

Make a Difference for Nontraditional Students



You can make a difference in students' educational experience and success, especially for students training for careers nontraditional to their gender. Nontraditional students are identified as a special population group in the Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act.

Schools receiving Perkins funds must offer programs and services to support special population students, including nontraditional students. To serve your nontraditional students and fulfill the Perkins requirements, this resource describes effective tactics employed statewide and nationally. Use these strategies to recruit and retain nontraditional students so they may overcome barriers and reach their CTE goals.

Nontraditional Training Programs in California Community Colleges

The California Community Colleges offer a diversity of programs that are considered nontraditional. For women, these include animal science, architectural technology, environmental technology, business administration, information administration, information technology, computer networking, automotive technology, construction crafts, manufacturing, administration of justice, fire technology, and more.

For men, examples of nontraditional programs include office computer applications, veterinary technicians, desktop publishing, software applications, educational aides, medical laboratory technology, radiation therapy technicians, child development, dietetic technology, cosmetology, travel services and tourism, and others. (For a complete listing of nontraditional programs, see "California Community Colleges: Programs Classified as Nontraditional" posted at cccspecialpopulations.org/resourcesPublications.htm and at jspac.org/nontraditional-occupations.)

Nontraditional jobs generally pay females 20-30% more than traditionally-female jobs, meaning that women in nontraditional fields will earn 150% more over the course of their careers. For men, nontraditional training can open new opportunities including high-wage management, business ownership, and school administration.

Furthermore, the California economy increasingly demands more college-educated workers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). These fields tend to be nontraditional for women. The California Community Colleges play a key role in providing well-trained workers in these fast-growing emerging markets, and in meeting the needs of STEM-businesses with well-trained students.

Women have made real inroads in many nontraditional fields: females compose 21% of drafters, 15% of network and computer systems administrators, 11% of surveying and mapping technicians, and 10% of computer hardware engineers. Fewer than one-in-ten women are construction managers (8% female), firefighters (5% female), construction helpers (4%), sheet metal workers (4%), carpenters (2%), electricians (2%), and automotive service technicians and mechanics (1%). Encouraging and supporting women to train in these fields will help them pursue successful futures.

This brochure is a joint project of the California Community College Industrial and Technology Education Collaborative and the California Community College Special Populations Collaborative.



Resources for Nontraditional Students

Many of the following resources are also valuable for other special population students, including:

- Economically disadvantaged
- Limited English Proficient
- Displaced homemakers
- Single parents
- Disabled

American Association of University Women
www.aauw.org

Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education
<http://agele.org>

California Career and Technical Education Joint Special Populations Advisory Committee
www.jspac.org

California Career Pathways
www.cpathways.org

California Career Technical Education State Plan (2008 – 2012)
<http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/ctep/print/htdocs/ctep/home.htm>

California Careers Information
www.californiacareers.info

California Community College Core Indicator Reports
http://webdata2.cccco.edu/VTEA_RPTS.htm

California Community College Industrial & Technical Education Collaborative
www.cccindustrialtech.org

California Community College Special Populations Collaborative
www.cccspecialpopulations.org

California Employment Development Department
www.edd.ca.gov

Tools and Tips for Educators

Following are tools and tips for educators, including ways to build capacity for nontraditional pathways, recruit nontraditional students, support nontraditional students, and bridge nontraditional training with employment.

Build Capacity for Nontraditional Career Pathways

Raise Awareness

- Identify areas where nontraditional enrollment at your college could be encouraged using the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's *Data Mart* (<http://datamart.cccco.edu>) and *Core Indicator* (http://webdata2.cccco.edu/VTEA_RPTS.htm) tools.
- Conduct professional development to increase awareness of gender bias and stereotyping and eliminate sexual harassment.



Connect with Colleagues

- Form learning communities with others working with nontraditional students at your school, across schools, or online. These communities allow teachers to share knowledge, develop new approaches, and have been shown to promote effective teaching and student achievement.
- School leaders can support learning communities by providing time and space for teamwork and recognizing and incentivizing their contributions.

Connect with Students

- Address stereotype threat. Knowing a stereotype exists about one's performance in a field can hinder performance (known as "stereotype threat"). Personal attention from instructors, the presence of female role models, other females in the classroom, and being told that females and males are equally capable have been shown to reduce stereotype threat.
- Follow up with an email or phone call when nontraditional students leave your program to learn how you might be able to support future students.



Recruit Nontraditional Students

Craft your Message

- Communicate the societal benefits of nontraditional careers. This can boost women's interest.
- Provide a broad overview of opportunities in your field.
- Make clear that all CTE programs are offered without regard to sex, race, or disability.

Foster Gateways

- Connect with feeder schools. Inform them of your program. Ask them to refer students.
- Connect with Public Information Officers at your college, informing them about the appeal of your classes for nontraditional students so they may recruit students.
- Encourage males enrolled in traditionally-male fields to recommend their program to female relatives and friends. Likewise, encourage females enrolled in traditionally-female fields to recommend them to males.
- Focus recruitment on groups that receive priority registration, such as Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S) and Veterans.
- Encourage participation in math, science, and technology courses since they are often the gateway for participation in nontraditional careers.
- Offer extracurricular opportunities for women to visit your shop or classes to become familiar with the equipment and technology.

Evaluate Materials

- Evaluate all school materials for positive nontraditional images.
- Post images of ethnically- and age-diverse women and men doing serious work and remove posters and calendars of scantily dressed women.
- Revise school materials to contain gender-neutral language ("s/he" rather than "he").

Support Nontraditional Students

Welcome Students

- Send welcome letters to nontraditional students to apprise them of support services.
- Develop a nontraditional student newsletter.
- Train students on sexual harassment issues. Enforce a clear sexual harassment policy.

Offer support

- Debunk stereotyping myths that careers are gender specific.
- Foster self-esteem and self-efficacy in potential nontraditional students.
- Use gender-neutral language in the classroom ("they" or "he and she," not "he" or "guys").
- Acknowledge that many students must balance school and family/personal responsibilities. Connect parents with resources such as school-based childcare.
- Provide opportunities for family members to learn about students' programs, potential salaries, societal benefits, and role models in the field to garner family support.
- Inform students of resources such as financial aid, academic support services, and employment assistance.

Resources for Nontraditional Students

California Labor Market Information
www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov

Career Café
www.cacareercafe.com

Fight the (Stereo)Type: Nontraditional Careers and Occupations
www.fightthetype.org

Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science
www.iwitts.org

Make a Difference for Special Population Students: Practical Tips and Tools for Educators
www.ccspecialpopulations.org

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
www.napequity.org

National Women's Law Center
www.nwlc.org

Nontraditional Careers
www.nontraditionalcareers.com

Nontraditional TOP Codes
<http://www.jspac.org/nontraditional-occupations>

Reality Check: A Tool for Understanding Your Earnings Needs
www.californiarealitycheck.com

The STEM Equity Pipeline
www.stemequitypipeline.org

Understanding Stereotype Threat
<http://reducingstereotypethreat.org>

United States Department of Labor Women's Bureau
<http://www.dol.gov/wb/>

White House Council on Women and Girls
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg>

"Who Do You Want 2 Be?"
www.whodouwant2b.com

Wider Opportunities for Women
www.wowonline.org

Women In Non Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER)
www.winterwomen.org



Connect Peers

- Place nontraditional students together in a training class to provide a peer group that bolsters students' aspirations and gives social and emotional support.
- Hold social gatherings to help nontraditional students integrate into your program.
- Develop student clubs or support groups so nontraditional students can meet to share concerns and successes.

Provide Equal Opportunities

- Ensure availability of equipment and facilities for both women and men, such as tools, gloves, and safety equipment in multiple sizes.
- Make sure every student has the chance to perform every task.
- Offer stamina-building and weight lifting to students in need of this for success.
- Make performance expectations clear so students understand what they do well, and where they can improve. Research shows that nontraditional students can interpret their performance more critically than traditional students, underestimating their potential.

Support Learning

- Teach students that skills and ability can expand with increased effort and experience.
- Discuss how your field applies to real world problems and situations.
- Offer instruction in multiple ways: group projects, hands-on learning, research, and online learning.
- Allow flexibility in the way work and tasks are customarily done.
- Provide tutoring and basic skills instruction to students who may need to catch-up.
- Use a case management approach in which one person monitors and guides the student.
- Provide students with examples of nontraditional people who have achieved great things in your field.
- Invite successful previous students or working women to speak to your classes.
- Offer field trips where students can hear and meet successful nontraditional workers.

Bridge Nontraditional Training with Employment

Inform Students about Nontraditional Jobs

- Educate students about the higher pay associated with many nontraditional jobs.
- Keep track of employers who hire your students, and ask to include them on outreach materials. This informs students of opportunities, and provides publicity for employers.
- Host a website or bulletin board of job openings, and invite employers to come learn about your program and present to your classes on employment opportunities.
- Discuss the job application and interview process. Ensure students have clothing appropriate to interview in their field (e.g., many construction jobs require tools, boots).

Give Students First-hand Experience in Nontraditional Fields

- Engage and prepare students by providing a realistic picture of on-the-job activities.
- Provide job fairs, e-mentoring, and opportunities to job-shadow.
- Facilitate internships to provide students with first-hand experience in the field.

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For more information, or to download this document, go to:

www.cccindustrialtech.org or
www.cccspecialpopulations.org