

San Diego and Imperial Community Colleges Career Education

Perkins V Local Comprehensive Needs Assessment: Consultation Report

Prepared by UC San Diego Extension April 30, 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Purpose

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, referred to as Perkins V, was first authorized by the federal government in its original form in 1984. The 2018 re-authorization of this act provides over \$1.2 billion in federal funds to support and increase the quality of career and technical education programs across all 50 states.

To apply for federal Perkins V funds, organizations must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment related to career and technical education, with an emphasis on understanding the needs of special populations. Perkins V special populations include:

- Individuals with Disabilities
- Individuals from Economically Disadvantaged Families
- Individuals Preparing for Nontraditional Academic Fields
- English Learners
- Homeless Individuals
- Out of Work Individuals
- Youth Who Are In or Have Aged Out of Foster Care
- Single Parents, Including Pregnant Women
- Youth with a Parent who is Active Duty with the Armed Forces

The consultation component of the comprehensive needs assessment must engage a diverse group of stakeholders, at minimum:

- Representatives of career and technical education programs from local educational service agencies
- Representatives of career and technical education programs at postsecondary educational institutions
- Representatives of local workforce development boards
- Parents and students
- Representatives of special populations
- Representatives of local agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth

Between March 25, 2020 and April 27, 2020, the UC San Diego Extension Center for Research and Evaluation conducted 22 stakeholder consultation interviews for the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges Career Education Perkins V Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Fifteen interviews were conducted with San Diego and Imperial County educational and special population service providers, workforce and economic development groups, and higher education officials. Each interview lasted roughly 30-45 minutes, and was conducted by telephone or Zoom

video conferencing. In addition, 7 phone interviews were conducted with a diverse sample representing current and past San Diego and Imperial Community College students and parents, and members of the Perkins V special populations. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the ability of some special population service providers to participate in interviews as they responded to an uptick in demand for their services. Particularly occupied by the pandemic were those working with homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals. Despite more limited availability among these groups, several representatives were interviewed, and their perspectives are captured herein.

Summary of Key Findings

Area service providers, workforce and economic development organizations, universities, and students recognize the great value the San Diego and Imperial County Community Colleges bring to the region, particularly for underserved populations. One respondent said, “The community colleges are very essential... they are essential to training the workforce and for the community in general”. Community college students, and especially those from underserved special populations, enrich our communities—they carry with them diverse and unique life experiences, and tremendous resilience, creativity, and motivation to succeed. These students enrich learning communities and it is important that community colleges continue the important work of understanding how to best serve them through career and technical education, and the critical support services community colleges provide. Several themes emerged from stakeholder interviews and are presented here in the executive summary in these categories: Facilitating Access to Higher Education, Marketing & Communications, Connections to Workforce Demand, and Access to High Wage Jobs.

Facilitating Access to Higher Education

There were a number of suggestions for local community colleges in terms of facilitating access to higher education for special population groups. Some were more salient for particular populations groups, but in general, students need assistance with:

Financial Support & Wraparound Services—coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, many students struggle to pay rent and other bills, or are homeless. They often need childcare support. Many interview respondents said clear access to a range of financial, mental health, academic, and employment support services will help community college students pursue and achieve their educational and career goals.

Transportation—closely connected with financial concerns are issues with finding transportation to get to community college campuses. Transportation came up frequently during interviews as a barrier to persisting at and completing a community college program.

Communications—Clear and consistent communication—ideally from the same individual, such as an academic advisor or mentor—could help community college students, especially

those from special populations, navigate and succeed in the community college system. Requests for improved communications around career pathways was also a theme among interview respondents, which should begin as early outreach to K-12 students.

Regarding communications, this could begin in the early years of high school with community college representatives and counselors reaching out to special population high school students to build a dialogue with them. One service provider respondent said, “Disabled Student Services (at the community colleges) are not going to the high schools’ Special Ed classes. These students don’t know how to apply and what to expect at college”. Another respondent said, “have more college preparedness in high school for underrepresented communities (low income, students of color, etc.)”. In a related area, offering transitional classes in high school will immerse students in the college experience earlier, in order to, “make it more of a transition to community college rather than a big leap [where they have] to navigate this new system on their own”. Another suggestion included, “offer remedial or developmental courses for those who don’t qualify for the college level out of high school. They come in and spent money to essentially take the same course as they did in high school and spend time to catch up and that can lead to them dropping out”.

A related suggestion was to extend the Career Technical Education and Equity Programs, which are part of the SD Unified School District offerings. One service provider respondent explained, “We have Child Development, Auto Body, Telecommunications, Mixed Media/Film Making/Photography, Culinary/Hospitality and Health Care, they are all hands-on programs and the students are learning in a professional environment (in film studios/professional kitchens, they get their food handling card) and the whole track is setting them up to step out into a job and have the skills they need. If we can extend those courses into the community colleges, that would be really beneficial to our students”. One service provider felt that the CTE programs needed more articulated courses between the community colleges and high schools to facilitate these students’ journey into college, allowing them to advance faster. Interview respondents noted some inconsistency across the community colleges in San Diego in their outreach to high schools within their district (e.g., frequency and depth of contact, engagement at the programmatic level, etc.).

Community colleges should ensure that special population students have support throughout the community college experience and not just from counselors or dedicated services, like the Disability Resource Center. One service provider said, “Community Colleges need more awareness for those who have disabilities”. This should include emotional and mental health assistance, if needed. Professors also need to be more aware of their students with special needs, such as allowing late assignments, as some cannot complete an assignment at the same pace as other students. One service provider said, “professors can be resistant to any deviations from their program”. For LGBTQ+ students in particular, one respondent felt that there was a need for extensive training for community college staff, including professors, in LGBTQ+ competency.

Part of this support mechanism is understanding that when special population students are struggling, they maybe less likely to reach out for help—this might be particularly true for veterans, but individuals from other special population groups as well. This is part of the reason

why support services and consistent communication with a trusted contact or mentor are vital. Supports or wrap around services can include tutoring, mental health services, financial support, and opportunities for social engagement. One service provider said that local community colleges should provide “support throughout their community college experience, peer-to-peer mentoring, and/or wrap-around services with someone checking on them”.

Other specific ideas offered by interviewees that might help underserved community colleges students succeed include:

- Ensure that disability resource centers have a sufficient number of technology devices (recorders, tablets), and be able to explore different devices with individual students to help them become familiar with the technology.
- Work with local community disability service and vocational service providers on formal partnerships. These groups are very important because they frequently assist in support services for special population students.
- Offer more life skills courses—independent living, as well as resume writing and interviewing skills.
- Assist with social support systems, even though admittedly that is not the primary mission of the community college system. One service provider explained, “Community colleges should provide more support and partner with organizations to provide basic support on the social side. It’s unfair to expect community colleges to have to be a social service but things like free tuition, food pantry, daycare for those with children, clothing, etc.—working with partner agencies and partnering with the community for their students’ needs.”
- Work on facilitating access to community college campuses. One service provider said that Miramar College had strong Auto Tech and Biotech programs, but many of their clients in South San Diego could not access them because of transportation issues. Exploring central hubs for students to access for vans to various campus might be something to explore.
- One San Diego area four-year university respondent felt that the community colleges should continue to work with area four-year schools on, “programming, data sharing, etc. which all helps to provide that successful handoff”.

Marketing and Communication Efforts

Interview respondents underscored the imperative for the community colleges to market their value to special population groups through key channels. One service provider respondent said, “send the message to the high schools that community college is an equal option to a four-year school and not a plan B, C or D. They need to be on equal pathway to different industries that allow you to advance with lower student debt. The students can be equally prepared”.

Community colleges and workforce groups must, “sell [employees on] the advantages of hiring these types of students through the community colleges. The community colleges need to show that they can educate and train employees for them with the qualifications they require”.

One workforce/economic development respondent summarized the benefits of the community college mission as, “The community colleges are very essential. They have a high percentage of transitional age youth that utilize the services provided by community colleges. They are essential to training the workforce and for the community in general. The community colleges provide...courses and training that is not traditional training that you would find in a four year college and training that leads them into meaningful jobs and builds up the community economically”. Another workforce/economic development respondent added, “community colleges have the flexibility to respond to changes in the economy and pivot their programs to meet the needs of industry much faster than a university can in terms of their curriculum and program offerings.”

Part of marketing efforts can include disseminating information on community college success stories. For example an interview respondent said, “a few youths have done well, typically in Engineering Technicians and Machinist programs...one young client started at \$17 an hour, for a first job that is successful”. Veterans have been successful through the community college system as well, “we have had some work logistics as contractors for the military in the Middle East and make six figures. Another had security training and is now at LAPD, so that is a success”. Those from truck driving school are doing well financially. It is about taking military skills and transferring it to the civilian world”.

One service provider did feel that the community colleges were getting the message out to special population members, “The community colleges have done a nice job with advertising on radio, billboard and bus stops (and through print and social media channels). That is good because these underserved populations do not understand all the job options available and what is involved”.

Programs Connected to Workforce Demand

Some interview respondents suggested that the community colleges develop additional certification offerings for in-demand sectors, including: security, medical, IT, logistics, trucking, manufacturing, and construction.

One service provider respondent said that, “more manual/physical trades are areas where some students find success—construction, landscaping, masonry, etc.”. One of the workforce/economic development respondents said that the San Diego area currently “trends toward computer technology, advanced manufacturing, and the medical industry. Before the Coronavirus, hospitality was in high demand.”

One workforce/economic development official talked about the opportunities for ‘Innovative Industries’ and ‘Opportunity Industries’. ‘Innovative Industries’ include fast growing occupations: 1) Traditional Tech—Information Communication, Software Development and Cyber Security, 2) Life Sciences—the Pharmaceutical Industry, Biotechnology, Medical Technology and Genomics, and 3) Defense Industry—Shipbuilding and other Defense Contracts. ‘Opportunity Industries’—Transportation, Construction and Warehousing—share a lot of the same talent needs as the

'Innovative Industries' but "need more people and there are more jobs that don't require a bachelor's degree, but still provide people with a quality job path and sustainable wage for a good living".

Facilitating Access to High Wage Jobs

To facilitate access to high-wage jobs for special population groups, suggestions for the community colleges included focus on: internships, job fairs (tailored for special populations), site visits to workplace facilities, and more involvement with employers—speaking on campus (employer panels), and having employers assist with curriculum alignment and development. One respondent said, "Take our consumers on an occupational site visit and guide us through their business. We have done that in Imperial Valley for the Border Patrol and Sheriff's Office. We would also look at what fields our consumers are interested in, they can see what they can do there. The colleges should be looking as well for companies to do this with".

Another service provider talked about the importance of having a mentorship program with local companies, "a mentorship program so they can be exposed to different careers. Some clients don't have a vision of why am I going to college or selecting an appropriate career. We want them to pick a realistic field. Talk to someone already in the field. We have clients who want to go into high tech, teaching or video game development. Match these individuals with someone already in the field, and shadow them...to see what they did. They could show them what they do throughout the day, follow-up with a test and meet a few times a month. That provides a little more hope for our clients". Another service provider said, "mentorships with direct support for these industries. Also ensure that the community colleges have programs that facilitate a job within these companies."

Part of the success of job placement efforts relies on the community college system to educate employers on the advantages of hiring special population members, which helps the growth of the local economy while also diversifying the workforce. One service provider respondent said, "San Diego firms look at local four-year schools and then outside of the area if they can't find the people they need. That's not sustainable. We need more regional awareness to recruit locally". One workforce/economic development respondent added, "there is a bit of work to do for employers but they are coming around for some of these typical bachelor's-degree-requirement jobs, the talent is so hard to find, they are open to looking for new sources of recruitment. Partnerships such as those with the community colleges—just being able to demonstrate that they can train people at a much faster pace and at the same quality so that people come out with the fundamental skill sets that then, through work, they can be refined and built upon."

Other suggestions for the community colleges to consider to improve special population access to high wage jobs include:

- Encourage employers to divide jobs into a set of skills to take the focus away from job titles, and change it to the skills these individuals need for jobs which they are trying to fill. This should reduce the bachelor's degree requirement for some jobs

where it might not be required, helping community college graduates enter these occupations.

- Guide students to different industries that they can pursue and that are of interest to them and, “not what we think they should take”. If they need to take a different path or need other requirements or training to achieve their goal, the community colleges should ensure that this information is delivered clearly to them.
- Create access for youth under 18 to some of the “robust skill training for adults...who could benefit as well from them. Skills training for Microsoft, culinary, welding and skilled trades would be good for youth”.
- One suggestion from a workforce/economic development respondent focused on more collaboration and coordination within the community colleges themselves, “I would like to see a more concerted effort to not compete against one another and really come together and think how their approaches can be streamlined and improved to really serve individuals and companies effectively. The community colleges have done a great job in recent years at doing that but continue that collaboration across schools so they can be a stronger total unit. Instead of maybe being individually strong as individual community colleges, rather [operate] as a collective community college group.” This effort will help to capture information from employers to drive curriculum development and share information on job opportunities and future prospects among the various colleges.
- Organizations certainly have an obligation and role in this effort, it is not solely the responsibility of the community colleges. Employers need to communicate more fully with these special population groups and be committed to accommodating them so they can be effective at their companies. One workforce/economic development respondent explained that, “they need to be more open to their needs and open their culture to them. Focus groups that employers could have with individuals from these populations will help them understand what they need”.
- Transportation can still present an issue, even after successfully completing a college program. As one service provider respondent said, “some high grade industries are located far away from our low income communities, which affects transportation and access to local services”. “This community is not the best for public transportation”, another added. The recent increase in remote working during the Coronavirus pandemic may help reduce this concern and provide more flexibility for workers with children, health concerns and other considerations by eliminating a long commute which can take up to 3 hours daily in the San Diego area.

Community College Students

Current and former community college students were largely positive regarding their community college experiences, with one saying, “the teachers were great—they were very impressive”. They talked about the value of the EOPS and CARE programs, and the ‘Next Up’ program for

former foster youth. They also appreciated the financial assistance they received. These programs allowed students to feel engaged with the community college and successfully integrated into the system. One former student summed up their experience by saying, “it was great. Everyone was helpful. I didn’t want to leave”.

Student interview respondents felt that continued one-on-one mentoring and/or counseling services were vital to keeping students engaged and on-track. One student respondent talked about former foster care youth, but the sentiment can apply to many special populations, “they have a fear of failure and help is there but a lot of schools do not go out of their way to let them know how to get the help”. Another respondent added that more help, information and guidance on services and assistance (including financial) was needed.

Other suggestions included:

- Count work experience towards college credit for older students (as the University of Phoenix).
- Expand outreach efforts to high schools to explain the services that community colleges offer to special populations and underserved students. This effort will help to excite them about college and help them realize that they can succeed there. One former community college graduate who is now at a four year school said, “get people enthusiastic for education, start with middle school students, outreach by the community colleges to underserved populations. Plant the seed with students early that I can go to a community college or a trade school and give them insight”. One former student said, “what they lacked was advertising more for those types of services that they have for different types of students”. Some students will need assistance, with the application process for college and financial aid and special programs, for example. Continue that effort as they enter college, to make sure that they understand the requirements of different programs and what services are available to them. The same former student added, “if you don’t know what to look for, you don’t know what’s available”.
- Expand the EOPS program and access for students. One respondent said, “you no longer qualify for the program when you complete 70 units. Extend the program there and it is also limited on the number of students included. Grant programs could extend the array of services that it offers to more people”.
- Facilitate ways (through panel meetings, etc.) to have faculty and staff at the community colleges meet with students from these special populations to better understand their needs and their culture.
- In terms of facilitating greater access to job opportunities after their certification or degree program is complete, one former student said, “keep in touch with students after they leave the community college and guide them. Keep that connection and guide them to learn more about resources that are out there, such as grants, etc.”.

- Job Fairs were viewed positively among community college students, particularly if when they are geared towards specific groups of students, (students with disabilities, first time college students, etc.), online job fairs may be viewed as less intimidating for some groups.
- Some students encouraged by the increased opportunity to work from home and take classes from home as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. They felt this flexibility would help enable them to meet obligations at home and reduce long commutes.

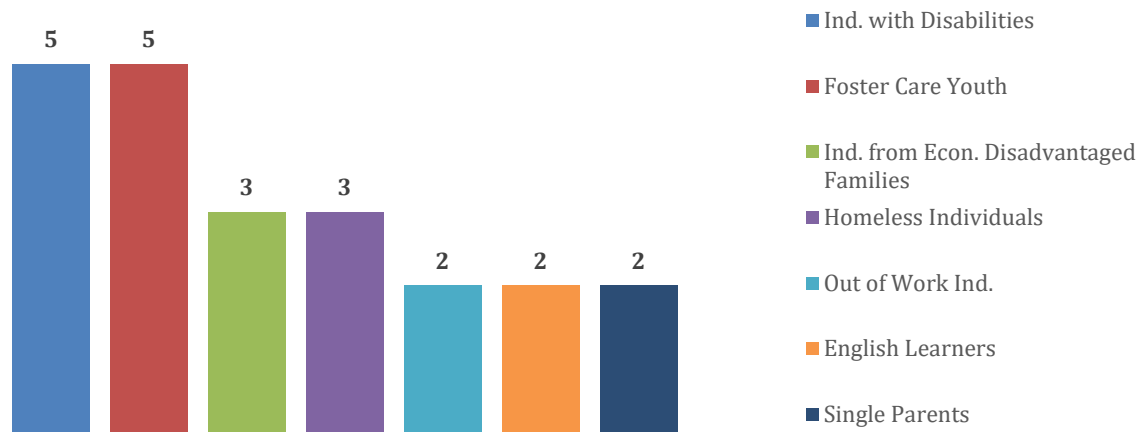
SPECIAL POPULATION SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Perkins V Regional Stakeholder Consultation

Organization Information

Interview Date	Organization	Phone Number
03-25-2020	Interfaith Services	760-708-6830
03-26-2020	Helen Keller Institute	858-578-1600
03-26-2020	Just in Time for Foster Youth	619-770-1853
03-27-2020	Trace School – San Diego Unified High School for Disabled Youth	619-368-7385
03-30-2020	Avid Behavioral Day Program	760-691-9622
04-01-2020	Access to Independence	619-704-2054.
04-02-2020	United Way	858-636-4181
04-03-2020	PATH	619-692-2077 ext. 207
04-10-2020	Autism Center at San Diego State University	619-992-5454
04-22-2020	San Diego County Office of Education	858-569-3037
04-23-2020	Towards Maximum Independence	442-236-5034

Special Populations Served (across n=11 providers)



Questions

1. What is your mission? Which specific special population(s) does your agency serve?

Interfaith Services—Services for out of school youth, including the homeless, women with pregnancies, those who have had any involvement with the criminal justice system. Also programs for underage youth (still in high school) and veterans, including those who are

homeless or at risk. *Specific special populations: single parents (including pregnant women), homeless individuals, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, English learners, out of work individuals, youth who are in (or aged out of) foster care.*

Helen Keller National Center—Focus on clients with combined hearing and vision loss, but it can include at times single mothers and minority clients, including many Spanish and Tagalog speakers. *Specific special populations: individuals with disabilities*

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Programs for former foster care youth from 18-26 years, including a college bound program where they students can get scholarships and access laptops, also a study abroad program. *Specific special populations: youth who are in (or aged out of) foster care*

Trace School—Part of San Diego Unified School District. Serves students 18-22 years of age with disabilities, helps them earn diplomas and provide transitional services. *Specific special populations: individuals with disabilities*

Avid Behavioral Day Program—Vocational and social skills for developmentally disabled adults. *Specific special populations: individuals with disabilities*

Access to Independence—Disabled customers (not one disability in particular). *Specific special populations: individuals with disabilities*

United Way—Focus on “Cradle to Career” for youth, which essentially equates to college and career readiness. Work with partners and cover a number of special populations, including youths from low income or disadvantaged backgrounds or low income neighborhoods. We are one step removed from those organizations—our end result is to develop more efficient processes and best practices. *Specific special populations: individuals from economically disadvantaged families, out of work individuals*

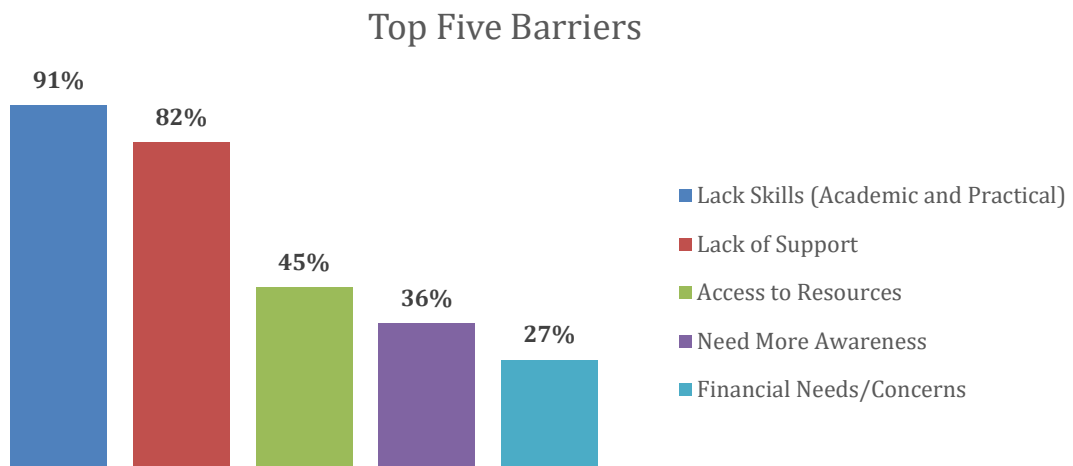
PATH—Provide support for homeless to transition to stable housing. Serve the LGBTQ+ community, work with youth, the 18-24 age group, but also elderly clients, families, veterans and the homeless population, so many populations frequently intersect with PATH. *Specific special populations: homeless individuals, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, youth who are in (or aged out of) foster care*

Autism Center at San Diego State University—Developing programs with multiple colleges. We want to be a hub for research-backed information on autism for the community. We cover the lifespan of autism from age 2 to 75, but we focus on programs for adults for a lot of our activities and research, because there is really nothing for them. *Specific special populations: individuals with disabilities*

San Diego County Office of Education—Programs for justice-impacted youth, mostly for K-12 but also some who have transitioned as adults. Residence program for foster youth and homeless youth, as well as for pregnant and parenting teens. We cut across many categories for special populations. *Specific special populations: youth who are in (or aged out of) foster care, homeless individuals*

Towards Maximum Independence—Work with intellectually and developmentally disabled populations. Foster care youth program, primarily for youth, but it does include those still finishing high school that are ages 18-22. Just started a veterans program two months before the Coronavirus hit. *Specific special populations: individuals with disabilities, youth who are in (or aged out of) foster care*

2. What are the top three barriers each of these populations experience that prevent them from accessing higher education and high-wage careers?



Interfaith Services—A lot is access and information and that is where we step in with our program. Family needs—the pressure to work to support families. We work with MiraCosta College to fund participation in their short-term programs. The lack of support to get to the next step, to provide a safety net for crises which lead to drop-outs—financial or conflict [at home]. Financial can be a barrier as well as transportation and information of what is out there for them. For veterans, most are homeless or at risk of homelessness so it is more of a long-term focus and they have families to support.

Helen Keller National Center—No access to attend courses or not meeting their needs. There are diverse communication styles, such as ASL and whether or not they need an interpreter. Some clients do not have the skills before they go to college. One of our clients had Usher Syndrome and struggled in community college. We worked with her for 14 months and she then went to Gallaudet University [in Washington D.C.] and received

the support and graduated with a high GPA and is now a government advocate. The resource officer or counselor needs to be able to be an emotional support to students and realize that, with the deaf and blind populations, their eyesight can change daily. Community colleges need more awareness for those who have disabilities.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—There is a stigma that many feel from having been in foster care growing up. People told them that they couldn't do college. They feel that they aren't good at school but their education has been disruptive. Being transferred from school to school has hurt them. Financial barriers during the school year (emergency rent assistance, parking passes—our participants can't depend on family).

Trace School—Students struggle with comprehending what they read, accessing support, and navigating the system. They have been supported academically before but now they are pushed off on their own. They need help with organizational skills.

Avid Behavioral Day Program—Our clients need help academically, with transportation, leisure activities and with independent living skills. We have 4-5 clients who are in college with 1-1 programs. The big challenge is homework. The resources could be there, but the students don't have the motivation to get it done. It takes them 4-5 times longer to complete an assignment than other students. We have a staff member with them and professors are aware of their disability but still do not allow late papers.

Access to Independence—There is a big disconnect between the high schools and community colleges. Community colleges go to the high schools to talk to students about applying for admission and financial aid, etc., but Disabled Student Services [at the community colleges] are not going to the high schools' Special Ed classes. These students don't know how to apply and what to expect at college.

United Way—Economics and affordability. Can they get into college and then afford to stay? That also includes books and transportation and just supporting yourself. Creating a smooth transition from one level to the next, like it is within grade school and high school—a natural progression—but high school to college is more of a middle class path. They need to know what post-secondary education looks like for them and what the pathway is to navigate. Build it in so that it is seamless. It depends on the pipeline transition and the relationship between the local high schools and the community colleges. Have more college preparedness in high school for underrepresented communities (low income, students of color, etc.).

PATH—A lack of understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and many have faced family rejection. They have no safe place or family to turn to. They tend to get kicked out of the home at younger ages, are homeless at younger ages and have difficulty accessing schools and jobs. They are discriminated against at home and socially. There are also mental health struggles that the youth face. Community colleges don't have adequate

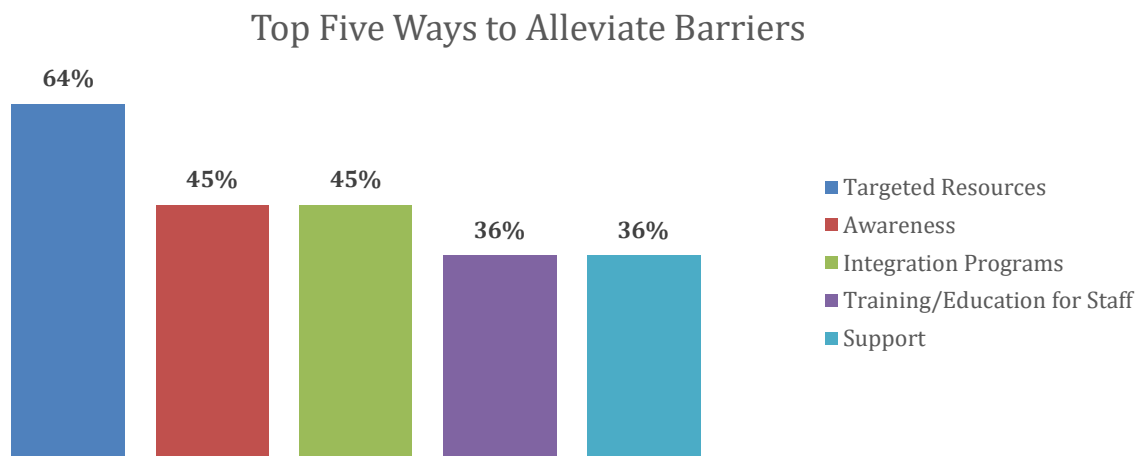
services on campus or are not LGBTQ+ competent. Our adult clients have similar experiences and it can lead to low incomes, homelessness—they lack social support.

Autism Center at San Diego State University—Social skills deficits. Clients have the capacity to perform in classes or tasks in a particular job, but it is the soft skills that impede them, navigating relationships with professors, employers and co-workers. They also don't always ask for help as they are rule followers. They don't even know that all students select professors from 'Rate My Professor'—they don't know that and can end up with the most difficult one.

San Diego County Office of Education—The biggest impediments are competitive needs: work, raising children, helping to support a family, and so on. There are also basic skills deficiencies, including for the digital divide. Some need to learn basic skills to use technology. With the current pandemic crisis, internet connectivity is a big issue.

Towards Maximum Independence—The ability to access different resources, such as having the internet to check a jobs website or even access an application to community college. Transportation is another barrier. Also, being told that they cannot do X, Y, or Z; counselors cutting down their dreams. We want them to reach for something higher. Also sometimes they lack social skills, such as those with autism. They may come across differently in a formal setting than others.

2a. Follow up: What can community colleges do to alleviate these barriers?



Interfaith Services—Increased communication. With MiraCosta College, we have a pretty good relationship. But sometimes with the instructor or professor, sometimes there is a disconnect. Understandably, they treat their students as adults as they are over 18 but sometimes the message of why they didn't make it to class or were late is missed and they were dropped. We find out about it after the fact. There could be consistent use of

targeted resources on campus and more integration with social service providers to help before the youth drop out.

For those clients under 18, more presence in the high schools to understand the barriers. MiraCosta has one representative on campus for junior and senior year advising on what they need to take. They should engage much sooner so they will be more motivated.

For veterans—If we can catch them early, they have a lot of skills from the military. We have those who are homeless for the first time (recently out of the military) and another group that are chronically homeless. For veterans, they won't seek out help—they will just drop out so military cultural competency breaks down those barriers and allows them to speak more freely and adds to the success rate, so some of the programs are military specific.

No housing, difficult to access internet, especially now [during the Coronavirus pandemic], if they live in their cars, they have no place to charge their phones with all the libraries shut down. We talked about it yesterday and now we need: more online support, more specialized counselling and support, materials—hot spots and chrome books, loaner programs. There is also a need for additional certification for in-demand key sectors: security, medical, IT jobs that pay well and are in demand (a lot of ex-military have good skills here), logistics, trucking, manufacturing, construction.

Something to get them started right way would be helpful [for veterans]—short-term programs for people that need to get to work and put food on the table now. Mental health support. A high school will have one counselor for academics for 500 students and one psychologist [for multiple schools]. Behavioral health support is a huge aspect in their [clients] success and transfers on to college.

Helen Keller National Center—Educating the schools, for example that our clients need materials in Braille. Also sensitivity training for instructors is needed as some can be inflexible. Some students might need an interpreter and another needs the professor's notes the night before the class. Professors can be resistant to any deviations from their program. Training for staff and an introduction for new students, a workshop going over what they have to deal with and cultural differences. The WIOA has a good program on disability awareness training. Orientation and mobility are big issues—such as a class changing or construction on campus. If they are not notified or only a sign is put on the door, then they have to rely on security staff or other students to get there or they miss the class.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Wrap-around support for the student during school. Some community colleges have used ex-foster care youth as counselors, while even work study jobs can help and integrates them.

Trace School—A tour of the college campus in small groups and stopping and meeting with all the disability support services. We try to teach them skills to organize themselves (calendar making, planning assignments, etc.).

Avid Behavioral Day Program—There could be more resources for specific individuals, tailored to the individual. The professor wants to follow the syllabus for everyone but it doesn't work for our clients. Break down the syllabus into 2 week sections so they do not feel overwhelmed with the amount of work.

Access to Independence—Something like a freshman summer program for more transitional help. Some kind of introduction that immerses students in some way to have that college experience but doing it while they are still in high school. Maybe starting in their last 2-3 years in high school, to make it more of a transition to community college rather than a big leap and having to navigate this new system on their own, and maybe they don't know the deadlines or eligibility.

We have close relationships with community colleges but nothing formal, the Disabled Student Services can collaborate with us to demystify that process. In Imperial Valley, the staff has great relationships with local high schools and actually has office space there, but we don't have that type of formal relationships with the local community colleges and I wonder if some version of that would benefit our customers.

United Way—Offer remedial or developmental courses for those who don't qualify for the college level in high school. They come in and spend money to essentially take the same course as they did in high school and spend time to catch up and that can lead to them dropping out.

PATH—Competency is needed on a large scale. Educators need a level of competence and it must be a necessity for their employees. Currently LGBTQ+ training is not required. It's needed with both the mental health and education sides. Professors have mis-gendered them or outed them to the classroom—sometimes not intentionally. Our organization provides an array of training and have taken it to organizations and tailored it to their needs and their level of competence. We have done one-on-one training, brown bag lunch small group training, and more formal PowerPoint training with large groups of educators. We can also develop custom programs.

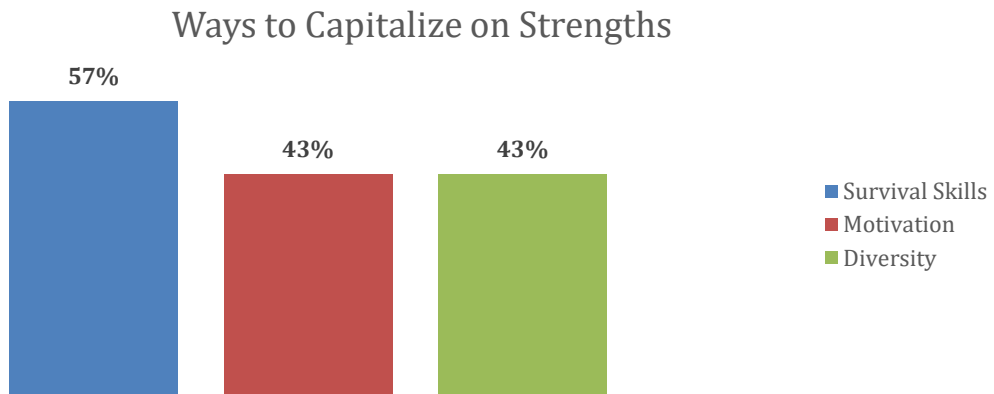
Autism Center at San Diego State University—The challenge is that no two autistic adults are the same. Professors need to adjust to each individual on the spectrum. Hold a Cultural Competency Course for service providers, teachers and law enforcement about autism and how diverse its manifestations can be.

San Diego County Office of Education—Some students don't have the basic reading and math skills required. There is a gap in education, particularly for new arrivals—such as

refugees, who some community colleges have large numbers of. Support for these needs and students is important.

Towards Maximum Independence—Disability support services that our students access on campus—there have been some issues with those services. We have a program called ‘Tailor Day Service’ for our students where one of our staff, who has been to college themselves, goes with them to school to support them and that might mean studying for tests, learning how to talk to a counselor or joining a social group on campus—a variety of ways that individuals can connect to their campus and be more successful. In Imperial Valley, they have told us they don’t want our staff with them in the classroom. When an individual needs a little more support, that is a barrier that we can fix, but the school doesn’t allow us sometimes. Trying to educate people and teach them is something that we definitely continue to strive for and work on teaching about our services.

3. What are the top three strengths / assets that each of these populations bring with them into a higher education environment?



Interfaith Services—We work with a lot of people who are extremely resistant; they are more mature than other young adults—inner strengths, their survival skills. By the time they get to an education or training program, they are fairly motivated too because it took them some effort to get there. They may be the first in their family that have done that.

Helen Keller National Center—They bring unity to a campus—everyone looks out for them. With a diverse group of people, they are all in it together. They also have perseverance—they have to want it—only 1% get pushed to college by their parents [They want to do it for themselves].

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Grit and resilience. We handle failure and keep moving forward. Compassion; they will tell other students about their experiences.

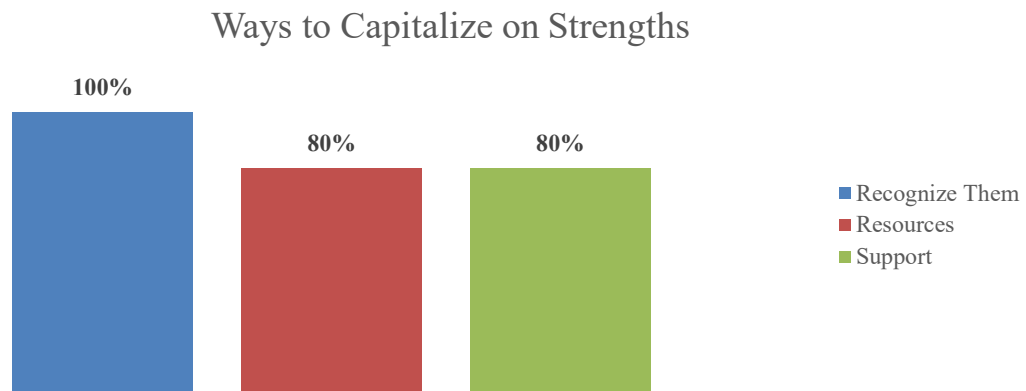
Trace School—Attention to detail. They do follow through with meeting deadlines but they won't always ask for help. Each student is unique in what they offer so it is hard to summarize. Once they are in a situation, they will give everything they have and not cut corners.

Access to Independence—They bring diverse backgrounds and provide a perspective to fellow students, professors and administrators who don't have disabilities. They have unique experiences from their K-12 years. They have had to advocate more for their services. They bring more diversity and more progressiveness.

PATH—Creativity for our young people. They are also street smart. They can readily prepare for a situation and read the room better than most, seeing if they can trust the room or people there. They are also academically creative. They think about things from a different perspective—gender, relationships, etc.—than do other students. They take a philosophical approach. So, in summary, creativity and survival skills.

Towards Maximum Independence—The level of diversity that people bring. Many have not had the opportunity to interact with a person with disabilities; our clients look at the world through a very different lens and they offer that diverse perspective that maybe we haven't tried looking at.

3a. Follow up: What can community colleges do to capitalize on these strengths?



Interfaith Services—Acknowledging them. Recognizing the effort that it takes for some students to even be there and celebrating those minor steps can keep them engaged and feeling valued.

Helen Keller National Center—Professors should talk to their students, because they are so individual, whether it is a guide dog or an interpreter that they need. The student could

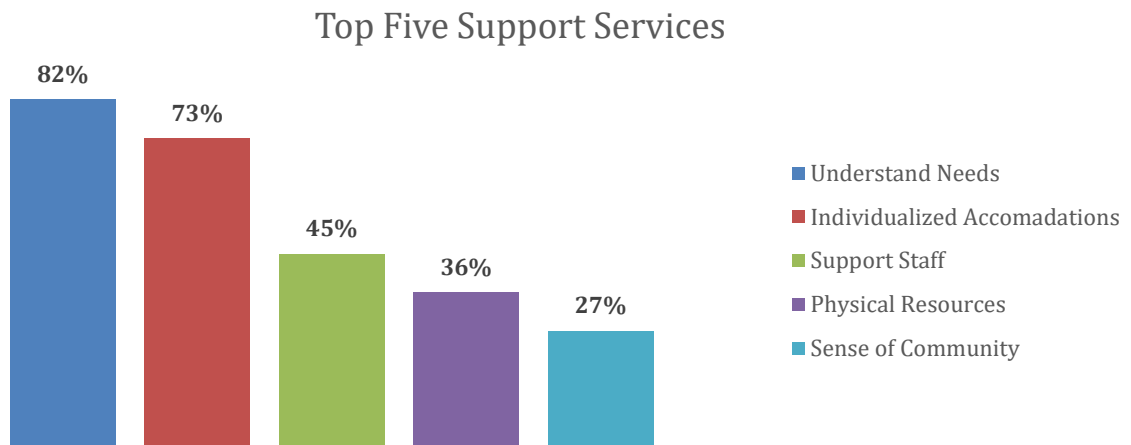
even talk to the class about rules for touching the dog. We need open-mindedness from the professors.

Trace School—They struggle with social gatherings (extracurricular activities), they find it hard to interact. Have clubs that they can participate in. Some like anima and video games, which aren't as social. These students are not so good at planning but they do like to participate.

Access to Independence—Colleges can contribute by having what the students need, such as technology devises for them (and enough of them) for when they attend classes. DSCS offices do not have enough devices (recorders, tablets) for them so who will get it for them? Also, being able to explore different devices for individual students and being familiar with the technology.

PATH—Accessibility—For homeless youth, 40% are LGBTQ+. They need extra care for things like how will they eat, complete school, and so on. There is a need for support for homeless and transient youth.

4. What support services/accommodations are necessary for special populations?



Interfaith Services—Access to technology—internet and hardware. We have talked about portable solar chargers for our clients right now [during the Coronavirus situation]. Childcare for veterans, some are living in their cars. Among our veteran clients, 50% are going to school. For younger clients, 25% of their housing is not stable, which makes it difficult to focus on other goals.

Helen Keller National Center—Accommodation is very individualized [for their clients] and depends on each student because of the wide variety of needs. Orientation and

mobility is big for unmet needs on campus. Community colleges will offer interpreters. SSP needs to work with them, which is something new (Service Support Provider).

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Strengthen the sense of community. Normalizing former foster care youth. Get the associated student body working on it.

Trace School—More DSPS classes available. There is a phenomenal art teacher at the Educational Cultural Center (ECC) but there are 40 plus participants [in the class and that is] too many. Many of our students are not diploma bound. They need more life skills courses—independent living, etc.—for those not pursuing a diploma. For those working on college credits, they have had a lot of support through high school.

Avid Behavioral Day Program—We have the resources and are coming into class with the students. Communication—who pays for the student's parking, is it the Special Needs Office (Disability Resource Center) at the college, or do we have to pay for it? We could have 3-5 people coming to campus to assist the student and who pays for their parking?

Access to Independence—Some students need Personal Care Attendants and being able to accommodate PCA's for them.

United Way—Community colleges should provide more support and partner with organizations to provide basic support [on the social side]. It's unfair to expect community colleges to have to be a social service but things like free tuition, food pantry, daycare for those with children, clothing, etc.—working with partner agencies and partnering with the community for their students' needs. Look at them as whole people [beyond just their classes]. During the COVID-19 crisis, there is more distance learning. This provides more flexibility so that students don't have to be on campus all day [it can be utilized after the crisis as well].

PATH—Visual signs on campus that show that the environment is safe are important—rainbow flag stickers on classroom doors or posters of how to be good allies to your LGBTQ+ students, and so on. Visual representation around campus is really helpful to get folks in the door and then provide services once they are in the door to keep them coming back would be helpful.

Autism Center at San Diego State University—For the autism community, there are a lot of non-profit organizations or day programs and therapy groups that could partner with the community colleges. They have the academic background and day-to-day experience with teaching people on the autism spectrum.

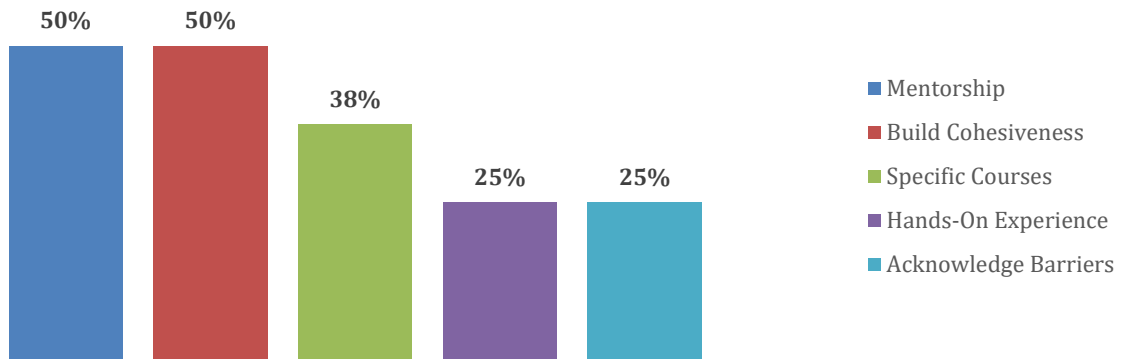
San Diego County Office of Education—Have one representative for each campus for justice-impacted youth. The community colleges have been responsive and flexible with them. We have studied this and peer support for students from incarcerated students is

important. Grossmont College is very active working in supporting courses with incarcerated women at Las Colinas prison. UCSD also has had good support for formerly incarcerated adults. San Diego City College has a program for homeless youth, with support for food, clothing, showers, etc.

Towards Maximum Independence—It can range from little things like getting more time between classes to cross campus for the disabled to needing additional test time, someone to read the questions to them, for example. It can run the gamut.

5. What strategies should community colleges employ to improve access and success to career education for the special populations your agency serves?

Top Five Ways to Improve Career Education



Interfaith Services—Continue to have support throughout their community college experience. Peer-to-peer mentoring or wrap-around service, with someone checking on them. Acknowledge barriers but don't make assumptions that they can't be successful.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Don't necessarily separate the former foster care youth but address the issue with larger groups—either for all students, or first-generation college students or low-income students. Build cohesiveness with other students.

Trace School—Job retention course. Miramar College had one for mock interviews, resume writing.

Access to Independence—Internships, help with volunteering at a site. Take our consumers on an occupational site visit and guide us through their business. We have done that in Imperial Valley for the Border Patrol and Sherriff's Office. We would also look at what fields our consumers are interested in and they can see what they can do there. The colleges should be looking as well for companies to do this with.

PATH—Student Life Department or student social support services like for mental health, a food pantry, housing options, having access to clothes for an interview, and so forth. Also have the LGBTQ+ organizations on campus like the Black Student Union, Chicano Student Union equivalents—which is not currently the case—that would be helpful.

Transportation is a big issue, being able to access the college campus. Also, the colleges need to have their forms and documentation (applications, etc.) to be gender identity and sexual orientation affirming. It starts with administration and then trickles down to financial aid, counseling and professors. There should also be language in the code of conduct referencing the proper treatment of the LGBTQ+ community.

For older students returning to college, they want to know the pathways to return. Many in the LGBTQ+ community start our education 10-15 years later than straight students. We [PATH] want to have the relationship and crossover partnership with the community colleges so that we feel comfortable recommending them. We can come on campus and do HIV testing for a day for example.

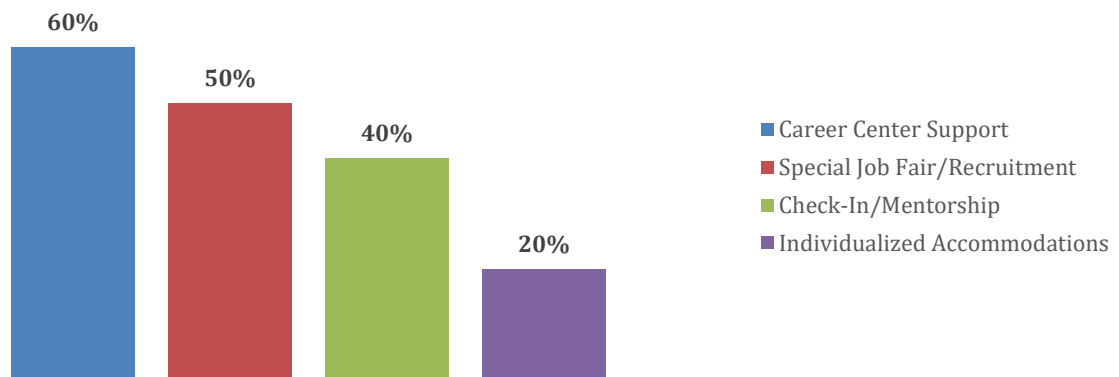
Autism Center at San Diego State University—We have heard from our community members that they would like to have the opportunity to network and connect with people like themselves. The autism community here in San Diego is vibrant and robust. The condition is isolating so creating opportunities for adults on the spectrum to meet, talk about their struggles informally (peer-to-peer support) would be welcome. We have been trying to create an autism-led club at SDSU. There was one in the past but it died out, there has been interest for one again. I don't know if community colleges have clubs like that but if it could be fostered, that would be good. It could be game nights, yoga in the park, movie nights and discussion afterwards. They are inexpensive to host. It normalizes that it is okay to be different—'I can be an individual even though I have this label, veteran, homeless, autism etc., that I have value in who I am.' That can boost confidence for them—these groups have a higher level of anxiety than others.

San Diego County Office of Education—The community colleges have robust skill training for adults but those under 18 could benefit as well from them. Skills training for Microsoft, culinary, welding and skilled trades would be good for the youths as well.

Towards Maximum Independence—More openness to the population we are bringing. It is sometimes something they have not interacted with. More training on the intellectually disabled and their full range of disabilities.

5a. Follow up: What can they do to ensure that underserved populations have the same access to high wage programs as other groups?

Top Ways to Ensure Same Access



Interfaith Services— Veterans don't ask for help. Have someone check-in with them. More Career Center support. Don't let barriers define them. Let them know that we understand that it is something they can overcome.

Helen Keller National Center—Testing with accessible materials is difficult [and not always fair]. If the client is not tech-savvy, they might not be able to use the file format (Jaws or Zoom text).

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Connect them with individuals that can inspire them. community colleges should try harder on careers. Give them realistic ideas beyond teaching and nursing. Career counselors refer them to the career centers. Have one person to develop a relationship with them, like peer mentors.

Trace School—The community colleges could advocate with local businesses. Some employers get hesitant when they learn the student has a disability. A job fair specifically to hire people with disabilities would be great. The students are willing to take an entry level job to get in the door and work their way up, which sometimes is better for them. Also internships—ideally paid, but even non-paid ones as they are happy to get into the company [for a chance for a full-time job].

Avid Behavioral Day Program—A mentorship program so they can be exposed to different careers. Some clients don't have a vision of why am I going to college or selecting an appropriate career (one wanted to teach pre-school and it wasn't a realistic choice). We want them to pick a realistic field. Talk to someone already in the field. We have clients who want to go into high tech, teaching or video game development. Match these individuals with someone already in the field, and shadowing them like, 'Daughter at

Work' days that companies used to do, to see what they did. They could show them what they do throughout the day, follow up with a test and meet a few times a month. That provides a little more hope for our clients.

Access to Independence—Building partnerships and collaborations with Student Services and Career Services and having those employers willing to talk to students about their job and what they offer, so the students have the education piece—they get the practical as well as theory. Internships (even unpaid) which provide experiences.

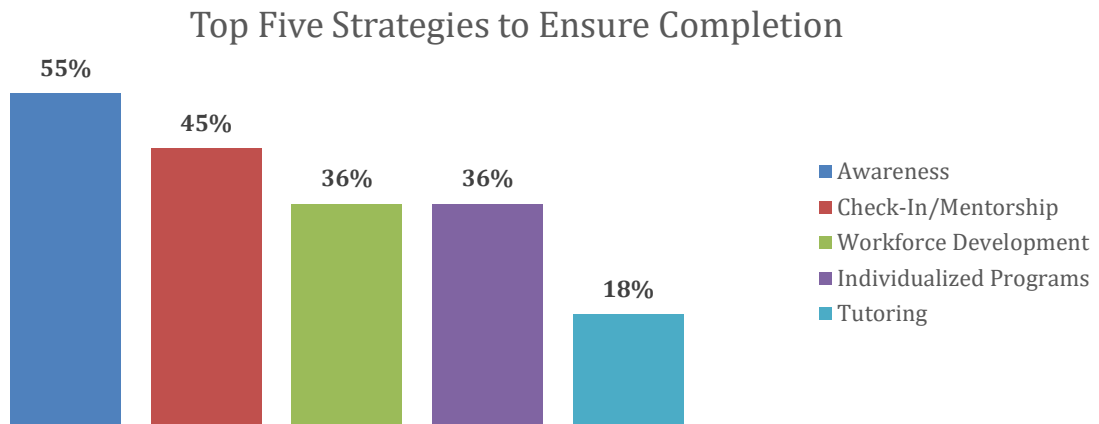
PATH—Some LGBTQ+ 18-24 year old are former foster care youth. They've been pushed out of traditional school systems. A hybrid program so that they can earn their GED and then certificate programs in fields that are interesting to them. Right now it is mostly CAN (Certified Nurse Assistant) and Welding but include more certifications in higher wage jobs, such as IT, LVN (Licensed Vocational Nurse), etc.

Autism Center at San Diego State University—I would like to know what kind of opportunities are out there in terms of skill training. A big issue is our community does not know how to find resources. Collaborate with these non-profit groups that serve the autism community—they can get the message out. Know what kind of jobs are out there and partner with companies that are willing to hire individuals on the spectrum.

San Diego County Office of Education—The community colleges have done a nice job with advertising on radio, billboard and bus stops. That is good because these underserved populations do not understand all the jobs options and what is involved.

Towards Maximum Independence—There are resources there, such as speech therapy that they or their parents are not aware of. Have a database of resources that [the special population individuals] can go to, for people of color, lower income, and so on. Posting messages, webinars, peer mentoring can all help get the message [about these services] out.

6. What strategies should community colleges employ to ensure that [insert special population] students complete their career education degree or certificate?



Interfaith Services—A lot of it community colleges are already offering—access to technology, tutoring services, dedicated programs for veterans and other high-risk groups. More access to soft skill training [for those] who didn't have that baseline: interview prep, finance, resume building, future planning (smart goals), helping them figure out where they want to get to define a path. Workforce development Internships, employer panels would be helpful. For the post high school group, revisit education goals with students and have regular check-ins.

Helen Keller National Center—Increased awareness, working with an interpreter could take twice as long to complete it. Deaf/blind students could take 3 times as long to complete it, plus fatigue can affect them more. It may take a student 2 years to complete a certificate rather than 18 months. Functional limitations and awareness of the additional time needed. More check-ins with students from the office on how they are doing with the DRC [Disability Resource Center] Counselor.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Make sure our students have one person that they are connected to on campus, such as a counselor, for the coaching aspect.

Trace School—Our students are different and a full semester for one course is better than a condensed 3-4 week course. Tutoring services, drop-ins for students. Also, have professors, DSPS, and peer tutors reach out to them [as they don't always ask for help when they need it]. Teachers need to be willing to work with them and have awareness of their needs (one teacher was helpful as he had a child with a learning deficit).

Avid Behavioral Day Program—Just recognizing that their program will take a lot longer for them to complete, 4-5 years for a 2-year degree and 10-15 years at a 4-year school. Having, like in high school, a homework club that they can participate in and

socialize—a place they can feel comfortable to ask a question. Our clients understand that people see them as different, but they would like to be involved.

Access to Independence—Technology needs and disability accommodation needs. Advise them the same way as someone who doesn't have a disability. Collaborate with organizations like ours and the Workability Program through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation—we have seen success for some of our clients through working with that program.

United Way—Internship programs. Prioritizing [by companies] to hire local youth. San Diego firms look at local 4-year schools and then outside of the area if they can't find the people they need. That's not sustainable. We need more regional awareness to recruit locally.

PATH—The City College district has had a business program for creating small businesses/entrepreneurship. One of the LGBTQ+ communities' main concerns is that they will not be in a safe work environment. Some of the certificate programs are perceived as gender-specific (for example, if a young lesbian is in a welding career with mostly men, that could be uncomfortable).

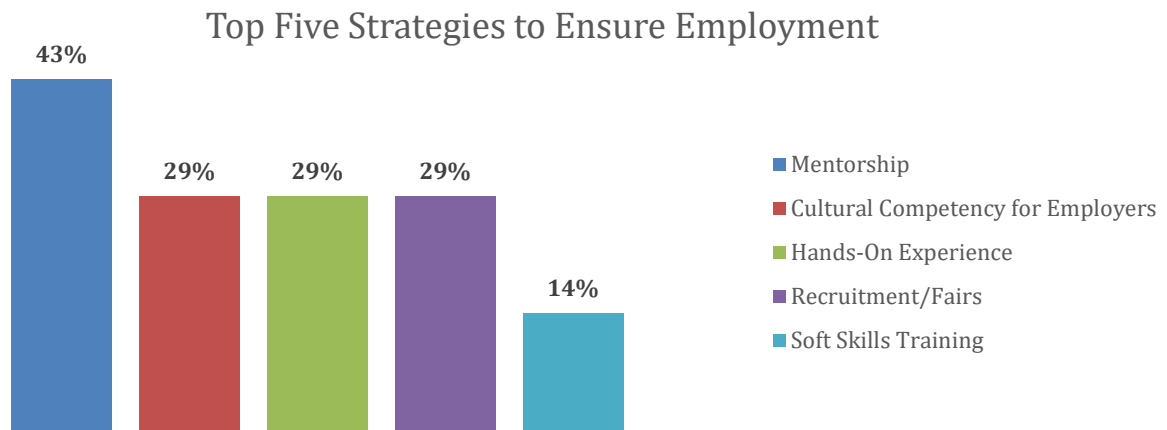
Autism Center at San Diego State University—Job skills training detailed for the autism community. Resume writing, and other skills through the lens of autism. Teaching self-advocacy, knowing when to speak up to your professor, employer, etc. and fight for your needs.

We were intending to have a workshop for teens and adults on the autism spectrum who were interested in pursuing higher education—we were working with our Disability Resource Center at SDSU but we had to postpone it because of the Coronavirus situation. I think there is a role for community colleges to play here.

San Diego County Office of Education—For the medical field for example, students think only of being a nurse or doctor. They don't know about Respiratory Tech or Phlebotomy. Understanding what programs can get you a position in a certain amount of time (i.e. short-term). More education and outreach to students will help here, particularly for certifications and adult non-credit programs. Programs such as Biotech, Bio Science and Information Tech have certifications that the students should know about.

Towards Maximum Independence—Make sure that the students have the support necessary to succeed. It's difficult enough when they are a first-generation college student (which many are) but then add a disability to that and it becomes almost impossible. We don't see a lot of our clients in college for that reason. Support the students with additional counselors, peer mentoring, and so forth.

7. What strategies should community colleges employ to ensure that [insert special population] students get employed in their field of study?



Interfaith Services—Employer panels and people working in the field to come in and help them build connections before they are finished, such as a mentor program. For high school students, we do assessments biannually with clients to see if they have ideas of where they want to go to make sure their goals haven't changed.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Apprenticeships or internships. Resume building (could be through English courses) and confidence building (e.g., negotiating for a higher salary) and financial literacy (could be through math classes).

Avid Behavioral Day Program—Mentorship programs (see previous response) and internship programs—understanding our population. Companies or employers are not open to that for liability reasons. Develop an internship program that knows the population, that we are supported and well-rounded and educated in that sense. An internship program where employers know this is our population and this is the goal. Educating the employers who participate in the internship program would be very helpful.

PATH—For older adults, in their certificate program or field of study, break it down as to what is needed. What are they facing so that it is not as daunting for them, which is hard for them later in life.

Autism Center at San Diego State University—Technical jobs and data entry jobs are popular for individuals with autism. Locally, there is a big push towards entrepreneurship, looking for their strengths and interest and developing job opportunities based on them.

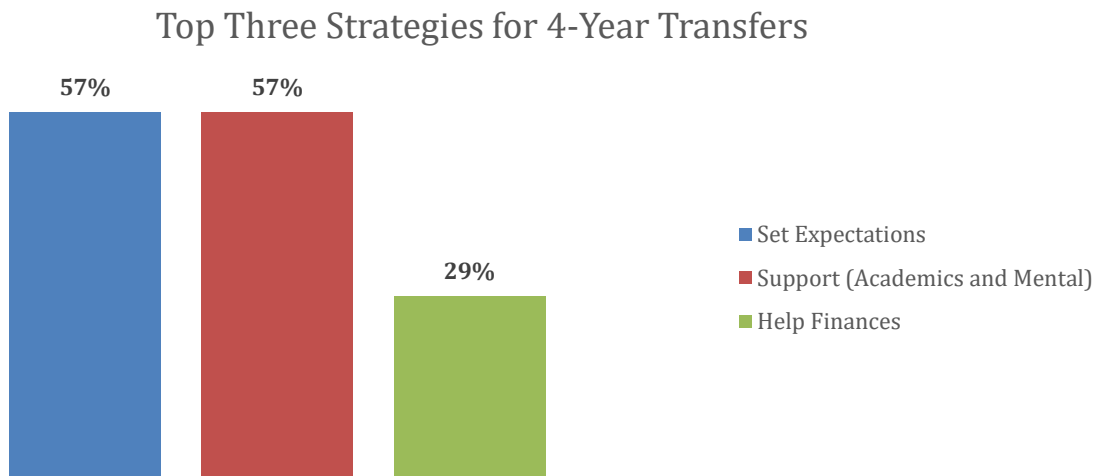
Cultural competency workshops targeted for employers. Teach them so they can establish and modify work environments and job positions, to reduce soft skills difficulties. Those on

the autism spectrum are good at attention to detail and thinking in a different way about a problem.

San Diego County Office of Education—There are transportation barriers for some students. The Auto Tech Program at Miramar College is excellent and they have a good Biotech program as well, but it's tough for many of our students to go there; many rely on public transportation. Perhaps having a transport hub to the community colleges—UCSD has had that from central locations like a hospital.

Towards Maximum Independence—More specialized job services departments/career services. Some requirement for them to go or escort them in small group sessions so they have knowledge of the next steps.

7a. What about transferring to a four-year institution?



Interfaith Services—The major barrier is financial, especially for the veterans. Knowing what to expect when they go on for a four-year degree, to feel they have the support they need and be mentally ready with a good foundation.

Also for the four-year education, there is a mental block, that it is too challenging and too expensive. We need to show them grants, programs, scholarships that make it affordable and have housing that is affordable—that is up to the four-year schools. Some choose not to go to a four-year school—cost is the biggest barrier. They have to support themselves, minor children, and keep a roof over their heads. Veterans don't typically go—they want to get into work force quickly and make a living. Cost benefits of a four-year degree—they don't see it if they have a job with a certificate, it is enough for them.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—We have an 80% college completion rate in our area for former foster care youth [she thought for both junior and four-year colleges] whereas the

national average is 3% for four-year schools. We do 10 master's programs scholarship a year and have done that for 5 years and have a 100% completion rate.

Trace School—They will go onto a four-year college only if the community college was not an absolute struggle. It is more likely that they would go on to further schooling if they have had support and success at the two-year level. Most of our students are more moderate to severe on the autism scale. Those mild to moderate on the scale are more likely to go on to college.

Access to Independence—We have had a couple of individuals who have gone on to university, one last year to San Diego State University. Four-year schools should provide tours on campus, exploring the library and rec center so that they can see what the expectations are for undergraduates and provide info on admissions requirements. DSPS (at the community colleges) should collaborate from one campus to another for the handoff. Provide a home base for students for counseling and tutoring services (even things like sleeping skills and handling stress). Also, provide information on how working affects their social security benefits and programs like Cal Able and changes if they go to a four-year school. DSPS needs to talk about that or collaborate with their key agency.

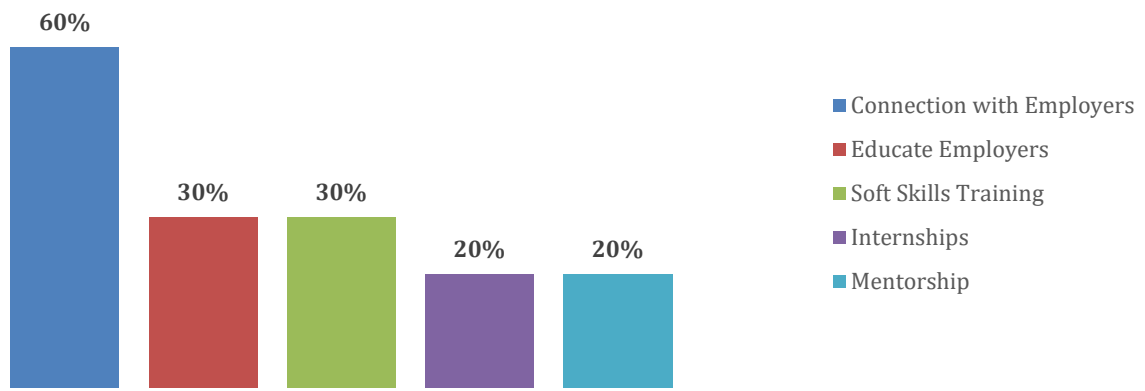
United Way—From community college to a four-year school, there have been some who have moved effectively. The schools need to articulate the requirements and build programs around those requirements. Sometimes they start at one community college and have to transfer to another community college for their program—that's not right.

PATH—We do have a good amount of students who transitioned from community colleges to four-year schools. At our center we have groups coming from social services or education institutions come to speak at our 18-24 youth night. They talk about program they are offering or employment experience opportunities they are offering and what the program is like and also what the environment and culture of the program is like. That direct outreach goes really far with the LGBTQ+ community.

Towards Maximum Independence—We have had a handful of students go onto four-year institutions. With the 'Taylor Day' program, they do well because they have an advocate. To do that successfully, they need to learn to advocate for themselves and the community colleges can teach them self-advocacy skills.

8. How can community colleges help overcome barriers for special populations to achieve access to high wage, in-demand occupations?

Top Five Ways to Overcome Occupational Barriers



Interfaith Services—Soft skills; they might have the technical skills but not the skills to interview well, present themselves well or handle on the job situations. For veterans, internships have to be paid. Employers should have relationships with the colleges so that they are aware that there are employers that would utilize students with these certificates. Interfaith Services pays some wages for paid internships but getting employers on board is a struggle—if companies can be incentivized to work with these people, that would improve these programs.

Helen Keller National Center—They need support on internships and externships. Vocational rehabilitation systems in terms of program support and technology. Colleges have partnerships with companies and can provide leads on jobs and make counselors aware of student needs.

Trace School—Some of their students tend to be better at programs like computer graphics/graphic design, video game development. The communication components can be a struggle—they need to learn how to talk to a boss or co-workers. Also more manual/physical trades are areas where some students find success—construction, landscaping, masonry, for example.

Avid Behavioral Day Program—Mentorships—workforce and classroom, working with other students. We are isolated. Other people in the class can have a group that they could participate in (even informally) or the professor could do it (even for a few minutes).

Access to Independence—The workability program in SD County has seen success for students.

United Way—Some high-grade industries are located far away from our low-income communities, which affects transportation and access to local services. Mentorships, with direct support for these industries which are not very diverse. It includes high tech/software programming jobs and biotechnology. Also ensure that the community colleges have programs that facilitate a job within these companies. On the employer side, employers need to consider community college students to hire—they go to 4-year schools automatically. Find out what are the true requirements of their company partners. Have the organizations think through the skills and competencies for different jobs that they have. Do they automatically recruit at a UC System school? Have they thought about going to the community colleges to recruit for some jobs?

PATH—We have had employers contact our center and had them reach out to us and we can send them individuals. We had one professional development fair with 25-30 employers (from different sectors) and we had another one scheduled but we had to cancel it because of the current (Covid-19) environment.

Autism Center at San Diego State University— We have an individual on the spectrum who has passed the bar exam and can't find a law group that will hire him to be a lawyer—they doubt if he can think on the spot or defend somebody if questions arise on the spot. It also involves changing society and not just preparing the individual with the disability, but presenting it to groups that want to hire individuals with autism; addressing what they need to do to prepare for hiring these special populations and what kind of jobs are appropriate for them. Also, remote work is a way to have a meaningful work environment for someone to work independently and reduces the social skill impact at work and transportation issues.

Also, job fairs for this population to have a low risk environment and they can practice interviewing skills. The Autism Society has done them and that would be good for the community colleges as well.

San Diego County Office of Education—Get faculty at the community colleges and high school teachers together for more K-12 and community college articulated courses for CTE classes. More articulated classes result in students not having to repeat courses.

We have done workshops on particular segments. We have had one on public service where Public Safety, Fire and Border Patrol have come on campus and spent a full day with exhibits and panels. The students love it and these inspire them. They are also popular with the skill trades, construction, solar panel demonstrations. Communication Information Technology is another area that lends itself to this. Have panels of our justice-involved students with professors to understand their needs and for better career awareness.

Towards Maximum Independence—Tech companies and financial services firms have begun to look at people with developmental disabilities because they want to work, don't

take time off frequently, and will work off-hours (students with autism have skills for that type of math work). Some companies also offer them social skills training.

9. What examples of high wage, in-demand occupations have you seen in which special populations are thriving?

Interfaith Services—A few youths have done well typically as engineering technicians, machinist programs, but they have to compete against older adults with more work experience. One young client started at \$17 an hour, for a first job that is successful. That's not always the case. Veterans have work experience. We have had some work logistics as contractors for the military in the Middle East and make six figures. Another had security training and is now at LAPD, so that is a success. Those from truck driving school are doing well financially. It is about taking military skills and transferring them to the civilian world.

Helen Keller National Center—Some deaf and blind students need a particular computer program for school and work but for an internship, who will play for it? The company doesn't want to, the school can't because it is an outside activity and a vocational department can't because it is temporary job but it could cost \$10,000 for it. In one case the student had it on their personal laptop but the company wouldn't allow them to access their system through the firewall (for security reasons). Job opportunities are too generalized at the Career Center. We had one student who interned at Sears and wanted to fix motors on large equipment machines but accommodations had to be made because she couldn't hear in that environment and she needed Braille instructions. It took 6 months to educate Sears. They did end up hiring her full-time to work on smaller motors (trimmers, lawn mowers). We have a client at UC San Diego working in the kitchen area. Food handling certificates are good. Community colleges should not be afraid to reach out to organizations like us to support them with student employment.

Trace School—We had one student who was successful with computer programs because they were more visually stimulating for him and kept him engaged.

Access to Independence—It's a little early for our consumers to say, they are still in school. We have a very low number of consumers attending college right now. It would be too early to see what the outcome would be. We are working with them to see that it is a successful one.

Autism Center at San Diego State University—I have a friend whose son is an artist and selling his art is something that he can do to make a similar wage as someone who is not disabled. Leveraging your strengths and interests and developing them for these populations.

Towards Maximum Independence—We do have individuals working full-time, benefit-eligible jobs. Some are government contracts and with the military, though not as many as with industrial jobs.

10. If you had one final recommendation related to career education for community colleges in the region, what would it be?

Interfaith Services—Offering some partnerships with community colleges for high school students. Also communicating that the certificate may not be most valuable if it is not followed by another certification. It needs to be presented well that it is longer-term. The Introductory Medical Phlebotomy Program is an example—it has high demand but not on its own. It can disappoint them and turn them off to future training. Another is a Veterinary Assistant, unless they can get into a vet tech program where there are not many, it's not a long-term program that would be high paying.

Helen Keller National Center—Learn about each student and their needs—hard of hearing students can get lost in the shuffle. They need to listen to the students as they explain about their own disability. Accept a student's reasonable request and we shouldn't have to step in on everything.

Just in Time for Foster Youth—Employment opportunities. Job panels where they can learn what else there is to do and what it take to do it.

Trace School—Extension of the Career Technical Education and Equity Programs, which is part of the SD Unified School District. We have Child Development, Auto Body, Telecommunications, Mixed Media/Film Making/Photography, Culinary/Hospitality and Health Care. These are all hands-on programs and the students are learning in a professional environment (in film studios/professional kitchens, they get their food handling card) and the whole track is setting them up to step out into a job and have the skills they need. If we can extend those courses into the community colleges, that would be really beneficial to our students. I think our schools are finally learning that not everyone is going to college and not everyone should. There are other vocations if community colleges could capture some of these higher paying jobs that aren't being filled in the community. Reach out to some businesses to find out what their needs are.

Access to Independence—Collaborate. Figure out who the players are in terms of disability services and vocational services and make sure that the community colleges have very substantial/formal partnerships with those organizations and know what they do and can connect with them.

United Way—Send the message to the high schools that community college is an equal option (equal with a four-year school) and not a plan B, C or D. They need to be on equal pathways to different industries and allow you to advance with lower student debt. The students can be equally prepared. Start talking to students in high school. More availability for dual enrollment courses for middle enrollment students—typically it is your best students that have access to them and only in their senior year. Offer it for our population starting at their junior or even sophomore year of high school, and offer those development courses that they have to take their first year of college earlier (while still in high school). They then have experiences with college classes and feel more comfortable and they have more credits. Bridging to employers and employment. Market or sell them on the advantages of hiring these types of students through the community colleges. The community colleges need to show that they can educate and train employees for them with the qualifications they require. Community colleges are better today than 10 and 5 years ago. I see progress, which is what you want.

PATH—It takes increasing the level of support for all students to be successful in a college program but particularly for marginalized youth —LGBTQ+, youth of color, low economic backgrounds, first time college students, and so on. They need additional support. We have a housing program for former homeless youth and each gets a case manager assigned to them, who is tasked with providing support and linkage to resources within the community for them. At the college level, there can be programs and systems put in place that track youth through the program and make sure they are connected to basic needs, health, mental health, food, and tutoring. Many of the youth we serve have not come from the best educational institutions so they need more tutoring. City College has one program for Hispanics and UC San Diego has one that services youth of color. These make a difference to keep them moving along a career track and keep them there (at college), rather than spending one semester there, finding it too difficult, and just quitting.

Autism Center at San Diego State University—Establish partnerships with organizations that serve the community—that will be the best way to find solutions. Hold online forums with caregivers and adults on the spectrum, at the very least it shows that community colleges are serious about this and taking an interest and that will spread the interest and connect you with other partners. Workshops for the community and for the special populations in terms of what strategies and tips that they need for gaining meaningful employment. The workshops might have to be catered to each special population. The autism community is really looking for that and could benefit from that. A workshop forum to showcase what the community colleges are doing so that people know what is available (programs and resources) and then can see where the gaps are, people can give you their opinions of what else the community colleges can do to meet their needs.

San Diego County Office of Education—Some teachers in high school work well with the community colleges but so much needs to happen. Sectors with good dialogue include Hospitality and Transportation while Arts/Media/Entertainment is getting better. There

are four stages of these types of programs: events, twice yearly visits, professional development, and articulated agreements for classes with the high schools.

These all help get the students into guided programs. Some are easy like hospitality, auto transportation and construction for CTE programs, but others like biotech are harder as they come out of Biology classes in high school. Better collaboration needs to be built across all community colleges in San Diego and their high schools. It is easier if there is just one high school district for one of the colleges, like City College has. These articulated agreements allow a student to skip these classes once they get to community college and advance faster. Dual enrollment courses focus on the last year of school. Articulated courses—which have to be signed off by the community college faculty—can be started earlier in high school.

Towards Maximum Independence—Just give people a chance to show what they can do and don't limit them.

WORKFORCE/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWS

Perkins V Regional Stakeholder Consultation

Interview Information

Group/Organization	Phone Number
San Diego Workforce Partnership	619-228-2900
San Diego Regional EDC	619-992-5454

Questions

1. Please briefly describe the mission of your organization.

San Diego Workforce Partnership—We connect job seekers and businesses together to optimize opportunities that are equitable and serve the San Diego community—jobs which provide sustainable living wages in San Diego.

San Diego Regional EDC—Maximize economic prosperity in San Diego. Work with companies to keep a pulse on their economic needs. We work on developing a straight link between the local college workforce and sales leads. Companies still spend a lot of money to bring talent in from outside the area.

2. How would you characterize workforce and industry trends in the San Diego region?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—It trends toward Computer Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and the Medical Industry. Before the Coronavirus, Hospitality was in high demand.

San Diego Regional EDC—Our high-grade areas of focus are trade Industries, which should show high growth numbers over the next three years. This excludes government and the health care industry.

For innovative industries, it includes traditional tech, including information communication, software development and cyber security, which consumes most of the tech industry space. Also life sciences—pharmaceutical industry, biotechnology, medical technology and genomics. A third area is the defense industry, I mean direct defense contractors for the most part, a lot of shipbuilding and other defense contracts. These are the highest growth areas. We see jobs growth in 3 categories and for jobs growing over the next 3 years among the top 20 occupations, it will add 10,000 jobs and includes software development/engineering and then engineering more generally—mechanical and

electrical—and then high growth around marketing and sales operations. These are 3 buckets we expect to see growth in over the next three years.

3. What role do community college career and technical education programs play in meeting regional workforce needs?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—The community colleges are very essential. There is a high percentage of transitional age youth that utilize their. They are essential to training the workforce and for the community in general. The community colleges provide training to the workforce in general and courses and training that is not traditional training that you would find in a four-year college, and training that leads them into meaningful jobs and builds up the community economically.

San Diego Regional EDC—The community colleges have been a really great partner. We have worked with them on the ‘Advancing San Diego’ program and they help address the workforce needs here.

3a. Which sectors should the community colleges focus on as they expand upon and develop new career and technical education programs?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Technical education is the way to go and continues to grow, particularly during the Covid-19 time, it is a strong sector to build upon as it provides flexibility and opportunity for growth. Horticulture is a really important area. Really any industries and sectors that are important to the community as well.

San Diego Regional EDC—Opportunity industries share a lot of the same talent needs as the Innovative Industries—which are low in total numbers but high in growth rate—but the opportunity industries, such as transportation, construction and warehousing need more people and there are more jobs that don’t require a bachelor’s degree, but still provide people with a quality job path and a sustainable wage for a good living.

Divide the jobs into a set of skills—what are the skills they need rather than job titles they are looking to fill? Also a clearer line of communication is needed between the community college and industries. Community colleges have the flexibility to respond to changes in the economy and pivot their programs to meet the needs of industry much faster than a university can in terms of their curriculum and program offerings.

3b. What do community colleges need to do more of in regards to career and technical education programs?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Provide more opportunities for different enrollment periods, multiple start dates for a particular program would be accommodating. The different populations that we are servicing have different needs—how can you

accommodate these populations? Refugees in the medical field have not found the flexibility in their programs—sometimes they get a later start in their career that is not necessary but it is how they were directed. Also, justice-involved individuals (those who have been incarcerated in the Justice System) could use more accommodation. Grossmont, City College and Palomar Colleges have programs for them to help them adjust. Include more offerings of programs for that community for all the community colleges. Guide them to different industries that they can pursue that are of interest to them and not what we think they should take.

San Diego Regional EDC—Make sure they have employer’s validation not only to ensure that the curriculum is current and up-to-date and keeping pace with the rapid changes taking place in technology, but also through better engagement from employers so they can recognize the work our community colleges are able to do in preparing individuals for jobs that they are looking to fill. Employers are concerned about the pace at which people are trained. That is a great advantage of looking to community colleges for recruitment purposes, that people are able to complete programs much faster. There is a bit of work to do for employers, but they are coming around for some of these typical bachelor’s degree requirement jobs, the talent is so hard to find, they are open to looking for new sources of recruitment partnerships such as those with the community colleges—just being able to demonstrate that they can train people at a much faster pace and at the same quality so that people come out with the fundamental skill sets that then, through work, be refined and built upon. The employer validation will not only benefit and inform the curriculum but will also increase the knowledge by employers of the capabilities of the community colleges.

3c. What do community colleges need to do less of in regard to career and technical education programs?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Community colleges do outreach and that’s great. I don’t see them doing less of it. When a student is entering into a program, there should be less of telling them what they need to do and more about finding out what they are interested in. Some are told what they should do rather than guiding them to their interests.

San Diego Regional EDC—Being mindful of how you get information from employers to inform your curriculum. We have 10 community colleges and 5 four-year colleges here, each with individual advisory groups. Put a system in place to capture the information quickly. More cooperation among the various community colleges rather than competition.

4. How can an organization cultivate hiring special populations?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Organizations can do more outreach and more accommodations so that it is desirable for these individuals to work there. They need to be

more open to their needs and open their culture to them. Focus groups that employers could have with individuals from these populations will help them understand what they need.

San Diego Regional EDC—Expanding remote work opportunities to meet special populations. San Diego geographically is the size of Connecticut and there are geographic barriers to expanding the work force. Also, for transportation reasons, more remote work allows people to focus more on health and family rather than long commutes and, at times, to work at hours that work best for them.

4a. From your experience and knowledge working with employers in your industries, what best practices are being used to cultivate hiring special, underserved populations?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—The best practice is finding out what are the accommodations they need to be successful on the job.

San Diego Regional EDC—Employers need to play a leadership role in removing the bachelor's degree requirement for some jobs and introduce a new definition of a job. This can be a complicated undertaking for a larger company. We want to see more of that. Companies can be their own worst enemy at this and we need strong leadership at the top of companies. If Northrop Grumman can do it, it gets the attention of other companies to do it as well. It is an exciting development.

4b. What examples of high wage, in-demand occupations have you seen in which special populations are thriving?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Technology, Computer, and Information Technology, has been great for vulnerable populations because of the flexibility, like with those with families and small children. Advanced Manufacturing is not always an assembly line and building by machines and tracking inputs and outputs are good. Also, Engineering Quality and Project Management positions. Management Information Systems also have jobs that are not very physical.

San Diego Regional EDC—I don't have the data handy to answer that question.

4c. Are there any hiring gaps related to special populations? Industries that aren't hiring these groups that could be?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—The medical field, particularly for the justice-involved population, as well as hospitality for those from families with small children/single mothers.

San Diego Regional EDC—I'm not sure. I don't have the data to say.

4d. Do employers face particular challenges when employing special populations?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Their bottom line is: will it affect their revenues and the quality of their products or services by hiring them? If they (employers) are provided incentives, it can relieve the stress that they have about the money concerns. There are government grants for tax credits, and they can utilize workforce services for subsidies. There is extra insurance bonding through the federal government—\$7,000 for hiring at-risk individuals.

San Diego Regional EDC—A lack of information on trying to expand the diversity of your workforce. If you have only ever worked with one group of people, it can be an adjustment sometimes for people to be able to recognize different backgrounds, education and experience that people come from. Take proactive measures to promote an inclusive work environment where people coming from non-traditional backgrounds can feel included. That culture change within your company is an adjustment but having the leadership at the top to talk fluently about the importance of expanding the diversity of the workforce and staying steady on those goals [is critical]. People will begin to see what a more inclusive and more diverse workforce looks like in their company.

5. What barriers do you see for underserved populations entering the workforce?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—The vulnerable populations are so diverse and there is a stigma labeled onto them and it is also how they see themselves. The job readiness skills that they receive releases those thoughts. Mental health needs also have to be accommodated to go into the workforce.

San Diego Regional EDC—First, transportation infrastructure is a barrier to accessing a job. This community (San Diego) is not the best for public transportation. More remote work can help here. Second is access to child care. Third is access to affordable housing.

5a. How can community colleges help overcome barriers for special populations to achieve access to high wage, in-demand occupations?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—The community colleges can advocate to employers to focus on the individual skills sets. The community colleges can invite employees in and encourage employers to be part of the curriculum, to be part of what they are doing. Also provide students an opportunity to visit companies, so they get a feel of what they would be doing.

San Diego Regional EDC—Community colleges need to get data on individuals who see the above 3 areas (see above—transportation, child care, and affordable housing) as a problem and receive more attention from governments and industries. Community colleges serve these underserved populations groups and can speak on their behalf.

6. If you had one final recommendation related to career education for community colleges in the region, what would it be?

San Diego Workforce Partnership—Do what you are doing now. Ask questions so that the service will be better for everyone. If you meet the needs of your most vulnerable populations, you meet the needs for everyone.

San Diego Regional EDC—Continue to foster collaboration among our community college system as a whole. I would like to see a more concerted effort to not compete against one another and really come together and think how their approaches can be streamlined and improved to really serve individuals and companies effectively. The community colleges have done a great job in recent years at doing that but continue that collaboration across schools so they can be a stronger total unit, instead of maybe being individually strong as individual community colleges, but rather as a collective community college group.

FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY INTERVIEWS

Perkins V Regional Stakeholder Consultation

Interview Information

Interview Date	Group/Organization
04-23-2020	UC San Diego, Office of Admissions/Transfer Student Services
04-27-2020	UC San Diego, Office of Student with Disabilities (OSD)

Questions

1. Please describe your role at the university.

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—I am the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Student Admissions and work with transfer student recruitment, through the application process and then verification of that (self-reported) information with their transcripts.

1a. Do you work with any special populations?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—Yes, we work with the following groups: single parents (including pregnant women), homeless individuals, individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, English learners, individuals preparing for nontraditional occupational fields, youth with a parent who is in active duty with the armed forces, out of work individuals, and youth who are in (or aged out of) foster care. Also, we work with students who have been incarcerated in the past.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—We work with all enrolled students (undergraduate, graduate and professional) on campus with disabilities. We work with 1,000 students a quarter, including those with chronic health and mental health needs, ADHD, and so on. We have an equal split between those from community colleges and high schools. We look at the community college accommodations that they had as part of our review and put a plan together for them.

2. What is the transition process like for students who are moving from a community college into a four-year university?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—We recruit students to apply at UC San Diego and then validate their transcripts and connect the applicant with programs such as the Office of Students with Disabilities and Hope Scholars program for those with disadvantages, such as homelessness or those from foster care. We also have the Claris Summer Bridge Programs for those from low-income backgrounds and summer success programs that we can link them with.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—When they come to UC San Diego, they are going from a semester to a quarter system. They don't realize how intensive the quarter system can be and that you have to be on top of things from day one, going from a 15-week term to 10 weeks. They don't realize that a third of their study time went away.

2a. How prepared are community college students for study at your institution?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—That is a hard question as our office doesn't work with them once they are admitted to UCSD. Anecdotally, I feel that transfer students do very well and enjoy it here.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—The accommodations of disabilities at community colleges is generally an extension of K-12. The documentation required from students is minimal. There is not a focus on students understanding their limitation and what accommodations would be useful to them. Our goal is to provide access and level the playing field for them. They might not be getting the same high grades as at community college. Classes here are much harder and more rigorous. Community colleges will provide extra credit but that does not happen at a tier 1 research university. It's important as in the work world they need to advocate for themselves and understand their limitations and what they need to bridge the gap. Sometimes their accommodations don't transfer (such as a deadline is crucial in a job and can't be altered).

2b. Are there any gaps in skills that you notice among those transferring from a community college into a university?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—To me, no. Some faculty in certain disciplines have said that community college transfer students are not as prepared (as those coming directly from high school or other colleges), but I have not seen the data and can't say that. They seem happy to me.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—The ability to advocate appropriately for themselves, in classes or interviewing for internships, etc.

2c. Are there differences in preparedness and skill gaps among the special populations you serve that transfer from community colleges?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—Probably. In my role in admissions, I don't see it. I'm not positioned to best speak to that from my experience.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities— They have distinct challenges with executive management—time management, how to study, etc.

3. What are the top three strengths / assets that community college transfer students bring with them into a university environment?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—Extraordinary life experience for one. We have single parents, veterans from the military, older students, those working in business, and so forth. They bring maturity, understanding, gratitude for the opportunity to study here and patience. Many have not taken a linear path here (from high school) but have had gaps and come back to school, they do well are very motivated. Professors like that community college transfer students are committed and dedicated to be successful.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—Many have been working. They bring a work/life balance perspective to conversations in the classroom. Many are of a different age group from traditional students. It enhances more robust conversations (politics, diversity, etc.) that they can draw on and share.

4. What support services/accommodations are necessary for community college transfers, including those from special populations?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—They are necessary for all students but particularly for the [Perkins V] special population groups. Services such as financial aid and scholarships, student veteran resources, Hope Scholars for disadvantaged youth, Office of Students with Disabilities, etc. The Office of Admissions is critical as we work with prospective students to provide them with information so they can make contact with the right people and resources once they are here.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—Help students make the transition. Help them connect to hubs on our campus to provide support (academic, social). For example, that there is a LGBT resource center that they might want to connect with. Don't just tell them, show them the website, give them information in detail, the name of the director, etc. A warm handoff will make them make a successful handoff to a 4-year institution.

A lot of community college students live at home and then many live on campus here. Internalize to them that it is going to be different and how to create appropriate boundaries. Roommate conflict, for example—the communication wasn't there at the beginning and then people have to be moved, which is quite disruptive. Teach advocacy communication so they get to know themselves and what they need to be successful in a fast-paced quarter system.

5. What strategies should community colleges employ to ensure that students, in general and from special populations in particular, are able to successfully transfer to a four year institution?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—Continue working with 4-year programs. All California community colleges have transfer centers, so they need to continue to support and fund them. Partnering with us with programing, data sharing, etc. all helps to provide that successful handoff.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—Find out about general academic support services. Our Teaching and Learning Commons Center has 1-on-1 and small group tutoring. They can assist and provide strategies to students, such as if someone is on the autism spectrum, that might be beneficial. Veterans need support and we provide that. Encourage the students to use free services here. The community colleges need to get them connected and encourage them to use our services before they struggle in their first quarter here.

6. How can local community colleges that provide career and technical education better work with four-year institutions to promote student success and placement in high wage jobs?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions—That is a good question, such as for vocations. My job is to get them to come to UC San Diego as a student. I would say counseling students to express what they are interested in or ask the right questions to help them understand their strengths, weaknesses and interests.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—Community colleges should explore partnerships with the university. If you had a community college nursing program and want to pursue a PA or MD, UC San Diego could help in mentorships. They might not be ready to come now but down the road they could, but connect them now to people on campus—in admissions, course programs, internships—to guide them. We need skilled individuals to go into business or medical fields.

7. If you had one final recommendation related to career education for community colleges in the region, what would it be?

UC San Diego, Office of Admissions— As students express an interest in vocational trades, it is beneficial to continue to advocate and encourage them to consider going for a bachelor's degree. Regular check-ins for those learning a skill or trade so that they continue to consider going on for a four-year degree, that it is still a consideration for

them, as those with bachelor's degrees tend to do better in the job market and in their careers than those without one. Make sure that they keep it as part of their thinking and that they understand that there are many different choices that they have.

UC San Diego, Office of Students with Disabilities—I really think that, especially for people with disabilities, provide them with easy opportunities to experience work life. An internship opportunity or job seems like a lot of hoops to jump through. The community colleges should work with employers, vet the students for them and hand them off. The industry doesn't spend time on hiring them and the student has a meaningful experience and can see if that is something they want to do in their career. Create an easy way for students to access it. It gives them meaning for why they do the academic work and hopefully inspires them.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT/SPECIAL POPULATION INTERVIEWS

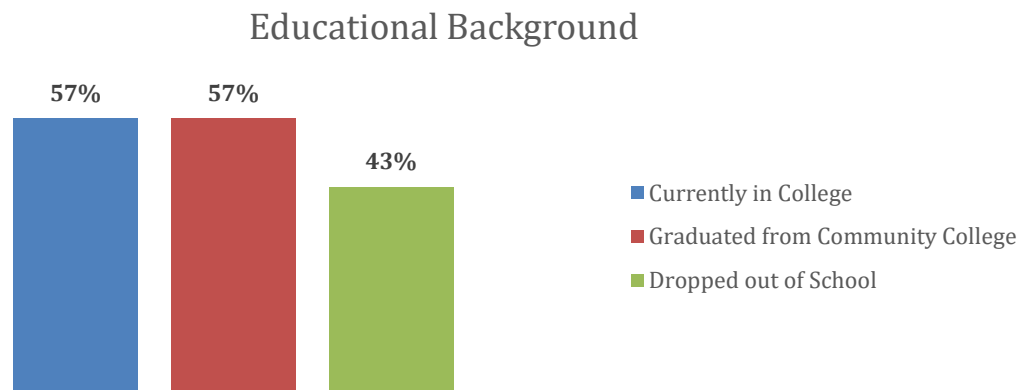
Perkins V Regional Stakeholder Consultation

Interview Information

Interview Date	Representative
04-13-2020	Referred by the Autism Center of San Diego – Low Income and Chicano Individual
04-14-2020	Referred by a Special Ed Service Provider
04-15-202	Foster Care Youth
04-15-2020	Foster Care Youth – Disabled and First Generation Student
04-17-2020	Referred by the Autism Center of San Diego – Single Parent and Low Income Student who was recently diagnosed with Autism
04-21-2020	Disabled (Hearing)
04-25-2020	Single Parent

Questions

1. Please tell me about your educational background?



Respondent #1—I went to southwestern college and had a certificate in Preschool Teacher Training and a A.A. degree in Childhood Development. I took a few courses at San Diego State after but couldn't continue financially.

Respondent #2—I completed some college but did not receive a degree. I went to San Diego City College.

Respondent #3—I'm currently in community college. I started out in 2017 at Santa Barbara City College and played basketball but that didn't work out. I came back to San Diego and worked for a year and then started at San Diego Miramar College last

summer. I am looking at going onto either Cal State San Marcos or San Diego State University after I get my AA degree in Business at Miramar.

Respondent #4—I am currently at Cal State San Marcos in Communications. I am a former foster youth, have dyslexia, and was a first-time college student in my family. I went to 15 elementary and middle schools but only one high school and turned my act around there in my junior and senior year. I looked at going to a 4-year private university but it was very expensive so I went the community college route, mostly at San Diego Mesa Community College, though I started at City College as I lived in Southeastern San Diego, I also took a few classes from Miramar online. I graduated from Mesa in the Spring of last year.

Respondent #5—I went to community college from 2012 to 2016 at Cuyamaca Community College. I was in the EOP program for first-generation college students and the CARE program for single parents. I am now in my last year at San Diego State University.

Respondent #6—I have a special education teaching degree from Sweden (3.5 years) which is a B.A. I then came to America and couldn't use the degree to teach children who could hear. I went to community college at Imperial Valley to learn American Sign Language (ASL)—Sweden's sign language is different. I twice went to community college counselors and they wanted me to do my four-year degree again and then my master's degree. I am trying to get accepted to a master's program at UCSD in special education directly after passing the state CSET test for special education, but I can't afford it now as I would have to quit my job as a Teaching Assistant at a school for deaf children. I am a single parent and can't quit my job now.

Respondent #7—I tried to go to college right out of high school in 1999 at Palomar College, taking two classes then and one in 2000 and didn't finish them as I was a single parent at 19. I recently went back to Palomar 3 years ago and was supposed to graduate this year with an AA in Deaf Studies (delayed due to the Coronavirus situation).

1a. Have you taken any courses or programs from community colleges?

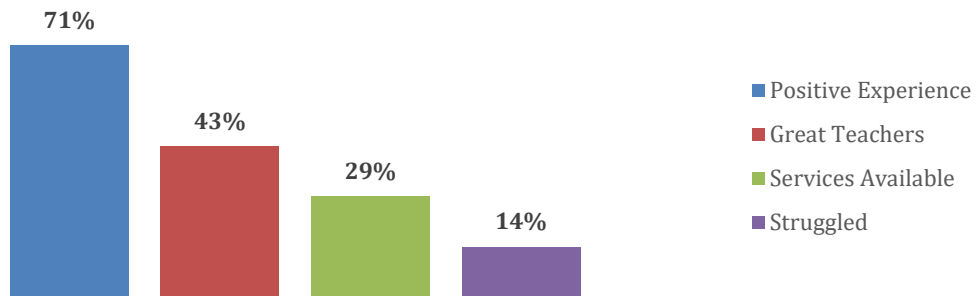
Respondent #6—At Imperial Valley College, I took ASL 1,2, 3 and 4 and Algebra, English Literature, Writing and US History. I did not finish my degree and gave up my degree work when I found my job and had children. I would like to do the UCSD master's degree when I can afford it.

i. If yes, what programs and when? At which community college?

Respondent #2—I majored in social work.

ii. What was your community college experience like?

Community College Experience



Respondent #1—I liked school. The teachers were great.

Respondent #2—It was good. I was in the EOPS Program (Extended Opportunities Program Services) and the Care Program. It was for first-time college students and at risk youth. I was on welfare and had a child. The EOPS Program had their own counselors and they got to know you.

Respondent #3—It was a bit of a struggle. There are lots of services but also lots of hoops to qualify for them and meet the expectations of the programs or services. It was me trying to figure out what route to take for my career.

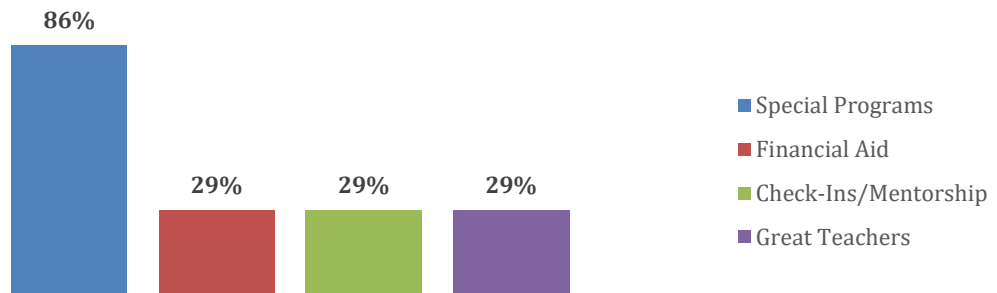
Respondent #4—The financial support was great. I think Mesa Community College is the greatest community college in California. The teachers were great.

Respondent #5—It (community college) was great. Everyone was helpful. I didn't want to leave.

Respondent #7—I love school. I am older than most students and I didn't participate in clubs, etc. I went to school and went home to be a mom.

iii. What did the community college do really well that helped you succeed?

Community College Benefits



Respondent #1—I had financial aid and access to a food program. My education there was paid for.

Respondent #2—I thought it was great. They followed-up on where I needed to be and tried to make sure I was doing what I needed to do to be successful. I had grants that paid for books and supplies. I have recommended it 100%, particularly the EOPS program.

Respondent #3—The ‘Next Up’ program for foster youth. I am an ambassador on campus and help with support for students and career guidance.

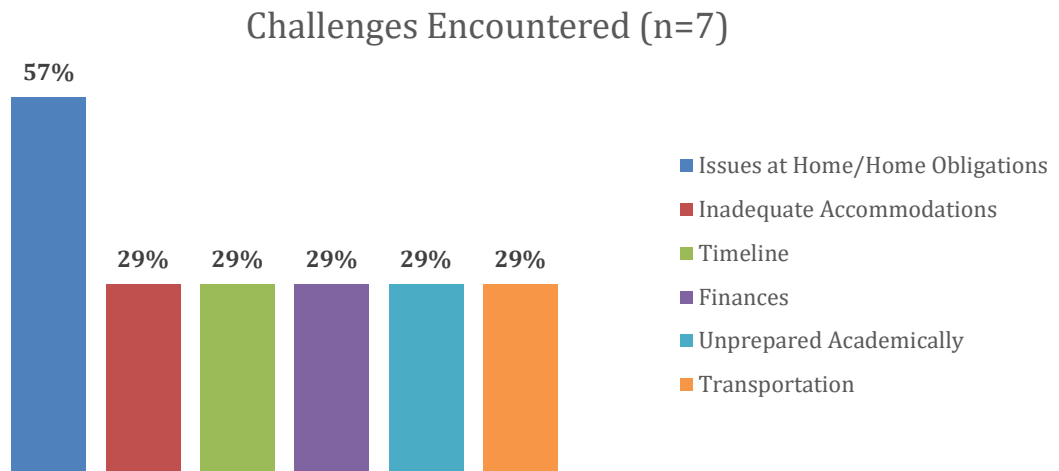
Respondent #4—I was in the EOPS and Fast Scholars program for former foster youth. They had different programs on campus that allowed you to feel a part of a community.

Respondent #5—Individual services for low-income students, single parents, students from different ethnicities, etc. were particularly beneficial. Without the EOP and Care Program, I wouldn’t be here at a four-year school.

Respondent #6— I had great teachers—they were very impressive.

Respondent #7—They had some really good teachers who care about their job and the students. I switched from majoring in Business to Deaf Studies after taking ASL classes with one teacher. He has guided me since. I am in the EOPS— Extended Opportunity Program Service and I had one counselor through the whole time. I also had a math teacher who would spend time with me after class going over the lessons because I didn’t get it.

iv. What challenges did you encounter as you pursued your education?



Respondent #1—The counselors could have been better. I wanted to be a nurse but it was a long waiting list and I wanted to be able to work sooner. Otherwise, I thought it was easy. At home, it was a challenge. I didn't live with my parents. My mother's boyfriend didn't respect me so I left home at 17 and had to work 2-3 jobs during school.

Respondent #2—It was my financial situation. I had a period during my second semester when I was homeless. I was a single mom and needed to work full-time. It was difficult to do school with a baby.

Respondent #3—Academic preparation. I struggled in high school and now am paying for it. I have to catch up a little bit.

Respondent #4— No, the challenge was that I was working full-time and taking public transportation, which takes 3-4 times that of a drive, even though I lived 15-20 minutes from campus. I got up at 5:30 am to make sure I got to my 8:00 am class and left school around 1:00-2:00 pm and took the bus to my job. Just the challenge of paying my bills.

Respondent #5—As a single parent, my obligations there and my commute was 60 miles each day to Cuyamaca College and is even farther to SDSU.

Respondent #6—I was overwhelmed. Imperial Valley Community College didn't offer interpreting services right away—it wasn't a smooth process. Then I had to drop a class when my interpreter didn't know enough English. She was from Mexico and usually the Mexican interpreters here are very good in English but she wasn't—she was interviewed in Spanish and snuck in a little. They pulled my other interpreter and as a result my grades slipped, but my teacher had taught me

before and testified that it was an interpreter issue. They (school) blamed me instead of the interpreter and I was hurt with the process.

Respondent #7—The challenges as an older student, I just turned 40 and it was tough to have a kid and go to school full-time. I had to take math and hadn't had a math class in 20 years. I had self-doubts at the time as to whether I could do this.

1. Did these challenges mean you had to stop attending community college?

Respondent #1—No, I completed my degree.

Respondent #2— Yes. As the baby got older, he had health issues and I couldn't give college my full attention.

Respondent #3—No—I am still in school.

Respondent #4—No, I'm still in school—four-year university.

Respondent #5—No, I'm at San Diego State.

Respondent #6—No, I left because I had a job and kids to take care of.

Respondent #7—No, I am finishing my degree this year.

ii. Have you attended, or thought about attending, a 4-year college or university?

Respondent #1—I had started at San Diego State U. but couldn't afford to continue or I might have gone on to be a doctor—I liked to study and liked school.

Respondent #2—Yes, now that things are evolving online and my son is older. I would probably go in the San Diego area. I have 80 units towards a social work AA. I might change my degree if I transferred to a university.

Respondent #3—I want to get a BA in Business and work in the automotive field. I worked at Pep Boys. At first I thought I wanted to be an automotive technician and started at Miramar in the Toyota Certificate program but then transferred (within Miramar) to a get an AA in Business. I want to open up my own business for customizing cars, such as classic vehicles and I freelance with that now.

Respondent #4—Yes, at Cal State San Marcos now, majoring in Communications.

Respondent #5—I feel at State, I don't feel support like I did at Community College. I feel like an outsider. I was recently diagnosed with autism and have a

developmental disability. At community college, I didn't take advantage of programs for students with disabilities but I worked in that office there and I saw what programs that they offered to them and disabled students were strongly encouraged to take advantage of them.

Respondent #7—Yes, I plan to go to Cal State San Marcos for a bachelor's in Sociology. I was also going to continue at Paloma in their Interpreting program as well. Things have changed as my dad got sick so my parents couldn't pick up my son so I will just go to San Marcos for my B.A.

2. Please tell me about your work experience.

Respondent #1—I was a Teaching Assistant out of school at the San Diego City Schools and then worked 12 years with the Neighborhood House Association Preschool. My son was diagnosed with autism in 2003 and then in 2008 during the recession, I lost my job. My boyfriend had a business so I was able to stay home and take care of my son. He has lost his business during the Coronavirus situation and so I want to work again.

Respondent #2—I have done some social work jobs and gained on-the-job experience as a Case Manager. I began at the YMCA and then worked at non-profits and have been at the San Diego Unified School District for 10 years. I've done what I wanted to do in social work and may want to do something related but different.

Respondent #3—I worked at PEP Boys. Now I am an ambassador for the 'Next Up' program for foster youth at Miramar Community College.

Respondent #4—I worked at Panera Bread and Target for four or five months, until I broke my leg and I had to quit—taking public transportation on a broken leg wasn't good.

Respondent #5—At community college I worked at the office for disability services and now have a work study job on campus at San Diego State with the EOP office.

Respondent #6—I am a teaching assistant at an Elementary School for the deaf.

Respondent #7—I am not working now.

2a. Are you currently employed or seeking employment?

Respondent #4—Now I work at Cal State San Marcos on scholarship recruitment for the ACE program for foster care youth, it is like a work study program.

Respondent #5—At State, I have a work study job with the EOP but I have my eye out for other opportunities. It is so difficult to work outside of school—it is nearly impossible to finish school. That’s why I stuck with the job but it was a struggle financially. But work study only allows you to work certain hours, the pay is not the best and there are no benefits. I had to take a semester off when I had my son in October (gave birth) and my work study job didn’t allow me to have unemployment or disability insurance, so I had no income for the entire semester, that was a big struggle and I didn’t feel that they appreciated me as a worker.

Respondent #6—Teacher’s aide for deaf children.

Respondent #7—No.

i. **If yes, what type of work do you do?**

Respondent #1—I always liked kids. I would like to work in education again and I tried to open my own day care a year ago, but I have anxiety and depression and hormonal issues and don’t always feel well. Hopefully I can work again with kids.

Respondent #5—EOP Department on campus at San Diego State

ii. **How did you get the training you needed to do your job?**

Respondent #2—In my various jobs, along with my social work schooling at community college.

Respondent #4—In classes and with my job on campus. I am a Communications major and like public speaking.

Respondent #5—From my job at Cuyamaca Community College where I worked in the disabled students services department.

Respondent #6—Only in that I learned American Sign Language (ASL) at community college.

iii. **How did you get hired for your current job?**

Respondent #2—I applied and you needed a BA or the equivalent amount of experience for 7 years. I was a case manager for years and worked with at-risk youth so I got the job.

Respondent #3—At PEP Boys, I walked in and asked for a job. At that time I didn't have the experience but I had the interest and they gave me a chance.

Respondent #5—My EOP counselor connected me to the work study director.

iv. Are you satisfied with the job you have now?

Respondent #2—It's been a great job. I've been here for 10 years. I'm feeling burnt out on case management though. I like direct service work with disadvantaged youth. I don't do that as much anymore—I am more in an administrative role.

Respondent #3—For 'Next Up' at Miramar, I am really satisfied. I think I have naturally gravitated to leadership. It's easy to speak to my peers to help them get the services they need.

Respondent #4—Yes. My main focus is to set an example for underserved youth. We are labeled at-risk but I don't think it is right.

Respondent #5—It's okay.

Respondent #6—I have insurance (health). It's not my dream job. I've hit a wall. With my degree (from Sweden) I can do better. I feel basic but I love the students. There are no advancement opportunities in my situation.

1. What new job would you rather have and why?

Respondent #1—NA. I tried to start my own day care center a few years ago but that didn't work out.

Respondent #2—I'm not sure but perhaps as a Program Coordinator or in Program Management so I can still provide services to youth.

Respondent #4— Yes. I want to eventually get a master's degree with public speaking and either go into education or social work, most likely education.

Respondent #5—When I graduate I want to work in human resources with my bachelor's in Business Administration, I want to go into benefits as a specialist or in payroll—something that I can work one-on-one with people.

1a. Do you think a community college could help you get the skills you need to get the job you want?

Respondent #1—No, I have a degree already.

Respondent #2—Yes. To go further I would need a degree, to complete my AA and then a bachelor's. For Program Coordinator or Program Management, I might need a master's degree.

Respondent #3—Yes. Through the tech program I made connections and met people in the field. For my entrepreneurial career, I am learning to be a better communicator, through the business classes and learning workplace skills.

Respondent #4—Opportunities to speak to groups of students.

Respondent #5—Yes.

Respondent #6—Yes, with ASL.

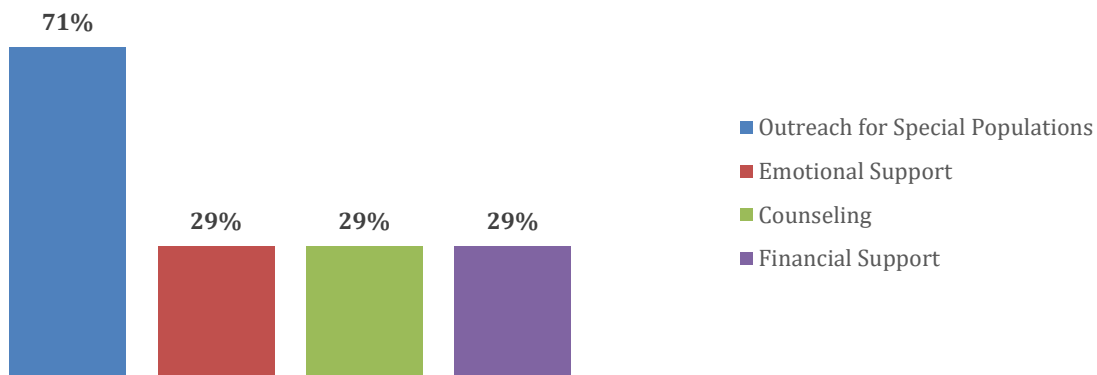
v. **If no, what steps have you taken to try to find a job?**

Respondent #7—I was going to go into the Interpreting field. With the AA in Deaf Studies, I thought I could be a para-educator in the San Diego School District as they have dedicated classes for deaf children. I would love to work with kids. But to be an Interpreter, I can't work until I have a BA or take the community college program and until you are certified, you have to work under someone else. It takes 4 years and so many hours, but having the BA is faster. The Interpreter Program does help you get contacts with people in the field in the community for internships, which helps you get a job when you get out.

3. How can community colleges better serve someone like yourself?

3a. What specific services can they provide to make going to school easier?

Services to Make School Easier



Respondent #1—A person like me, I needed a lot of emotional support. Counseling to guide you and more financial support, then I could have gone on to finish at a four-year school.

Respondent #2—Maybe more flexible class offerings. Some schools like the University of Phoenix allow you some work experience towards the college degree. You learn more from hands-on experience than from a book.

Respondent #3—There are a lot of students from foster care. The system is brutal when you get out and then you have to go back into another system (college) and some don't have the interpersonal skills that they need. If the community colleges can introduce them into school in a friendly way, they will take things better when someone is more interpersonal with them. No one explained the programs to me—I had to find it out for myself. They have a fear of failure and help is there but a lot of schools do not go out of their way to let them know how to get the help.

Respondent #4—San Diego Mesa Community College offered bus passes, I used them. Get people enthusiastic for education, start with middle school students, outreach by the community colleges to underserved populations. Plant the seed with students early that I can go to a community college or a trade school and give them insight.

Respondent #5—What they lacked was advertising more for those types of services that they have for different types of students. I got a great deal of resources because I asked for it and did research online. That is one area that they can do better. When you apply, there are boxes to check off for first-generation students, etc. but you don't know which boxes to check. Have a counselor help you to fill in an application. Also, doing outreach about these programs in high school. I don't recall anyone coming to my high school to talk about them, we just had military recruiters.

Respondent #6—It's really important that they provide a good interpreter. We (deaf students) have a right to have it. It should not be an issue. Southwest College had great interpreters.

Respondent #7—My biggest problem was that I couldn't qualify for financial aid when I came back as I had attempted school (at Palomar College) in 1999/2000. I had three courses and couldn't finish them as I was pregnant. They were held against me today. I didn't have a job and had to pay for everything. I found EOPS—they didn't direct me to something like that. I felt like they (the college) was saving money. I qualified for financial aid but the school says "no". Did the school still get the funding? They were not being very helpful. The military veterans have their own counselors. With the general public, they are not forthcoming. EOPS pays for books. The Governor's fee Waiver paid for units (courses). They (the college) are not telling you about the programs. It's there when you enroll. If someone didn't tell you to apply for it, you don't know and don't do it.

i. Is there anything that might help you learn that the community colleges haven't thought about yet?

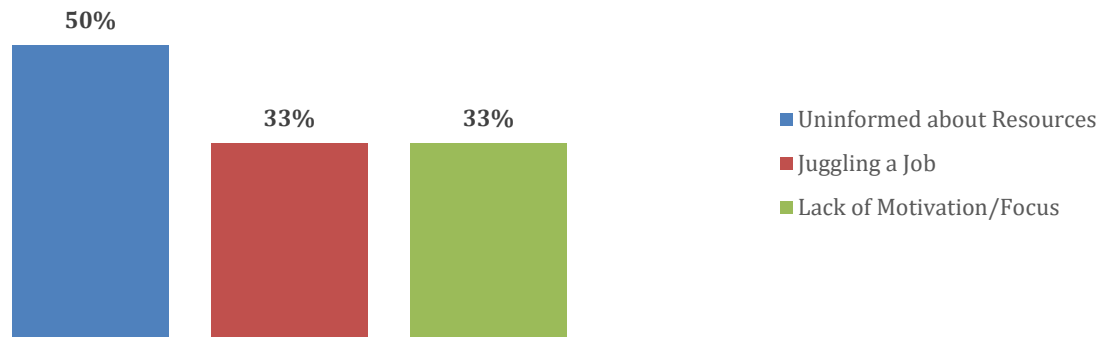
Respondent #1—No, the teachers were good.

Respondent #6— When I took an Excel course at Southwest College, I had to request an interpreter. It's not my responsibility to provide one, it is the organization's responsibility. I wish that people at the front desk knew that and were better educated.

Respondent #7—My son went to Palomar and had an IP as he has ADHD. He is not good at seeking them out and Palomar again didn't help. He is not continuing in school—it's not for him.

3b. What are the biggest challenges you face when you think about attending community college?

Challenges for Attending Community College



Respondent #1—Financial. I had to work multiple jobs during school.

Respondent #2—I work full-time. I would have to take online courses. I've never been diagnosed with a learning disability but I wonder if I have the focus for something and the discipline for an online class, and if I would be engaged enough with learning online as I would be in-person.

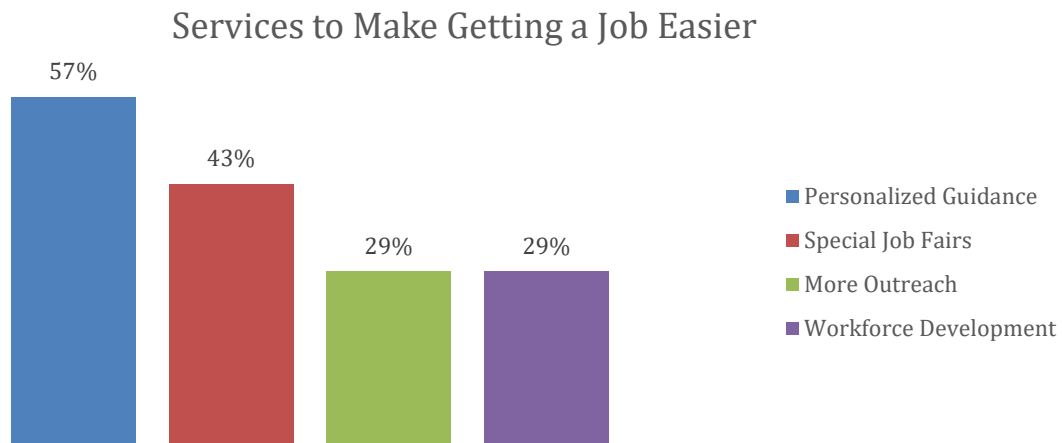
Respondent #3—I did not have self-motivation and didn't know a lot about the services on campus.

Respondent #4— Be open to feedback from these communities. Hear the student's voices—people learn differently. Professors should get the voice of their students into their projects.

Respondent #5—I felt I was on my own. As a first-generation student, college might have been talked about at home but it was more like a dream. You have to do research on your own. If you don't know what to look for, you don't know what's available.

Respondent #6—It depends on where you are. San Diego is better for deaf people—there is more awareness of deaf rights, etc. Imperial Valley was horrible, horrible, horrible. I needed help with note taking. It's hard to look down and take notes while someone is signing. Most colleges have tutoring but a group of students for peer support would be good.

3c. What specific services can community colleges provide to make getting and keeping a job easier?



Respondent #1—Keep in touch with students after they leave the community college and guide them. Keep that connection and guide them to learn more about resources that are out there, such as grants, etc.

Respondent #2—Working closely with individuals. There are lots of programs, such as through the Department of Rehabilitation, to help at-risk students. More outreach to the students because a lot of students don't know what resources are out there to find jobs. When I was in college and wanting a job, I would go to the career center and they would refer me back to a one stop career center or a worker's partnership and then you go there and you just get lost in the shuffle of having you sent to someone else over and over again. Have someone guide you so you don't get lost in the steps. More case managers out there and helping them stay on track.

Respondent #3—More job fairs and again, just more personal interaction with students of my demographics. Also teaching them resume building skills.

Respondent #4—Mesa Community Colleges had panels of people who had graduated. This shows students role models, particularly when they are from underserved communities. Also, networking events are good. At Cal State San Marcos, students' login and can see a list of jobs. Also, present information on skills like financial literacy (taxes, IRA's etc.) as many underserved students don't get this information from home.

Respondent #5—Career Fairs—I think about these resources, community colleges gear them more to 'normal people.' A lot of people don't want to deal with the crowds—I don't—and are too anxious among all these people. Accommodate students—have a career fair for students like me. A virtual career fair would be better. With the Covid-19 crisis, we can adapt to anything and everything and now businesses and universities can

work with people who want to work from home because it has affected everyone. I am so happy to be at home. They need to adapt and work with people with special needs like me.

Respondent #6—Have counselors at the community college who are deaf or hard of hearing. It's hard to find work for deaf individuals. At least, you need counselors who are familiar with deaf culture.

Respondent #7—I don't know. From my own experience, I didn't see anything. They would bring people to campus. Again, they are not forthcoming. They might have had a booth one day but other than it's not like you are bombarded with all this information. They might send out stuff about other colleges or this rep is coming, but I don't think job-wise that I saw any of it.

3d. If you had one final recommendation related to the community colleges in the region, what would it be?

Respondent #1—Same thing as above—be more connected with students. Everything is on the internet but the face-to-face interaction is important too.

Respondent #2—Expand the EOPS program and make it more available. You no longer qualify for the program when you complete 70 units. Extend the program there and it is also limited on the number of students included. Grant programs could extend the array of services that it offers to more people.

Respondent #3—A little more on campus support for students. Like the 'Next Up' program at Mesa City College—they have dedicated workers and a center for foster youth to make them feel that they have a place there. Miramar could add that as we have no full-time staff dedicated to foster youth students—they split their time across other schools. They need to have their entire focus on our population.

Respondent #4—Present social events for the diverse students to engage them. Things like Welcome Back Weeks, a carnival, movie nights, homeless food bank drive, etc.

Respondent #5—Just be more human and understanding that everyone has different needs and what you implement will not fill everyone's needs.

Respondent #6—Just counselors who know about the deaf world.

Respondent #7—Just be making everything accessible to people. If I can't qualify here for this program tell me what I can qualify for. Not so much of that "You can figure it out and if you can find it, we will give it to you." More help and information is needed.