Executive Summary
The 2019 Graduate Follow-Up Survey requested information from 923 Transfer Degree and Career/Technical Education (CTE) graduates who completed degree or certificate programs in Academic Year 2017-2018. Survey administration began in January 2019 and ended in early April 2019. A total of 439 responses (48% response rate) were obtained through email, mail, and phone calls. There were 220 CTE respondents (45.7% response rate) and 219 Transfer respondents (50.2% response rate). These numbers represent a 9% decrease for CTE graduates and a 3.2% decrease for Transfer graduates over the previous year. Each survey year presents its own set of challenges and this year was no exception: staffing, weather, and technology issues may have affected the response rate to some extent. The five-year trend data for CTE graduates is shown in Table 1 below:

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year of Survey</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Graduates</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed or Continuing Education</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Hourly Wage</td>
<td>$17.42</td>
<td>$17.59</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>$18.28</td>
<td>$17.80</td>
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The employment rate for CTE graduates decreased to 80.5% this year, a decrease of 4.7% from the previous year. Approximately 45% of CTE respondents indicated that they were employed in a position related to their CCA training and education, while 35% indicated they were in a position unrelated to their training/education. The average hourly wage for CTE graduates is $17.80, representing a decrease of $0.48 from the previous year. Overall, the percentage of CTE respondents reporting that they were employed or continuing their education was 83.1%, a decrease of 4.4% from the previous year. Of the graduates who reported being employed, 84% responded “Well” or “Very Well” to the question of how well CCA help them get or keep a job. The five-year trend data for Transfer graduates is shown in Table 2 below:

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1 Note: These data are based on a limited sample. More complete data will be available from the Colorado Dept. of Labor in June.
The percentage of transfer graduates showing that they were continuing their education decreased to 60.4%, which is a 1.9% difference from the previous year. The percentage of graduates either employed or continuing their education was approximately 91%, which is a nearly two percent decrease from the previous year. The hourly wage for Transfer students was $16.85, which represents an increase of $0.29 per hour over last year. Among the Transfer grads, 95.1% indicated that CCA had prepared them “well” or “very well” to continue their education. Overall, these data show small declines in the rate of employment and in students continuing their education.

Full Summary Report

I. Respondents
The 2019 Graduate Follow-Up Survey requested information about employment, continuing education, and educational satisfaction information from 923 Career/Technical Education (CTE) and Transfer graduates who completed degree or certificate programs during the 2017-2018 academic year. The survey is administered on a yearly basis under a mandate from the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to provide information on CTE graduates for annual Perkins funding reports and for program approval. The Community College of Aurora (CCA) also surveys its Transfer graduates (i.e., graduates in Associate’s degree programs leading to a transfer to a four-year institution) to get a more comprehensive picture of all CCA graduates in a given year.

Survey administration began in the middle of January 2019 and ended in early April 2019. We collected a total of 439 responses (Response rate: 48%) through a combination of online, hard-copy mail, and telephone surveys. This is a decrease of approximately 7% from the previous year. The CTE response rate was 45.7%, down 9% from the previous year, while the Transfer response rate was 50.2%, down 3.2% from the previous year. The response rates for CTE and Transfer graduates are shown in Table 3 below:
2019 GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

TABLE 3: RESPONSE RATES OF GRADUATES SURVEYED IN SPRING 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Surveyed</th>
<th>Responded</th>
<th>Percentage Responded</th>
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<tr>
<td>CTE Graduates</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>48%</td>
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The demographics of the CCA student body, CCA 2017-2018 graduating class, and survey respondents are shown in Figure 1 below:

FIGURE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS COMPARING THE CCA STUDENT BODY, 2017-2018 GRADUATES, AND SURVEY RESPONDENT POPULATIONS.

Demographics for Campus, Graduates, and Survey Respondents

The demographics of female and male respondents are closely representative of the gender breakdown at CCA, with differences of less than 2%. For example, the CCA student body is 58% female, while the number of female 2017-2018 graduates is 59% and the percentage of female survey respondents is 60%. Similarly, the CCA student body is 42% male, compared to 41.3% within the FY18 graduates and 40.1% among survey respondents. There are more significant differences when we look at the three largest racial ethnic groups: for instance, Black Non-Hispanic students comprise 20.1% of the CCA student body; 16.3% of the FY 18 graduating class; and, 19% of the survey respondents. Hispanic students make up 31.6% of the student body, 27.2% of the graduating class, and 25% of the respondent pool. The most significant difference is among White Non-Hispanic students: Whites comprise 31% of the student body, but are overrepresented in the graduating class (42.1%) and the respondent pool (41.5%). This is not a
new phenomenon: the previous year’s data show similar distributions among gender and racial/ethnic groups.

II. Employment of Graduates
The employment rate for CTE graduates decreased to 80.5% from 85.1% the previous year. Employment rates for Transfer graduates increased 80.4%, up from 74% the previous year. The five-year trend is shown in Figure 2 below:

FIGURE 2: LINE GRAPH SHOWING EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR CTE AND TRANSFER STUDENTS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Employment rates for CTE graduates are nearly identical to Transfer graduates, as shown in Figure 2, with values of 80.5% for CTE graduates and 80.4% for Transfer graduates, respectively. The CTE percentage for 2017-2018 represents a drop of 4.6% from the previous year, ending a three-year climb. In contrast, the Transfer data show an increase of 6.4% from the previous year. Given the state of the economy, the decrease in CTE employment is surprising but may be endemic to the pool of respondents rather than the entire population of CTE graduates. We will know more when we have access to data from the Colorado Department of Labor later this summer. Demographic data for CTE respondents is shown in Figure 3 below.
FIGURE 3: EMPLOYMENT RATES BY VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS (E.G., NON-TRADITIONAL, TRADITIONAL, MALE, FEMALE, ETC).

The breakdown of employment demographics shows some variation across different categories. The highest percentage of individuals is White Non-Hispanics and Males, which each marked “employed” at 85%. Whites’ employment rates were 4% higher than Hispanics and 22% higher than Black Non-Hispanic graduates. Males were 9% higher than Females.

The data for 2017-2018 represents a substantial overall decrease compared to the previous year. While employment for males remained roughly the same (85.4% last year; 85% this year), female employment rates decreased 8%. Non-traditional and traditional employment decreased 3.2% and 7.3%, respectively. First Generation employment decreased nearly 10%, but non-first generation employment actually increased by nearly 7%. White employment increased 3.8%, while Hispanic employment dropped 16.9% and Black Non-Hispanic employment decreased 22.7%. Figure 4 shows the breakdown for CTE graduates and how well CCA training helped them get or keep a job.
The responses to the question “How well did your CCA training help you to get or keep a job?” showed high marks across nearly all categories. Eighty-four percent of CTE graduates indicated that CCA helped them in this area, which is a nearly 10% decrease over the previous year. However, we should note that there 22% of respondents did not answer this question.

Hispanic students gave the highest percentage of “well/very well” responses (86%), which is three to four percent higher than White or Black Non-Hispanic students. Non-Traditional students gave the second-highest percentage of responses with 85%, while First Generation/Non-First Generation and Male/Female each answered 84%. The lowest percentage of “well/very well” responses comes from Traditional students. However, it should be noted that this question had sizeable numbers of respondents who either marked “not applicable” or skipped the question entirely.

Average Hourly Pay

The average hourly pay for the 135 CTE graduates who responded with sufficient information to calculate wage data is approximately $17.80, which represents a decrease of $0.48 from the previous year. The average number of hours CTE graduates worked per week was 38.3 hours. Using data from 157 Transfer respondents, their hourly wage is $16.85, which represents an increase of $0.29 over the previous year. The average number of hours worked by Transfer graduates was approximately 31 hours per week. The breakdown of CTE and Transfer pay rates are shown in Table 4:
TABLE 4: FIVE-YEAR TREND OF HOURLY PAY FOR CTE AND TRANSFER GRADUATES (IN US DOLLARS)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTE Average Hourly Wage</td>
<td>$17.42</td>
<td>$17.59</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>$18.28</td>
<td>$17.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Average Hourly</td>
<td>$17.29</td>
<td>$14.87</td>
<td>$15.20</td>
<td>$16.56</td>
<td>$16.85</td>
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III. Continuing Education of Graduates

Rate of Continuing Education

The percentage of Transfer graduates continuing their education after degree completion at CCA came to 60.4% this year, while CTE graduates continuing their education came to 18%. The comparison of Transfer and CTE students continuing their education is shown in Figure 5 below:

FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGES OF CTE AND TRANSFER GRADUATES CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION

Figure 5 shows decreases in continuing education for CTE and Transfer graduates, the third such decrease in as many years. Transfer graduates show a 2% decrease, while the number of CTE students dropped by 1.1%. The demographics for Transfer graduates continuing their education is shown in Figure 6 below:
The figure above shows a fairly consistent distribution across the different demographic categories. Hispanic students are the largest group of transfer students continuing their education (62.2%), followed by Non-First Generation students (61%). Black Non-Hispanic and Traditional students had the third-highest percentage with 60% answering they were continuing their education. The lowest-ranked group is White Non-Hispanic students with 56%. It is important to note that these numbers are based on the responses given during the survey, and the comparison of transfers with National Student Clearinghouse data may change that picture to some degree.

Another question asked of graduates was how well CCA supported them in continuing their education at another college or university. The demographics for the Transfer graduates who answered this question is shown in Figure 7 below:
Across all demographic categories, 95.4% of Transfer graduates indicated that CCA did “well” or “very well” at providing support for them to continue their education. This represents a modest decrease of 3.7% over the previous year’s numbers. Although the disaggregated data show similar small decreases in overall percentages, there is also a redistribution of responses in which respondents answered “very well” more than the previous year. For example, where 67.3% of last year’s transfer graduates answered “very well” to this questions, 74% of 2017-2018 graduates answered “very well.” Similarly, 68% of Black Non-Hispanic graduates answered “very well” last year, but this year the percentages are 77.4%. The bottom line is, though the overall percentages decreased slightly, the quality of interactions have also slightly improved.

Support for continuing education is a complex issue since each individual has different needs with regard to taking next steps toward a new degree, but open-ended comments from Transfer students suggest that they require more support from Advising to position themselves for the eventual transfer to a four-year institution. They may also require greater support from their departments and instructors to ensure their training and educational experience provides them with the necessary foundation for further study (see selected comments at the end of the document).
IV. Experience of Graduates at CCA

Advising

CCA graduates were asked if their advisors provided a clear and structured path to attain a degree or a certificate. Overall, 93.1% of graduates said that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that advisors provided them with a clear educational pathway. This is an increase of 0.7% over the previous year. The disaggregated statistics are shown in Figure 8 below:

FIGURE 8: DEMOGRAPHIC FOR RESPONDENTS TO THE QUESTION, “CCA PROVIDED A CLEAR, STRUCTURED PATH TO ATTAIN YOUR DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE”

The combined percentages of “Agree/Strongly Agree” across all categories exceeds 90%, which shows that CCA advising provided respondents with the path they needed to achieve their degree. One of the most telling pieces of disaggregated data is the percentage of Hispanic students (72.5%) who answered “Strongly Agree,” which is significantly higher in comparison to other categories. Black Non-Hispanic students answered “Agree” at a higher percentage (37.3%) and “Strongly Agree” at a lower percentage (57%) than other categories, which suggests their experiences are slightly different than others.

Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

CCA graduates were asked how well CCA created “a welcoming and inclusive environment for their individual identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, etc.)” and responses were overwhelmingly positive,
with 97.4% of respondents answering “well or “very well.” This is an increase of 1.6% over the previous year. Each subcategory’s responses of “well/very well” exceeded 97%. Hispanic students felt the most strongly, with 99.3% of responses for “well/very well.” Another positive indicator is the fact that “very well” is given as a response nearly three times more often in each subcategory. Overall, CCA’s inclusion efforts appear to be paying off. The demographic breakdown of respondents is shown in Figure 9:

FIGURE 9: DEMOGRAPHICS FOR ALL RESPONDENTS ABOUT HOW WELL CCA CREATED A “WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES.”

![Welcoming and Inclusive Environment at CCA](image)

**Job Search Skills**

We also asked CCA graduates how well CCA helped them improve their job search skills, such as resume preparation, networking, interview skills, and so forth. There were 437 responses to this question, with 132 graduates (30%) marking “not applicable,” presumably because the majority are continuing their education at another college or university. Of the remaining 305 responses, 277 (91%) marked “well” or “very well” in response to the question. The demographics for job search skills are shown in Figure 10 below:
FIGURE 10: DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS FOR HOW WELL CCA IMPROVED THEIR JOB SEARCH SKILLS (E.G., RESUME PREPARATION, NETWORKING, ETC.).

The breakdown shows that 96.4% of Hispanic students felt that CCA improved their job search skills, although this number is 2.2% lower than the previous year. Ninety-five percent of Black Non-Hispanic students answered “well/very well,” which is a nearly 15% increase over last year. White Non-Hispanic students felt that CCA improved job search skills the least, with a total percentage of 88.3% answering “well/very well,” although the percentage represents a 2.5% increase over last year. There were also percentage increases among male and female respondents of approximately 2%, first generation/non-first generation increases of .3% and 4.8% respectively, and non-traditional students increased almost 6%. Traditional students’ responses decreased 3.8% from last year.

**Soft Skills**

Nearly 96% of CCA graduates answered that CCA helped them with the development of their soft skills (e.g., good communication, positive attitude, etc.). This is similar to last year’s reporting, which showed that 95.5% of students answered “well” or “very well.” Looking at the disaggregated data, over 95% all categories answered “well/very well” for this question. The greatest impact is found among Traditional students (99%), Hispanic students (98%), and Males (97.1%). The least impact was females (95.1%) and non-traditional students (95%). The demographic breakdown for improvement of soft skills is represented in Figure 11 below:
FIGURE 11: DEMOGRAPHICS FOR RESPONDENTS ABOUT HOW WELL CCA HELPED DEVELOP THEIR “SOFT” SKILLS (E.G., COMMUNICATION, GOOD WORK ETHIC, ETC.).

Meet Educational Goals

We also asked respondents how well CCA met respondents’ overall educational goals. The breakdown of responses is shown in Figure 12 below:

FIGURE 12: DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS FOR HOW WELL CCA MET THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS.
Ninety-six percent of all CCA graduates answered that CCA met their educational goals. The groups that rated this question the highest were Black Non-Hispanic students (98%) and Hispanic students (98.5%). Responses in all other categories (e.g., males, females, first-generation, non-first-generation, and traditional/non-traditional students) all came to approximately 96%, while White Non-Hispanic students answered “well/very well” at 95.1%. Clearly, CCA met the educational goals for the student population.

V. Summary of Comments
At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to share their feedback about their experiences at CCA as a free-form, open-ended response. Out of 439 respondents, 234 provided feedback on their experiences. Below are selected responses about areas of strength and areas for improvement for CTE and Transfer graduates.

Areas of Strength
CCA’s greatest strength lies in its faculty and instructors. One hundred and eleven graduates cited faculty and instructors who were particularly helpful or provided excellent instruction. There were numerous comments specifically praising the EMT program, and specific instructors within that program. Another common point of recognition was that CCA was a great school and students had amazing experiences at CCA, which was mentioned by ninety-seven students. This was due to the quality of instruction, the utility of what they learned for future jobs, or because it CCA provided a very diverse and welcoming environment.

CTE Comments
Experience
- Had a great and inclusive experience at CCA.
- Had an amazing experience here at CCA and really enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere that was created by the staff and student body.
- The Film school was great and very inclusive, hence it enlightened me on different backgrounds and Arts. Also, I like the class effectives at CCA, meaning that it is very concise, hence facilitates adaptation.

Instructors
- CCA made it easy to connect and meet with the right people within my program and field of work. The instructors and social aspects were amazing and really helped me and guide me to the career I have now.
- CCA is a great school and I enjoyed my time there. All of my instructors were knowledgeable and were passionate about their subjects. I'm glad I got my degree from CCA.
- The professors are great i [sic] learned a lot and if i [sic] had the opportunity i [sic]would take another course.
- CCA is the best community college. It has best instructors and advisors that works with you through our your program
- I felt that the instructors at CCA took the time to care. I remember that a lot of them were passionate about their subjects and they inspired me to possibly take that same career path.
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- Really enjoyed the general education classes and noticed that every instructor was really enthused about teaching their subject and made all the classes fun. Would like to give a shout out to those who teach the night classes, especially math, because all the instructors were reasonable and flexible. There was not a single teacher that did not spread the feel of encouragement, a welcoming environment, and good engagement in subject and class.

Transfer Comments
Experience

- I feel that CCA has a great community and the teachers are all wonderful and are truly there for you and your education.
- CCA is an amazing school. I got my Associates [sic] of Science there, and I decided to finish my pre-reqs [sic] for Pharmacy School and continue to go to CCA even after I completed my degree. I love CCA and would highly recommend to everyone thinking about taking any college classes. Thank you CCA for helping me and everything!
- CCA was a great school. If I could tell high school students about the choice between community college and 4-year school, I'd tell them to choose community college, at least to start out.
- CCA was very welcoming and allowed students to have freedom and time to share their opinions. Many different perspectives that made the overall experience great and very well diverse.
- Community College of Aurora made higher education enjoyable and accessible [sic] to me even while working full time and being a single-dad [sic].
- During my time at CCA I was able to find the help and support to lead me into finding the right path to my future.

Areas for Improvement

Advising is one area for improvement, as evidenced by comments about the fact that advisors did not seem versed in the specific classes needed for a student to achieve a specific degree, gave incorrect information about course schedules, or simply did not provide the support that students expected. A second area for improvement is in the Colorado Film School, due to comments made about the need for greater support, particularly in helping students prepare for employment, investing in upkeep and securing resources and upkeep of the facilities, and in promoting a more positive environment.

CTE Comments
Experience

- Very thing went pretty well however, there was some issues with the students at the film school program. They were a little sexist but, the teachers took care of it very well.
- Film school overall was pretty great just wished that there was more money put into film school. For example, he wishes that they had a higher budget, a cafeteria, and a study area over at the film school.
- 99% of the time, the film school was great. But [sic] there is 1% of it that was really tiring and inadequate; meaning that some film students began to react and involve politics with the instruction e.g. the Trump Election. Hence [sic] created a convoluted atmosphere for
other people who were trying to learn and go over it; aside from that my experience was
great.
• Still waiting for more information about the Associate's in Fire Science at this point. Feel like a
paying customer.
• The film school needs more money and more space and general resources. Also my
Production 3 program promised me a budget for my film and they still owe me $446. Could I
please get my money back?

Transfer Comments
Advising
• I loved attending CCA. I however was very disappointed in the academic advising at CCA many
advisers did not know how to help me attain my goals and were quite incompetent. I also had to
complain about a few of my professors and felt that department heads did not take my
concerns seriously.
• I really enjoyed my time at CCA. I felt like I was very prepared to explore my interests and
determine what kind of major I wanted to focus on. The only issue I have is, when it comes to
the advisors I didn't really feel like they helped me at all. I mostly depended on my own sister
who went to DU to help me. So I would recommend the advisors learning more about the
different majors and making sure that we know how to sign up for classes, how many classes
they would recommend taking, what teachers to take etc. Also please make sure that we are
informed on what careers we could pursue and what we would have to major in, in order to
pursue that career. There's just a lot more that the advisors could do and should do to
make the students more informed.
• The Theatre Designation degree was an option, so I decided to attend CCA. Before I transferred I
found out that the school couldn't offer me the classes I needed for the Theatre Designation
Degree and there was no flexibility within it. It was disappointing, however, I enjoyed my time at
CCA and the community!

Experience
• I had a lot of problems with the science department. The classroom environment made learning
difficult. Some instructors gave the students too much material but not enough guidance.
Especially for foreign students like myself, their lessons were sometimes difficult to follow, and
the questions they asked didn't make enough sense to me. It was unorganized and there
seemed to be too many department tests that didn't have anything to do with what we were
studying. I really didn't like the science classes and I would tell others not to do nursing degrees
that require science at CCA. Some instructors in English, Art, and psychology were good with
their communication and made my experience better.