



Video Discussion and Action Guide Faculty



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Doing What MATTERS™

FOR JOBS AND THE ECONOMY



Understanding How Workforce Pathways Shape College Outcomes and Earnings Gains

Career and technical education (CTE) faculty are the lynchpin between institutional goals and student experiences. Having access to **complete data** about student progress and outcomes can help CTE faculty make important decisions about what to emphasize in their **teaching**, which **resources** to request to improve outcomes, and whether institutional **policies** should be reviewed to ensure they support students' abilities to engage with course content. More comprehensive data is now available on the CTE LaunchBoard, which can help support these activities. The LaunchBoard can also help make the link between specific program outcomes and institutional policy issues on topics such as measuring success, resource allocation, and educational planning.

This discussion guide is designed to be used with two short videos posted on the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy [website](#) that link new research on career and technical education (CTE) outcomes with broader issues of educational policy. The first, "[Building More Comprehensive Measures of Workforce Training Success](#)" (four minutes), describes why success

metrics for CTE programs need to be more comprehensive than completion of community college credentials or transfer to a four-year college. The second, an "[How Workforce Pathways Shape College Outcomes and Earnings Gains](#)" (eight minutes), examines the multiple types of workforce training offered by community colleges and their associated earnings gains, as a means

of documenting the value of both short-term and long-term educational pathways.

Below are a number of possible discussions and action steps that faculty could undertake after viewing the videos.

Measuring Success

Both videos make a case that CTE programs should be assessed by looking at the following metrics:

- Completion of community college degrees and certificates
- Transfer to four-year universities
- Earnings gains
- Employment and employment retention
- Third-party certifications

By logging into the [CTE LaunchBoard](#)--a dashboard that can be accessed by anyone associated with a community college--you can find program-level results for your college on many of these metrics.

CTE LaunchBoard Uses

- » **Get a Bigger Picture:** see how well your students do in attaining milestones, completion, wage gain, and employment
 - » **Strengthen Budget Requests:** make the case for why your program yields a strong return-on-investment by comparing enrollments and outcomes with regional labor market information
 - » **Demonstrate Success:** showcase outcomes on both program completers *and* skills-builders—more experienced workers who are improving their employment status by filling skills gaps
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There are a number of possible questions that you could discuss and actions you could take after reviewing LaunchBoard data.

Discussion: Does the data on the LaunchBoard appear to be accurate?

If not, the problem may lie in how your college codes and tracks program-level information. The LaunchBoard is largely populated from the annual uploads that colleges provide to the Chancellor's Office for accountability reporting. If your information is being incorrectly tagged, it not only affects the LaunchBoard—it also affects how data appears in public reports like the Salary Surfer, the CTE Scorecard, and outcomes submitted to the federal government.

Action: Talk with your college's institutional researcher to examine how course- and program-level information is coded and tracked.

Discussion: In the “credentials” portion of the LaunchBoard Program Snapshot tab, is the “locally issued certificates” field filled in?

Many colleges do not report the number of certificates given out for non-Chancellor's Office-approved programs, because it is an optional part of accountability reporting. However, if colleges submit this information, it can be included on the LaunchBoard to provide a more complete picture of CTE outcomes.

Action: Talk with your Chief Instructional Officer about the value of submitting this information and recommend that non-approved certificates be added to accountability reporting.

Discussion: In the “credentials” portion of the LaunchBoard Program Snapshot tab, is the “external credentials” field filled in?

The primary source of information for this field comes from the CTE Outcomes Survey, an optional survey that colleges pay to participate in (the survey is administered at cost by Santa Rosa Junior College—detailed information on pricing, timelines, and survey questions are available on their [website](#)). However, colleges can also upload data from other sources, provided that the information is linked to individual student records and the collection methodology is certified by Cal-PASS Plus and the RP Group. Understanding whether college programs are well-aligned with industry-recognized credentials can help inform curriculum and program development.

Action: Talk with your program director about the best way to gather information on third-party credentials for your college. If you would like to upload data on this metric, contact launchboard@cccoco.edu to learn more about how to get your data certified.

Understanding Outcomes

The longer video points out that colleges may be addressing diverse goals through their workforce training programs. For example, some programs require a long sequence of courses to ensure that students master complex skill-sets, while others—like those targeting skills-builders—only need to offer a class or two to fill discrete skills gaps. Short-term programs may be just as effective as longer programs at helping students reach sizable wage gains, depending on the industry and the experience level of the student. Examining the data in the LaunchBoard can help you determine whether your program is helping student attain the appropriate outcomes.

Possible questions that you could discuss and actions you could take include:

Discussion: Looking at factors such as completion, employment, earnings gains, and third-party certifications, and given the goals of your program, how successful do students appear to be?

Once your data is in place, you can determine if students are attaining outcomes that align with your program goals. For more information on how to leverage the completion and employment data in the LaunchBoard, as well as compare it to labor market information from your region (available in the “regional labor market information” portion of the LaunchBoard Program Snapshot tab), you can download a [four-page guide](#) that describes how one college used this type of information to drive program improvement. You can also view a [PowerPoint presentation](#) that details specific combinations of fields that can provide useful insights.

Action: Talk with your program director about integrating the information available in the LaunchBoard into your program review process. You may be able to use these expanded outcomes to make the case for why a program deserves more resources or a greater number of sections. Or, if the numbers aren’t strong, you can begin investigating how to help more students reach their goals.

Discussion: For short-term programs, does the LaunchBoard enable you to make a case for policy and advising changes?

Being able to demonstrate positive employment and wage outcomes can help to advance policy changes, such as exempting courses from repeatability limits, creating a local certificate that can be easily integrated into educational plans, or securing Chancellor’s Office approval for an

existing local credential. For example, a multi-media program might have historically low completion rates, paired with high employment and wage outcomes as demonstrated in the LaunchBoard. If the program is facing declining enrollments that are being driven by repeatability rules, the college could map this high-value pathway, ensure it is documented in a local certificate, and adjust policies at the program level that are inadvertently preventing students from reaching their goals.

Action: Work with your program director to raise issues with existing policies that are being treated on a case-by-case basis, but in fact are systemic. Also, encourage your program director to share your outcomes data with counselors, so they can help students who are seeking to build discrete skills prepare appropriate educational plans.

Find Out More

Below are links to resources listed in this document. You can also get your questions answered by emailing launchboard@cccoco.edu.

- **Chancellor' Office resource website** on Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy, which describes how workforce training is being strengthened among California Community Colleges: <http://doingwhatmatters.cccoco.edu/Home.aspx>
- **Four-minute video** on why success metrics for career and technical education (CTE) programs need to be more comprehensive: <http://doingwhatmatters.cccoco.edu/CollegeLeadershipResources/InformingPolicy.aspx#video1>
- **Eight-minute video** on the multiple types of workforce training offered by community colleges and their associated earnings gains: <http://doingwhatmatters.cccoco.edu/CollegeLeadershipResources/InformingPolicy.aspx#video2>
- **Research** on earnings outcomes for workforce students: <http://www.wested.org/project/quantifying-non-completion-pathways-to-success/>
- **CTE LaunchBoard**, a dashboard of workforce training outcomes available to faculty and staff of California community colleges: <https://www.calpassplus.org/launchboard/Home.aspx>
- **Resource guides** on understanding the LaunchBoard and how to use specific features: <http://doingwhatmatters.cccoco.edu/LaunchBoard/Resources.aspx>
- **Case studies** on using labor market data to inform planning: <http://doingwhatmatters.cccoco.edu/LaunchBoard/Resources.aspx>
- **Information on the CTE Outcomes Survey**, a voluntary survey that capture employment outcomes of former students, conducted at cost by Santa Rosa Junior College: <http://www.santarosa.edu/cteos/>