Improving Career Education Pathways into California’s Workforce

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The pandemic has increased focus on workforce training

- The pandemic may reshape jobs and increase the need for training
  - Long-term economic shifts were already reshaping the future of work
- Public funding for job training has bipartisan support
- Recent federal and state investments have increased funding levels
Community colleges are poised to play a key role

- Largest public provider of workforce education
  - diverse group of students in terms of race/ethnicity, age, work experience
  - training opportunities from manufacturing to health care to business
  - varying levels of credentials
- Wages increase about 20%
  - program choice and credential type matter a lot!
We seek to understand effective pathways into the workforce

- Our study examines student progress through career education programs
- Our interviews with stakeholders shed light on the college-workforce connection
Few career education students complete a credential

![Bar chart showing the percentage of students earning CE credentials within 6 years by field.]

- Business: 10%
- IT: 10%
- Engineering: 20%
- Health: 60%
- Family/Consumer: 20%
- Public/Protective: 20%
- Overall: 20%
Success varies across groups, but full-time attendance is the strongest predictor

- Less likely to complete a credential:
  - Black and Latino students
  - Youngest (under 24) students
  - Male students

- Attending at least one term full-time is the strongest correlate of completion, controlling for demographics and program choice
Even a short-term credential is a time investment for students

Years to reach milestone

- Overall
- Associate
- Long-term
- Short-term

- Earn 1st credential
- Become intending
Many students return to community colleges, but few stack credentials.
Practitioners cite diverse challenges among career education students

- Students may benefit from specific supports
  - Flexible schedules to support working adults (though flexibility alone is not enough)
  - Financial supports to cover basic needs, child care
  - Technology like computers, broadband access

- Early support may keep students from falling behind and may improve equity gaps
  - Within first year, Black and Latino students have lower odds of completion compared to other racial/ethnic student groups
Stronger college-employer engagement could benefit students

- Work-based learning opportunities
  - internships, apprenticeships
- Curriculum that matches employer needs
- Increased potential for stackable pathways
However, collaboration between colleges and employers can be difficult

- Requires commitment, time, and resources
- Coordination within and across colleges is challenging
- Multiple workforce funding streams contribute to fragmented engagement efforts
Conclusions

- Connect student goals with student outcomes and supports
- Strengthen opportunities for students to attend full-time
- Consider statewide coordination role, esp. for curriculum
These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.