The Workforce Development Role of Community Colleges

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Workforce Development Potential

• Tradition of training—RN’s, first responders, construction and manufacturing apprentices

• Local institutions with close ties to employers
  – Students and graduates more likely to stay
  – Advisory boards and joint planning
  – Frequent use of employees as part-time faculty

• Responsive to changing needs of those employers
Workforce Development
Credentials and Programs

• Occupational or technical AA degrees (two years)
• Occupational certificates (less than two years)
• Non-credit occupational programs
• Certifications
Student Characteristics

Cert. > AA (Oc.) > AA (Ac.) > BA

- Older
- More male
- More minority
- Lower income
- Lower test scores
- More part time
- More likely to delay
- More likely to seek “job skills”
- But still have high degree expectations
Community College Occupational Programs Have Labor Market Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returns to:</th>
<th>Percent Diff. in Earnings compared to HS Grad</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year of postsecondary:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>occupational courses</td>
<td>7.7*</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic courses</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional certificate</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational AA</td>
<td>26.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic AA</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Author calculations from NELS
CC First PSE Students
Percent Distribution by Highest Outcome in All PSE Within Eight Years (NELS)

- Certificate: 6%
- Associate: 15%
- Bachelors: 18%
- 10+ Credits (no deg/cert/xfer): 33%
- <10 Credits (no deg/cert): 17%
- Transfer (no deg/cert): 11%
Graduation—Students in AA Programs

• Traditional aged students
  – Occupational students have a 7 percent lower chance of achieving an AA or BA or of transferring, than academic students

• All first time students
  – Occupational students have about a 10 percent lower probability of achieving this “success”
Barriers for Occupational Students

- Occupational students face more personal barriers and have fewer resources
- But supplemental academic and advising resources are either under funded or not effective
- Problem worsened by poorly structured and often bewildering programs
Trends Reshaping CC
Occupational Education

- 271K occupational associates degrees in 2007 (1/3 in health)—13% growth in 10 years
- 326K occupational certificates in 2007 (more than 1/3 in health)—32% growth in 10 years
- Faster growth of liberal arts (transfer oriented) degrees—32%
- Growing importance of transfer-oriented occupational associates degrees
- Transfer is still a difficult route to a BA
- Growth of non-credit programs
Conclusion

• Occupational AAs have value but many students don’t complete

• Growth of transfer oriented occupational degrees—need to improve the transfer function

• Growth of shorter term credentials—certificates, certifications, non-credit—these need more attention
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