

MiraCosta College Highlights Apprenticeship Innovation Through Strategic Communication

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MiraCosta College is leading the way in developing innovative apprenticeship programs that meet the evolving needs of employers and the community. After securing three California Apprenticeship Initiative grants, MiraCosta recognized that to successfully launch programs, they would have to hear from students, faculty and employers. The team conducted in-depth research to ensure apprenticeship efforts were understood, supported and embraced by all audiences.

That foundational work became the focus of [Minding the Message Gap: What People Really Think of Apprenticeships](#), a dynamic presentation delivered by MiraCosta's Benjamin Gamboa and Molly Ash, alongside Taylor Toledo, Principal at Toledo Consulting, at both the Spring California Community College Association for Occupational Education Conference and Advancing California Apprenticeship Conference.

The interactive session guided participants through MiraCosta's comprehensive research and engagement process, while [findings](#) revealed valuable insights into current perceptions of apprenticeships and motivating factors for different audiences. One key finding revealed that while awareness of apprenticeships is relatively high among both employers (75%) and students (80%), misconceptions persist — particularly around perceived costs or the belief that apprentices must choose between college and a career. These insights highlighted a distinct “message gap” between what colleges intend to communicate and what audiences actually hear.

Building on this research, MiraCosta developed three apprenticeship [explainer videos](#), which were each tailored specifically to either students, faculty or employers. Each video breaks down the apprenticeship model and illustrates its benefits as an earn-and-learn pathway.

The presentation underscored that success in expanding apprenticeships lies not only in creating programs but in clear, authentic communication that resonates with each audience. This begins with listening, so you can truly understand perceptions and meet people where they are. These conversations must continue, as colleges across the state work to strengthen the connections that make apprenticeship programs thrive.