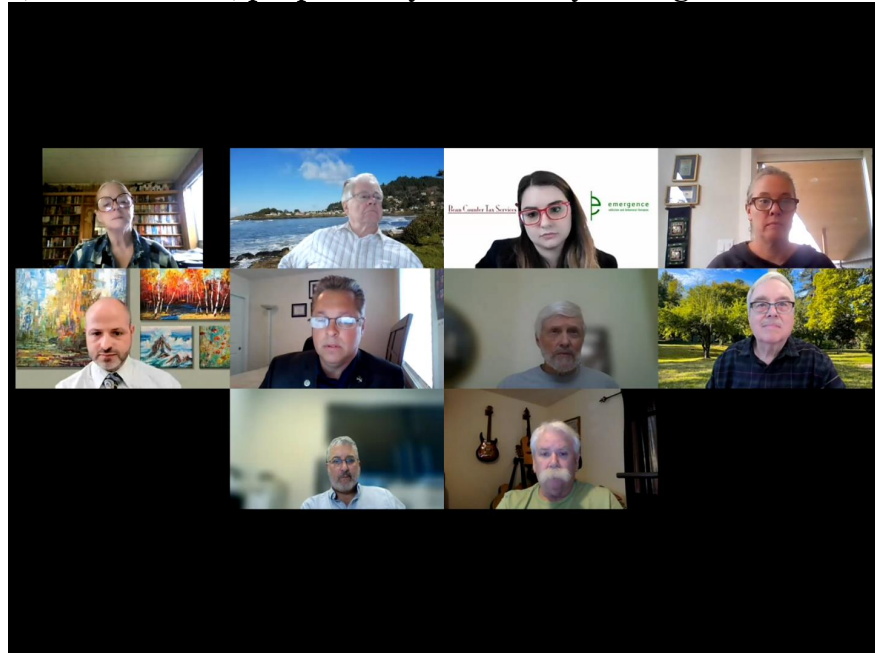


Career Technical Education (“CTE”) has been a feature of the American system of public education from the beginning. However, while in the past it had been described as almost a “second class” education dedicated only to learning a trade, the current generation has seen the term recognized as a description of a much broader form of education, involving not only the K-12 school system, but also the higher education realm, where it now is a mainstay, particularly of community colleges. Now, in many cases CTE is a degree program, leading to an associate’s degree in two years while providing both hands-on work experience and academics, which can not only prepare students for work but also, in some cases, propel study for a four year degree and beyond.

At Lane Community College, over 50 percent of student activity is in CTE related programs, according to Grant Matthews Associate Vice President for Career Technical Education and Workforce Development at Lane.



At lower levels, Shareen Vogel of Lane Educational Services District reports that there are 109 CTE

programs at the secondary level in Lane County schools, all of which have connections to programs at LCC. These programs allow a student to focus on a particular career pathway and combine career and technical skills with traditional academic content. In many cases, the 16 districts that the ESD serves have agreements with local unions to provide opportunities for hands on work experience while learning.

That approach is exemplified by the Career Pathways program offered by Local 16 of the Sheetmetal Workers. Russ Benton, who has worked in construction for 32 years and serves on the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, said that this program, which operates in two centers, one in Portland and one in Springfield, now has 325 students enrolled. Each of these students is fully employed in the trade. The students must have a high school diploma to enroll and when they complete the five year program, which includes 1000 hours of classroom study and 8000 hours of work, in addition to certification in their trade they receive an associate degree from Mt. Hood Community College.

Then union began a pre-apprenticeship program to provide a link for high school students, but it had to close during the pandemic. The union plans to reinstate the program when it is feasible.

The breadth of CTE programs has also expanded far beyond what used to be considered the customary trades. Ms. Vogel pointed to six career clusters: Agriculture, food and natural resources; arts, information and communications; business and management; Health Sciences; Human Resources; and industrial and engineering systems. Mr. Matthews noted that at Lane CTE programs include business management cybersecurity, medical assisting, nursing, dental hygiene, aviation maintenance and flight technology LCC also recently started an unmanned aerial vehicle program. CTE programs are also offered in graphic design, multimedia design and music technology, he said.

CTE programs offer significant benefits both to the students and to society as a whole. Ms. Vogel reports that students who participate in CTE tend to be more engaged and committed to completing their programs and have a significantly greater success rate. Mr. Matthews added that there is about a four to one multiplier on money CTE students spend and that taxpayers gain three dollars in community tax revenue for each dollar invested in CTE.

CTE programs are significantly more expensive to offer, in large part due to the capital investment in equipment needed for gaining work experience. Perhaps this is why, after the adoption of Measure 5 cuts to property taxation, CTE programs were among the first to be abandoned or reduced by the public school system. Only recently, following the adoption of Measure 98, has additional funding been infused into CTE offerings at the K-12 level. Mr. Matthews said that even after Measure 98 substantial increases in funding are necessary for community colleges to be able to continue, and expand, their ability to offer CTE programs.

The full presentations of the three panelists may be found here:

[Shareen Vogel](#)

[Grant Matthews](#)

[Russ Benton](#)