



March 2020

Better Careers at Hartnell College

Creating a System to Connect
College to Career

*By Career Ladders Project in
partnership with Hartnell College*



HARTNELL COLLEGE

Acknowledgments

Hartnell College is the heart of the Salinas Valley. Hartnell students, many of them farm workers, become plant scientists, teachers, and tech entrepreneurs. The Hartnell approach is as welcoming as the delicious strawberries grown in nearby fields. Career Ladders Project learned together with their dedicated faculty and staff, and for that we are grateful.

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Introduction

Visitors to the Salinas Valley are struck by its beauty: the rolling hills, the fields of food crops, and the tight-knit and welcoming community. But Salinas, like many rural communities relatively close to larger urban centers, is experiencing an economic paradox. An influx of new homeowners, themselves priced out of Silicon Valley and San Jose, inadvertently has driven up housing costs, resulting in a cost of living 45% above the national average (salary.com). In addition, a boom in agricultural technology is creating higher-wage, higher-skill jobs in the area and shaping its reputation as an epicenter of innovation. For five years, Salinas has hosted the annual Forbes AgTech Summit, which attracts over 600 global industry leaders. But many of the one in four Salinas Valley residents who are employed in agriculture do not earn a living wage, and higher-skilled local graduates are often drawn to job opportunities in nearby cities like San Jose and San Francisco. Of the Valley's 250,000 residents, one in six lives in poverty, and nearly two-thirds of those 25 years old or older have completed no postsecondary education. The median annual earnings of residents without a high school diploma or equivalent is barely more than \$20,000, not enough to sustain a household in this high-cost region (ACS 2012-2016).

Hartnell College serves its community. Between 2014 and 2019, the college's student population grew nearly 15% to 18,000, with an ethnic profile that includes 62% Latinx, 23% White, 3% Asian, 2% Filipino, 3% Black, 1% Native American and Pacific Islander, 2% multi-ethnic, and 5% unreported students (2018-19 student enrollment, Datamart CCCCCO). Hartnell offers students the best local opportunity to complete the education and training they need to advance economically. The college's 66 total associate degree and certificate programs, including 12 A.A -T., 12 A.S -T, 16 A.A., 8 A.S. degree programs and 18 certificate programs, address the middle-skill needs of regional employers and prepare diverse community members to assume high-quality jobs with benefits and advancement potential. Along with its four-year university partners — California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB), and University of California, Santa Cruz — Hartnell collaborates in regional workforce and economic development partnerships to ensure that its students are prepared to enter and advance in the workforce. Those partnerships include the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership to map regional career pathways and connect students with internships and employment via a tri-county jobs portal; Salinas Valley Intermediary Advisory Board, which unites the community college and representatives of five cities around common workforce education goals; the Monterey Bay Workforce Development Board, to align career training and apprenticeship development with the county's workforce system; and Bright Futures, the county's cradle-to-career initiative.

Hartnell College's role in the Salinas Valley has grown beyond education and training to reflect a deeper commitment to students' post-graduation employment and careers. Several statewide initiatives incentivize this more expansive role for the college. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's [Vision for Success](#) names ambitious goals for the system, including increasing the number of graduates who report being employed in their field of study and earning higher wages. The Strong Workforce Program supports colleges financially and provides a statewide infrastructure to connect college with careers, with a special emphasis on K-12 partnerships. The Guided Pathways initiative provides a framework for reorganizing colleges with students at the center, including mapping all degrees and certificates to careers. And the increasing statewide emphasis on equity has helped to validate the work of colleges to decrease equity gaps and increase the number of women and students of color in fields where they have been underrepresented.

Hartnell's [Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#) embraces this commitment to student employment. "Students who do not intentionally explore career interests, are not directed to career placement options early on in their studies, or fail to connect learning to prospective employment outcomes, may not engage in the most productive learning experiences or otherwise be optimally prepared for available jobs," the plan states. "Working

"I started at Hartnell with the plan of being an engineering student but then started hearing the statistics and how girls are left out, so I'm doing a teacher pathway so I can encourage all kids, but especially girls, to love this before they give up on it."

– Student, education convening

alongside regional employers, **Hartnell is fully committed to improving student employment opportunities subsequent to training or completion.** Hartnell has focused on employment in three strategic sectors that offer strong growth and livable wages: agriculture, health, and education.

The college has begun to explore ways to pursue this goal and provide opportunities for students to learn about work (such as through field trips, job shadowing, attending conferences, networking, and career counseling), learn through work (such as through a course-based practicum, internship, or summer work experience), or connect directly with employment (such as through a paid internship, on-the-job training, an apprenticeship, or permanent employment). Hartnell is indebted to the original Work-Based Learning continuum, developed by the Linked Learning Alliance and the James Irvine Foundation, which provides a helpful framework for understanding the range of employment-related activities under consideration for expansion at Hartnell.

Purpose and Goals of the Implementation Plan

In August 2019, Hartnell College invited the collaboration of Career Ladders Project to engage the college and external partners in developing a vision for a user-focused college-to-career system. The goals of this initiative were to:

1. Develop and strengthen Hartnell’s sector-specific steering committees by fostering employer engagement and investment;
2. Assess the current availability of college-to-career services, gaps, best practices, and opportunities for growth; and
3. Design a system that will strengthen direct job placements and expand employer co-investments in internships and apprenticeships.

This implementation plan, **Better Careers at Hartnell College**, describes the college’s current assets as a starting point and proposes a system of employment-focused support. The report concludes with a proposed staffing plan, timeline, and work plan to guide creation of this college-to-career model.

Approach to Idea-Gathering: Sector Convenings

In the fall and winter of 2019-20, Hartnell hosted a series of three convenings – focused on the agriculture, health, and education sectors – around the college’s vision of improving students’ employment opportunities.

The convenings brought together students, instructors, counselors, and external partners, including employers, K-12 districts, CSU Monterey Bay (CSUMB), the Monterey Bay Workforce Development Board, and guests from other colleges. These gatherings, which included student and employer panels and dynamic group discussions, revealed diverse perspectives on the current state of work-based learning at the college, strengths and challenges of these current offerings, and opportunities to respond more effectively to students’ and employers’ needs. Participants learned about industry trends and hiring practices, and they heard moving student stories about work-related experiences that had proved meaningful and beneficial to their future employment.

The convenings were appreciated by partners, and the addition of student voices in particular will enhance the current steering committee model for the agriculture and health sectors. The education sector, which did not have a steering committee, now has this model to structure engagement

“We have hired 50 new grads from Hartnell. We learned that it made the most sense to hire new grads who are from this area and committed to this area, they stay, and that’s really what we’re looking for.”

– Local employer,
health sector convening



and the exchange of ideas. The convenings will serve as models for inclusive meta-major-specific steering committees in the future. Participants also identified existing practices that could be scaled and sustained for greater impact, as well as strategies to grow Hartnell College's employment-related activities in new directions that will leverage regional partnerships, prepare students for career success, and address workforce and economic development needs.

Current Employment Activities at Hartnell College

The three sector-specific convenings included discussion of current work-based learning practices at Hartnell, both within specific certificate and degree programs and college wide. Participants agreed that each of the three sectors of interest – agriculture, health, and education – offers strong employment-related elements that may serve as models to inform the design of a more systemic approach.

Agriculture Programs: Hartnell currently offers five certificate and degree pathways in agriculture: Agriculture Business (AS-T), Agriculture Plant Science (AS-T), and Agriculture with Emphasis (AS, Certificate of Achievement) (with emphasis on Business, Production, or Food Safety). These are included in the Business, Agriculture, and Industries meta major. Students benefit from a variety of work-based learning activities that are integrated with their agriculture courses, including guest speakers, field trips, an annual career fair, access to industry tools and equipment, job shadowing, and participation in industry conferences. A career exploration course, Careers in Agriculture and Technology (ABT-110), is also offered. Students gain direct work experience, unpaid or paid, through internships (or micro-internships) and the ABT-99 cooperative work experience course. Hartnell's Business, Agriculture, and Industry meta major has a coordinator of job and internship placement who places a particular emphasis on the agriculture sector and helps students connect with internship opportunities.

Health programs: Hartnell offers five health certificate and degree programs: Kinesiology (AS, AS-T), Nursing - Registered Nurse (AS, Certificate of Achievement), Nursing - Licensed Vocational Nurse (Certificate of Achievement), Public Health Science (AS-T), and Respiratory Care Practitioner (AS). These are part of the Health Sciences meta major. Health Sciences programs maintain partnerships with over 35 clinical placement sites and other employer partners, and they incorporate high-fidelity simulation, skills laboratory activities, and clinical experiences that meet industry accreditation requirements and prepare students for national licensure examinations.

Education programs: Hartnell offers two education degree pathways: Early Childhood Education (AS, AS-T) and Elementary Teacher (AA-T). These are included in the Social Sciences and Humanities meta major. Students participate in integrated service-learning projects, work study, and the Early Childhood Education 12 practicum course. Many gain hands-on experience in the college's Child Development Center Lab School. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Career Center, counseling courses, and career fairs.

College-wide employment services: Hartnell's Transfer and Career Center, though focused on transfer assistance, provides students with an online job and internship bank and a web page of job search resources. Career services are self-serve, and there is no dedicated career counselor. The college's STEM Center provides research and professional micro-internships and internships for students in STEM fields.

Themes from the Convenings: Current Assets and Areas for Growth

Convening participants noted that they would like several of Hartnell's existing employment-related activities to be sustained and expanded:

- **Personnel with direct ties to employers:** Participants described Hartnell's coordinator of job and internship placement as highly effective at connecting students with discipline-related work experience and employment, and they expressed a desire to see similarly dedicated staff serving every meta major at the college. The Teacher Pathway Program director was also praised for connecting students with employment, suggesting the value of staff holding industry-specific expertise and networks.
- **Integrated career exploration:** Participants praised Hartnell courses that include guest speakers, field trips, and job shadowing as means for students to explore their interest in the field and learn about the demands of the work. Participation in industry conferences was mentioned as an opportunity for students to feel like professionals in their field.
- **Work experience:** Participants mentioned the formal internships in agriculture and health programs as a model that could be expanded, as well as the service learning and practicum experiences included in education pathways. Apprenticeships are limited at the college (although Hartnell serves as the local educational agency for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers [IBEW] electricians apprenticeship) and are another area for expansion.
- **Cohort-based services:** Programs like nursing and teacher preparation offer the benefits of tight cohorts, where students taking multiple classes together develop comradery and a peer support network. Meta majors at Hartnell provide an additional opportunity to support "loose" cohorts, whereby students who share general interests take some classes together and receive some common, contextualized academic and career support services, leadership development, and work-based learning opportunities.

Early on I had a scare, what if I can't continue school? Jihan took me aside and said we will make this work. My parents are ag workers so they couldn't help me. And Jihan got me a job that I love.

- Student, DACA recipient, education convening

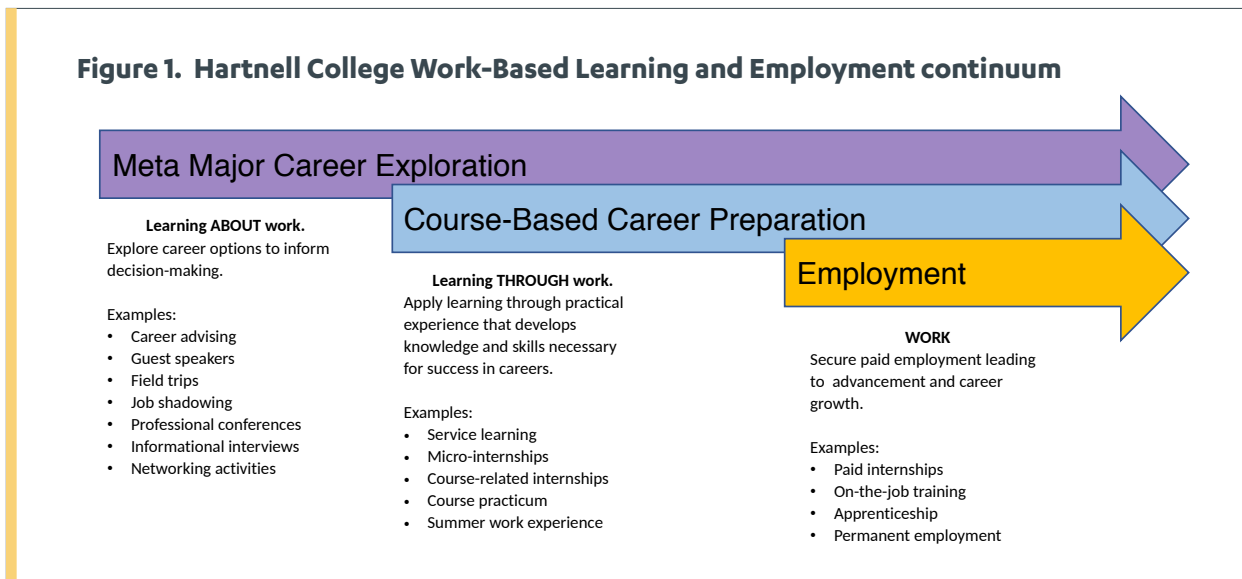
The convening discussions generated interest in going beyond what is in place at Hartnell to increase students' employment prospects. Above all, participants wanted to see the college establish a **centrally coordinated system** for connecting students with work-based learning, internships, and jobs. They wanted this system to support a team of dedicated staff with expertise and specialization in the Salinas Valley's top industry sectors. They hoped that this investment by the college would lead to a **more diverse selection of work experience opportunities**, including options beyond those embedded in career technical education programs. They also hoped this system would support an expansion of **formal apprenticeships**, especially in the agriculture sector.

Core Elements of a College-to-Career System at Hartnell College

Through discussion of what works well now at the college and what employers and students need and hope for, convening participants identified core services and activities to be included in an improved college-to-career system that they hoped would connect more Hartnell students with employment. These services and activities can be understood along a Work-Based Learning and Employment continuum, which is adapted from the original Linked Learning Alliance Work-Based Learning continuum and is shown in Figure 1.

It is worth noting that Hartnell’s investment in the design of meta majors creates an opportunity to deliver meta major career exploration services that guide students’ identification of interests and strengths and inform their decision making related to college majors and career pathways. Meta majors can create “loose” cohorts of students who take part in exploratory activities within their common interest area and establish relationships with career-focused personnel dedicated to their meta major.

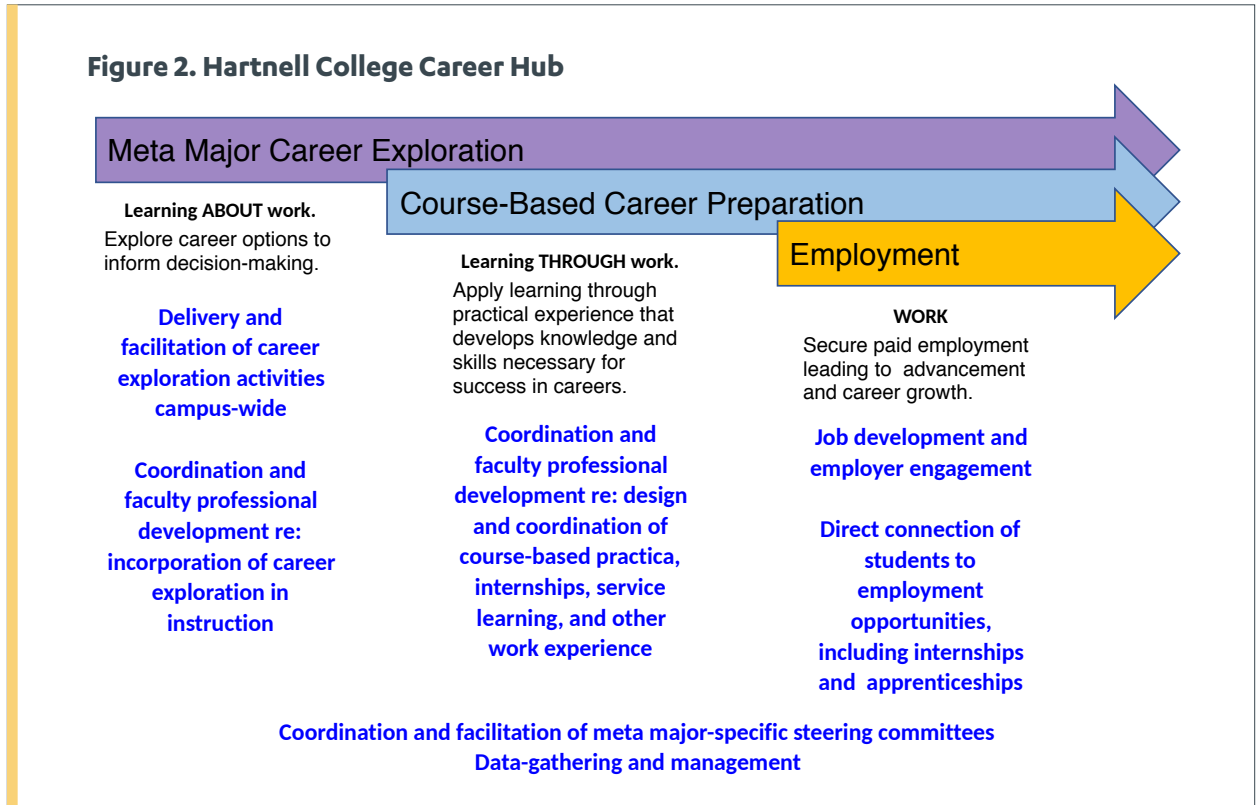
Convening participants suggested that each of these services could be delivered or facilitated through a centralized college-to-career system, which will be referred to here as Hartnell’s Career Hub. Figure 2 illustrates the role of the Career Hub in coordinating, facilitating, and delivering employment-related activities and services, as well as supporting the industry-specific steering committees and data management necessary to ensure the success of the system.



The **Career Hub** will be a center of career-related activities at Hartnell. It will engage employers and other regional partners, deliver and facilitate career exploration activities specific to meta majors, support the integration of career exploration and career preparation activities in courses, and connect students directly with employment opportunities, including paid internships and apprenticeships. Students will recognize the user-focused Career Hub as the place to go for employment-related assistance; faculty will see it as a source for industry expertise, relationships, and work-based learning opportunities; and employers and other regional partners will see it as the link between workforce education and industry hiring needs. The Career Hub will provide equitable economic development and workforce development opportunities to students from all centers in the Hartnell district, including new centers.

A key to the success of the Career Hub – prioritized by convening participants – will be its **dedicated personnel**. The Hub will rely on the overall direction of a Career Hub coordinator and the industry-specific experience and networks of a team of three job and internship placement coordinators, specialized by meta major. These staff will implement each of the elements of the work-based learning and employment continuum: deliver and facilitate meta major career exploration activities; coordinate course-based career

Figure 2. Hartnell College Career Hub



preparation, including practica, internships, service learning, and other work experience; and, through employer engagement and job development, connect students directly with employment opportunities, including paid internships and apprenticeships. Career Hub staff will coordinate faculty professional development to support the codesign of work-based learning activities and their incorporation in instruction. They will also oversee data gathering to track and evaluate the impact of Career Hub activities.

Another important role of the Career Hub staff will be the convening of meta-major-specific **steering committees**, comprising college, employer, K-12, CSUMB, workforce board, and other partners, to continuously inform the work of the center, ensure its relevance to the regional economy, and expand opportunities for Hartnell students in every meta major. The Career Hub’s dedicated staff will help to strengthen the steering committees by engaging additional participants, both internal and external to the college, and designing agendas that capture opportunities for employer engagement and work-based learning within the context of college programs. Regular meetings of the steering committees, under the expertise of specialized Career Hub staff, will help to encourage and facilitate employer co-investment in strategies such as internships, apprenticeships, and direct job placement.

The timeline includes the launch of a Career Hub marketing and communications campaign in year one. This reflects the intent of one of Hartnell’s Quality Focus Essays (QFEs) that was developed by faculty and staff in 2019 in response to the college’s Strategic Plan 2019-2024 Student Success Goals. An investment in marketing materials and campaign strategy from year one will ensure that students and the wider college community are informed of the central role of employment-related services in Hartnell’s redesign.

Convening participants noted that the **expansion of apprenticeships** at Hartnell will require attention and expertise beyond the capacity of the Career Hub that is described above. Hartnell’s single existing apprenticeship program, numerous strong career technical education programs, and robust employer partnerships provide a foundation for apprenticeship development. However, a deliberate start-up effort will be necessary before apprenticeships are institutionalized within the college’s various departments and the Career Hub. This implementation plan, therefore, describes steps to both establish the Career Hub and simultaneously grow apprenticeship pathways through up-front investment in specialized staff.

Implementation Plan

This implementation plan is shared as a starting point from which to begin creating a college-to-career system, or Career Hub, at Hartnell College. Co-developed by the Career Ladders Project and Hartnell leads, its content was informed by the three sector convenings and by follow-up discussion with Hartnell staff, students, and faculty, the Hartnell Foundation, K-12 and CSUMB partners, and regional employers. The proposed structure was also influenced by the Integrated Career Hub model at Skyline College. The intent of the implementation plan is to capture the collective wisdom of the many stakeholders who contributed to it and to present choice points for Hartnell’s design of a system responsive to the needs of its unique community.

Proposed Career Hub Metrics

- students served
- employers committed to work-based learning and hiring
- active steering committee members and meetings
- new apprenticeship programs
- students employed at \$18/hour or higher wages

Oversight of the Career Hub

Following the Skyline model the Career Hub can be located under the direction of Hartnell’s dean of Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development. This would have the advantage of keeping the Hub within the realm of workforce development and would help to broaden the concept of workforce development beyond Career and Technical Education to the whole college. The Career Hub can maintain strong collaboration with the Transfer Center and the Student Services and Support Programs which will further support the integration of career services across the college.

Staffing plan

The Career Hub will require additional personnel as well as coordination among existing personnel. Figure 3 outlines a potential staffing plan for the system.

The proposed plan to expand the capacity of job and internship placement coordinators from 1 full-time equivalent to 3 full-time equivalents could potentially relieve two Hartnell instructors of their coordinator duties: the clinical coordinator for nursing, and the vocational nurse coordinator. Bringing these duties under the umbrella of the Career Hub and its dedicated staff could facilitate greater college-wide coordination and enable the two current coordinators to return to their instructional duties.

The first choice point relates to the location of the Career Hub on the Hartnell campus. The proposed staff could locate at the existing Transfer and Career Center or in another space. A benefit of the Transfer and Career Center is that it has already assumed the identity of a career center by name, though its current services are primarily virtual. However, the Transfer and Career Center has a strong focus on transfer assistance and may not easily align with the goals and activities of the Career Hub. Wherever the Career Center is permanently housed, its personnel will travel to ensure equitable access across Hartnell’s centers, including new centers.

Figure 3. Potential Career Hub staffing plan

New Positions	Career Hub director Apprenticeship coordinator Job and internship placement coordinator: Health Sciences Job and internship placement coordinator: Arts & Languages/Social Sciences Administrative assistant
Existing Positions (to coordinate with Career Hub)	Job and internship placement coordinator: Business, Agriculture & Industries Teacher Pathway Program director Director of Math and Science Institute for STEM internship

Potential three-year timeline and work plan

This significant increase in staffing of the Career Hub could be phased in over a three-year period, as resources are secured and internal capacity is developed. Table 4 represents a potential three-year timeline and work plan for the start-up process. This timeline describes the up-front hiring of the Career Hub coordinator, who could oversee the Hub’s engagement of existing personnel involved in employment-related activities. Once the Career

Hub structure and functions have been built on this foundation of existing staffing and services, additional job and internship placement coordinators could be hired in year three.

The timeline and work plan describe phased capacity-building related to apprenticeship development that will take place concurrently with the development of the Career Hub. A second option is presented here: either a new apprenticeship coordinator could be hired in year one, or an outside organization with specialized apprenticeship expertise could be engaged during this start-up phase. Starting an apprenticeship is specialized work, and finding a new hire with this experience may be challenging. A contracted organization could get some apprenticeships started while Hartnell searches for a strong candidate to assume this role. The organization could be hired to start three to five new apprenticeship programs and train the Career Hub director in apprenticeship coordination, then turn this process over to Hartnell and a newly hired apprenticeship coordinator in year two or three.

Potential Funding

There are funds available to support this work, and Hartnell's intentional and thoughtful design and start-up of the Career Hub will position the college to secure the resources it needs. By actively supporting students connecting with internships, apprenticeships, and jobs, Hartnell students are expected to complete the indicators in the student-centered funding formula, such as nine or more career technical education units, attainment of regional living wage, and completion of a Chancellors' Office approved certificate of 16 units or more, which will earn the college an increase in state funding. Positions and activities that focus on career and technical education pathways may be eligible for Perkins funds. Positions that focus on creating career connections are eligible for Strong Workforce Program funding. Hartnell recently reapplied for a Title V grant to support this work and previously was funded by the Irvine Foundation for innovative work. Apprenticeship programs will be partially funded by employer partners and will be eligible for competitive grants available through the U.S. Department of Labor and the California Apprenticeship Initiative.



Looking Forward

Through the process described here, Hartnell College has confirmed its commitment to improving student employment opportunities subsequent to training or completion, as articulated in its strategic plan. Furthermore, Hartnell has shaped a vision for the Career Hub that will position the college as a regional leader in preparing community members for high-quality, family sustaining wage jobs and addressing the workforce development needs of employers invested in the local economy. Moving forward, Hartnell will set annual, measurable objectives for the Career Hub and will hold itself and its partners accountable for intended results.

The work proposed for the coming three years will establish the Career Hub in its home on campus, with dedicated staff specialized in each meta major. With the strong support of Hartnell's president, the Career Hub team will deepen partnerships with regional employers and convene steering committees of key stakeholders. By collaborating with employers and unions to grow new apprenticeships, Hartnell will expand training options that lead to high-quality jobs. Most importantly, the Career Hub will begin right away to connect more Hartnell students and recent graduates to work experience, internships, apprenticeships, and other employment and career opportunities. The Career Hub will soon be known as an integral part of the Hartnell College experience.

Figure 4. Potential three-year timeline and work plan

Career Hub and Apprenticeship Development		Projected Expenses
Year 1		
Summer 2020	Hire Career Hub director Identify Career Hub space Provide administrative support	Director salary and benefits Administrative support salary and benefits
Fall 2020 – Spring 2021	Coordinate meta major career exploration, course-based career preparation, and employment services with existing personnel, developing the structure to support them via the Career Hub CHOICE POINT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire an external entity to develop apprenticeships; or • Hire Hartnell apprenticeship coordinator Create 3-5 formal apprenticeship programs (suggested focus: Industrial Maintenance for Agriculture, Cyber Security, and Community Health Worker), develop curriculum, and register with State of CA Train Career Hub director in apprenticeship creation (if no apprenticeship coordinator hired yet)	Marketing campaign coordination and materials External apprenticeship coordination contract or coordinator salary and benefits
Year 2		
Summer 2021	Hire apprenticeship coordinator [If external entity oversaw start-up apprenticeship development]	Apprenticeship coordinator salary and benefits
Fall 2021 – Spring 2022	Hire Job and Internship Placement Coordinator for health sciences Design and deliver meta major career exploration, course-based career preparation, and employment services for business, agriculture & industries and for health sciences	Job and internship placement coordinator salary and benefits
Year 3		
Summer 2022	Hire job and internship placement coordinator for arts & languages and social sciences.	Job and internship placement coordinator salary and benefits
Fall 2022	Co-design with faculty and counselors meta major career exploration, course-based career preparation, and employment services as needed for business, agriculture & industries, health sciences, arts and languages, and social sciences	
Spring 2023	First semester of full, college-wide implementation.	

Appendix A - Definitions

Apprenticeship is an “earn while you learn” opportunity for workers of all ages, in which wages increase as demonstrated competency increases. It is a paying job that starts on day one of training and leads to a nationally recognized industry credential and a long-term, well-paying career. From [21st Century Registered Apprenticeship](#), US Department of Labor 2013.

Career pathway is a series of structured and connected education programs and support services that enable students to advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare students to progress to the next level of employment and/or education. Career pathways target jobs in industries of importance to local and regional economies. From [High Impact Pathways](#), Career Ladders Project.

Internships are extensions of classroom learning that involve practical application and skills development in a professional setting and align with a student’s career interests and pathways. Internships are of varying length and intensity, may be paid or unpaid, and may or may not award college credit. See [Work-Based Learning Definitions: Themes from State and National Organizations](#), College and Career Readiness and Success Center, American Institutes for Research.

Meta majors are groupings of aligned college majors that help students explore a larger area of interest if they are not sure of their major. Colleges may have different names for groupings that fulfill this function, such as career clusters, interest areas, or career and academic paths. The meta majors at Hartnell are Arts and Languages; Business, Agriculture and Industries; Health Sciences; Social Sciences; STEM; and Exploratory.

Work-based learning is an instructional strategy designed to expose students to future options and provide opportunities for skill development and mastery over time. Linked Learning developed a work-based learning continuum that includes career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and career training. Adapted from [Work-Based Learning in Linked Learning: Definitions, Outcomes, and Quality Criteria](#) (2012).



Career Ladders Project collaborates with community colleges and their partners to build capacity for equity-minded redesign. We research, demonstrate, and elevate promising practices. And, based on our work, we offer policy recommendations to help advance student-centered reform.

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