

## San Diego and Imperial County Community College Association Career Education General Talking Points

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San Diego and Imperial Counties' community colleges and continuing education campuses have united to fill the growing regional middle-skill labor gap by promoting Career Education programs to target these well-paying, in demand jobs.

Whether learning new skills, completing short-term free career training, or earning a certificate or an associate degree, Career Education students gain real-world experience that prepares them for in-demand, well-paying jobs.

With more than 200 programs to choose from, students learn by exploring, collaborating and doing, with hands-on training taught by instructors and professionals who have worked in their field of study.

The 10 community colleges and continuing education centers in San Diego and Imperial Counties offering students the opportunity to “Learn More. Earn More.” are: Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, Imperial Valley College, MiraCosta College, Palomar College, San Diego City College, San Diego Continuing Education, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College.

### **What is Career Education, and what kind of jobs could students get after they graduate?**

- Career Education programs align with industry sectors in need of middle-skill workers. Middle-skill jobs require more than a high school diploma but less than a 4-year college degree.
- These are jobs in San Diego's fastest-growing sectors, like biotechnology and life sciences, along with those that many more readily associate with Career Education, such as automotive technology.
- Companies across the San Diego region need trained lab technicians, electrical engineers, computer network architects and more—and an associates degree or certificate through a community college Career Education is the most efficient, cost-effective, hands-on way to get started on the path to those good-paying jobs.
- San Diego and Imperial Valley community colleges offer more than 200 programs to choose from in sectors including: Advanced Manufacturing; Advanced Transportation and Logistics; Agriculture, Water and Environmental Technologies; Energy,

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Construction and Utilities; Business and Entrepreneurship; Health; Information Communication Technologies and Digital Media; and Life Sciences and Biotechnology

### **Why are the colleges uniting to promote Career Education programs? Don't most of the best jobs require four-year degrees?**

- The colleges are heavily investing in Career Education as part of a statewide effort to close a growing labor supply gap—employers need middle skills workers more than ever.
- Despite the changing job market, job openings in these areas are predicted to outpace the employees trained to fill them.
- These jobs, in booming regional industries such as biotechnology, pay well above the regional median hourly wage. Minimum wage in California is \$12.00 while the median wage is \$19.30 per hour and middle skills jobs average \$22.10 and upwards from \$26.70 for higher demand careers.
- In addition to training for good-paying careers, 71 percent of Career Education graduates are employed one year after finishing their program.

### **When can I sign up for classes and how much does it cost?**

- Enrollment for the Fall typically starts in June and for the Spring, registration begins in October.
- Depending on what you'd like to study many programs at the ten colleges across San Diego and Imperial Counties offer six and eight-week courses that start mid-semester.
- Enrollment deadlines vary by college and program, so we recommend looking those up online.
- The average cost per unit is just \$46 which means you can change your career for as little as \$1,460 a year. Compare that to an average of \$5,742 at California State Universities and \$12,630 for a University of California education.
  - That's an even better value considering most California schools will be online only this fall. If school is at-home and online, local community college offers a great experience for a lot less investment.
- There are financial aid programs available and some first-time, full-time students may even be able to attend college for free.

## Where can students go to find the right program and college for them if they're thinking of taking advantage of these classes that start mid-semester?

- CareerEd.org is a one-stop central website where prospective students can learn more about what Career Education program and college is best for them, and begin the enrollment process online.
- CareerEd.org:
  - Connects programs to careers and industries, so students know what degrees and certificates lead to which types of jobs.
  - Available in both English and Spanish.
  - Features videos that showcase real student stories.
  - Highlights the region's top industry sectors with demand for middle-skills workers, and gives real salary and job title examples.