

THE INDISPENSABLE INSTITUTION REIMAGINING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Opportunity America Working Group on
Community College Workforce Education

JUNE 2020

ABOUT THE REPORT

- Formulated by a diverse mix of educators, education reformers, researchers and policy experts
 - Opportunity America is a Washington-based nonprofit promoting economic mobility
- Main Concern - the heightened inequality as automation and artificial intelligence transform the world of work
- Main Point - Placing career prep and midcareer upskilling at the center of the mission and culture of CC's
- <https://opportunityamericaonline.org/community-college-summary/>

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PAPER

- All two-year college students, including those who intend to transfer to a four-year college, should receive instruction in basic job skills, including workplace communication and applied math
- All should have an opportunity for work-based learning and career exposure
- Every credential earned at a community college, including the traditional, academic associate of arts degree, should be designed to have value in the labor market
- Colleges should be held accountable for what happens after students graduate, with their performance measured against post-completion employment outcomes—job placement and earnings - Funding Reforms

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PAPER

- Community colleges need to restructure programs, offering more short-form, applied courses geared to industry needs and industry-recognized credentials
- Educators should develop much closer relationships with employers and assume more responsibility for the economic prosperity of their regions
- Institutions should bridge the divide between academically oriented programs and job-focused workforce education

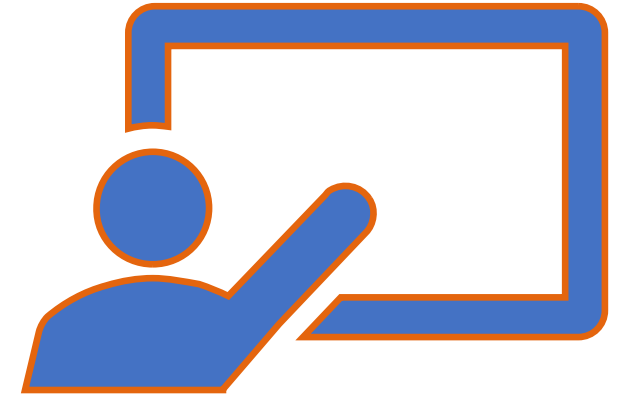
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Need for quick job-focused upskilling and reskilling in local labor market
- Learner needs
 - Foundation human skills - critical thinking, problem solving, communication, creativity, research techniques
 - Essential job-focused competencies- essential for all students-include workplace communication, applied math, teamwork, time management, data analytics and the rudiments of coding
- Students will want shorter courses, at convenient times, more focused on job-related skills
- Expand work-based learning: institutions need dedicated outreach staff



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Dedicated employer outreach office, additional resources for placement staff, more robust career services, better coordination between curriculum and the labor needs of local employers
- Credit and Non-Credit working together helping the local labor market
- Competency-based industry certifications should be better integrated into college programming
- Students need better information on the labor market
- Credit for prior learning for midcareer adults



CAREER PREPARATION FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

- More intensive career advising
- Career exposure—job shadowing, internships
- Required to take courses in workplace communication—business writing, public speaking and how to present at a meeting
- General education requirements should be restructured: organized, like the most successful workforce programs, around competencies and project-based learning
- Every student, no matter what their major, should get a grounding in statistics - data analytics

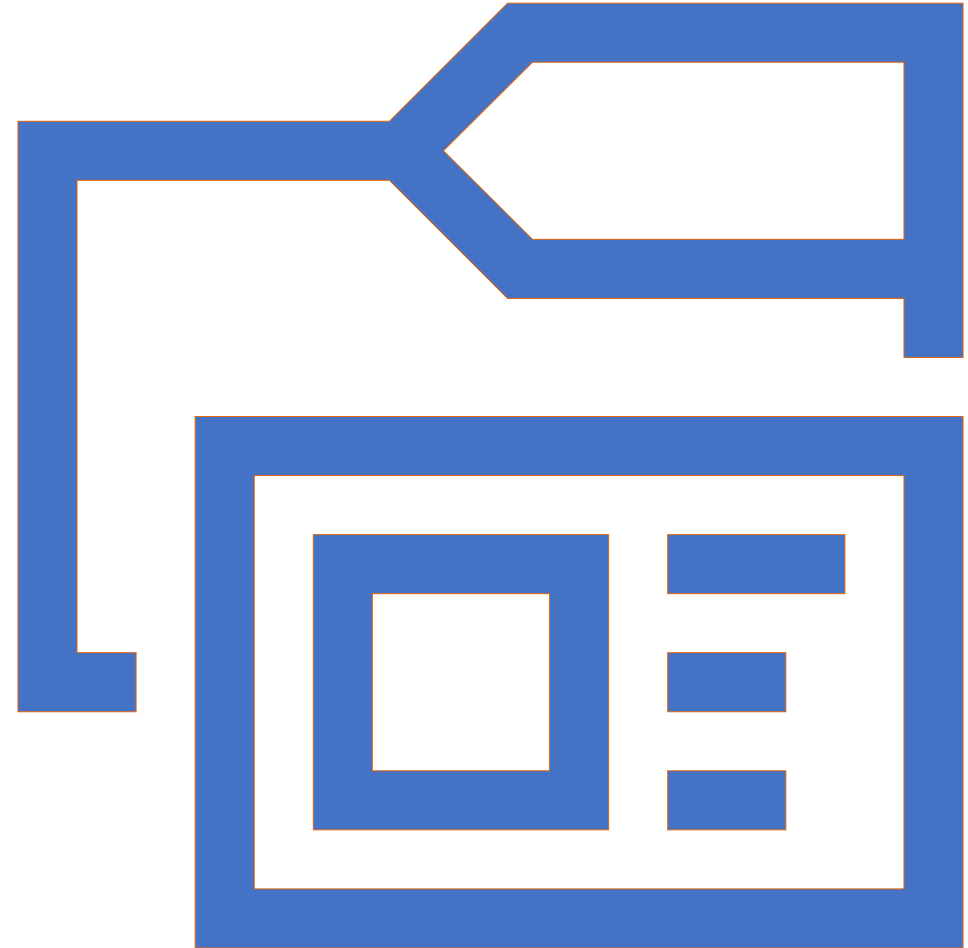


WHAT'S IN THE DATA

- Only half of those born in 1985 could expect to earn more than their parents
- Nearly two-thirds of all jobs required some postsecondary education or training
- More than half of well-paying jobs required a four-year college degree
- Poorer students might have access to college than they did historically, but degree rates are much lower
 - 67 percent of students from households earning less than \$30,000 obtain no credential of any kind within six years—not even a short-term certificate
- Roughly as many learners in certificate and associate degree programs as in bachelor's degree programs

WHAT'S IN THE DATA

- Middle-skill jobs currently account for roughly half of US employment
- 77 percent of traditional college-age students arrive at community college expecting to transfer to a four-year institution and earn a bachelor's degree, but only 13 percent succeed
- More than 45 percent of those who attend two-year institutions are enrolled in noncredit programs (decade old data)



SWOT - REIMAGINING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- YC Strengths

- Low Cost, Nimble Program Approval, Established REDC, Strong CTE Programming

- YC Weaknesses

- Local labor market is a challenge because of large retirement population, lack of industry
- Slow to sunset programs
- Resistance to adapting to student course preference (modalities and duration)
- Articulation issues with 4-year partners

SWOT - REIMAGINING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- YC Opportunities

- Streamline program/class portfolio so we can add new (relevant) programs
- Explore and promote more 3 + 1 partnerships
- Train faculty and administrators about the latest trends in the workplace
- Short courses/different start dates - more convenient options to the student
- Better credit/non-credit partnership to meet employer needs

SWOT - REIMAGINING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- YC Opportunities

- Technical sales and sales management as one of the hardest-to-fill midlevel jobs - upgrade retail skillsets
- Industry cert review - what can we add that we don't address in our credit programs?
- Expand underage non-credit (high school) that leads to concurrent enrollment/dual enrollment (i.e., get them in the door even earlier)
- Work with high schools to honor concurrent enrollment at greater levels
- Public job center on campus - direct employment - hook up with YC programs

SWOT - REIMAGINING COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- YC Threats
 - More flexible credit and non-credit options from competitors
 - State funding attached to credit only - expenditure limitation
 - Declining enrollments