

Memorandum

To: Annette Lee, Woodland Community College (WCC)

From: Aaron Wilcher, Director, Center of Excellence (COE), North-Far North region

Date: February 25, 2019

Re: Program endorsement request for Accounting and Bookkeeping

Background

WCC sought a program endorsement report from the COE regarding a business information worker (BIW) program. The COE performed an extensive report for a Mendocino College on the same program in December 2018. The findings and recommendations from that report should be used for the BIW proposal at WCC. Several key takeaways are summarized in this memo. In addition, the COE provides updated occupational data for the 7-county North region in the findings below.

Findings

- BIW occupations of Customer Service Representatives (SOC code 43-4051), Receptionists and Information Clerks (SOC Code 43-4171), Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants (SOC 43-6011) have not recouped pre-recession employment levels, down from 27,800 jobs in 2008 to 25,960 in 2018. Customer Service Representatives, and Receptionists and Information Clerks are projected to add jobs over the next five years. Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive have the largest employment size and are projected to offer most annual job openings in the next five years in the region. Customer Service Representatives represent the fastest growing occupation group in the region.
- Together, the BIW occupations in the 7-county North region show 3,617 annual openings projected over the next five years. Overall projected growth is tepid, just 1.0% annually.
- Wages for the studied occupations are below the living wages for one adult and one child household in the region. Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants offer a higher wage at \$27.77 per hour but have fewer jobs in the region and across the state. The other occupations have median wages of \$16.79 per hour for customer service representatives or \$14.27 per hour for receptionists.
- The educational attainment data shows typical workers employed in the studied occupations have at least some college education. Few have a bachelor's degree. These are mostly middle skill jobs.
- Job postings volume for the studied occupation is strong in the region but has decreased continuously in the past two years. Most job postings are for employment in Sacramento County.
- The top employers posting include a range of employers, including health care, universities, financial services, and retail.
- Customer service and administrative support are listed as the most in demand skill for the occupations. Microsoft Excel and other Microsoft Office applications are the most in demand software skills according to the job posting data.
- Award production data shows community colleges in region confer a total of 178 certificates and associate degrees in the two TOP codes studied. Woodland Community College's award production in the related TOP codes is very small compared to most other colleges in the North/Far North region.

Recommendations

- The simple gap analysis comparing projected annual openings and awards indicates that there is a clear demand that is not met with current award production.
- Tepid historical and projected growth may be an indication of automation risk for many of these jobs.
- WCC has a low number of program graduates in these related TOP code areas. The college would do well to produce more award recipients for its local service territory, and the wider region.
- Wage levels are low, indicating that pathway program development (associate degree for transfer) for opportunities for students to advance into higher-earning-potential, related degrees, including bachelor's degree programs.
- COE recommends that Woodland Community College move forward with the BIW program.

Please contact Aaron Wilcher, COE director, for further information at wilchea@losrios.edu or 916-563-3233.