

## Memorandum

To: Rose Giordano, Department Chair of Nutrition, Folsom Lake College (FLC)

CC: Vicky Maryatt, Dean of Career Education, Folsom Lake College

From: Ebony J. Benzing, Research Manager, Center of Excellence (COE), North/Far North region

Date: June 27, 2019

Re: Program endorsement request for nutrition education certificate program

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## Background

Folsom Lake College requested a program endorsement report from the North/Far North Centers of Excellence regarding the creation of a nutrition education certificate of achievement within the existing Nutrition department. FLC's current nutrition programs include an associate of science in nutrition and dietetics for transfer (A.S.-T), an associate of science in nutrition science, as well as a more general associate of arts in interdisciplinary studies in the social and behavioral sciences. FLC's nutrition programs intend to prepare students to work in related fields such as wellness programs, food and nutrition businesses, and health care.

The goal of the nutrition education certificate is to increase program participant awareness of food literacy, health and wellness, and the impact of food choices on health. The program is not intended to prepare students for a particular occupation, but rather provide a skill set to a targeted group of incumbent workers – personal care aides (SOC 39-9021)<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to analyzing occupational data for personal care aides, COE conducted a separate review of job postings data to identify a prospective pool of incumbent workers whose work or job prospects may benefit from a credential in nutrition and to identify regional employer demand for workers with nutrition credentials. Most job postings were for food preparation and serving workers. The findings below represent personal care aides and other incumbent workers whose work and job prospects may benefit from a certificate in nutrition education.

## Key Findings

- **There was no regional employer preference for a nutrition certificate.** There were 2,145 job postings for personal care aides in the greater Sacramento region<sup>2</sup>. While top skills for personal care aides included caregiving and meal preparation – skills that the nutrition certificate would better – top certifications were a driver's license and first aid and CPR. Additionally, there was no education requirement beyond a high school diploma or some vocational training. These findings suggest that employers are not specifically seeking personal care aides with additional training in nutrition education.
- **There was no clear market indication that a certificate in nutrition will lead to an increase in pay.** Of the 2,145 job postings for personal care aides, 30, or approximately 1% of job postings for personal care aides, mentioned "nutrition" as a skill. When comparing advertised wages of postings without the nutrition skill to those with the nutrition skill, median hourly wages remained the same – around \$12 per hour.
- **However, there appears to be some demand for certificates in nutrition education.** Cosumnes River College (CRC) is the only regional post-secondary institution in the greater Sacramento area that offers a short-term certificate in nutrition (TOP code 1306.00; CIP code 19.0501). Since 2015-16, CRC has seen an

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<sup>1</sup> Community health workers were excluded from search as typical educational attainment is a bachelor's degree and the typical programs that prepare for this occupation are social work and public health.

<sup>2</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool," <http://www.burning-glass.com>, 2019. Jobs postings represent online listings from June 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019. Greater Sacramento include El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Tuba counties.

increase in the number of certificates conferred, while the numbers of related associate degrees conferred have remained relatively steady (Exhibit 1). Furthermore, demand for credentials in nutrition seem to move towards certificates; beginning in 2016, post-secondary institutions awarded more certificates than associate degrees. These trends are mirrored across the state and the US.

**Exhibit 1. Comparison of short-term certificate and associate degrees conferred in Foods, Nutrition, and Wellness TOP and CIP codes, 2014-2017<sup>3</sup>**

| Region             | Award type  | 2015 Completions | 2016 Completions | 2017 Completions | 2018 Completions |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Greater Sacramento | Certificate | --               | 1                | 3                | 5                |
|                    | Associate   | --               | 2                | 1                | 1                |
| California         | Certificate | 65               | 57               | 82               | --               |
|                    | Associate   | 62               | 54               | 61               | --               |
| United States      | Certificate | 69               | 128              | 149              | --               |
|                    | Associate   | 109              | 70               | 106              |                  |

**Recommendations**

Recent literature from the Public Policy Institute of California on stackable career education credentials in California Community Colleges indicates that students who earn short-term certificates are more likely (than other credential earners) to continue to earn additional credentials<sup>4</sup>. However, there is a growing concern that short-term certificates sidetrack students – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – from completing longer-term credentials that offer better economic returns and opportunities to transfer to a four-year college. With these thoughts in mind, COE recommends:

- **Clearly articulating the path from a short-term nutrition certificate to related longer-term credentials.** Research from PPIC shows career education programs with progressive or lattice pathways are particularly beneficial to students, especially students of color<sup>5</sup>. FLC should map a pathway from this certificate to other opportunities that produce better economic returns and share that information in a widely circulated and accessible space.
- **Move forward with the new program or program modification.** Short-term certificates are a benefit to student populations with limited access and time to acquire post-secondary education. They provide the potential to access better-paying jobs, with additional training.

Please contact Ebony Benzing, COE Research Manager, for further information at [Ebony.Benzing@losrios.edu](mailto:Ebony.Benzing@losrios.edu) or 916-563-3215.

<sup>3</sup> COE Supply Tables, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataMart, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

<sup>4</sup> Bohn, Sarah, and McConville, Shannon. 2018. *Stackable Credentials in Career Education at California Community Colleges* (Tech). <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/stackable-credentials-in-career-education-at-california-community-colleges-october-2018.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.