

California Community Colleges

**Career Technical Education Initiative**

**A Statewide Plan to Re-Brand and Market  
Career Technical Education**

August 23, 2016

Submitted by Ogilvy Public Relations



Ogilvy

# Ogilvy Public Relations

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**FINAL**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Between March and June 2016, the California Community College's Chancellor's Office engaged Ogilvy Public Relations (Ogilvy) to conduct preliminary research to lay a foundation for the development of a plan to generate awareness about the system's Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. This followed the California Community Colleges Board of Governor's approval of 25 recommendations put forth by the Task Force of Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy about career technical training. The recommendations seek to strengthen workforce education throughout the 113-college system, and help ensure a workforce with relevant skills and quality credentials that meet current and future employer needs, filling existing jobs and fueling job creation.

The research points to a tremendous opportunity for the California Community Colleges to become the higher education institution which can help close California's impending skills gap through the education and training of a well-paid workforce – one that meets employer needs and, ultimately, ensures the economic prosperity of the state.

Like any new initiative, a critical component of its success will be how it is branded, launched and promoted to key target audiences. The initiative must define and raise awareness among students, their influencers, key stakeholders and others about the variety of career pathways available through career training at California community colleges. Additionally, the effort should address changing perceptions of what career training programs can offer in terms of good well-paying, fulfilling and sustained employment opportunities.

This document provides a framework for the development of a comprehensive plan to re-brand and market the California Community Colleges CTE programs.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

The recession is over. California experienced impressive economic growth in 2015 – and it has continued in 2016. According to recent data from the World Bank and the California Department of Finance in March, California’s economy became the sixth largest in the world, behind only the U.S., China, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. California Governor Jerry Brown attributes this economic success to the diversity of the California business environment, “from movies to the Internet to agriculture – the incredible array of businesses that make up the state.”<sup>1</sup>

The governor also recognizes that education is key to California’s success. He recently said, “...new investments in our schools; solid universities; investments in water and energy. All this gives security and keeps California very much in the forefront of investment, change, cultural adaptation and leadership.”<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, there exists a real and growing gap between what employers need to keep our economy humming and what California’s labor pool currently offers. This gap varies greatly by region. For example, in the West Coast of California several sectors are looking for employees: Small Business; Information & Communications Technologies (ICT)/Digital Media; Agriculture, Water & Environmental Technologies; Retail/Hospitality/Tourism and Global Trade & Logistics industries are having trouble filling existing jobs. In the Central Valley and along the Eastern border sectors include: Advanced Manufacturing; Energy (Efficiency) & Utilities; Advanced Transportation & Renewables; Life Science/Biotech and Health sectors are fueling job creation, but again the state lacks a pool of qualified candidates to fill positions. It is clear that the state today lacks a pool of qualified candidates, and as the state continues to grow, we must make sure California’s labor pool keeps pace with employer demands for a skilled and competitive workforce (both regionally and statewide).

According to a February 2016 article in *Evolution*, an online magazine about higher education, “California faces a confounding juxtaposition...thousands of unemployed or underemployed workers living side-by-side with thousands of unfilled jobs.”<sup>2</sup> The current problem will only get worse, unless addressed by career training programs.

For instance, statistics show that by 2025, 30 percent of all job openings in California – more than 1 million jobs – will require postsecondary education training such as middle-skills degrees, certificates and credentials. California’s education pipeline is not keeping pace with employer demands. The California legislature and the California Community Colleges have recently recognized this critical skills gap. As a result, the California’s budget now includes \$200 million for a workforce training program to address the challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-16/brown-s-california-overtakes-brazil-with-companies-leading-world>

<sup>2</sup> “The Seven Most Important Changes Community Colleges Can Make to Close California’s Skills Gap”, February 2016

## **CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES' NEW INITIATIVE**

In 2015, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy began to grapple with how to address this challenge and improve workforce education within the system. They came together with one goal: to close the skills gap that employers say is a barrier to filling existing jobs and fueling job creation. The Task Force was made up of representatives from community colleges, the business community, labor groups, K-12 policymakers, public agencies involved in workforce training and community-based organizations. In the end, they developed 25 recommendations for improving California Community Colleges' capacity to prepare students for future job opportunities and meet the goals of our growing economy.<sup>3</sup>

The Colleges Board of Governors unanimously adopted the recommendations in November 2015. The main areas covered in the recommendations are:

- Student success
- Career pathways
- Workforce data and outcomes
- Curriculum
- CTE faculty
- Regional coordination
- Funding

The California Community Colleges is uniquely qualified to help meet this challenge. The system's 113 college campuses can help ensure our future workforce will meet growing employer needs because of the robust, affordable and accessible CTE programs that already exist. Some of their current programs result in certificates, others result in associate degrees, and some offer courses to enhance skills and set students on the road to a well-paying career. In fact, the California Community Colleges' CTE programs are already highly successful. Governor Jerry Brown's Proposed 2016-17 Budget calls out the current strengths of the California Community Colleges' career programs<sup>4</sup>:

- The California Community Colleges is the largest provider of workforce training in the state and nation.
- California community colleges educate 70 percent of our state's nurses.
- California community colleges train 80 percent of firefighters, law enforcement personnel and emergency medical technicians.
- More than 100,000 individuals are trained each year in industry-specific workforce skills.
- California community colleges offer associate degrees and short-term job training certificates in more than 175 fields.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/portals/6/docs/sw/BOG\\_TaskForce\\_Report\\_v12\\_web.pdf](http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/portals/6/docs/sw/BOG_TaskForce_Report_v12_web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/KeyFacts.aspx>

As one California community college administrator put it this way: “If you are in an accident anywhere in California, everyone who will touch you, come to your aid, comfort you and may help save your life – from the first responders, to the ambulance personnel to the hospital intake staff to your nurses – may have been trained at a California community college. Our careers are high-quality, essential, important and well paying.”

However, except for a few training programs like those mentioned above, CTE programs in California are often overlooked, under-valued and under-promoted.

In order to address that, the report by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation contained a central recommendation: to create a sustained, public outreach campaign to industry, high school students, counselors, parents, faculty, staff, and the community at large to promote career development and attainment and the value of career technical education.<sup>5</sup>

What follows is a framework for the direction of such a public outreach initiative to market California Community Colleges’ CTE programs that will help fill the skills gap. To prepare this framework, Ogilvy conducted a multipronged preliminary research project to better understand the current state of California Community Colleges’ CTE programs and the barriers and opportunities that exist for a successful program.

### **INITIAL RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Multipronged research included both qualitative and quantitative research studies, including: literature review, website assessment, in-depth interviews, small group discussion sessions and a quantitative student-focused, statewide survey. Reports for the website assessment, small group discussion sessions, in-depth interviews and a quantitative student survey<sup>6</sup> are included in the Appendix and will provide a fuller understanding of the research findings.

The small group discussion sessions and in-depth interviews were conducted among instructors, professors, administrators, public outreach staff and other campus representatives. They generally confirm that there is a very positive and good news story to be told about current CTE programs. In fact, there is almost universal enthusiasm and support for the role that community colleges play, and can play, in assuring California meets future workforce needs. Moreover, there is enthusiasm about system-wide plans to elevate the CTE brand and promote career programs. Most feel it is long overdue.

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<sup>5</sup> CCC BOARD OF GOVERNORS Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy Report and Recommendations, page 10.

<sup>6</sup> Small Group Discussion Sessions, June 2016; In-Depth Interviews, June 2016; and Career Technical Education Quantitative Survey Research Findings, July 2016)

The statewide quantitative survey (among students and prospective students) indicated that general overall awareness of CTE programs is high, familiarity and specific understanding is low; although most current and prospective students agree that a CTE class or program can help them financially and may lead to a job that interests them.

Taken together, all the research highlighted a myriad of reasons for the lack of emphasis on and the understanding of the importance of career technical education programs. But, it also confirmed the opportunities presented by the California Community Colleges' CTE programs. Following are some of the barriers the research brought to light:

- The disappearance of high school shop and other technical programs in the 1990s<sup>7</sup> (due in part because of the emphasis on computer skills training).
- The lack of parental, high school counselor, influencer and student support for CTE program enrollment.
- The struggle to “be heard” above the constant chorus from the community college community, and others, of the need to transfer to four-year institutions (messages about career trainings opportunities are overshadowed by transfer messages).
- There is not enough money or focus to promote the opportunity, validity and pathway to excellent careers that CTE programs deliver.
- Private, for-profit training institutions directly compete for time, message penetration, paid advertising and enrollment with the California Community College CTE programs.
- The lack of coordination between and among campuses with competing training programs in the same area or in various areas throughout the state (including the lack of coordinated outreach to employers and labor representatives in each region).
- The “second-class” or even third-class relegation of technical programs both in the minds of the public as well as with policymakers and governing bodies (at least two respondents in different groups said, “Here’s how people perceive us: First you are supposed to go to a four year college; if you can’t get in there, then you go to a community college so you can transfer to a four year college; and then, and only then, if you can’t or don’t want to do that, you can try a technical career...It’s always the last choice and not a very good place for your brand to be.”).
- While most students and prospective students would consider a CTE class or program, they need more information – knowledge surrounding CTE programs is the biggest barrier to enrollment, although students wanting a four-year degree is also a considerable barrier. Because they don’t know, those surveyed could not define “CTE.”

The CTE brand is unclear at best and the hundreds of programs that fall under CTE are not all necessarily “technical”, so while overall awareness of CTE programs in general is high among students and potential students (65 percent of current students and 50 percent of prospective students, Career Technical Education Quantitative Research findings, July 2016), familiarity and specific understanding of the specific programs and classes and what they may lead to is low.

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<sup>7</sup> *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, Matthew B. Crawford, 2009.

The California Community Colleges needs a new, compelling brand that easily and clearly defines what career pathway programs can offer in a way that encourages further exploration and enrollment by students, and renewed public support. The system will need to communicate this new brand via outreach to students, influencers, policy makers, employers and the general public, laying the foundation for a behavioral shift, where the value of CTE is properly recognized, respected and celebrated.

The brand must be broad enough to provide an umbrella encompassing the entire state, but must also allow the flexibility to be regionally tailored to reflect regional economies, and all the 72 districts and 113 campuses.

In addition to awareness and clarity, Ogilvy's research also uncovered key barriers and challenges that must be addressed in both the branding and outreach programs (e.g., emphasis on four-year transfer, skepticism of academics, multiplicity of community college initiatives, etc.). Any plan for creating and promoting a new brand must recognize these barriers, and provide both the functional and emotional equities to overcome them.

### **BARRIERS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Preliminary research – both quantitative and qualitative – uncovered key challenges and considerations.

Challenges include:

- **Understanding:** Initial research indicates there is a level of familiarity about what “CTE” is but few can actually define it or name specific areas of study.
- **Perceptions:** Initial research has shown that CTE programs and careers are viewed as “less than” or “second class” or even “dirty.” Often times it is assumed that if one could not enroll in a four-year college or university, then one could enroll at a community college but only for the purposes of transferring to a four-year college or university. CTE programs are only considered as a last resort.
- **Competition:** There is a great deal of competition for the system's CTE programs. First, competition from private for-profit vocational schools that “sell” flexibility, short-term investments and guaranteed job placement. Second, direct competition from the system's 113 colleges who also market their offerings for the purpose of transferring to a four-year college or university (e.g., programs highlighting agreements with the California State University and University of California systems).
- **California's Multicultural Population:** California's ethnically diverse populations require specific and targeted outreach, which is both language-appropriate and culturally sensitive to the specific needs of the respective communities. Language barriers, cultural differences and literacy levels as well as socio-economic circumstances may all influence how outreach for the California Community Colleges' CTE programs is conducted. Multicultural outreach is critical in California, and it is not a “niche” or an add on – it needs to be an integral part of planning and all program activities, including when a new brand is considered which must be culturally sensitive.

- **Size and Scope of the State:** The size and scope of California’s media markets are greater than any other state, making it significantly more costly to reach the targets. Additionally, the skills gap across the state varies greatly by region. For example, the skills gap in the Western part of the state includes: small business; information & communications technologies/digital media; agriculture, water & environmental technologies; retail/hospitality/tourism and global trade & logistics. The skills gap in the eastern part of the state includes: advanced manufacturing; energy & utilities; advanced transportation & renewables; life science/biotech; and health. To effectively close the skills gap that employers say is a barrier to filling existing jobs and fueling job creation, we must promote the system’s CTE programs based on regional labor market needs.

Opportunities include:

- **Variety:** There are a tremendously wide variety of programs that offer breadth and depth in terms of industry-valued middle-skills degrees, certificates and credentials. While some might only think of welding when they think of CTE, the reality is that there are a myriad of programs and areas of study from which students can choose. In fact, students can enroll in associate degree and certificate programs in more than 350 fields of study.
- **Income and opportunity:** Currently the skills gap means that employers are looking to hire into long-term, good paying jobs, but they struggle to find workers who have the skills to fill job openings. Employers are in need – and are ready to hire – individuals with industry-valued middle-skill degrees, certificates and credentials.
- **The system’s network:** The system’s network has the ability to foster collaboration among districts, business/labor and K-12 at the local level. In recent years, community colleges and workforce partners have moved toward a regional approach to respond more effectively to regional labor market needs and address skills gaps. By leveraging the successful integration of the colleges, and partnering with business/labor and K-12 at the local level, student and employer needs can be better met.
- **Example for the nation:** Because California is so large and diverse, the “testing” and rollout of this new initiative can and should be an example or model for other states. California is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world. Our workforce can drive the national workforce and, the current interest in career training as evidenced by the national attention it recently garnered by both President Obama and Secretary Clinton elevates the importance and opportunity of this new initiative.

After addressing the barriers and leveraging the opportunities, a new brand must then be aggressively sold to skeptics and students, while assuring employers that the system’s CTE programs can fill their needs. The plan must be thoughtful, compelling, strategic, and take into account California’s diversity. It must also recognize and utilize all the channels of communication currently being used by the public (particularly students). The plan must have a traditional, digital, paid and earned media component, as well as outreach components that have proven successful.

In 2016 and beyond, it won't be enough to put multilanguage ads in ethnic and traditional print media. It won't be enough to build a brand, without a financial and system-wide plan to highlight and embrace it. It won't be enough to simply understand the need for student, teacher and counselor buy-in, without a realistic plan to achieve it. Also, as with any public awareness and behavioral change program, success won't happen overnight.

One additional barrier Ogilvy noted is that a handful of individual campuses currently have their own outreach programs underway to develop and promote their CTE programs. Some even have developed brands and taglines that are being marketed in their regions (e.g., "Your Future Starts Here" in Fresno). Any plan must consider this reality.

## **PLAN ELEMENTS**

In developing a plan for outreach, consideration should be focused on the overall goal of the effort to re-brand and market CTE.

**Goal:** The goal of the effort is:

- *Position the California Community Colleges as the higher education institution helping close California's impending skills gap through the education and training of a well-paid workforce with relevant skills and quality credentials that meet employer needs and, ultimately, ensuring the economic prosperity of the state.*

To accomplish this goal there will need to be a broad-based commitment from the entire community college system, education and workforce partners, business and industry, and state policymakers. This will allow the California community colleges to build on the long-established success of educating the state's workforce, getting students into well-paying jobs and keeping pace with the increasing demand for skilled workers.

A successful plan must combine marketing campaign elements including paid advertising, media relations, community education, grassroots outreach, partnerships, stakeholder engagement (business, labor, K-12, etc.), social media and direct marketing.

Each of the above outreach tactics and more must be explored to ensure all external and internal audiences understand the value and benefits of the programs. Each will require a dedicated budget and a statewide rollout. California's continued economic well being may very well depend on success.

If successful, the system has the potential to be recognized as the catalyst for helping the state meet its workforce shortage gap and serve as a model for the nation.

**Communications Objectives:** The following communications objectives support the overarching goal:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the system’s Career Technical Education opportunities;
- Change the perceptions of what a CTE means; and, ultimately,
- Motivate and increase enrollment in the California Community Colleges’ CTE programs and increase employer engagement with these programs.

**Target Audiences:** The primary target audiences for this effort include:

- **Teens and young adults:** This includes those ages 16 – 24 year olds. This group includes high school students and recent graduates, as well as current community colleges students.
- **Adults, including Veterans:** This group is 25 – 54 year olds, with an emphasis on those that are unemployed or underemployed, but also considers those that want to enhance their skills.
- **Influencers/Stakeholders:** Influencers includes parents, caregivers, counselors (high school and community college), community leaders and elected officials.
- **College and District Administrators:** These stakeholders are an important audience in helping spread the word and understanding of CTE programs.
- **Business/Labor/Industry:** This is a key target as training and career opportunities greatly vary by region and input on curriculum, labor needs, etc. and includes workforce development boards, economic development agencies, etc.

All target audiences outreach must reflect the diversity that is California. This includes, but is not limited to specific plans to reach Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Pacific Islanders, and others. This diversity must be reflected in all outreach strategies, paid media, and program materials – and not simply translation, but transadaptation – ensuring information is culturally *and* linguistically sensitive and relevant.

**Strategies and Approach:** While this report is not meant to fully explore and present a final plan to re-brand and market the California Community Colleges’ CTE initiative, Ogilvy recommends a few strategy considerations that research suggests may point to a successful program.

1. A phased campaign approach. This new initiative will require a great deal of work. Using a phased approach for this plan will allow for stakeholder buy in, utilization of key learnings and course correction as necessary. A phased approach might include: Phase I: brand development including messages, logo, tagline, etc.; Phase II: stakeholder introduction; and Phase III: the public launch, advertising and ongoing activities. This phased approach is not mandatory, but might provide the best workable framework for this new program.

2. Umbrella brand. Establishing an overarching “umbrella” brand position for the system’s CTE initiative that can be tailored to meet the needs of specific regions/districts/colleges. Since many districts/campuses have their own outreach campaigns highlighting specific CTE programs, any new brand that is developed for the system-wide outreach program must be broad enough to encompass all programs (e.g., it must be an umbrella covering the entire system). The umbrella brand should represent an accumulation of the impressions in the mind of the audiences – a set of characteristics that tell a story and make a promise throughout the whole system. The overarching brand will provide focus on all strategic and tactical efforts that are then tailored and implemented at the local level. The California Tourism Commission’s Visit California campaign has successfully implemented an “umbrella” effort. Visit California conveys the California ethos of dreamers, excitement and adventure while regionally highlighting the variety of destinations in the state. The brand conveys that ethos weather promoting wine tasting in Napa, surfing in San Diego or skiing in Tahoe.
3. Multiple channels. Using multiple trusted channels to reach audiences (paid media, earned media, social media, partners (K-12, business, industry, labor, etc.).
4. Messaging. Developing messaging that is clear, simple and “jargon free” as well as culturally and linguistically sensitive, and carrying this messaging throughout all touch points (advertising, information materials, website, app, etc.).
5. Website. Exploring the website conundrum as there are currently many career exploration websites students use to research various careers, including CTE careers. The result is decentralized information that is not presented in a single, unifying voice. The plan must recommend the best way to enable a seamless user experience.
6. Stakeholder engagement. Developing a stakeholder introduction and engagement program as there are a variety of stakeholders and collaborative entities that play a role in the success of the marketing campaign. They must be included in the planning and rollout of the new effort. Introducing stakeholders to the effort early will allow for feedback and comment while helping achieve maximum buy-in from parties and will help maintain high levels of support.

**Tactics:** The marketing plan should consider the following tactics:

- Research (additional research beyond what has been conducted to date): Develop research plans to help inform the development of brand creative (name, logo, tagline, creative concepts, etc.).
- Brand development (including name, logo, tagline): Apply a brand development strategy and approach for the creation of a name, logo and tagline.
- Creative and message development (including testing of creative): Outline the approach for creative and message development.
- Creative production (including paid advertising and materials): Detail the creative production process, including procurement of vendors at key stages of the production.
- Media planning and paid advertising (including value add): Recommend a media planning and paid advertising plan (including paid social media), including value-add elements.

- Website and app development: Outline the website development process and supporting app, if appropriate. This must be informed by new and scheduled web and app developments currently under way by the Chancellor’s Office and its partners.
- Social media: Develop innovative social media strategies to drive growth and engagement, as well as leverage existing and emerging assets for content development (e.g., Salary Surfer 2.0 video series, “I **Can** Afford College” A Little Big of Magic video featuring CTE careers, etc.).
- Stakeholder engagement (including planning and coordination with the 72 Districts and 113 campuses, employers/business/labor, K-12, elected officials, etc.): Outline a strategy to engage stakeholders and keep them involved with and informed of program activities. One of this engagement strategy’s goal is to elevate awareness and knowledge of the system’s CTE programs.
- Media relations (traditional and social): Develop a statewide media relations plan designed to raise awareness of the program.
- Events: Identify and recommend events for program participation throughout the year. Events can include, but are not limited to high school college fairs, industry conferences, community college campus events, community events and multicultural fairs and festivals.
- Partnerships: Develop a plan to recruit and engage partners such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, unions, employers, community stakeholder groups, public and private organizations and others.
- Employer/Union Outreach: Develop an employer/union-based outreach strategy that will increase work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships, provide workplace experience and, ultimately lead to job placement. This outreach will focus on partnerships that respond to regional labor market needs. Additionally, the employer/union outreach should elevate awareness and knowledge of the system’s CTE programs.
- Ground Game: Develop a ground game effort that includes community college campuses, high schools, employers and community-based organizations to engage prospective students one-on-one through multiple touch points to increase awareness and CTE opportunities.
- Measurement and Evaluation: Ongoing measurement and evaluation is required to assess the success of the program components and allow for the opportunity to adjust messaging, tactics and paid media as necessary. This new program represents a major commitment from the State of California and the California Community Colleges. Measurement and evaluation are critical to ensure that policymakers will continue to support it. Implementation of the program should not only focus on outputs, but also outcomes, and at a minimum, should include the following:
  - *Awareness and perceptions tracking survey*  
Ongoing tracking of awareness and perceptions among the student target population can help guide ongoing outreach efforts. This can be done via a telephone survey or online survey, but the method should be consistent year

upon year for comparison and tracking purposes. The tracking survey will assess changes in awareness overtime, perceptions, knowledge levels and behavioral intentions. In addition, data can be collected on message recall, exposure to elements of the campaign and the relationship between recall/exposure and outcomes. This data will be an important measure of campaign effectiveness.

- *Stakeholder feedback*

As the stakeholder audience is a critical part of the success of this effort, an evaluative tool to solicit stakeholder feedback is important. It may be most appropriate to solicit this feedback via an online survey to facilitate a streamlined means of providing feedback.

- *Website hits/app downloads and usage*

Success will also be evaluated by website hits. Additionally, if an app is developed, the number of app downloads and usage should be tracked so that data from those accessing the information via mobile are captured.

- *Social media tracking*

It will be critical to implement a robust and unified social media measurement and analysis procedure. Pending what the social media platforms are used in the effort (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.), different evaluative metrics should be established to capture relevant data – followers, engagements, shares, likes, etc. Additionally, a listening post can capture what the online conversation on the program is – what specifically are people “talking” about, what is the sentiment, etc.

- *Media Tracking*

Media impressions as a result of media relations efforts will need to be tracked to give context to audiences reached and impressions. In addition, accuracy of messages and tone should also be evaluated. Media tracking should be done on a monthly basis allowing for adjustments in media plans and messages as needed.

- *Materials distributed*

As an output measurement, the materials created to support program efforts should be tracked so there is a sense of what materials are used most frequently and by what audiences (stakeholders vs. students, etc.). This can also help inform the development of materials for future campaign efforts.

- *Number of enrollments*

Ultimately, the success of the marketing and outreach plan will be determined by the number of enrollments in a CTE program at a California community

college and subsequently, the number of students completing CTE programs and earning a certificate. This data will be tracked by the Chancellor's Office.

All work must be closely coordinated with the California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office and the Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy, whose initial work on and commitment to career development is key to the success of the program and its support from the Governor and legislature. In addition, the marketing plan must include integration and coordination with college enrollment marketing efforts to leverage budget dollars, extend reach and coordinate rollout.

**BUDGET**

The budget is estimated to be \$3,000,000 - \$4,000,000 annually. A recommendation on resource allocation for the scope of work should be made.

**TIMING**

A recommended timeline outlining key activities and milestones for project elements should be developed.

**APPENDIX**

(Note: the website assessment, small group discussion session, in-depth interview and quantitative survey report will be attached).

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## Appendix

- Existing Site Review & Initial Recommendation
- Small Group Discussion Sessions Comprehensive Summary Report
- Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) Comprehensive Summary Report
- California Community Colleges Career Technical Education Research Findings

*Agiloy*

# Ogilvy Public Relations

**To:** Paul Feist, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

**From:** Ogilvy Public Relations

**Cc:** Paige Marlatt Dorr, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

**Date:** May 6, 2016

**Re:** Existing Site Review & Initial Recommendation

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## OVERVIEW

As part of Ogilvy's Scope of Work to develop a plan to re-brand and market the California Community Colleges' Career Technical Education (CTE) initiative, we were tasked with conducting a review of three existing websites/apps to determine their utility as they pertain to the re-branding effort, to conduct an initial examination of their effectiveness and to make recommendations that might be explored in the CTE branding/outreach campaign.

At the direction of the Chancellor's Office, Ogilvy reviewed the following sites/apps:

1. Salary Surfer (website)
2. Career Coach (website)
3. Here to Career (app)

## METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our review, Ogilvy asked internal social media experts to review each vehicle. At the same time, and in order to get a younger reaction to each, we had two Ogilvy interns (one recent college graduate and one current American River Community College student) evaluate each site. Then, before we finalized this report, we asked other public relations colleagues to review and participate in a discussion of the findings presented by the evaluation team. One thing was clear: we found some markedly different reactions to the sites usability and impact based on the age, technical acumen and use of social media of the evaluators.

Following are our findings and recommendations. For each vehicle, we indicate both pros and cons, make some specific "fix" observations and then make some initial recommendation on how these sites/app might best be integrated into the CTE re-branding effort.

## SITE ANALYSIS

### 1. Salary Surfer <http://salarysurfer.cccco.edu>

Salary Surfer gives prospective students a tool to compare salary ranges for various disciplines and career choices. It uses the aggregated earnings of graduates from a five-year period to provide an estimate of the potential wages a worker might earn two years and five years after receiving a certificate or degree in a designated careers. This tool also provides information on which colleges offer programs in specific disciplines. The Salary Surfer does not contain information about wages earned by community college students who transfer to a four-year institution or get degrees post AA and/or technical certificates.

We understand that the Salary Surfer website will eventually have more than 100 videos featuring CTE students, professors and employers. These videos will be able to be repurposed at the local level and should go a long way in extending the information available on this site.

#### Pros

- The site is simple and friendly.
- It features photos from different college campuses representing CTE careers.
- A pull down menu offering fields/areas of study is at the top of the page which is useful.
- Salary tables can be sorted by salary levels.
- There is a link to additional wage tracker resources so potential students can view additional information.

#### Cons

- The link to these additional resources is not prominent; it is in the “fine print” at the bottom of the page.
- In the salary tables, the meaning of the “2 Years Before” column is not clear.
- There are links provided to schools offering the degree/field of study, but the links are to the school’s *homepage* rather than to a page about the degree/field of study; therefore, a potential student must work hard once they reach a campus site to find specific career choices – younger researchers found this frustrating.
- There is no open search bar to allow users to enter their own search terms. Individuals can only search via the predetermined fields of study – again, younger evaluators are used to broad search features where they can select from a wide variety of choices.
- The Salary Surfer does not contain information about wages earned by community college students who transfer to a four-year institution.
- Simple salary information is likely appealing, but simple salary facts don’t provide enough detail to determine a career path.

General overview: Overall, this site offers information that, on the surface, looks to appeal to both students and others (parents, counselors, friends) who may be instrumental in helping students understand the career choices available to them and what they can expect to earn. However, while we found that simple salary information is appealing to 18 – 21 year olds (e.g., they understand the difference between making \$50,000 and \$85,000), simple salary facts don't provide enough detail for them to help them determine a career path. This was quite evident in the different age-group evaluations. As a stand-alone site, this lacks important additional data. We believe it must be a part of a larger and/or more comprehensive site that combines factors of all of the options we reviewed.

## **2. Career Coach** (<https://4cd.emsicareercoach.com>)

Career Coach is designed to help students find a good career by providing the most current local data on wages, employment, job postings, and associated education and training.

The Career Coach site is difficult to find. It does not come up under any general search using the words "Career Coach." The URL is not standard and the sites appear to be aligned with specific college campuses. Therefore, users might only find it if they had an interest in those specific campuses. All of our researchers found this difficulty a major drawback of the site.

### **Pros**

- The main page features five sections or ways to search for information.
- An open search bar allows for easy navigation.
- The specific section prompting military personnel to search by their Military Occupation Code (MOC) is very helpful for veterans and others.
- The "Quiz/Career Assessment" tool profiled our test users accurately; leading to our conclusion that it can be very helpful to prospective students.
- The depth of the Career and Degrees sections is thorough and helpful.
- The "Resume Builder" is a strong tool.

### **Cons**

- The site is difficult to find.
- Both search sections at the top of the page are open prompts, but some people need help getting started.
- The "Hot Jobs" section only lists one career.
- The site is not visually engaging. There is little color and the icons representing the sections are not obvious and do not visually differentiate the ways to search.
- If you create a list of careers to review, you have to scroll through pages to review every option and that is time consuming.

While this site has many valuable tools and provides much more usable information than Salary Surfer, the fact that its title is not intuitive and there is not an easy way to find it is a huge drawback. The design was not visually appealing to older audiences; although younger audiences did not comment on it. The biggest issue for the younger audience was the need to scroll through multiple pages of careers which was a barrier to their exploration of the site.

### **3. Here to Career (mobile app)**

Developed in partnership with the Chancellor's office and the Young Invincibles, Here to Career is a mobile application originally designed for low-income students and their families in the Inland Empire. Its original goal was to provide low-income Latino families information about educational opportunities at California community colleges including information on careers that would increase earning potential and provide improved economic prosperity.

Our evaluation showed that while it was originally developed for low-income families, it is applicable and usable for all.

#### **Pros**

- This app has a simple clean design.
- It includes detailed explorations of various careers.
- Its home page offers three clearly differentiated buttons to explore.
- The "Degrees & Colleges" section can be customized to individuals who are using the app.
- It appears that the quiz results are accurate and easy to understand.
- The profiles of community college alumni in each occupation are clear and compelling and the profile notes that the career is in "high demand" are especially appealing.
- The app includes a clear resource page for financial aid, deadlines, etc.
- An individual can "save" or "dismiss" any alumni profile you review, so that they can review and build a personalized list of career possibilities.

#### **Cons**

- Sideswiping the profile left or right to "save" or "dismiss" is reminiscent of Tinder (a date rating site) and undermines some of the app's credibility. The app should be fun and easy to use, but swiping up or down or choosing a red light or a green light might be more appropriate.
- Under the Jobs & Careers option, you are forced to take the quiz before you can see any career profiles.
- The focus of a student's search is on their careers and degrees, not the alumni, so these sections might be more appropriately named.

Developed originally for a low income/Latino population all evaluators felt this app provided the easiest navigation, the clearest information and appealed to the broadest audience, certainly not just to low-income individuals. It was clear in our discussion that students and younger users are prone to like and use apps. They “live” on their cell phones, utilizing apps from when they wake up in the morning, throughout the day and before they go to bed at night and therefore immediately took to this vehicle. In addition, the Here to Career app has simple and clean design, and a catchy title spoke to all the evaluators in a positive way. Whatever the final new brand for the program, it must include a mobile app that very well could and should be modeled on Here to Career.

### Initial Recommendations

While all the sites have some interesting and useful content, features and functions, in order to finalize our recommendations and to make comparisons easy, we developed a simple four-point scale to rate each vehicle (0 being the lowest ranking and 3 the highest). A quick look at the chart will give you an easy reference.

Site/App	Ease of URL Search	Search Options on Site	Student Applicability	Parent/Influencer Applicability	Specific CTE Promotion*
Salary Surfer	2	1	2	3	2
Career Coach	0	3	2.5	2.5	0
Here to Career	3	3	3	3	0

Each of the vehicles has some positives as well as barriers to help current/prospective students choose a career or understand pathways available through CTE.

The Here to Career app is the most robust and useful tool (and has the highest scores), but other aspects of all three of the vehicles include important information that should and can be incorporated into one all-encompassing site with a complimentary app.

\*The CTE promotion column means we rated these in terms of how much they promote those careers that specifically relate to technical and certificated programs offered at the California community colleges. While two of the sites are good places for career choices, if the goal of these vehicles is to promote CTE programs, they have a lot more to do. We have included more about this in the general recommendation section that follows.

## Recommendations for Improving the Sites

We have recommendations for some simple fixes that might easily be made to all three. For instance, both the app and the web platforms need an easy open search function as well as guided search options. If a student knows what they are looking for, they should be able to search that term. If they don't know, they should easily be able to find a quiz or a list of careers to explore.

In addition, here are two more things to consider:

- **Data.** There should be consistent data across all sites. We recognize that the data behind the sites is different, but there should be a determination as to which data is best to support a combined endeavor and to make sure it matches.
- **Add Key Words to Each Site Messaging.** As we delve deeper into our other research for this project (focus groups, IDIs, etc.), certain words keep coming up. Some of the words are almost ubiquitous when professors, administrators and others describe the highlights of the program and its importance. Words like: **Skills, Employment, Pathway, Help, Applied Learning, Good Paying/Good Wages** – these are just a few words that we would recommend in all messaging moving forward and should be included in any final site and/or app.

Other “fix” or update considerations for the individual sites/app:

### 1. Salary Surfer

- Add an open search bar.
- Change the landing page to go to directly to individual campus career pages, not the home page.

### 2. Career Coach

- A pull down menu or list of areas of study is helpful. “Where to Start” section could be higher on the page.

### 3. Here to Career

- The Here to Career quizzes are good, but should be re-evaluated frequently to ensure they are up-to-date.
- The Here to Career personalized profiles are excellent for helping students consider various professions in detail, but the profiles may be a bit “lofty” for beginning students and/or 18 year olds. We suggest that the upcoming video project encompass video profiles of people in CTE careers and/or careers that seem attainable to high school students or others. Highlighting astronauts or anesthesiologist may be more off-putting than inspirational.

## Overriding concern

By far the biggest issue we see with all three vehicles is also surfacing in our other research: *What is the central message of CTE – and how are you going to limit or brand it so that it is not trying to be all things to all students?*

This is clearly an issue for a larger discussion. Are you a transfer system? Are you a remedial system? Are you a retraining system? OR are you an institution where you offer training for the jobs of the future? We know the answer is all of the above, and more. But before establishing the CTE “hallmark” website, you must land on an answer and a brand on how to promote the CTE program.

For instance, all three sites/app seem to be equally promoting the array of degrees and careers offered by community colleges, while at the same time suggesting career options that go beyond what your technical degrees and/or programs can deliver. If the true goal is to promote the technical careers and “industry-informed career pathways,” then quiz profiles should not suggest career options such as Supreme Court Justice, Model or Astronaut.

We understand the aspirational goal of the community colleges: a system that promotes the idea that you can enter *any* career by starting at a community college (even Oscar winning movie director). However, those more difficult career paths seem in conflict with promoting CTE careers where the community college certificated programs are a fairly attainable and quick way in to jobs where you can make a good living, support a family and have a rewarding career.

**One thing is clear given our research, after branding the CTE program, we recommend that one new site and supporting app should be developed with the best features of the sites/apps reviewed here, but using Here to Career as a foundation for both.**

We caveat this recommendation with the note that testing web concepts, content, features and apps must be further tested with those that will actually use the site as input from the target audience is critical. In addition, the site must developed in line with the ultimate brand development of the entire project.

###

**California Community Colleges  
Career Technical Education (CTE) Initiative  
Small Group Discussion Sessions  
Comprehensive Summary Report**

June 17, 2016

Prepared by  
Ogilvy Public Relations

Following is an overview of part one of the research, methodology and findings conducted by Ogilvy Public Relations on behalf of the California Community College Career Technical Education Initiative (CTE). This research is part of an initial exploration of current CTE programs to help inform the development of a plan to re-brand and market the system's CTE programs. Three types of research were planned for this initial stage (two have been completed):

1. **Small Group Discussions** with stakeholders and administrators who currently work with and for various California community colleges;
2. **Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)** with people similar to the above (e.g., stakeholders, administrators). IDIs also included private sector representatives from business and labor; and
3. **A Quantitative Student Survey** with students who are currently enrolled in or hope to enroll in community college career technical programs.

In addition to the research above, Ogilvy also conducted a website review to assess the utility of existing career exploration tools. That report was delivered to the Chancellor's office in early May.

The following report discusses the **Small Group/Focus Group research**.

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS – PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to solicit feedback on the current California Community Colleges' Career Technical Education (CTE) Initiative among key education stakeholders, administrators, CTE instructors, public affairs/communication staff and program leaders. That research will help inform the development of a plan to re-brand and market CTE. Ogilvy Public Relations conducted this research in small group settings in Sacramento, Davis and Santa Rosa California. Although all the groups took place in Northern California, participants represented campuses throughout the state. Two Ogilvy senior staff moderated the group discussions.

The participants represented system-wide administration, as well as programs and professional roles from campuses throughout California – from San Diego to Northern California, the Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles and many campus locations in between. These discussion

groups took the form of “focus groups” (although and there was no “two way mirror” separating participants from anyone).

These groups were the first research protocol we conducted; results from the groups helped formulate both the IDI questionnaire and the student quantitative survey that followed.

### **Methodology**

Four small discussion groups were held in April 2016 to explore ideas, concerns, barriers, and messages surrounding California Community College’s CTE programs. Participants included Community College Administrators (including the leader of the Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy), education stakeholders who currently work with and for various campus CTE programs, system-wide communications staff, professors and instructors of CTE courses, and public relations and communications experts from campuses with active CTE programs. A total of 32 participants took part in the small group discussions.

- **Group #1** - The first of four groups, on March 23, 2016, was held with Chancellor’s office staff and other leaders.
- **Group #2** - The second group, on March 30, 2016, also conducted at the Chancellor’s Office, included WEPAC/EDPAC Strong Workforce Advisory Joint meeting members.
- **Group #3** - The third group, on April 14, 2016, included representatives selected by the Chancellor’s Office from the annual CCPRO meeting held in Santa Rosa.
- **Group #4** - At the CCAOE Joint Reception in Davis, on April 19, 2016, we conducted the fourth group discussion including professors, administrators and instructors.

After a warm up and introductions, participants of each group followed the same discussion agenda. First, the groups were asked to participate in the Martian Exercise where participants fill in a blank cartoon drawing and think about and answer: “What words or statements would you use to describe CTE to someone who just landed from Mars?” The participants were then given five minutes to come up with three messages they would relay to the Martian and then they discussed their responses. This was an interesting exercise as it led to many short and clever single word responses and concise and short statements describing CTE programs (see Martian Exercise in the Appendix).

Next, individuals were asked to participate in a Projection Exercise. This exercise required participants to think five years down the road and image that the CTE re-branding and marketing initiative had been a success. Participants were asked to imagine what six different audiences would have to say about the initiative. These audiences included:

- a California Community College Board of Governors Board Member;
- a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education Student;
- a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education Professor; an employer whose workforce is made up of middle-skills trained workers;

- an employee who completed his/her middle skills training at a California community college and employed in a long-term job; and
- a policy maker.

Participants were encouraged to discuss their responses and their hopes for the future of the system's CTE programs (see the Projection Exercise in the Appendix).

In every group, these exercises led to what became a robust and exciting one discussion about CTE and its future.

All respondents were encouraged to be forthright and honest, and participants were assured that their comments would not be specifically attributable to them and that their identities would not be used in this report.

All of the exercises were aimed at exploring awareness, perceptions, misconceptions and barriers, as well as thoughts on successful outcomes, about the California Community Colleges' CTE programs including:

- Perceived benefits of the California Community Colleges' CTE programs;
- Perceived competition and barriers for the California Community Colleges' CTE programs; and
- Perceived opportunities for a rebranding and heightened effort for all California Community Colleges' CTE programs.

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS – DETAIL**

### **The Martian Exercise**

Word association exercises are often key to a final brand name and/or tagline, and these types of exercises are strong foundations for building brand equities. Ogilvy frequently uses the "what words would you use to describe Martian cartoon" as both an ice-breaker and a way to begin to elicit key words that participants believe frame the current brand.

These initial keyword responses help us better understand what words and phrases immediately come to the surface (without much thought) as individuals describe the current state of CTE.

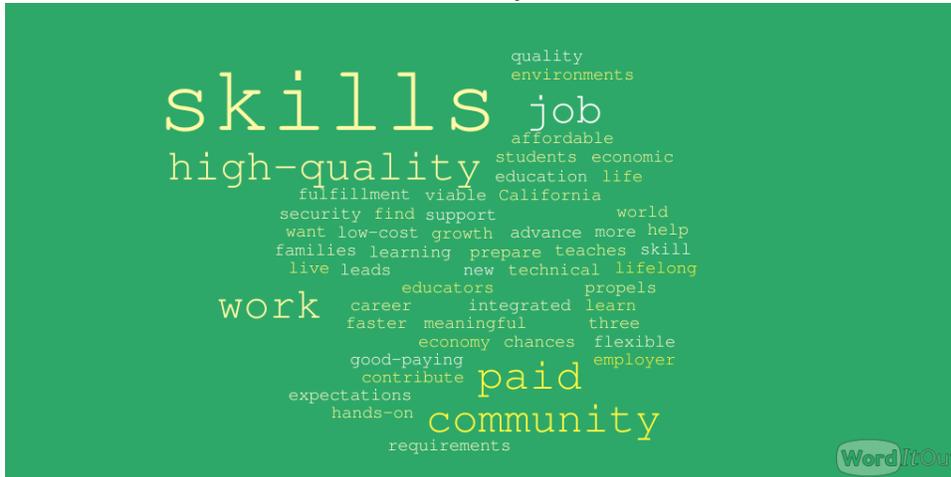
Of course, as soon as we began discussing what individuals in the groups told their Martian visitor, it became apparent that many were using the same words. This is expected and, with certain exceptions, played out throughout each group.

To focus our key learning in this part of the exercise, Ogilvy created word clouds that highlighted the key words that came out of each session. Word clouds are images comprised of

words used on a particular subject, and the size of each word indicates the frequency in which it was mentioned.

Following are those word clouds representing responses from each group. The final word cloud is one that combines all four-word clouds together.

### Chancellor's Office Staff and Leadership Word Cloud



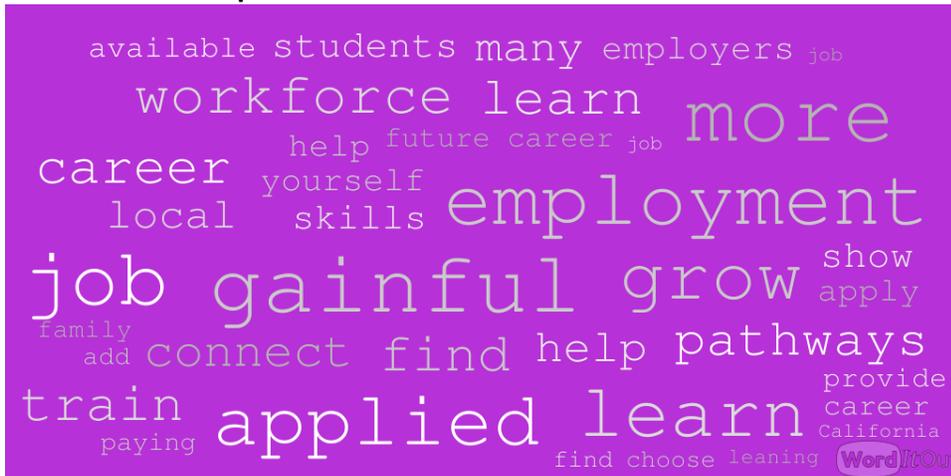
### WEPAC/EDPAC Word Cloud



### CCPRO Word Cloud



### CCAOE Joint Reception Word Cloud



### Comprehensive, Combined Word Cloud



In reviewing all the world clouds, here are the top line results. Again, these “off-the-top-of-your-head” words are often the key to the final brand essence that we are looking to uncover:

- *Skills, skills training, skills for a lifetime, and skills for good paying jobs* were critical words in three out of the four groups. Only those actually engaged in teaching CTE courses did not use or overuse the *skills* word. One might opine that professors see their courses as teaching more than just ‘skills’.
- *Career, career opportunities, work, workforce, jobs, gainful employment, paid jobs, and good paying jobs* are words related to the outcome of CTE programs. These words were top of mind with many respondents.
- Less prevalent were words that had to do with the process students engage in when they take part in CTE programs. *Pathway, help, community connections, variety, learning and finding* – these words appeared less often in the Martian Exercise, but were frequently mentioned during the discussion.
- A slightly different focus of words surfaced with fourth group at the joint reception. In that word cloud (#4), you can see there is a bigger emphasis on *applied learning, gainful jobs, workforce learning and jobs*.
- In discussions about their Martian Exercise, participants expanded on all of these words to flush out what they really would tell a Martian. What we heard over and over, combining many of the top words, might be paraphrased like this: “This Martian needs to know that there is a place you can go right now, that can teach you the skills that you need that will lead to a fulfilling, well-paying career. It won’t cost you much and it’s at your local community college; we’ll even help you pay for it.”
- One final note on the Martian: Although these specific words were not prevalent in the Martian Exercise, in discussion the words “*high quality*” were very important. Participants wanted us to know that the CTE programs were not second-class (see barrier discussion) or somehow less important, less rigorous or easier than academic courses. They are “*high quality*” technical courses that lead to lifetime careers that pay a good family wage.

In the expanded section of this report, you will find other specific comments that participants used in the Martian Exercise.

### **The Projection Exercise**

After a thorough discussion of the Martian Exercise, groups were directed to the Projection Exercise.

This exercise asked respondents to look five years into the future and “project” what they were hoping to hear from various “man on the street” respondents (all of whom have some connection to CTE).

Respondents tended to be hopeful, positive and uplifting in their responses to the Projection Exercise. They like/love/support CTE; they are anxious to see the initiative succeed; they

support a rebranding effort that will give it the emphasis it deserves and they want to be a part of that. They are firmly committed to helping students (who are not looking for a transfer or a four-year degree) get the unique and critical training they can provide; training that will provide them careers for a lifetime. In general, most of those interviewed believe that, branded correctly and with enough marketing funding behind them, CTE programs can transform students and the workforce in California. Recently elevated to the 6<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, this transformation is not only necessary, but California's Community College system is in exactly the right position at the right time to move it forward.

This transformative and positive feeling permeated nearly every response to every question. For instance, we heard positive, almost tearful comments over and over from each group on Question 2 (What do you want to hear from students?): "It changed my life; it's responsible for my success; I had no idea I'd love this career; this is the best experience I ever had in school; it was the best decision I ever made; now I have a career for life."

Similarly, answering questions from CC Board members and policy makers, (Questions 1 and 6) respondents used words like "game changer; a boon to California's economy; it's the one true pathway for success for thousands of Californians; this is our vision; the skills gap has been closed thanks to CTE; we have made a difference."

And, finally, respondents' hope for what employers might say (Question 5) indicated a clear understanding of how important CTE programs are to filling the current and future need for a skilled workforce. What do they hope employers will say in five years? "I have many choices among well-prepared applicants; graduates are in my pipeline and already contribute to the success of my company; there are the place where I get my best employees; thank goodness for CTE."

## **CONCLUSIONS & SUMMARY**

The Martian Exercise and the Projection Exercise did not color the respondents understanding of the barriers that currently exist for the success of CTE programs, their marketability and the challenging task ahead.

As noted above, in every discussion participants were quick to point out the barriers that career-training programs face every day:

- Lack of parental/high school/influencer/student support;
- The feeling that their programs are second-class;
- The struggle to "be heard" above the constant chorus of the opportunity for transfer to/or a pathway to a university;
- Their perception that other programs "get more ink, get more money and get more praise";
- The lack of coordination between and among competing training programs in the same area;

- The second-class or even third-class relegation (at least two respondents in different groups said: “First you are supposed to go to a four year college; if you can’t get in there, you go to a Community College so you can transfer; and then, and only then, if you can’t/don’t want to do that you can try a technical career.... third choice at best.”).

Despite these well-expressed concerns and reservations, and despite universal agreement about what the barriers are and how extensive they are, respondents were overwhelmingly positive and hopeful. A new brand that captures this optimism with enough marketing and outreach money behind it might indeed make the desired beliefs a new California reality.

It is too early to draw final conclusions. This research from just four groups is limited; but an early summary of findings from these and the Individual Interviews (IDIs) indicate that a re-branding and marketing effort for the California Community Colleges’ CTE programs will need to invest heavily in branding, marketing and outreach activities to:

- Increase awareness among the various target audiences;
- Communicate the breadth and depth of programs offered;
- Stress that these jobs are “fulfilling, desirable, good paying and can provide a family with good wages”; and
- Create an atmosphere that leads to behavioral and attitudinal change - a real change in public perception that embraces the importance of the career pathways available through CTE programs at CCC and puts their worth on par with a four-year or two-year degree.

\* \* \*

## General Findings (Select Verbatims and Summaries)

Following are more detailed findings from the four group discussions. They mirror the summary above, and provide more texture and language surrounding the conclusions.

### Group #1 – March 23

#### CCTE Leadership & Communication Staff (6 Participants in Sacramento)

##### Martian Exercise Verbatims

“What words would you use, what would you say about CTE programs, if a Martian landed in front of you today?”

- *“High Quality, low cost –flexible education that leads to a viable career and propels California’s economy and growth.”*
- *“Community of educators and students that thrive to advance to [a] world of work and the areas they live.”*
- *“Can prepare you for a good paying job-in some cases faster.”*
- *“Allows us to contribute in a meaningful way to our community.”*
- *“Training on technical and professional skills that employers want.”*

Martian Exercise Summary: The main themes that surfaced in this first group were how the CTE programs lead to careers that are good paying, beneficial to the community, and what employers are looking for.

##### Projection Exercise Verbatims

“What do you want people to say about the program 5 years from now?”

1. To the California Community College Board of Governors Board Member...
  - *“Successful Program that is fueling California economy and should be used as a model for other programs.”*
  - *“Proud they were able to support a successful statewide effort.”*
2. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education student...
  - *“Knows they got the skills that employers need.”*
3. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education professor...
  - *“It helped me improve my courses and I felt like I had a real impact on students because of this.”*
4. To an employer whose workforce is made up of middle-skills trained workers...
  - *“California Community Colleges [are] the entity that delivers polished, highly trained and skilled individuals to my talent pool.”*
  - *Hire primarily from my local community college because the students are well prepared for the positions and can jump right in and get to work.”*
5. To an employee who completed his/her middle-skills training at a California community college and is employed in a long-term job...

- *“CCC provided all necessary to get me on the right path to my career success.”*
- 6. To a policymaker...
  - *“Wants to give more money to CTE. CC’s are an important solution to social mobility and state prosperity.”*

Projection Exercise Summary: Based on the responses given during the 5-year projection exercise, participants would like the reputation of California Community Colleges to change as relates to technical and career training. The interviewees want to see a more positive brand for CTE programs within the system (as well as a change in public perception), so these programs are not seen as second class or an add-on to other programs at CCC.

**Group #2 – March 30**  
**WEPAC/EDPAC (10 Participants in Sacramento)**

**Martian Exercise Verbatims**

- *“Success is measured one student at a time.”*
- *“Industry/sector driven programs.”*
- *“Training students for competencies/skills leading to long term employment.”*
- *“Partnerships with businesses/industry.”*
- *“Relevant and applied [learning].”*
- *“CTE programs allow you start your own business.”*
- *“You may not need to attend a University to gain a worth-while career.”*
- *“Timely, Relevant training in every industry available.”*

Martian Exercise Summary: Within this group, skills and relevant technical learning rose to the top. Many interviewees also pointed out how the enhanced skills and relevant learning can lead to student success and careers that provide life-long, well paying jobs. In addition they believe a focus on CTE programs will enhance the reputation of the CCC.

**Projection Exercise Verbatims**

**What do you want people to say about the program 5 years from now?**

1. To the California Community College Board of Governors Board Member...
  - *“The board should be ever informed about the outcomes for student achievement. As such, board members should be equipped to carry the message.”*
  - *“We’ve changed delivery and success definition for education; life/career.”*
  - *“We have evolved to value. CTE = General Education through the dedication of all involved.”*
  - *“Holistic and moving needle forward for under-deserved communities.”*
2. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education student...
  - *“My CC experience provided me with a lost cost alternative to explore preparation for a career and transfer. All Faculty were outstanding.”*
  - *“This changed my life and started me on a life long journey in a career that matches my passion.”*
  - *“Training targeted the current job market and I expect to get hired upon completion.”*
  - *“I am living my dream and I credit my CC for this.”*
  - *“It worked for me and now I am in a satisfying career.”*
3. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education professor...
  - *“I’m continuously re-tooling and keeping my skills relevant to relay to students.”*
  - *“I stay relevant by staying connected to my craft.”*
  - *“My students are receiving training in emerging fields.”*

4. To an Employer whose workforce is made up of middle-skills trained workers...
  - *"More responsive employees who have continued employment with our company greater [than] 50% [of] previous employees."*
  - *"It closed skills gap."*
  - *"Community College grads are the first candidates I interview for job openings."*
  - *"Credentials matter; I hire those who show proficiency."*
  - *"I need to focus more on the CCC for middle-skilled trained workers."*
5. To an employee who completed his/her middle-skills training at a California community college and is employed in a long-term job...
  - *"No regrets of having one through CCC. It gave me the skills I need for advancement."*
  - *"I plan to go back and take additional classes."*
  - *"I bought a home, can feed my family, have work/life balance and found my piece of happiness in the world."*
  - *"I should tell more people of how I benefitted through my middle skills training."*
6. To a policymaker...
  - *"Well though out and applied institution that helped business and industries fill 50% of unfilled job skill gaps."*
  - *"Best investment."*
  - *"We did the right thing to support and fund this institution."*
  - *"There are multiple pathways to education."*
  - *"Long-term funding is guaranteed to keep programs training for future technologies- equipment is not the problem."*
  - *"We have made a great investment in our future generations."*

Projection Exercise Summary: Several main themes emerged through this exercise, including student achievement (both in the classroom and in the work force.) The word *career* was used a great deal along with the feeling, expressed by many, that in any re-branding of these programs must show that CCC's mission must be expanded to be more than 'just a stepping stone to a UC or more schooling'; participants wanted to make sure that CCC CTE programs be viewed as a way to open the doors to student careers. Other participants also pointed to the need to make sure that the technical training curriculum is kept up to date with what the industry desires while incorporating the skills connected to what employers want.

**Group #3 CCPRO – April 14**  
**CCPRO (14 Participants in Santa Rosa)**

**Martian Exercise Verbatims**

- *“Variety/ diversity of opportunities.”*
- *“Industry specific for region. Gets students prepared to work close to home.”*
- *“Builds skills for those looking to improve their career.”*
- *“Provides pathways for growth opportunity.”*
- *“Puts people to work, fast.”*
- *“Wonderful faculty with extensive industry experience. You’ll love your classes.”*
- *“Wide range of topics, from welding, to flower arranging, police officer to nurse.”*

Martian Exercise Summary: The main themes from this group revolved around the opportunities that these programs provide, but to the student and to California’s workforce and employers. These participants spoke glowingly of the variety of the courses and the well-paying different types of careers available through the CTE programs.

**Projection Exercise Verbatims**

**What do you want people to say about the program 5 years from now?**

1. To the California Community College Board of Governors Board Member...
  - *“It was a great investment.”*
  - *“We supported it and gave it many resources to succeed.”*
  - *“What an initiative! California is in a much better place to meet work force needs.”*
  - *“It’s been a huge game changer in the system and it is great to see the success.”*
  - *“Looks toward the future. We are on the right path!”*
2. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education student...
  - *“I love my career.”*
  - *“It changed my life for the better.”*
  - *“Learned about program, enrolled and graduated and now looking to be in a great job.”*
  - *“I now have a path/direction.”*
  - *“Totally changed my life.”*
  - *“Graduated, started a new company that is success ad I love my CC.”*
  - *“Best Decision.”*
  - *“It turned me into a better student then I ever could have been.”*
3. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education professor...
  - *“My work was valued.”*
  - *“I am thrilled to be in a field where I help students and industries match their skills.”*
  - *“CTE’s are now getting the attention they deserve.”*
  - *“Thank you for marketing these programs.”*

- *"Has helped me connect with greater students, especially those who wouldn't have been aware or motivated."*
  - *"I love what I do and I am passionate about helping students succeed."*
  - *"There is no better satisfaction than to see the light bulbs go off in students' eyes when they get it!"*
4. To an Employer whose workforce is made up of middle-skills trained workers...
    - *"Thank God for CTEs- great pool of candidates."*
    - *"Praise for high quality employees."*
    - *"We are confident we couldn't have done it without you."*
    - *"Enabled a fabulous partnership between SRIC and us."*
    - *"I turn to out local community college first to make hires."*
  5. To an employee who completed his/her middle-skills training at a California community college and is employed in a long-term job...
    - *"It changed my life and secured my position."*
    - *"Thankful for Community Colleges for training them."*
    - *"Never dreamed this could happen."*
    - *"I proudly list myself as a graduate on all my social media profiles."*
  6. To a policymaker...
    - *"I need to support more of this work."*
    - *"It's been a 'boom' to California's economy."*
    - *"Want to continue these programs to realize their importance."*
    - *"This was our vision for our involvement."*
    - *"Best practice in California"*

**Projection Exercise Summary:** In addition to answering the questions posed by the exercises, this group wanted to talk about what they wanted to see come out of the re-branding project. They stressed making the process of enrolling and completing the degree or training seem like a good investment in their education, their careers, and them. They also wanted to make sure that graduates of the courses had a real sense of direction and they wanted to highlight faculty and staff responsible for this success. Another important re-branding outcome that many emphasized was their hope that employers and industry leaders come to believe that the students and professionals coming out of the CCC's and CTE's are top-notch and provide a pool of candidates to choose from for their future hires and job openings. Participants further linked this desire to California's economy.

## Group #4 - April 19

### CCAOE Joint Reception Small Group (8 participants in Davis)

#### Martian Exercise Verbatims

- *"You will be able to find gainful employment in your future."*
- *"You will learn skills that will be applied to the workforce in a positive way."*
- *"It will help you grow and learn more about yourself."*
- *"Our pathways will prepare you for many careers."*
- *"CTE programs can prepare you to any career."*
- *"CTE provides hands-on training and preparation."*
- *"CTE prepares students in industries looking for employees in the local region."*
- *"Choose a short-term or longer-term training depending on time available and employment goal."*
- *"Learn how to use job specific equipment."*
- *"Learn social skills you need for the workplace."*
- *"They take general knowledge and show you how to apply it to specific skills."*
- *"CTE Programs prepare you for good paying jobs to provide for your family."*
- *"CTE programs enable you to add value to an employer."*
- *"Career exploitation and practical learning."*
- *"Community College CTE programs are some of the best kept secrets in California. We need to let people know about it."*

Martian Experiment Summary: While responses from this group display many of the common themes and characteristics other groups mentioned, since many of these participants were professors and instructors in CTE programs they were very focused on their students and on improving the brand and reputation of their programs. They do not want to be seen as second class, or third choice. They firmly and passionately believe that their programs prepare their students for any career, while also teaching them how to grow and end up with life-time careers that are good paying and satisfying.

#### Projection Exercise

##### What do you want people to say about the program 5 years from now?

1. To the California Community College Board of Governors Board Member...
  - *"Our investment in making CTE and basic skills priorities was worth it given the impact on the work force, employed CCC and their families."*
  - *"We finally allocate our budgets in alignment with labor market needs."*
  - *"We have made a difference."*
  - *"Provider of successful job training and education across the state."*
  - *"Your students are all successful."*
  - *"It was successful and changed the face of California's workforce."*

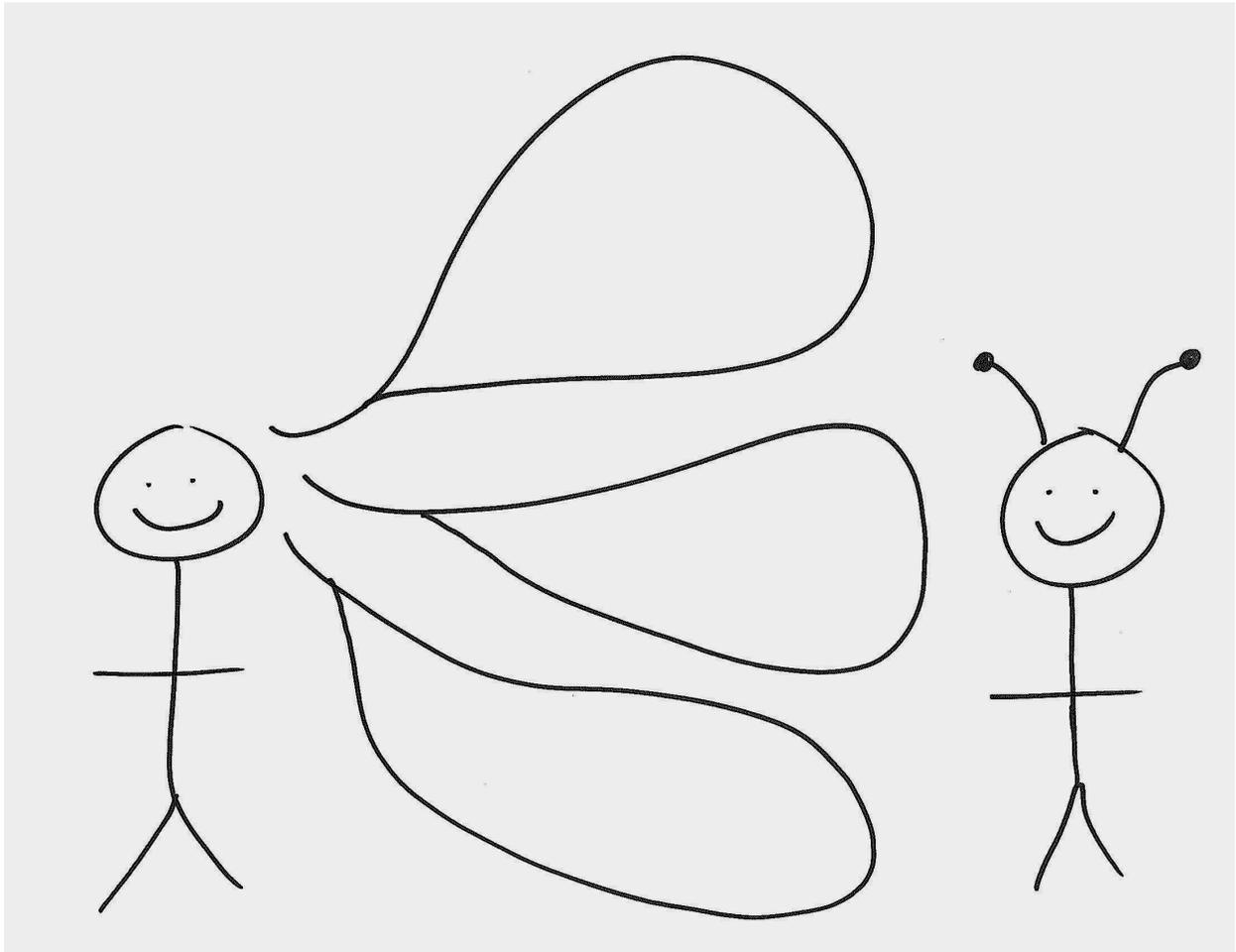
2. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education student...
  - *"I have an amazing job that challenges me daily and helps me support my family thanks to the CCC CTE program I completed."*
  - *"I secured a high-paying job with my CTE degree."*
  - *"My dream became my reality."*
  - *"The education I received at CCC changed my life."*
  - *"Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to learn and start a career."*
  - *"High paid technology worked/ well trained with awesome faculty and equipment."*
  - *"Thank you for saving my life."*
  - *"It launched my life."*
3. To a California Community Colleges Career Technical Education professor...
  - *"I made a difference as seen by the number of graduates from my program earning high wages within the field."*
  - *"I may have to work harder than others, but I feel the deep reward knowing my students earn industry credentials of value."*
  - *"I have what I need to teach my students."*
  - *"I am most proud of the difference I made in students' lives."*
  - *"You should see my students thriving within our innovative workplace."*
  - *"Great place to work that aligns with current industry needs."*
  - *"I watched students succeed and it was so satisfying to witness."*
4. To an Employer whose workforce is made up of middle-skills trained workers...
  - *My employees were well prepared thanks to their CCC CTE experience."*
  - *"The California Community College system finally woke up. They are training students for in demand jobs and I know they have high quality programs."*
  - *"I have many choices among well-prepared applicants."*
  - *"I am so pleased that I discovered the training programs at CCC. Graduates from the program are in my pipeline and contribute to the success of my company."*
  - *"Appreciate the partnership we share to meet our workforce needs."*
  - *"This is where I get my best employees."*
  - *"My company grew and employees thrived."*
5. To an employee who completed his/her middle-skills training at a California community college and is employed in a long-term job...
  - *"I am thankful for my CTE education and experience."*
  - *"I continue to go to my local CCC for updated knowledge and to remain relevant in my field."*
  - *"CTE provided an opportunity to keep my skills up to date and not only keep my job, but advance in it."*
  - *"High paid, well trained employee in great companies."*
6. To a policymaker...
  - *"Our community is being served well. The skills gap has been closed."*
  - *"We must continue to respond to the needs of business and industry."*

- *“Policy changes to make financial aid available for students seeking low unit certificates made a significant difference in their lives and positively affect the California economy.”*
- *“Our investment has yielded a great return.”*
- *“Aligned K-12/CC/CSU/UC systems with employers to get people successfully into the workplace.”*

Projection Exercise Summary: The words *success* and *successful* was used a lot throughout the discussion of these participants. They are in the classrooms with their students every day, and you could feel their passion to help them succeed in all of their responses. They described their programs as “life-changing” education, a worthwhile investment that produced a strong ROI. The investment, they pointed out was not only in one’s education, but also one’s future.

APPENDIX

MARTIAN EXERCISE



## **PROJECTION EXERCISE: 5 YEARS FROM NOW**

Imagine in five years you are walking down the street and you run into one of the people listed below. You ask them what they think about the California Community Colleges' Career Technical Education initiative. Write what you would want their response to be.

1. The California Community Colleges Board of Governors Board Member . . .
  
2. A California Community Colleges Career Technical Education student . . .
  
3. A California Community Colleges Career Technical Education professor . . .
  
4. A employer whose workforce is made up of middle-skills trained workers . . .
  
5. An employee who completed his/her middle skills training at a California community colleges and employed in a long-term job . . .
  
6. A policymaker . . .

**California Community Colleges  
Career Technical Education (CTE) Initiative  
Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)  
Comprehensive Summary Report**

June 17, 2016

Prepared by:  
Ogilvy Public Relations

Following is an overview of one part of the research, methodology and findings conducted by Ogilvy Public Relations on behalf of the California Community College Career Technical Education Initiative (CTE.) This research is part of an initial exploration of current CTE programs to help inform the development of a plan to re-brand and market the system's CTE programs. Three types of research were planned for this initial stage (two have been completed):

1. **Small Group Discussion Sessions** with stakeholders and administrators who currently work with and for various campus CTE programs and within the system-wide administration;
2. **Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)** of those with similar backgrounds as those in the small groups, adding to those education stakeholders with private sector representatives from business and labor who utilize the graduates of the programs; and
3. **Quantitative Student Survey** with students who are currently enrolled in or hope to enroll in Community College career programs. This portion of the research is not yet complete.

In addition to the research above, Ogilvy also conducted a website review to assess the utility of existing career exploration tools. That report was delivered to the Chancellor's office in early May.

The following report is for the **Individual In-Depth Interview** research.

## **PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to solicit feedback on the current California Community Colleges' CTE Initiative among key individual stakeholders to help inform the development of a plan to re-brand and market CTE. Ogilvy Public Relations conducted this research and the interviews took place following the small group discussion sessions and overlapped with the start of the quantitative student survey. Some of the key learnings and insights gleaned from

the small group discussion sessions helped inform the development of the phone interview questionnaire.

It is important to note that the findings of this qualitative research should be considered directional. Though the findings shed a great deal of light on the subject matter, the nonrandom recruiting method and, in this case, particularly small sample size, does not permit us to be certain that these findings apply to the market as a whole. Nevertheless, we have uncovered a great deal of marketing insight and direction, and we recommend further exploration with broader audiences.

### **Methodology**

Twenty-one (21) IDIs were conducted with two broad stakeholder audiences: those currently in education (15 interviews) and those representing business/labor concerns (six (6) interviews). Contacts were provided the California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office, and the IDIs were conducted over the phone, using a questionnaire developed by Ogilvy and approved by the Chancellor's Office. Both the questionnaires (for the education representatives and those representatives from business and labor) are included in the Appendix).

Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were conducted between April 1 and June 7, 2016.

The questionnaire included questions to explore current awareness, perceptions and misconceptions of the California Community Colleges' CTE programs including:

- Perceived benefits of the California Community Colleges' CTE programs;
- Perceived competition and barriers for the California Community Colleges' CTE programs; and
- Perceived opportunities for a rebranding and heightened effort for all California Community Colleges' CTE programs.

All respondents were encouraged to be forthright and honest – and like those in the group discussions – were assured that their comments would not be specifically attributable to them; and that their identities would not be used.

We did, however, want to give you a sense of who was interviewed and their backgrounds.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Educator/Counselor/Administrator</b>	<b>Business/Industry/Labor</b>
Female	9	3
Male	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>

## IDI DETAILS

To help inform the development of a plan to re-brand and market the California Community Colleges' Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, Ogilvy conducted 21 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) via phone in April, May and June of 2016.

Following are our high-level research findings from the 15 IDIs conducted among educators:

- **Awareness of California Community Colleges' CTE programs is low.** There is general consensus that awareness of California Community Colleges' CTE programs or what career pathways that CTE can lead students to achieve is low (16 – 21 year olds as well as, 21+). Except for some over-subscribed programs (e.g. nursing and welding were mentioned) educators feel that among both current and potential students the awareness of what CTE courses can offer is very low. And importantly they believe it is also low with parents and other influencers.
- **"CTE" isn't something that can easily be defined.** This feeling was a universal belief. Nearly every respondent felt that there needs to be context to help explain what it means, what it can mean to students for family wage jobs, and how beset to define and promote it.
- **CTE programs have perception challenges.** Many respondents believed that CTE programs and careers are thought of and viewed as "less than" or "second class" compared to other programs offered at California's Community colleges. Some said the CTE programs are thought of as a "last resort" – something to be considered only if a four-year institution isn't an option or a student could not afford to, didn't want to, or wasn't looking to transfer. Like in the group discussions, respondents felt that this may be an historical stigma associated with career and technical training. Moreover, respondents described that many felt that CTE's programs were thought to be attached to jobs or careers that were "dirty," needing low to minimal skill sets, and that they don't pay well. Of course, respondents were quick to point out that this perception is wrong – and in fact many careers that CTE trains for are well paying and "clean," but the perception persists.
- **Respondents recognize there is a great deal of competition for California Community Colleges' CTE programs. In fact, respondents said competition was three fold:** (1) Private Vocational Schools; (2) Pressure to get a four- year degree; (3) The emphasis on transfers. New branding of CTE and its programs must pay careful attention to the current atmosphere of competition and confusion and seek to broaden the understanding that CTE programs are as important as the other missions of the system (e.g. transfers and AA degrees.)
- **It is felt that close coordination with high schools and business/industry/labor is key to success.** Nearly every respondent agreed that in order for California's Community College newly revived and branded CTE programs to succeed California Community Colleges need to work closely with local high schools

(counselors, administrators, teachers etc.) as well as their local business/industry/labor communities to ensure pathways are aligned with regional business and industry; that high school counselors – and other influencers (parents) understand what CTE programs can offer that students see CTE training as a means to good paying, life-long careers.

In addition to interviews with educators, we also interviewed six representatives from the business/labor community. High-level research findings from these IDIs include:

- **A belief that there is a huge unmet need for technical training; the current labor pool lacks the skills and training necessary for today’s careers.** Nearly everyone we spoke with pointed out that a key barrier to hiring local workers is the lack of relevant skills/training, especially “soft” skills (e.g., attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and work harmoniously with other people). This is an opening that a robust CTE program can fill; and there is a great deal of understanding about the need for such a program. Done right, a newly branded CTE program could have the support of labor and business throughout California. Representatives understand the need, it will be up to CTE programs to convince them that they are the right place to help fill it.
- **Lack of consistency with CTE education creates barriers.** The variance across different colleges with regard to terminology, curriculum and training is vastly different from one campus to another. This makes it challenging for employers to “know what they are getting” when they get graduates from current CTE programs. Alignment of both programs and requirements could go a long way towards alleviating this barrier.
- **Local community colleges need much more proactive outreach.** While business and industry respondents were generally familiar with CTE programs offered through California community colleges *in their regions*, there is the general sense that the colleges could do a much better job of proactively reaching out to business/industry/labor to share information, learn about regional labor needs and training needs, etc. Again, this is key opening for new CTE outreach and should be pursued by the new program implementers.
- **Partnerships between business and labor are key.** The partnerships among business and labor and local Colleges needs to be “a three way street”; one in which the colleges recognize businesses are looking to grow and be profitable, and the colleges need to be open to what the needs of businesses are and how to address them quickly. That means (as noted above) aligning curriculum to needs, frequent meetings and outreach programs that involve local business, more direct connection between programs and employers and leveraging the system’s contract education programs as a pipeline for prospective students.

As you can see, the problems outlined by the educators tend to be much broader – and more difficult to address (the public perception of technical training programs; the lack of respect for students who choose non-four year curriculums) than those specific concerns expressed by

business and labor representatives. All will have to be examined and addressed as you look for a new brand and engage in important public outreach.

## **GENERAL FINDINGS SUMMARY**

Findings from this preliminary research indicate that a re-branding and marketing effort for the California Community Colleges' CTE programs will need to invest heavily in marketing activities to:

- Help increase awareness among the various target audiences;
- Communicate the breadth and depth of programs offered;
- Stress that the jobs are “clean, good paying and can provide a family wage”; and
- Create an atmosphere that leads to an understanding that important ongoing education pathways are available through CTE and that are just as important as a four year or two year degree.

Additionally, both the educators and the representatives from business and labor, pointed out that for CTE to succeed it needs to develop deeper relationships and partnerships with high schools and parents. Perception change about the technical training in general – and CTE's programs specifically, will not be easy; but can be achieved with the right brand and the right program. It is also clear that any CTE program must engage in a more robust and constant outreach program to local business/industry/labor groups. These critical partners are part of the framework that will make this effort successful and help change perception and barrier issues.

## **CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

While this research is not quantitative in nature, it is clear from the 21 IDIs conducted that there is general consensus among these individuals that awareness of California Community Colleges' CTE programs is low and a significant amount of outreach and marketing needs to be implemented in order to increase awareness, change perceptions and highlight the benefits while focusing on the motivators and drivers.

While regionally, CTE programs vary significantly, an “umbrella” brand or platform for the system with a consistent look, feel and voice must be developed. This brand then needs to be adapted regionally to reflect the differences and nuances not only of the 72 districts, but also the local colleges themselves.

It will be critically important to conduct additional research to gain further insights to help rebrand and market “CTE” with a new term that is meaningful, and helps create a perception shift that moves audiences away from the notion of “dirty” or “less than” jobs and careers.

\* \* \*

Following are more detailed findings from all 21 interviews. They mirror the Executive outlined above, and will give reviewers more texture and language surrounding the major conclusions.

Awareness of California Community Colleges' CTE programs is low.

Across education and business/industry/labor, **there is general consensus that awareness of California Community Colleges' CTE programs is low** among key audiences including 16 – 21 year olds, 21+ year olds and parents/influencers. Many interviewees noted that awareness is likely low due to the emphasis placed on four-year higher education (public or private) from high school counselors, teachers, parents and influencers. There is the perception that the *only* pathway to career success is through a four-year degree so no one is promoting alternative pathways. Many feel this contributes to the lack of awareness especially among students.

Many felt that when students are asked to consider community colleges as an option for continuing higher education, it is typically in the context of using the system as a “stepping stone” for two years before transferring to a four-year institution. This can be both financially driven (i.e., you can save money by attending a community college for two years before transferring) or readiness driven (i.e., the student does not have the grades or test scores to enter into a four-year institution). In addition, both the recession and the continuing higher cost of higher education has led community colleges to be more frequently considered as a viable and a more accepted option for transfer, but the lack of awareness of the breadth and depth of two-year certificates/training through community college CTE programs is felt to be extremely low. Again, this research was not quantitative. It was 21 interviews among those who know something about CTE; our student survey should help determine whether or not the lack of awareness is as low as some believe.

**“CTE” isn’t something that can easily be defined.** Beyond awareness challenges, **CTE, in general, has significant perception challenges.** Interviewees opined that the public believes that CTE programs and careers are “less than,” “second class” or a “last resort,” only something to be consider if a four-year institution is not an option or if a student cannot/doesn’t want to transfer. Some said CTE programs were described as a “terminal degree/certificate”, and that students, parents and influencers may believe that a CTE program will trap someone in a particular job for the rest of their life. Of course, interviewees were quick to point out the fallacy of these perceptions, but nearly everyone said they felt this was the current public perception of CTE programs.

Additionally, there appears to be an historical stigma attached to CTE and that the jobs are “dirty,” low in skill requirements and do not pay well. Older generations – parent, influencers, etc. – think of CTE jobs as only automotive repair or other “hands on” jobs, vs. good-paying, “clean” long-term careers, which they perceive pay well. Some respondents pointed out that this might reflect a gender gap (e.g., CTE programs are for men because they are hands-on and “dirty.”) Of course, nearly everyone pointed out the fallacy in this myth, citing the variety of training programs in growing fields/sectors such as health care, biotech, energy,

culinary/hospitality and information technology, among many others. This just underscores another perception issue that the new brand must address.

**“CTE” isn’t something that can easily be defined.** Interviewees said over and over that “CTE” isn’t something that can easily be defined or understood. Many said that the acronym CTE or even “Career Technical Education” doesn’t “mean anything to most people” and there needs to be context to help explain what it means especially pointing out the breadth and depth of the career paths that are available to students in a variety of careers. The also argued that IF people thought they knew what CTE was, they assumed it referred to welding, automotive repair, HVAC, etc. – those “dirty” jobs in the main for men.

Beyond the perception challenges, **competition for California Community Colleges’ CTE programs is also a major challenge involving three different barriers**

### **1. Private Vocational Schools**

First, there are the private vocational schools. These for-profit schools have large marketing and advertising budgets and promote short duration training programs taught by those in the industry to lure students into their programs. The for-profit programs promise quick training completion and immediate job placement in a good-paying job. The immediacy of what they are offering is very appealing to prospective students who are looking to get into the workforce quickly so they can start making money. The price tag for these for-profit schools is high, but many seem to think that the benefit of getting into the workforce quickly outweighs the cost; consequently many take out large student loans. Of course this speaks loudly to the lack of understanding of what is currently offered with CTE programs at various campuses. It’s clear that many students don’t realize is that not only can they get the training they need at a Community College but that other services offered by community colleges (financial aid, health centers, etc.) create an environment for student success that is vastly different from the private, for-profit vocational schools that do not offer these additional services and can mean many of the students wind up in huge debt – without acquiring the skills they were promised.

### **2. Transfer Focus**

Transfer focus is also viewed as a competitor to the system’s CTE programs. With emphasis placed on four-year degrees (the key path for a successful career) and with new programs that promote, support and assist with the transfer process (Associate Degree for Transfer and Transfer Pathways program), many respondents felt that CTE has been relegated to the backseat. At the very least, it is not first in line for promotion or focus.

As evidence, respondents cited that many community colleges tout and promote *their transfer rates*, but few do the same for their CTE programs. While a re-branding and marketing effort to promote the California Community Colleges’ CTE programs will launch later this year, these “competitive” transfer programs have been promoted,

marketed, have had more visibility to date. Any new CTE marketing effort will be playing “catch up.”

### **3. The Need for a Four Year Degree**

Nearly all respondents talked about the historical and deep-rooted emphasis on obtaining a four-year degree. They discussed the practice of talking about going to college from toddlers on; high school teachers and counselors have been trained to promote and encourage four-year institutions; and parents want “what is best for their children” and that has historically meant a path that leads to a four-year higher education institution. Respondents pointed out that even at the legislative level, policymakers have long felt that for every child to have a good career they have to go to a four-year college.

To begin to overcome these three misconceptions, California Community Colleges will have to re-brand with a marketing effort that promotes and highlights the variety of cutting-edge CTE programs and pathways that allow students to get marketable in-demand skills, through expert/industry instruction that then leads to good-paying family wage jobs in emerging fields. Changing perception is never easy, and given the long-standing myths and perceptions that exist, careful messaging and a significant expenditure of marketing money will be necessary to begin to change public perception.

### **Business/Labor Perceptions**

There was not disagreement about the need for more CTE programs, their import and their need to align with current labor/business needs. In fact, there was universal agreement that the student of today lack the skills and the training needed for the jobs of the future – amongst nearly every one of our respondents, but it was loudly and clearly articulated by our business respondents.

Our interviews also indicated that **close coordination with high schools and business/industry/labor will be key to a successful re-branding effort.** This is most important at regional levels as trainings and programs offered by local community colleges must be aligned with regional employment needs. Respondents recommended that colleges need to work more closely with local high schools as well as the local the business/industry/labor communities to ensure pathways stay aligned with regional business/industry and curriculum aligns with every changing needs of employers.

While this recommendation might seem to fall into the Regional Coordination area of the 25 Strong Workforce Task Force recommendations, from a marketing perspective it will be important to ensure that outreach efforts are communicating that community colleges are regionally “the best kept secret” – or as one respondents said, the “sleeping, 500 pound gorilla.” Making sure that CTE programs in collaboration with high school and business/industry/labor representatives, including Workforce Investment Boards, will help in the marketing of local college offerings and meeting regional labor market needs.

While respondents described a myriad of **key benefits of California Community Colleges' CTE programs**, IDI respondents most frequently described these benefits as:

- A means to good paying jobs
- Affordable, accessible/convenient
- Providing upward mobility
- Leading to good paying careers
- Providing a variety of career path options that have regional relevance (the training and the jobs the trainings lead to).

While there are many more, the challenge is that these benefits are not known or promoted to the extent that they need to be. Additionally, no one, even our respondents (and least of all potential students), knows the variety of career paths and areas of study that are available to them – or the good salaries they can earn if they pursue them. While programs such as nursing, welding and automotive repair have higher awareness levels, there are a plethora of other areas of study with regional and statewide relevance that could easily turn around the perception of all CTE programs.

IDI respondents most frequently stated that **parents, high school counselors, elected officials (statewide and local) and regional business/labor groups are the most important partners in the CTE re-branding efforts**. These key audiences are critical messengers for not only broad awareness of the California Community Colleges' CTE programs, but important messengers for current and potential students specifically. Much more must be done in a new outreach program for the entire CTE re-brand plan.

Finally, to improve the CTE initiative, many respondents noted increased funding to “compete” with the for-profits marketing campaigns, keeping curriculum and related equipment up-to-date so students are prepared to enter the workforce and, overall, increasing awareness about the variety of CTE programs that are available that lead to good paying, family wage supporting, long-term jobs.

## APPENDIX

### California Community Colleges

#### Education In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) Questionnaire (30-minute questionnaire)

#### FINAL

Ogilvy will conduct in-depth interviews (IDIs) with key stakeholders to glean insights and information to help inform the development of the communications plan to re-brand and market California Community Colleges' Career Technical Education. We anticipate each interview to be approximately one half hour.

1. In your opinion, what do the following three groups think and know about CCC's CTE?
  - a. 16-21 year olds
  - b. 21+ year olds
  - c. 3) parents/influencers
1. What are the misconceptions?
2. What, in your opinion, are the 3-5 key benefits of CCC's CTE programs?
3. What/who are the main competitors for CCC's CTE? (e.g., private vocational, 4 year)
4. What makes them (the competitors) appealing compared to CTE? What are their downsides?
5. Can you think of any specific fields where CCC's CTE is most recognized/appealing? Why? (e.g., nursing)
6. What will define success for CTE re-branding and marketing in the next year? The next five years?
7. Who are the most important partners in this effort? How should we involve them?
8. On a closing note, if you had a "magic wand" and could wish for anything to make the CTE initiative better, what would you wish for?

## California Community Colleges

### Business/Labor In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) Questionnaire (30-minute questionnaire)

**FINAL**

1. What are the biggest barriers to hiring local workers now?
2. What can the California community colleges do to help reduce those barriers?
3. What do you know about your local California community colleges' CTE programs?
4. How have the local California community colleges communicated with you about the CTE programs they offer?
5. What is the most important thing you can advise your local California community college to do to highlight the benefits of CTE programs?
6. What do you believe is the most effective way for California community colleges to reach businesses?
7. Are there particular tools that are most useful (brochures, videos, etc.)?
8. Conceptually speaking, what would it take for a business like yours to put some sort of agreement in place that hires interns from a community college, after students graduate from a specific technical program?
9. Do you have any closing comments or thoughts?

###



Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide



**KOSKI**  
RESEARCH

# California Community Colleges Career Technical Education

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Research Findings 2016

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- Methodology
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# Objectives

## Measure Awareness & Perceptions

- Assess current level of awareness around California Community Colleges' Career Technical Education (CTE) classes and programs in California's 5 economic regions
- Gauge familiarity and knowledge of CTE classes and programs among current and prospective students
- Identify student barriers to enrollment in CTE programs
- Understand key attitudes towards and perceptions of CTE classes and programs



# Methodology

<b>Who</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ N=439 California Community College students and prospective students</li><li>▪ N=200 California Community College students</li><li>▪ N=239 Prospective CCC students (including soft quota of 19% High School Students ages 16-18)</li></ul> <p>▪ Ethnicity: 30% Caucasian, 40% Latino/Hispanic, 16% Asian/Pacific Islander, 12% African American</p> <p><i>Sample was developed to mirror California community colleges student demographics</i></p>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 5 minute quantitative online survey</li></ul>
<b>Where</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Northern California, Bay Area, Central Valley/Coast, Southern California 1, Southern California 2 (See appendix for definition and breakdown)</li></ul>

## Executive Summary

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- **Overall awareness** of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs or classes in general is **high**.
- **Familiarity and specific understanding** of these programs and classes is **low**, however.
- Most students and prospective students would consider a CTE class or program but **need more information**.
- When it comes to benefits of CTE enrollment, most current and prospective students agree a CTE class or program will **help them financially and lead to a job** that interests them.
- **Knowledge surrounding CTE programs** is the **biggest barrier** to enrollment, although current students wanting a four-year degree is also a considerable barrier.
- Students and prospective students are most likely to **seek more information** on a California community college **website or on a web search**.

# Implications

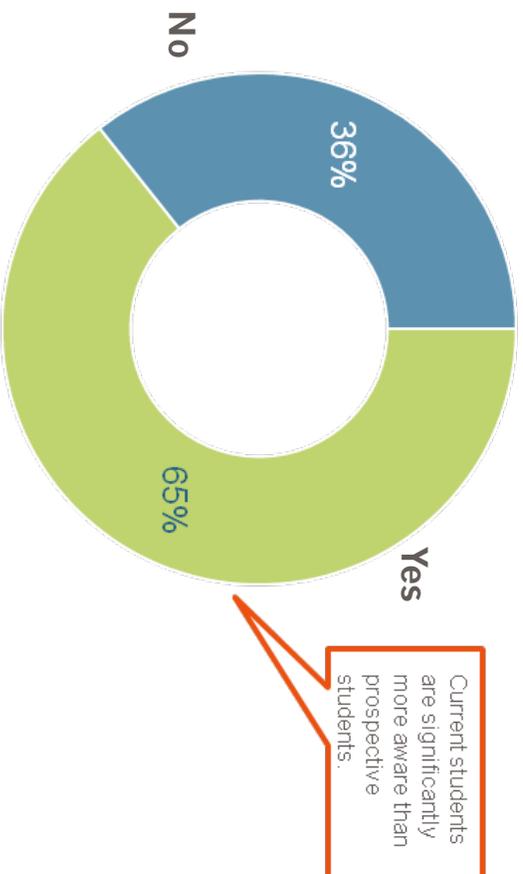
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- 1 Current and prospective students react positively to the idea of CTE programs and classes but need more information.
- 2 This research suggests that key messages can highlight improved job prospects and career opportunities.
- 3 Desire for a four-year degree is high, and some believe private programs take less time. Consider emphasizing the strengths (e.g. value) of CCC CTE programs and classes relative to these two options.
- 4 California community college websites and internet searches will be the first source of information – make sure website answers students’ and prospective students’ questions and is optimized for search.

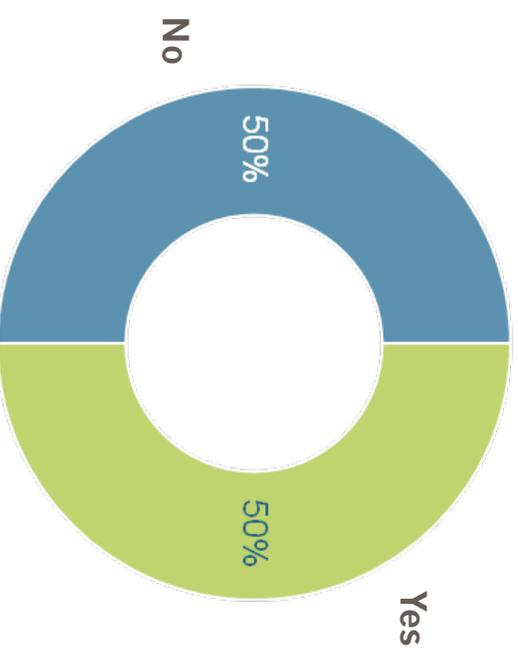
Awareness, Barriers, & Benefits

# A majority of students are aware of the phrase “Career Technical Education” – Prospective students are less aware

“CTE” Awareness  
Current Students



“CTE” Awareness  
Prospective Students

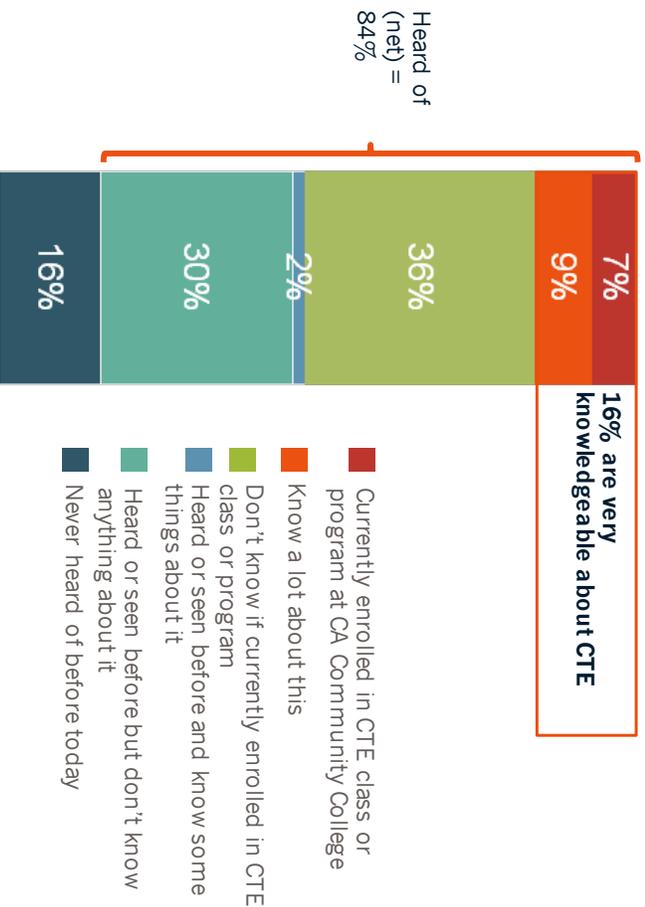


Q1. Have you heard of the phrase, “Career Technical Education” or “CTE” before? (Base: Current Students=200 / Prospective Students=239)

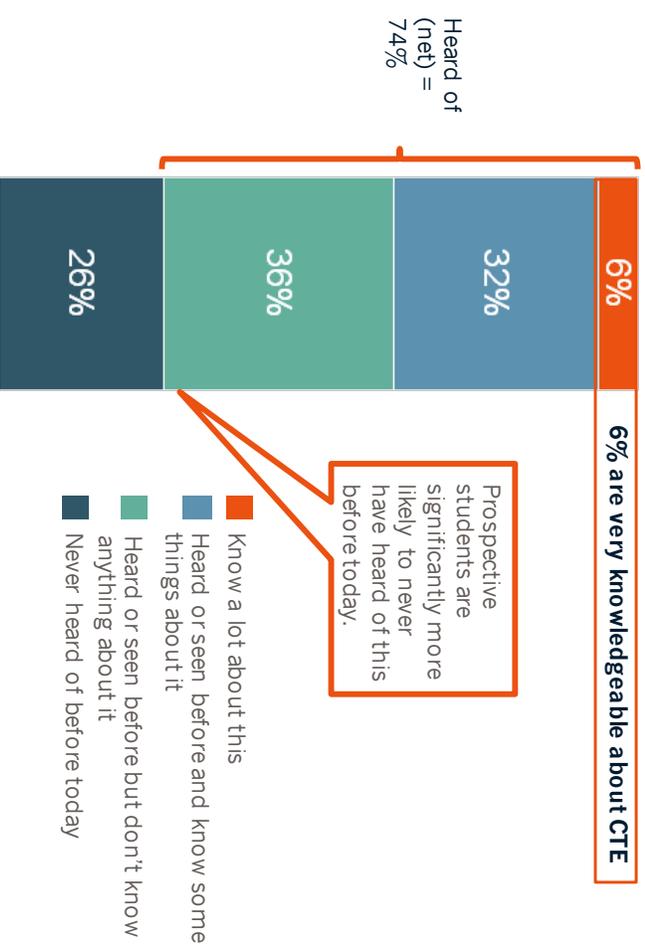


# Although awareness of CTE is high, familiarity with CCC's CTE classes or programs is low

## Familiarity with "CTE" Current Students

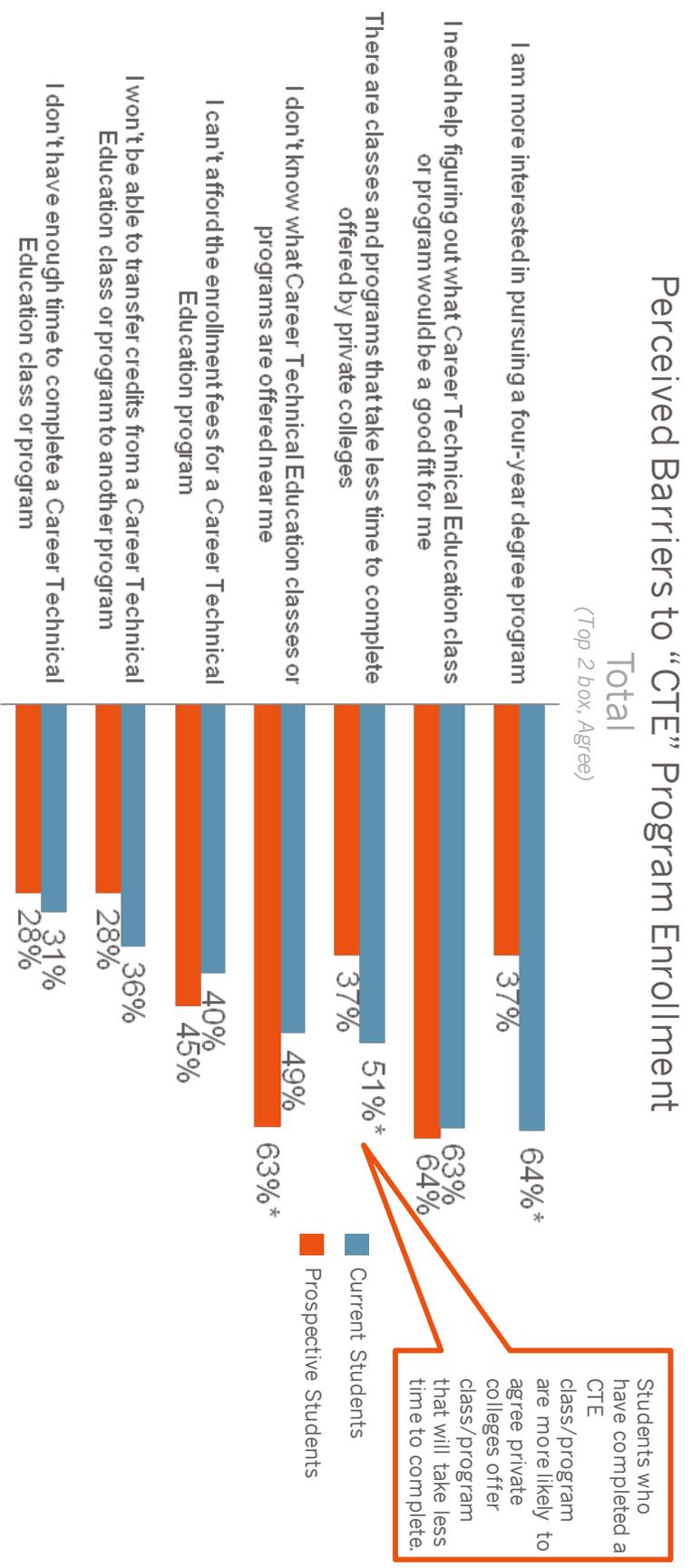


## Familiarity with "CTE" Prospective Students



Q2: Which response below best describes your familiarity with Career Technical Education classes or programs at California Community Colleges? (Base: Current Students=200 / Prospective Students=239)

# Interest in a four-year degree and knowledge surrounding CTE programs are the biggest barriers to enrollment



Q4. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements. (Base: Current Students=200 / Prospective Students=239)  
 Note: \* Denotes a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

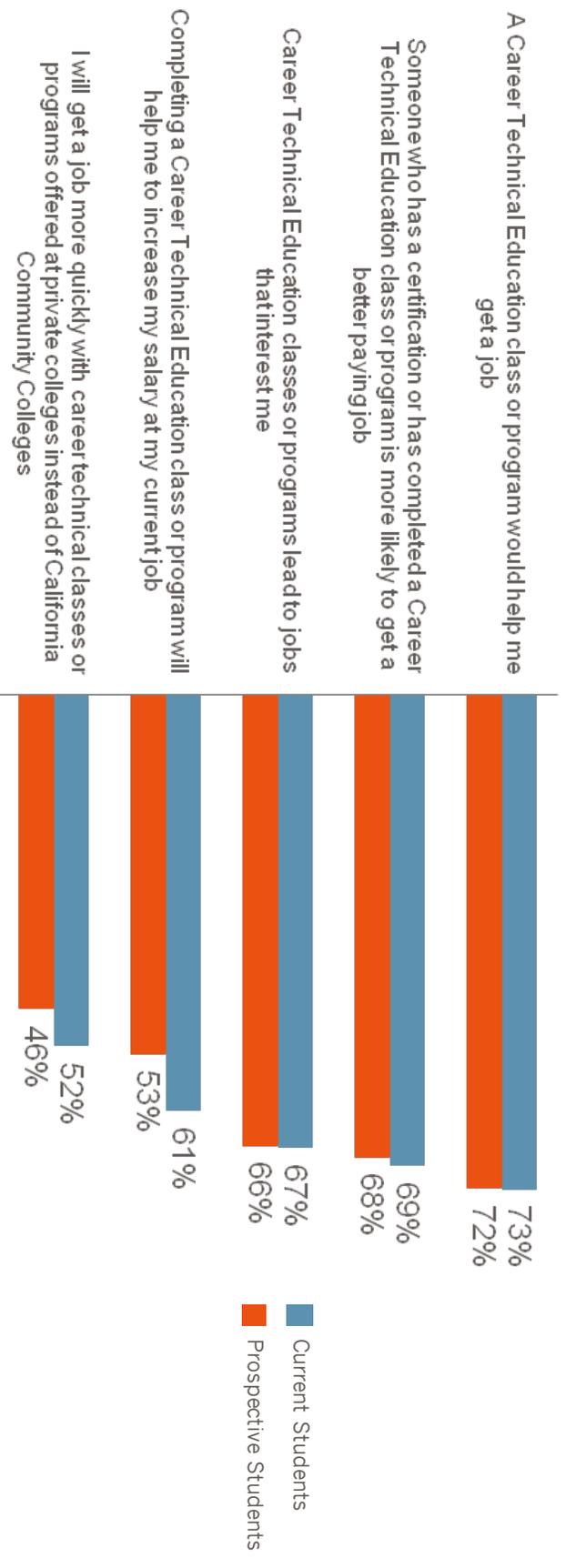


# Most students agree a CTE class or program will help them financially and lead to a job of interest

## Perceived Benefits to “CTE” Program Enrollment

Total

(Top 2 box, Agree)

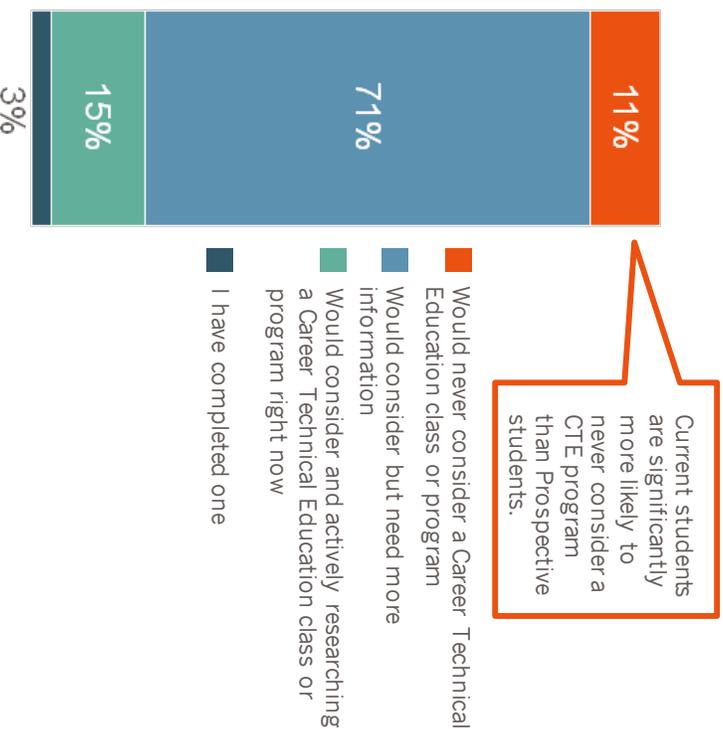


Q4. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements. (Base: Current Students=200 / Prospective Students=239)

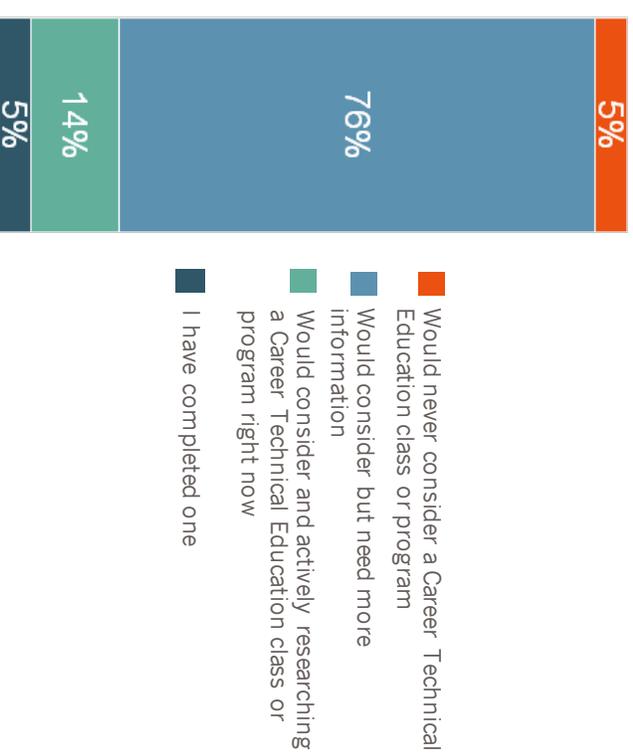


# Most students would consider a Career Technical Education class or program at a CCC but need more information

Consideration of "CTE" at CCC  
Current Students Not Enrolled



Consideration of "CTE" at CCC  
Prospective Students



Q3. Which of the following describes your feelings about enrolling in a Career Technical Education class or program at California Community Colleges? (Base: Current Students not currently enrolled in CTE program=186 / Prospective Students=239)

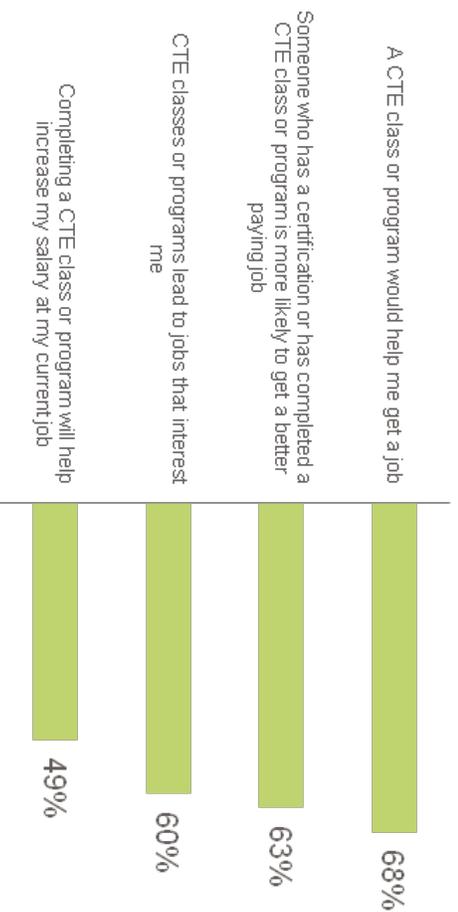


# Those who have taken action agree with the benefits of a CTE class or program more so than those who haven't taken action

## Benefits

### Have not taken action

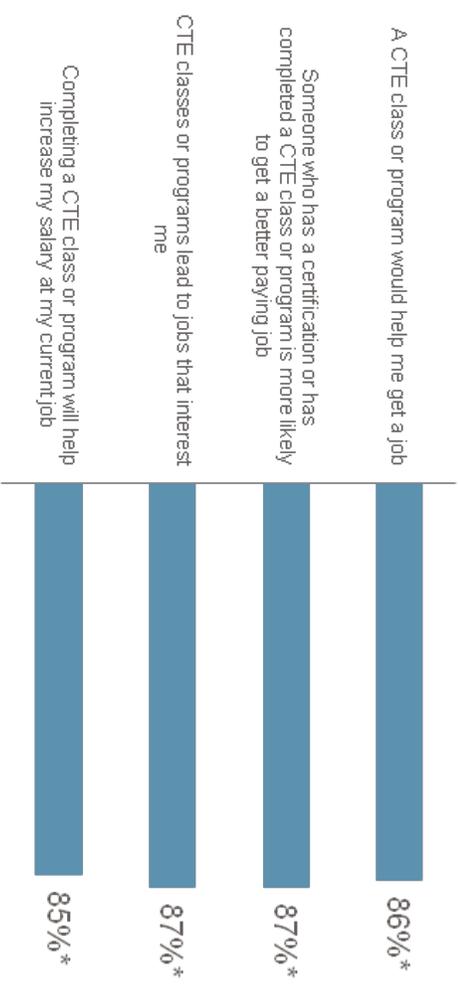
(Top 2 box, Agree)



## Benefits

### Taken action

(Top 2 box, Agree)



*Haven't taken action students either would not consider a CTE class/program or would consider, but need more information*

*Taken action students have either actively researched or enrolled in a CTE class/program*

Q3. Which of the following describes your feelings about enrolling in a Career Technical Education class or program at California Community Colleges? (Base: Those not currently enrolled in CCC CTE=407)

Q4. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements (Base: Haven't Taken Action=347 / Taken Action=78)

Note: \* Denotes a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.



# Knowledge about CTE programs and appeal of four-year degree are the biggest barriers for those who haven't taken action

## Barriers

### Have not taken action

(Top 2 box, Agree)

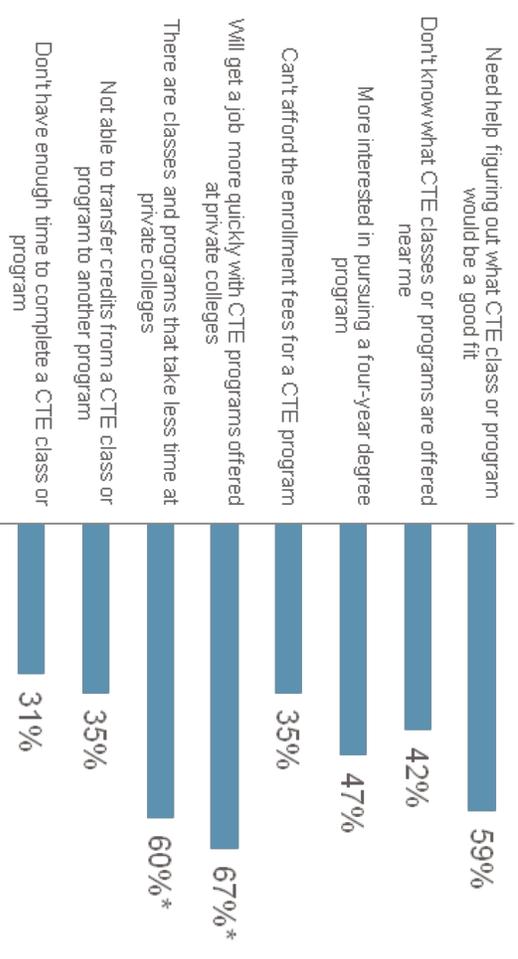


*Haven't taken action students either would not consider a CTE class/program or would consider, but need more information*

## Barriers

### Taken action

(Top 2 box, Agree)



*Taken action students have either actively researched or enrolled in a CTE class/program*

Q3. Which of the following describes your feelings about enrolling in a Career Technical Education class or program at California Community Colleges? (Base: Those not currently enrolled in CCC CTE=425)

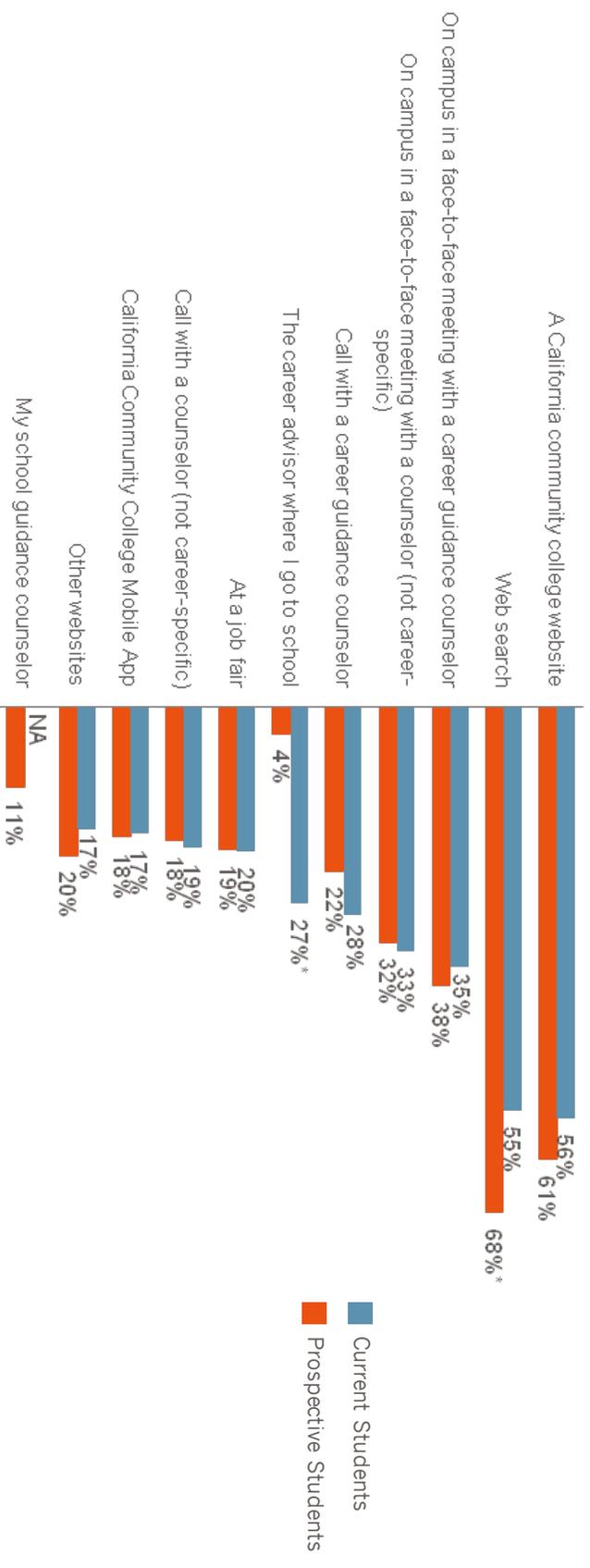
Q4. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements (Base: Haven't Taken Action=347 / Taken Action=78)

Note: \* Denotes a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.



# Most students would go to a California community college website or a web search to learn more about a CTE program

Information Sources for “CTE” Program at CCC  
Total



Q5. If you wanted to learn more about Career Technical Education classes or programs at California Community Colleges, where would you go? (Base: Current Students=200 / Prospective Students=239)  
Note: \* Denotes a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.



# High School Student Profile

A subsample of high school students was surveyed to get directional feedback from this hard-to-reach group. We've outlined their results separately here.

	Consider California Community College	Of the 38 high school students surveyed, 74% would consider enrolling in the future and 24% are not sure.
	Awareness & Familiarity	Half of high school students have heard of the phrase Career Technical Education or CTE but familiarity is low with 55% having seen or heard it but not knowing what it is. Almost a quarter (24%) say they know something or a lot about CTE.
	Consideration of CTE class or program	Most high school students (84%) would consider a CTE class or program but need more information. One in eight (13%) students say they would never consider a CTE class or program at CCC.
	Barriers to enrollment	A majority of students need to figure out if a CTE class or program would be a good fit or if they are available near them. Another barrier is the appeal of a four-year degree.
	To learn more...	These students would complete a web search or talk to their high school guidance counselor.



# Demographics

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	Current Students (N=200)	Prospective Students (N=239)
<b>Age</b>		
Mean	25 years	33 years*
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	55%*	45%
Women	45%	55%*
<b>Region</b>		
Southern California 1	26%	34%
Bay Area	22%	28%
Central Valley/Coast	24%	16%
Southern California 2	17%	14%
Northern California	11%	8%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic/Latino	51%	31%
Caucasian/White	19%	39%
Asian or Pacific Islander	16%	15%
African-American/Black	12%	12%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	2%
Other	1%	1%
<b>Marital Status</b> (N=195) (N=207)		
Married	16%	46%*
Separated/Divorced	2%	8%
Single	69%	33%
Other/Prefer not to answer	13%	13%

Note: \* Denotes a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.



# Demographics

Employment Status	Current Students (N=200)	Prospective Students (N=239)
Full-time	27%	34%
Part-time	23%	17%
Full-time student	27%*	12%
Part-time student	10%*	5%
Unemployed	6%	11%
Other	7%	21%*
<b>Considering Attending CCC</b>		
I currently am enrolled in a California Community College	100%	NA
Yes, in the next six months	NA	28%
Yes, in six months to a year	NA	14%
Yes, in a year or more	NA	11%
Yes, but not sure when	NA	19%
Not sure	NA	28%
<b>Income</b>		
Mean	\$37,800	\$42,400

Note: \* Denotes a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

Focus On: Region

# Focus On: Region

	Northern CA (N=40) (a)	Bay Area (N=111) (b)	Central Valley/Coast (N=86) (c)	Southern CA 1 (N=134) (d)	Southern CA 2 (N=68) (e)
<b>Familiarity with CTE</b>					
I have heard or seen before and but don't know anything about it	35%	32%	26%	39% c	34%
I have heard or see before and know some things about it	30%	41% d	42% d	28%	28%
<b>Enrollment of CTE</b>					
I have completed a CTE class or program	5%	5%	7% d	2%	4%
<b>CTE Benefits (Top-2 Agree)</b>					
Someone who has a certification or has completed a Career Technical Education class or program is more likely to get a better paying job	85% bcde	64%	66%	69%	68%
<b>CTE Barriers (Top-2 Agree)</b>					
I am more interested in pursuing a four-year degree program	45%	43%	58% b	48%	53%
I don't know what Career Technical Education classes or programs are offered near me	60%	56%	56%	49%	72% bcde
I won't be able to transfer credits from a Career Technical Education class or program to another program	28%	34%	41% d	24%	34%
I can't afford the enrollment fees for a Career Technical Education program	50%	34%	56% bd	37%	46%

Note: Letters denote significant differences at the 95% confidence level.



# Focus On: Region

Information sources to learn more about CTE	Northern CA (N=40) (a)	Bay Area (N=111) (b)	Central Valley/Coast (N=86) (c)	Southern CA 1 (N=134) (d)	Southern CA 2 (N=68) (e)
CCC website	45%	62%	55%	64% <sup>a</sup>	54%
On campus F2F meeting with a counselor (not career-specific)	30%	26%	37%	38% <sup>b</sup>	26%
CCC mobile app	25%	23% <sup>d</sup>	14%	13%	16%
Career advisor where I go to school	18%	13%	22% <sup>d</sup>	10%	13%
My school guidance counselor	8%	2%	7%	5%	12% <sup>b</sup>

Note: Letters denote significant differences at the 95% confidence level.



Focus On: Ethnicity

# Focus On: Ethnicity

	Latino (N=174) (a)	Caucasian (N=132) (b)	African American/Black (N=52) (c)	Asian/Pac Islander (N=69) (d)
<b>Familiarity with CTE</b>				
I know a lot about this	9%	5%	13% b	4%
<b>Consideration</b>				
I would consider it but need more information	74%	78% c	63%	73%
<b>CTE Benefits (Top-2 Agree)</b>				
Completing a Career Technical Education class or program will help me to increase my salary at my current job	54%	53%	54%	70% ab
<b>CTE Barriers (Top-2 Agree)</b>				
I am more interested in pursuing a four-year degree program	61% bc	39%	44%	48%
There are classes and programs that take less time to complete offered by private colleges	43%	38%	60% ab	43%
I won't be able to transfer credits from a Career Technical Education class or program to another program	37% b	26%	37%	28%
<b>Information sources to learn more about CTE</b>				
CCC website	51%	61%	67% a	65% a
Call with a counselor (not career-specific)	14%	20%	35% abd	14%
CCC mobile app	13%	19%	13%	26% a
My school guidance counselor	10% b	2%	4%	4%

Note: Letters denote significant differences at the 95% confidence level.



Focus On: Income

# Focus On: Income

Familiarity with CTE	Less than \$25K (N=115) (a)	\$25K-\$49K (N=114) (b)	\$50K-99K (N=135) (c)	\$100K+ (N=47) (d)
I have never heard of this before today	27% b	15%	21%	21%
I have heard or seen and know some things about it	33%	40% c	28%	43%
<b>Consideration</b>				
I would never consider	15% bc	4%	5%	9%
I would consider and am actively researching a Career Technical Education class or program right now	6%	17% a	20% a	22% a
I have completed one	6% b	1%	6% b	2%
<b>CTE Barriers (Top-2 Agree)</b>				
I don't have enough time to complete a Career Technical Education class or program	37% b	22%	27%	38% b
I won't be able to transfer credits from a Career Technical Education class or program to another program	41% b	26%	33%	28%
I can't afford the enrollment fees for a Career Technical Education program	59% bcd	39%	36%	30%
CCC website	50%	60%	67% a	60%
On campus F2F meeting with a counselor	30%	42% a	43% a	28%

Note: Letters denote significant differences at the 95% confidence level.



# Appendix

# Regional Sampling Plan

Region	Counties
Northern California	Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Mendocino, Tehama, Plumas, Lake, Glenn, Colusa, Sutter, Yuba, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras
Bay Area	Sonoma, Napa, Yolo, Marin, Solano, Sacramento, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, Stanislaus
Central Valley/Coast	Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Merced, Kings, Madera, Fresno, Mariposa, Tuolumne, Alpine, Mono, Inyo, Tulare
Southern California <sup>1</sup>	Kern, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside
Southern California <sup>2</sup>	San Diego, Imperial

