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While San Francisco has long been identified as a place of innovation and opportunity, a well-known

To explore these questions, the RP Group engaged 42 different college and community stakeholders—from CCSF English and CTE instructors and counselors to CBO leaders, staff, and program participants (including individuals who previously attended the college)—in interviews and focus groups. (See *Appendix A: Research Methodology* for a full description of Phase 2 research activities). This report summarizes the results of this exploration.

In Sections 3 and 4, we offer a deeper discussion of (1) findings related to building the college's internal capacity to serve undecided students (including key findings, recommendations, and quotes from counselors, English instructors, and CTE instructors), followed by (2) results focused on engaging external CBO stakeholders in supporting student movement into and through CCSF's programs of study (including key findings, recommendations, and quotes from CBO staff and program participants).

We conclude with ideas for future research (including suggestions for a CCSF Way to Stay SF Phase 3).

Additionally, conversations with instructors and counselors

opportunities to participate in cohorts can help students stay connected and maintain their focus on their program of study—particularly in an institution as large and as difficult to navigate as CCSF. CBO retention practices and successful cohort models already implemented by the college (e.g., Metro Academics, Puente) offer CCSF a range of approaches to consider when developing pathways.

Conclusions

This exploration reveals that **CBOs can provide complementary services for high-demand CTE programs of study**

- **Adopt new and scale existing strategies to provide information about educational and career options directly to students** (e.g. orientation, low unit college success and CTE survey courses). **Require all undecided students to engage with these strategies**

- **Align CBO training with CCSF's programs** and broker agreements that allow CBO training completers to secure college credit for their experience, thereby allowing students to progress more quickly to attainment of a related CCSF certificate or degree.

- **Leverage CBO connections to secure support for work-based learning, employer**

unaware of how to achieve that outcome. Instructors and counselors suggested that these different cohorts of undecided students who will likely require a different level of support to encourage their path to completion.

- Reinstitute a methodology for quantifying the number of students who are undecided upon connection and entry to the college.

- Identify a scale for "undecided" to recognize the range of students who fall into this overarching classification.

- Segment the data on the undecided student population accordingly, and use these data as a guide for developing related strategies.

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This research reveals that CCSF does not currently have a shared agreement on the vital importance of career development to student success, particularly for undecided students, or a strategy for integrating this type of exploration and advising throughout the student experience. CCSF students, regardless of where they fall on the "undecided" continuum, do not reliably receive support for or engage with exploration and planning that links college and careers. Moreover, they are not consistently supported to conduct this exploration and

- Map out a path that establishes developmental benchmarks and milestones for both college and career development; ensure students can both self-navigate some activities and engage in others with support from a teacher or counselor.

- Require career development and college success coursework or workshops for all students, given the potentially large proportion of learners who fall on the "undecided" continuum; consider multiple modes of delivery (e.g., face-to-face sessions, online courses, on-demand videos, etc.).

- Embed career development systematically into key points in college entry and early progression (e.g., pre-collegiate math and/or English courses).

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CCSF is fortunate to have many existing strategies that support undecided students in learning about college and career options, and about CTE programs and pathways in particular. These range from college success courses, to introductory courses to a career program, to contextualized basic skills courses. These practices can inform the creation of a college and career development framework for CCSF's undecided students and can be replicated or scaled to reach more learners.

As a precursor to the recommendations that follow, we suggest the college consider identifying the primary "models" at CCSF that are effective in supporting students in college and career planning, and that lead to program completion. This assessment will allow the college to determine which existing models it might invest in replicating and/or scaling, and also recognize when it needs to look outside the college for additional ideas. We recommend studying these local models through an inquiry-based approach and looking at available data to understand their strengths and areas of improvement. For any approach to be successful and sustainable, an engaged group of faculty and other stakeholders will need to be committed to fostering and adapting it over time.

Recommendations:

- Require all undecided students to complete a college success course; help them understand the range of resources available in the college for their support, and the different educational pathways they can

- Leverage existing support strategies such as Early Warning, which serve a large percentage of students, and design embedded, collaborative interventions to ensure all students are getting exploration support, rather than 'opting in' to seeing a counselor.

Strengthening Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations

The RP Group engaged a sample of CBO leaders, staff, and program participants (both youth and adults) to explore how CCSF can strengthen its capacity to externally engage different groups that could benefit from education provided by the college. These conversations with community stakeholders are particularly pertinent given the growing emphasis on community college/CBO collaboration in the current workforce development funding and policy environment. The perspectives of key community partners and their clients can help CCSF better respond to the movement among state educational and workforce agencies to more closely align on workforce outcomes, and in turn, the mandate to improve alignment of service delivery across community colleges and CBOs.

This research suggests that **key CBOs can (1) strategically direct student groups into the college, (2) serve as a model for effective support practices as CCSF works to improve entry and progress, and (3) provide services and supports that can complement the college's programs of study, particularly for students in the completion phase.** We summarize below key findings and recommendations to inform CCSF engagement of external partners in support of the development of pathways in to and through the college.

Key Findings

Partnerships between CCSF and CBOs have a solid track record

CBOs we spoke with in San Francisco (e.g., Goodwill, Jewish Vocational Services, Year Up, and JCYC) have previously forged partnerships with CCSF that have served as a conduit between their training initiatives and the college's CTE and workforce development programs. While

college's current leadership to renew these relationships. CBO staff and program participants all cited concrete and specific ways to begin rebuilding these bridges and are eager to connect.
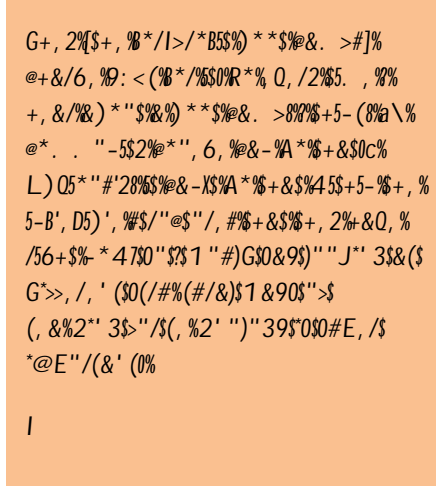
The following issues will need addressing in any effort to rejuvenate relationships with key CBO partners.

- **Reliance on individual champions rather than systematic a nd systemic linkages:** Productive and long-lasting collaborations have been in place that leverage CCSF's programs with CBO supports and other resources, but this research suggests these connections almost always depend on the relationship between the CBO and an individual champion at the college, making these relationships extremely vulnerable to changes in CCSF leadership, staffing, and priorities. Further, wi th no system in place and no clearly-defined point of contact at the systems level, CBOs do not know how to engage with the college, meaning that relationships are usually built at the individual or program/department level.

- **Ongoing changes in the top-level leadership at the college:** Numerous changes in the college's executive leadership over the past five years have left the CBOs interviewed without a clear understanding of CCSF's workforce development priorities, who is setting those priorities, and whom to contact to maintain/renew their relationships.

- **Loss of confidence in the institution**: The college's public accreditation battle has left some CBO partners wary of maintaining or forging programmatic agreements. The college's recent accreditation reaffirmation will undoubtedly help to assuage these concerns.

- **Lack of efforts by the college to engage with the CBO community:** CBO interviewees cited a breakdown in communication with community training and service providers, including a failure to keep CBOs informed about what CCSF has to offer their clients and

As the college considers which community partners to engage, it is useful to recognize that **CBOs can offer CCSF access to a diverse group of prospective student groups** including SFUSD youth participating in a wide range of CBO programs (from academic support to career development and work-based learning); transition-age youth and adults engaged in sector specific training; and un/underemployed adults with significant barriers to education and employment. **Each of these populations requires a different type of outreach strategy and transition support to encourage their enrollment at CCSF**.

For example, CBO program participants expressed a range of perceptions about enrolling at CCSF. Some SFUSD high school students and graduates we reached through CBO programs **see CCSF as "the last option."** Part of the problem is a general reluctance on the part of high school students to continue their education in a local community college, which they perceive as an extension of high school. Some advisors of local high school students, including high school counselors and CBO staff, reinforce t his view or even discourage students from considering CCSF. On the other hand, youth who had direct contact with CCSF through dual enrollment or summer classes described positive experiences. Similarly, **young adults who had previously enrolled at the college expressed a positive perception of the institution**, citing it for its accessibility, affordability, and high-quality teaching.

All CBO program participants interviewed expressed an openness and interest in CCSF's programs (both CTE and traditional transfer pathways), **but were unclear about how to get information that was concrete, timely, and actionable.** Moreover, CBO leaders, staff, and program participants commonly noted that the **college does not clearly articulate a value proposition to prospective students and their advisors,** addressing important questions such as, "How can CCSF help you meet your goals," "How long will it take," "What will it cost," "What will you be able to do and earn when you complete your degree/program?" By contrast, CBOs tend to provide this information on their programming in a tangible and accessible way. Some CBO leaders also identified that for-profit colleges are attractive to their clients because they offer prospective participants clear value propositions. CBO youth participants were aware that there were vague benefits to attending CCSF (while in high school and transitioning into college), but did not have details needed to engage further. Individuals participating in CBO workforce training noted these kinds of questions would absolutely need answering in order to encourage their attendance at CCSF.

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that could leverage CCSF's offerings, including job search and placement supports and services. CBOs believe that many CCSF students complete their coursework not knowing how to parlay their new skills and competencies into a job. **CBOs can help CCSF students with their job search and employer connections**. CBOs can also help CCSF respond to the local technology-driven labor market's

Conclusion

CCSF is moving into a new era, having settled many of the outstanding accreditation issues confronting the college during the past five years. The opportunity to develop a coherent set of pathways for current and future students is now presenting itself. A growing cadre of creative and energized faculty, staff, and administrators are showing an interest in pursuing guided pathway development, and at the same time, the state is making available new resources to support the changes the college needs to address.

To this end, the RP Group research team considered which additional research activities would further inform and support guided pathway development, with a focus on undecided students, and with community partners in mind. We assert the following activities will help the CCSF Way to Stay SF team make a case inside and outside of the college for this work and outline the

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