

**Washington State University**

**College of Education**

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**Will defend the dissertation on**

**Date: November 10, 2022**

**Time: 2:00 P.M.**

**TriCities Campus - TCIC 221**

**Zoom by request to [gradstudies@wsu.edu](mailto:gradstudies@wsu.edu)**

*Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend*

**BUY-IN AND RISK AVERSION AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY  
DURING GUIDED PATHWAYS IMPLEMENTATION**

Chair: Shannon Calderone

The purpose of this mixed-methods case study was to explore buy-in among faculty members during Guided Pathways implementation at a mid-sized community college in Washington State. Buy-in was assessed through the lens of prospect theory to more fully understand the nature of the decision-making processes used to assess whether or not to buy into the organizational change requisite of Guided Pathways. The framing of decision-making through an assessment of risk helped to determine barriers to buy-in. This study was conducted sequentially. During Phase 1, faculty members participated in a quantitative survey designed to inform the general perceptions of faculty to Guided Pathways, how it might impact the organizational functioning of the college, how it might impact their day-to-day work, and how it might impact the quality of teaching, learning, and advising on campus. Findings from this phase were used to guide development of an interview protocol employed during the qualitative phase of the study (Phase 2) and explore perceived threats and risks to Guided Pathways, including how faculty calculate and assess the cost-benefits associated with organizational change, how faculty believe Guided Pathways might impact their teaching and advising, and faculty beliefs regarding the main challenges and opportunities of Guided Pathways. The findings of this study indicate that the values of focus on teaching, community connection, workload, autonomy, and professional expertise are endowments that serve as reference points for risk during decision-making among faculty. Further the study identified value misalignment, uncertainty, lack of direction, mission creep, and fatigue as threats to buy-in through risk aversion. The researcher concluded that leaders may be able to garner faculty buy-in by framing change in a way that aligns with faculty endowments and addresses threats with transparency and collaboration. Further, a theoretical framework for faculty buy-in during decision making under risk emerged from the findings and may be beneficial to broader issues of faculty buy-in within the context of large-scale organizational change programs like Guided Pathways.