As the initial administration resulted in a low response rate, likely due to survey fatigue and the survey being administered during the final week of the spring term (as necessitated by the spring survey calendar), an additional reminder was sent during the Summer I term.

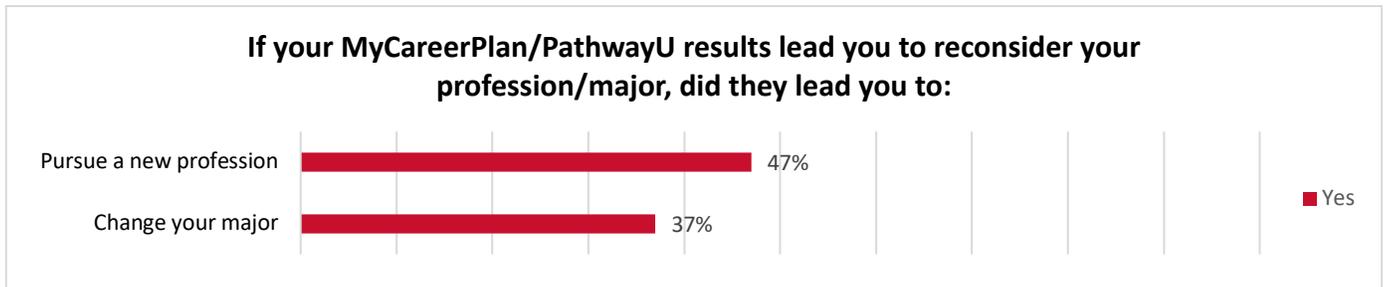
The survey was closed on June, 5, 2018. In total, 4,744 students were emailed, and 219 responses were received – yielding a response rate of 5%. Given the response rate, it is advisable that the findings presented herein be interpreted/extrapolated with some degree of conservatism. General findings from the survey are presented below.

Survey Results

- ❖ 23% of respondents indicated that their PathwayU results led them to reconsider their major.
- ❖ 22% of respondents indicated reconsidering their profession because of their results.



- ❖ In total, 30% of all respondents reported reconsidering their major and/or profession in light of their PathwayU results.
- ❖ Of those who reported reconsidering their major, more than a third (37%) reported actually changing their major and 47% indicated their results led them to pursue a new profession.



Results of Internal Analyses

In an early effort to explore the potential academic impact and corollaries of students' engagement with PathwayU, an analysis of student grade point averages was conducted (separately) for the fall 2015 and fall 2016 entering cohorts (to account for the fact that fall 2016, but not fall 2015, cohort students were subject to the iPASS protocols including PathwayU).

- ❖ For both cohorts, students who completed PathwayU had **statistically significantly higher cumulative GPAs** as of the fall 2017 term.¹

The significant increase in GPA suggests that at Montgomery County Community College, PathwayU users tend to have higher GPAs than non-users. The analysis of grade point averages was conducted using Civitas Learning which matched PathwayU users and non-users on a number of variables within the student record. While it is possible that more academically motivated students take PathwayU, it is also possible that students' engagement with PathwayU and the associated protocols facilitates greater academic success through increased engagement, better aligned course selection, and/or improvements in self-knowledge. Ultimately, maintaining a high GPA is important for students attempting to access certain academic programs, earn scholarships, and/or secure employment following college.

¹ 2015 Cohort: $t(242)=7.6, p<.01$; 2016 Cohort: $t(1011)=15.9, p<.01$