



Toward a Better Future: Exploring Outcomes of Attending Career Colleges and Universities

Executive Summary

Introduction

Postsecondary career education continues to grow. The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES), in its enrollment tracking of Title IV sub-baccalaureate certificate programs (which tend to be vocationally oriented), finds that about eight percent of undergraduates are enrolled in a vocational certificate program. According to [The Good Jobs Project](#), the United States has 30 million jobs that pay an average of \$55,000 per year and don't require a bachelor's degree. Most of these jobs do require career or vocational training. The U.S. Department of Education reports that people with career and technical educations are actually slightly more likely to be employed than their counterparts with academic credentials, and are significantly more likely to be working in their fields of study – thus, they are successful contributors to the workforce.

To better understand the value of and satisfaction with career and vocational education, Gallup worked with Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU) to survey a representative sample of its member schools' alumni about satisfaction with their education, experiences while enrolled at a CECU institution, career and life success outcomes. These results are based on the responses of 3,203 recent CECU alumni conducted in the fall of 2018. Gallup compared these outcomes to a nationally representative sample of associate degree holders to evaluate outcomes of career education and training.

Key Findings

The study reveals that post-secondary career education provides a relevant learning track that helps graduates find meaningful work, which can provide a powerful pathway to financial independence. The majority of CECU alumni report successful lives after graduation, and employed report a 62% increase in median personal earnings after their education than before. In many areas, CECU alumni rate on par or better than their peers with associate degrees*.

PREPARATION FOR JOBS

CECU grads are **more likely to quickly find good jobs** upon graduation than are peers.

- 50% found good jobs within six months vs. 29% of peers.
- 64% are employed fulltime vs. 55% of peers.

WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT/FULFILLMENT

CECU alumni are **more likely than their peers to have a job that interests them**.

- A majority do work that deeply interests them.

CAREER COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

The majority of alumni are **satisfied overall** with their CECU educational experience, feel their CECU education prepared them for life outside of school and would recommend it to others.

WELLBEING

CECU alumni **fare better** than the national comparison in all **wellbeing** areas.

- The majority of CECU alumni are Thriving.

MILITARY SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Most military personnel and veterans feel CECU program **prepared them for life** outside of college.

- 71% are satisfied with their education; 76% say their degree/certificate is related to their work
- Six in 10 (63%) would recommend their school.

MINORITIES IN CAREER COLLEGE

The **majority of black and Hispanic** graduates **are satisfied** with their CECU education.

- They experienced a 60% average increase in median earnings following their degree.
- Six in 10 say their school was perfect for people like them.

* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally – see Methodology Appendix for full description.

The 2018 Study of CECU Alumni

Summary of Methodology

This study utilized the Strada-Gallup Alumni Study protocol to allow for comparisons of graduates of career education colleges and universities to those of peers of two- and four-year higher education. The Strada-Gallup Alumni Study assesses alumni perceptions of post-high school education experiences and how those experiences relate to wellbeing and job quality later in life.



3,203 CECU Alumni Survey Completes

- CECU alumni across nine member companies selected to reflect a cross section of all member institutions by size, sector and region. Gallup included alumni who graduated between 2008 and 2018 in the study as this group had the most accurate contact information.



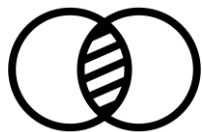
Strada-Gallup Alumni Core Survey

- Core survey provides validated questions and allows for comparisons to outside groups.
- CECU survey included custom items developed by Gallup and CECU related to career education.



Survey Fielded: Sep. 25 - Oct. 19, 2018

- CECU institutions sent introductory email and reminder to alumni.
- Non-responders received up to five Gallup email reminders.



Comparison Groups Are Derived From the Gallup-USA Funds National Database

- Comprised of associate degree holders at both public and private, for- and not-for-profit institutions nationally who completed their degree between 2007-2015 to best align to recent CECU graduates.
- National Alumni Comparison: n=468.



Interpreting Data

- Data was weighted by gender and race/ethnicity to reflect CECU schools' recent alumni.
- For results based on the total sample of alumni, the margin of sampling error is ± 1.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



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Great Opportunities: Preparation for Jobs

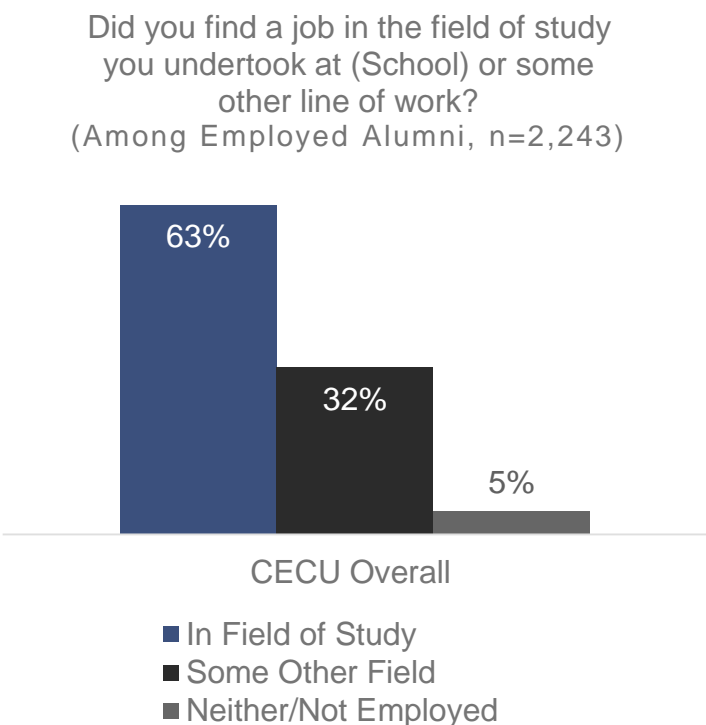
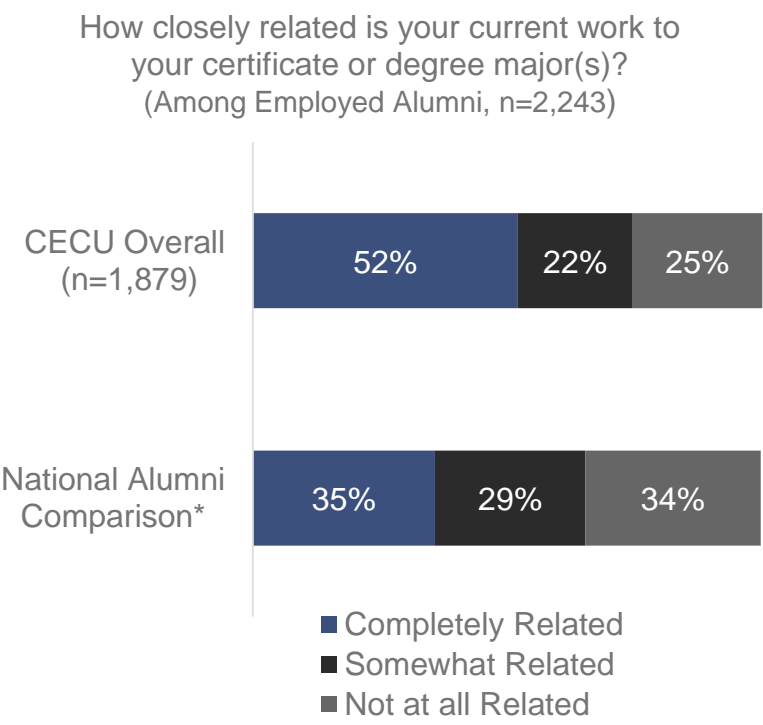
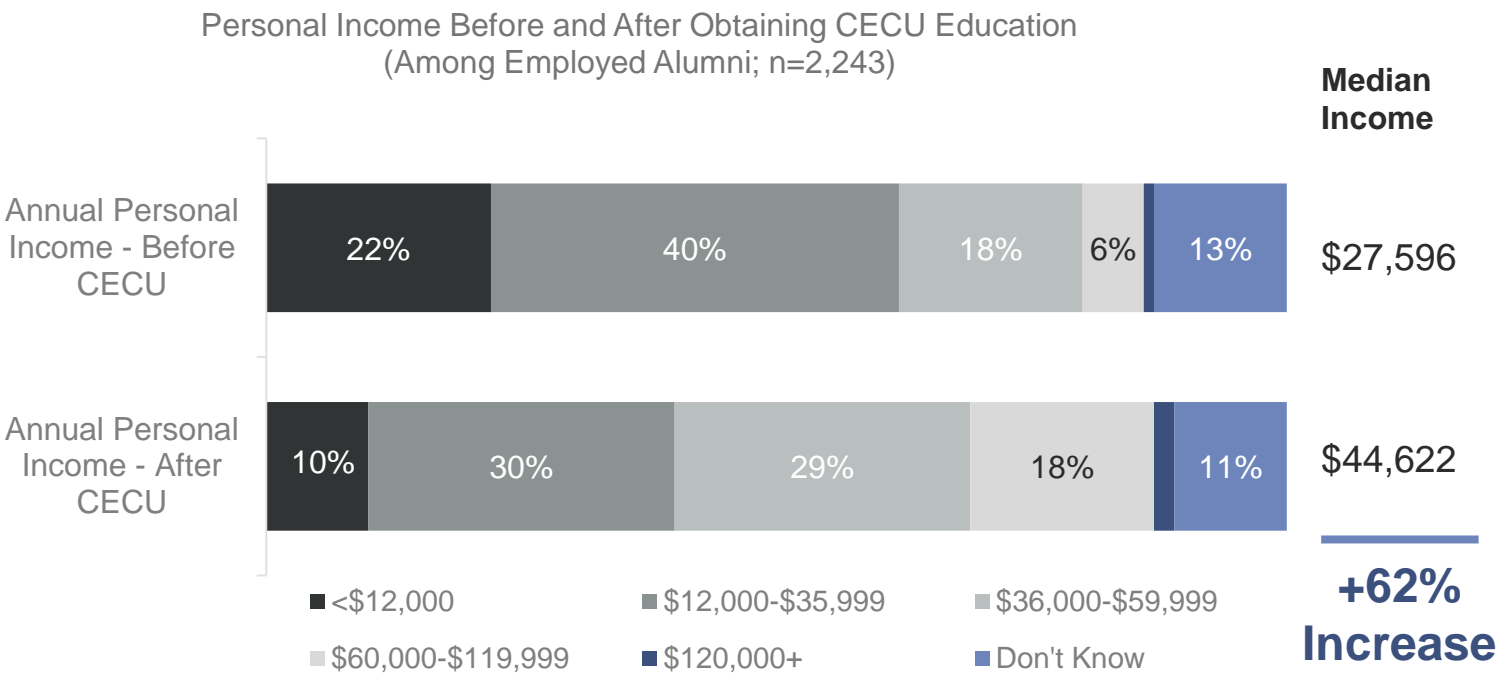
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5 Value of CECU in Jobs

6 Career Services/Placement Office

Value of CECU Education in Alumni's Jobs

On average, CECU alumni are earning about **60% more in personal income** than before they attended a CECU institution. Alumni are also more likely to have a job related to their certificate or degree program than their peers.



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)

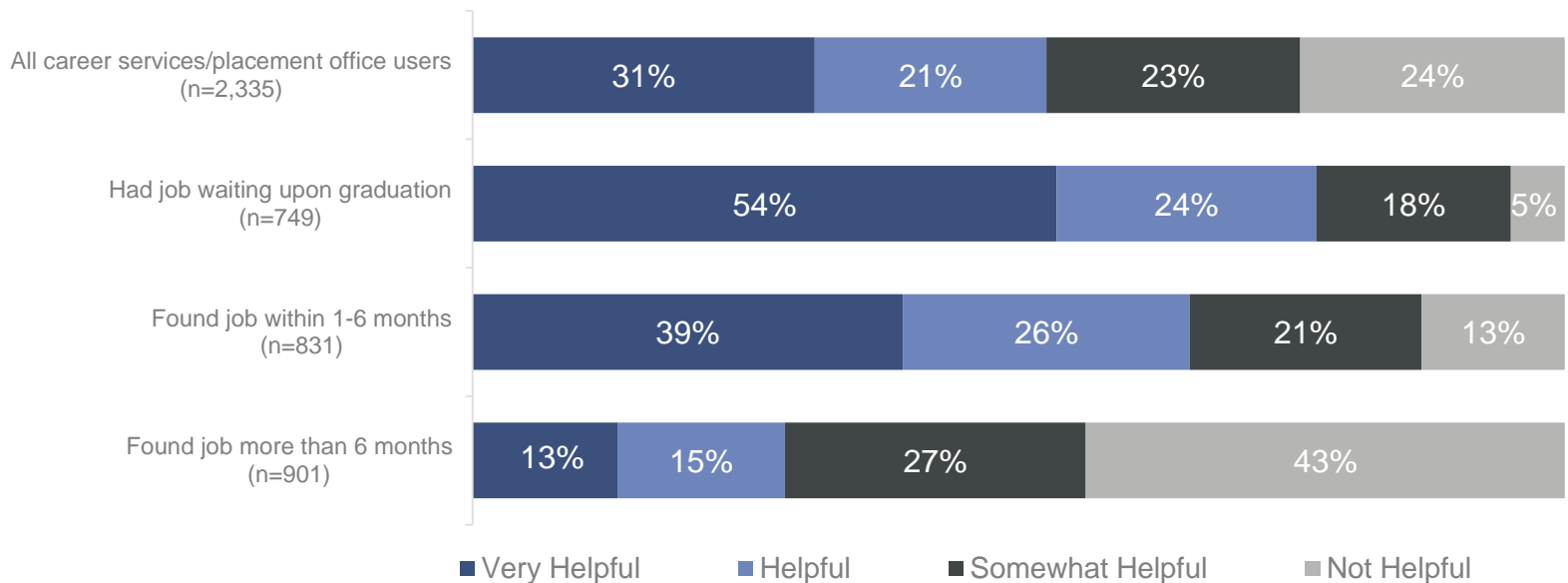
Career Services/Placement Office

Nearly three in four CECU alumni visited their institution's career services or placement office at least once. Help with quickly finding a job is linked with the perceptions of the career services/career placement office and is a driver of the overall satisfaction of their CECU education.

73%

of CECU alumni visited the career services or placement office at least once.

How helpful was the career services or placement office to you?
(Among Employed Alumni)



2.7x

CECU alumni who found their career services or placement office very helpful are 2.7x more satisfied with their CECU education than those who did not find the office very helpful.



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Great Jobs: Workplace Engagement

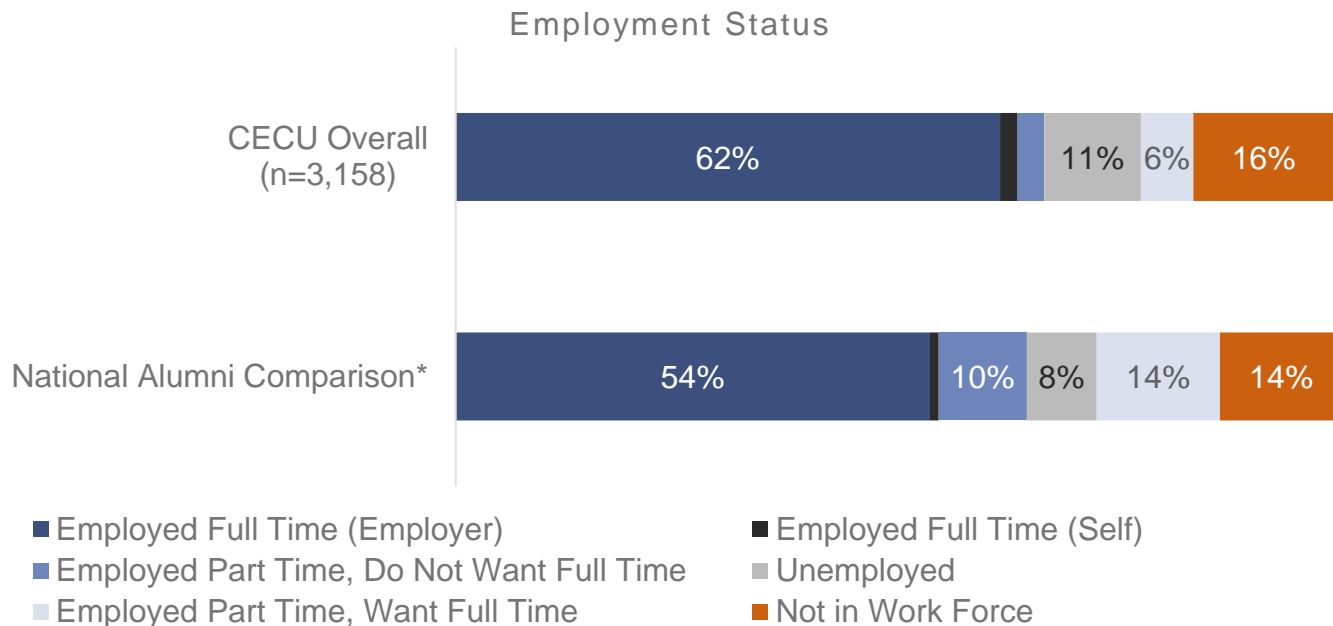
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9 Workplace Fulfillment and Engagement

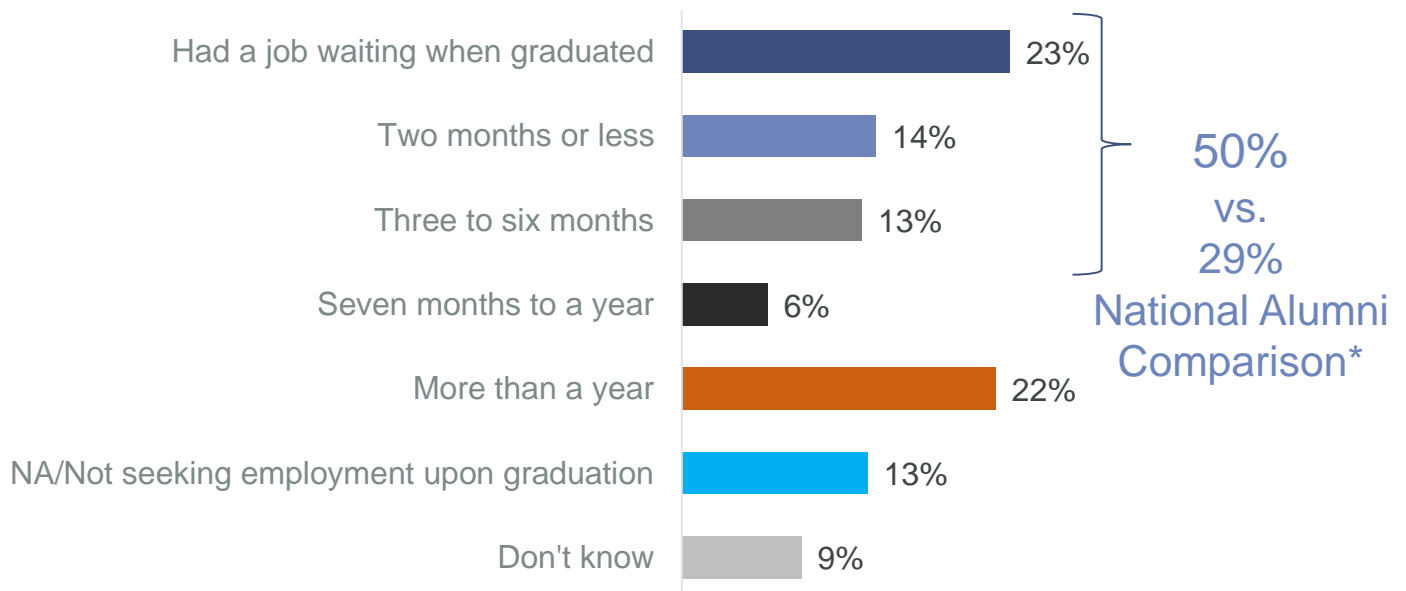
Employment After Graduation

CECU alumni are ahead of their peers on having full-time employment. They are also more likely than their peers to have a job within six months of graduation.



Note: <5% not shown

About how long did it take for you to obtain a good job related to your field of study after you completed your education?
(Among Employed Alumni, n=2,243)



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)

Gallup's Employee Engagement Measures

MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE

Gallup has measured the engagement of more than 6.4 million employees globally from hundreds of organizations and companies. Workplace engagement is an important driver of overall wellbeing and is the leading indicator of organizational performance, such as higher profitability and better financial outcomes.

Gallup's Q12 instrument measures an individual's emotional connection to and investment in their job. The 12 engagement elements function like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with basic needs that must be fulfilled before employees can progress.

To reduce response burden for CECU's survey, the 12 elements were reduced to three elements that correlate highly with the full Q12 index. These three elements are highlighted below.



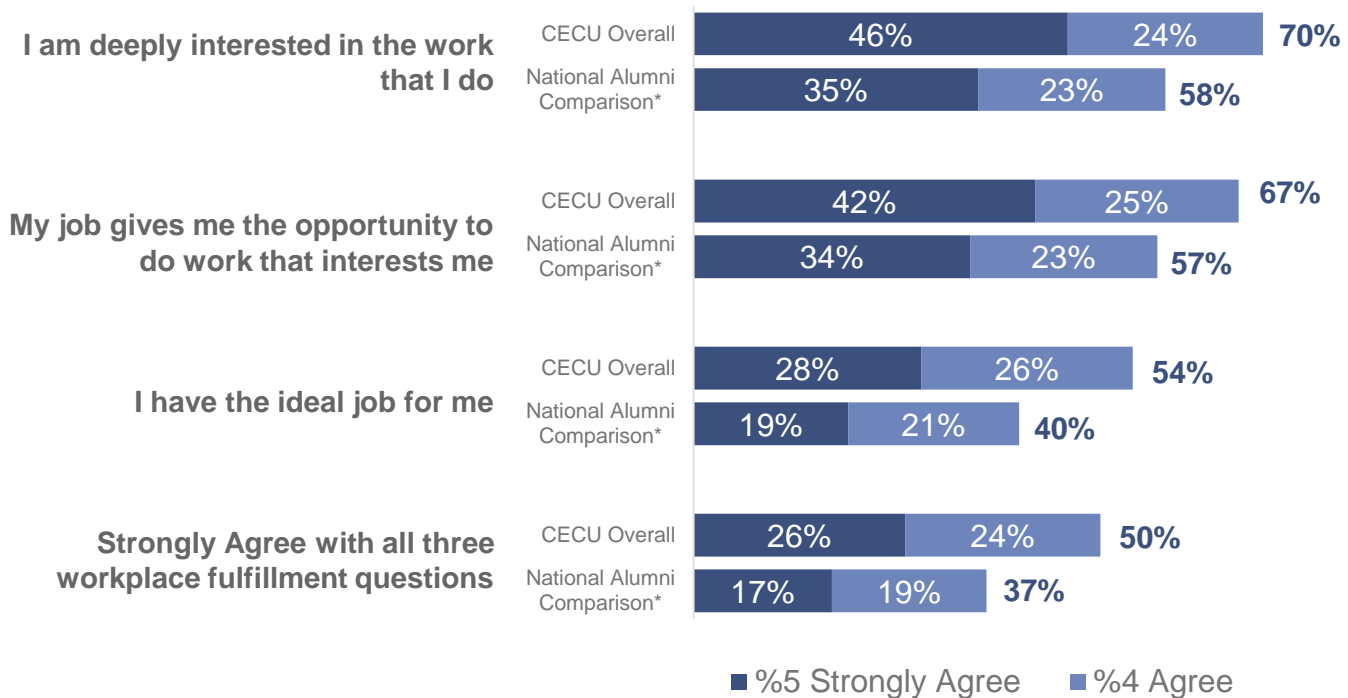
Gallup categorizes workers as engaged, not engaged or actively disengaged based on their responses to a three-question index that measures elements that best predict employee and workgroup performance. This index correlates highly with the full Q¹² index.

Engaged	Not Engaged	Actively Disengaged
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace.• They are psychological “owners,” driving performance and innovation and moving the organization forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychologically unattached to their work and company.• Because their engagement needs are not being fully met, they are putting time — but not energy or passion — into their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resentful that their needs are not being met and are acting out their unhappiness.• Every day, these workers potentially undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

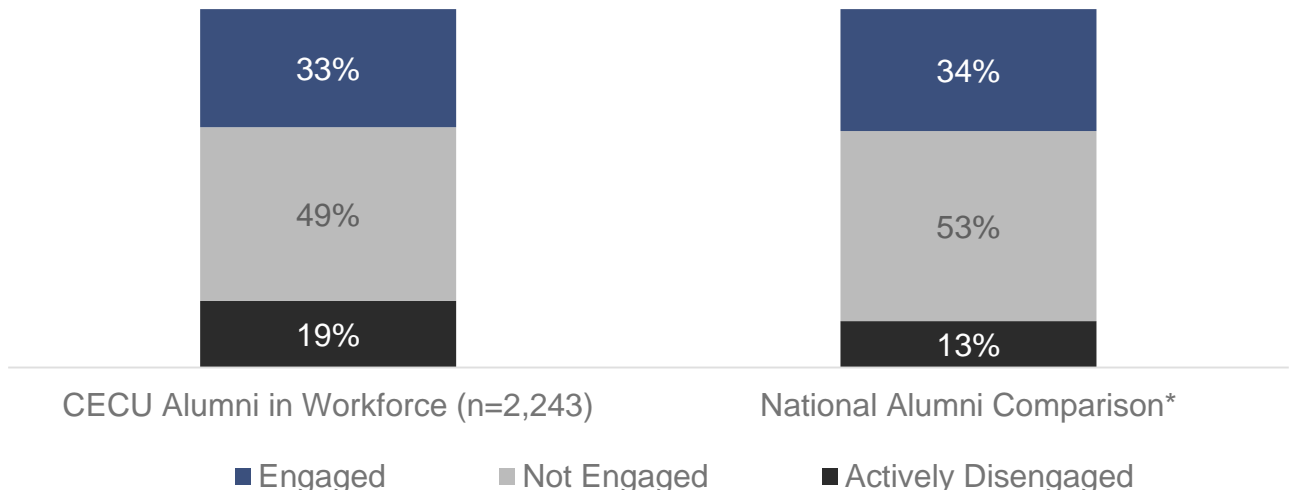
Workplace Fulfillment and Engagement

CECU alumni have higher workplace fulfillment than their peers. Additionally, one in three CECU alumni are engaged at work-- on par with their peers. Alumni who are highly satisfied with their education and who strongly agree their education was worth the cost are more likely to be engaged.

Workplace Fulfillment
(% Strongly Agree, Among Employed Alumni,
n=2,243)



Workplace Engagement – Gallup Q¹²
(Among those employed full time by an employer)



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)



3 Great Lives: Wellbeing

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12 Elements of Wellbeing

13 Thriving Elements

Elements of Wellbeing

Gallup has conducted decades of global research surveying a representative sample of 99% of the world's population from more than 160 countries. Our research has found that wellbeing is associated with numerous positive health and employment outcomes, including lower medical and health expenditures, fewer ER visits, lower absenteeism, etc.

Factor analysis identified five interrelated and interdependent elements of wellbeing:

Purpose Wellbeing: Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

Social Wellbeing: Having supportive relationships and love in your life

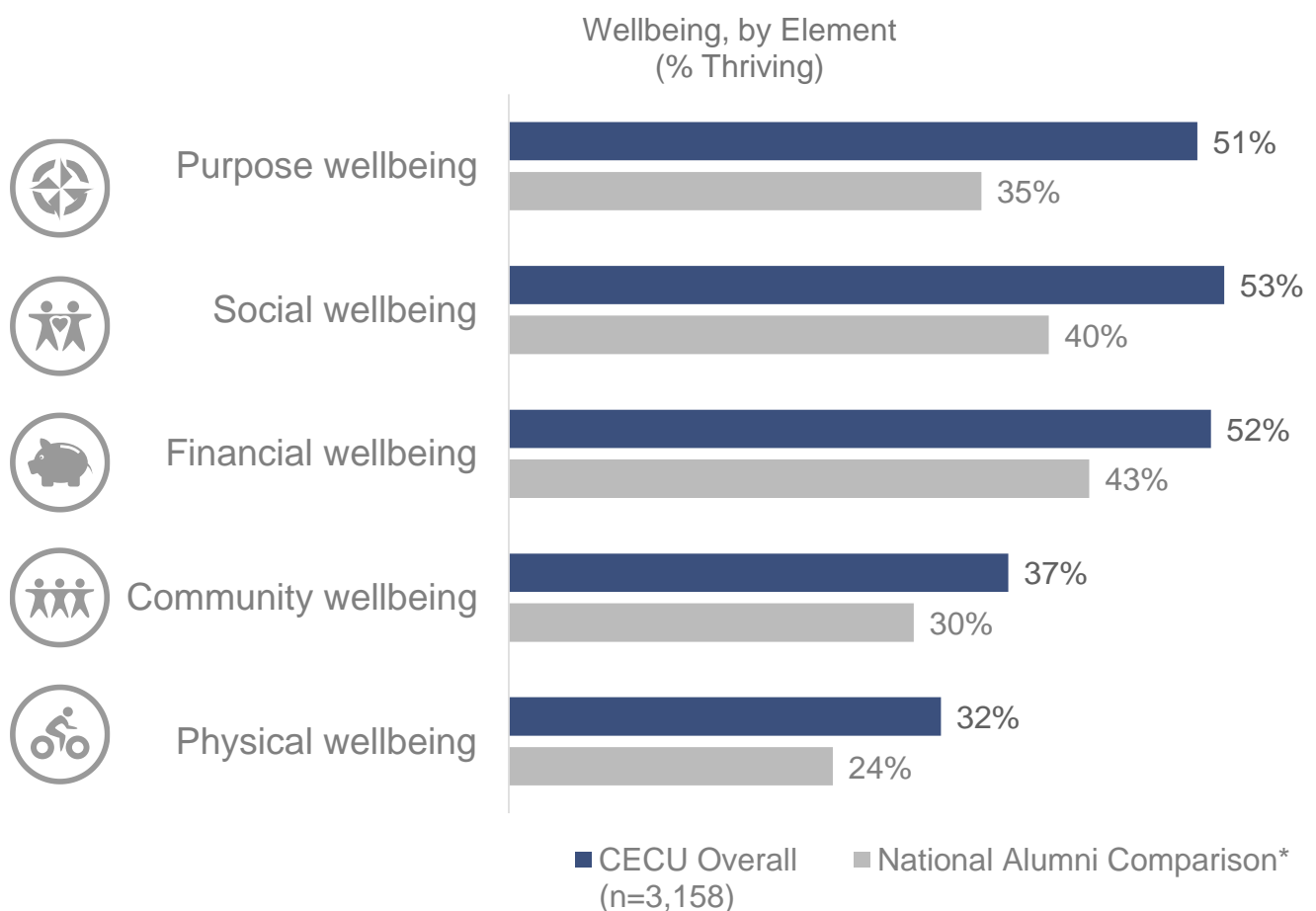
Financial Wellbeing: Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security

Community Wellbeing: Liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community

Physical Wellbeing: Having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

Gallup examines not only the individual levels of wellbeing, but also the difficult-to-reach pinnacle of wellbeing of thriving in all five elements — purpose, social, financial, community and physical.

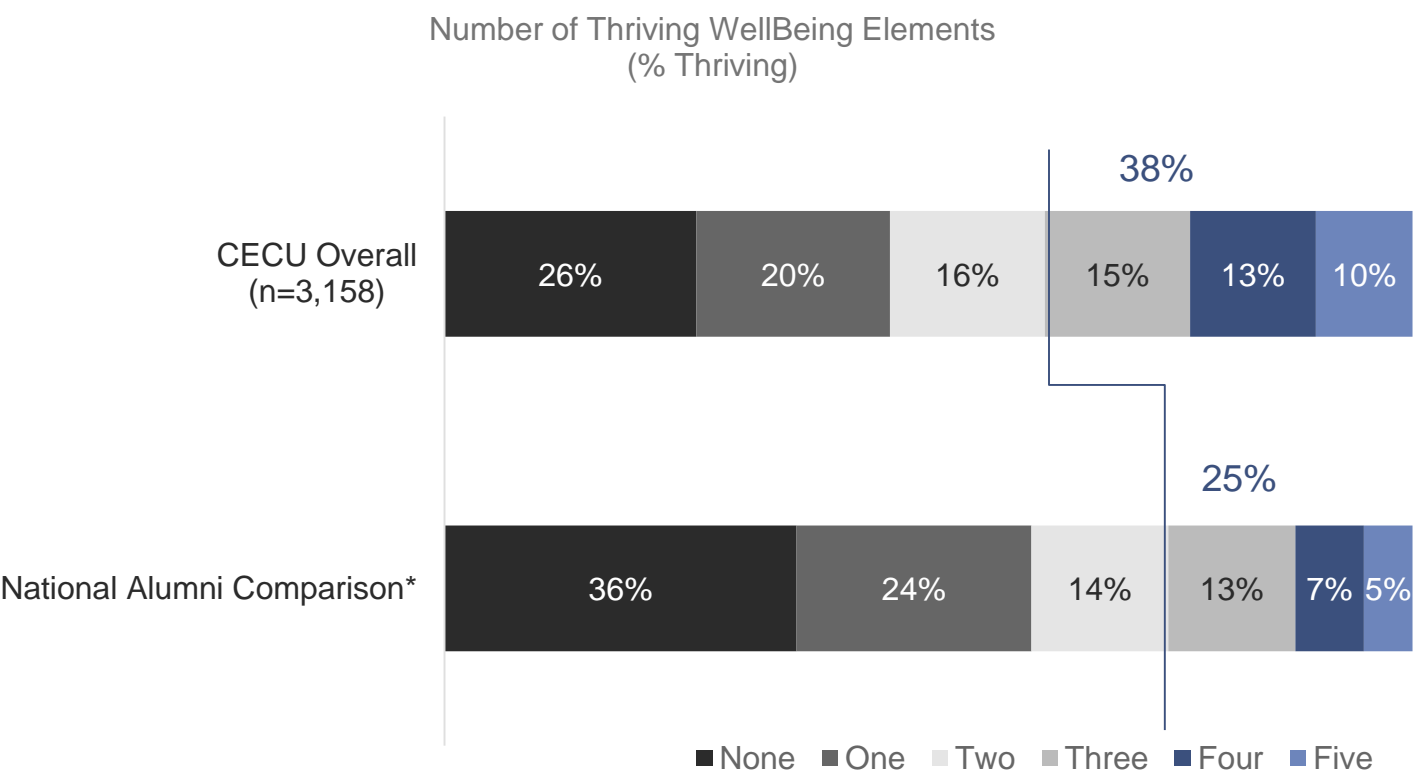
The majority of CECU alumni are more likely than recent associate degree holders to thrive in all elements of wellbeing.



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)

Thriving Elements of Wellbeing

Not only are CECU alumni thriving in each individual wellbeing element, they are also thriving in more wellbeing elements than their peers.



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)





Great Experiences: Career Education Experience

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16 Support Experiences

17 Transfer Students

Perceptions of Educational Quality

The **majority** of all CECU alumni are satisfied with both the education and training they received from their school, and how well the **school prepared them for their career**, and would **recommend** the school to others.

59%

Satisfied[†] with their education at CECU

57%

Satisfied[†] with how well CECU prepared them for their career

52%

Would recommend[†] their institution to a friend, family member or colleague

[†]7-10 on 0-10 scale

Alumni who are most positive about their experiences:

	Satisfied [†] with Education	Satisfied [†] with Career Preparation	Likely to Recommend [†]
Alumni age 49+ (n=576)	64%	62%	59%
Alumni who transferred or obtained education from another school (n=1,324)	65%	62%	58%

56%

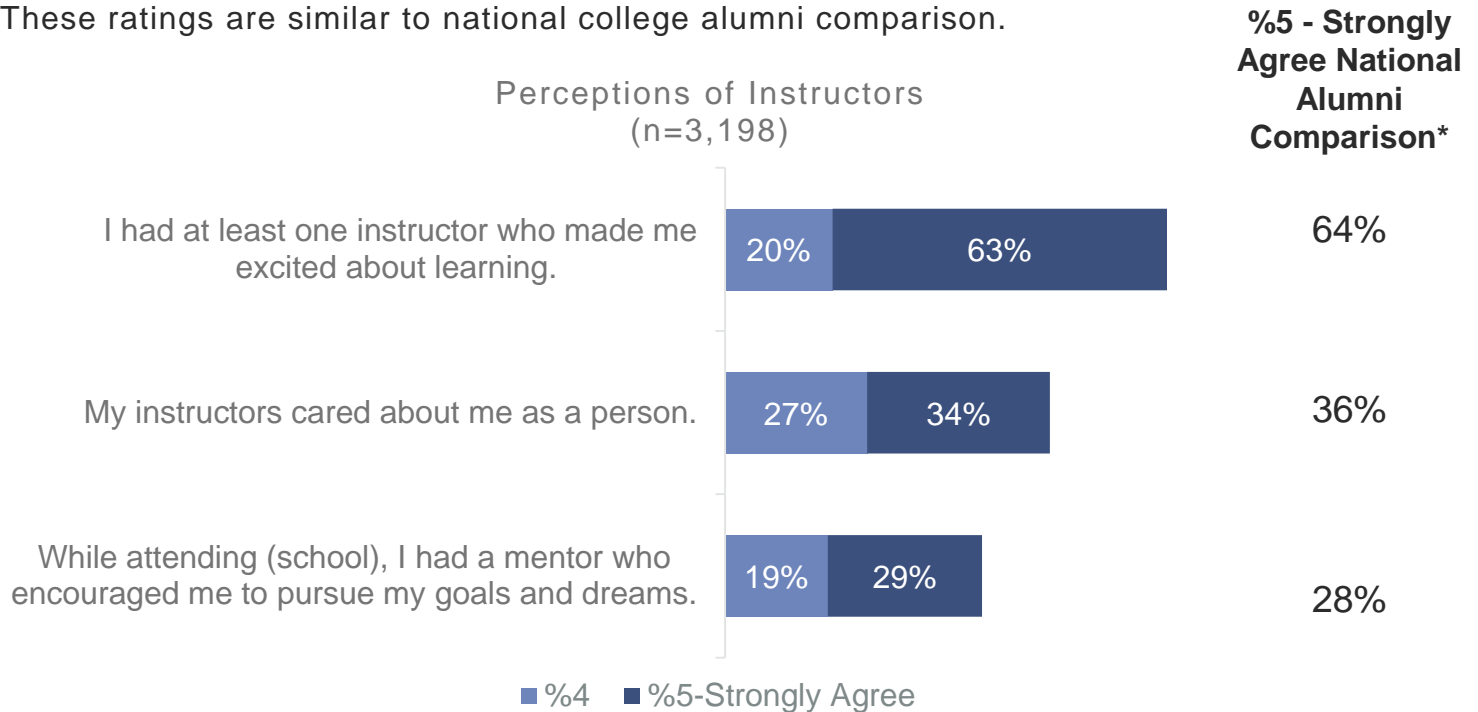
of CECU alumni agree that their institution was the perfect school for people like them.



Support Experiences

CECU alumni have **positive perceptions of academic support** experiences while obtaining their education. A large majority agree they had an **instructor who made them excited** about learning. Six in 10 (61%) agree that their **professors cared** about them as a person.

These ratings are similar to national college alumni comparison.



One in five CECU alumni strongly agree with all three support experiences and are classified as having “felt supported.” CECU alumni who felt supported were more likely to have more favorable perceptions of their education and more likely to be engaged in their current work.

Receiving **support** leads to:

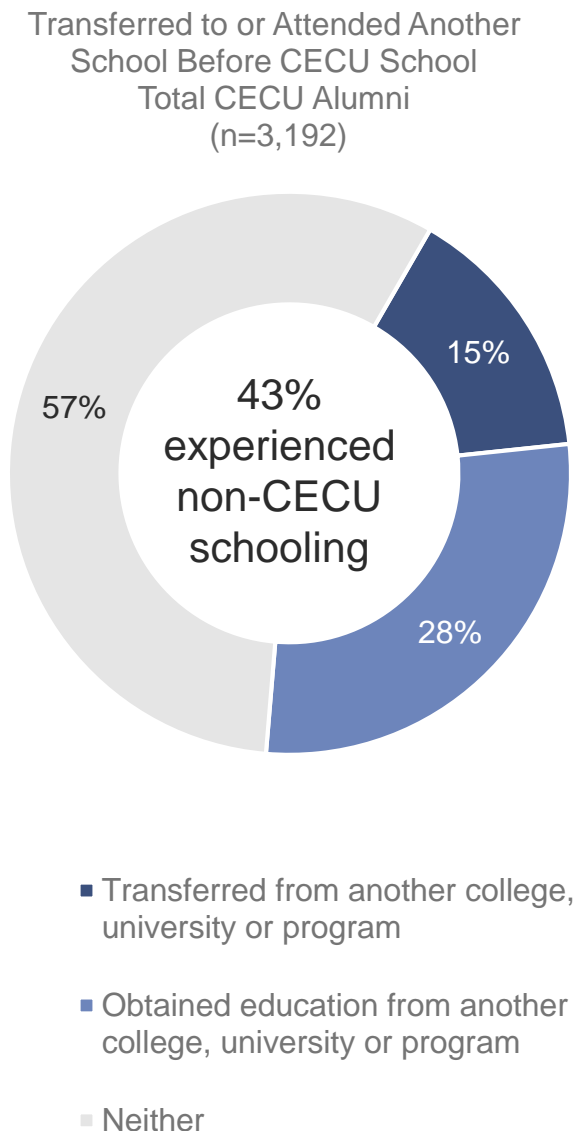
- **3.2X** higher satisfaction
- **1.8X** higher workplace engagement
- **3.9X** higher belief education was worth the cost

* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally

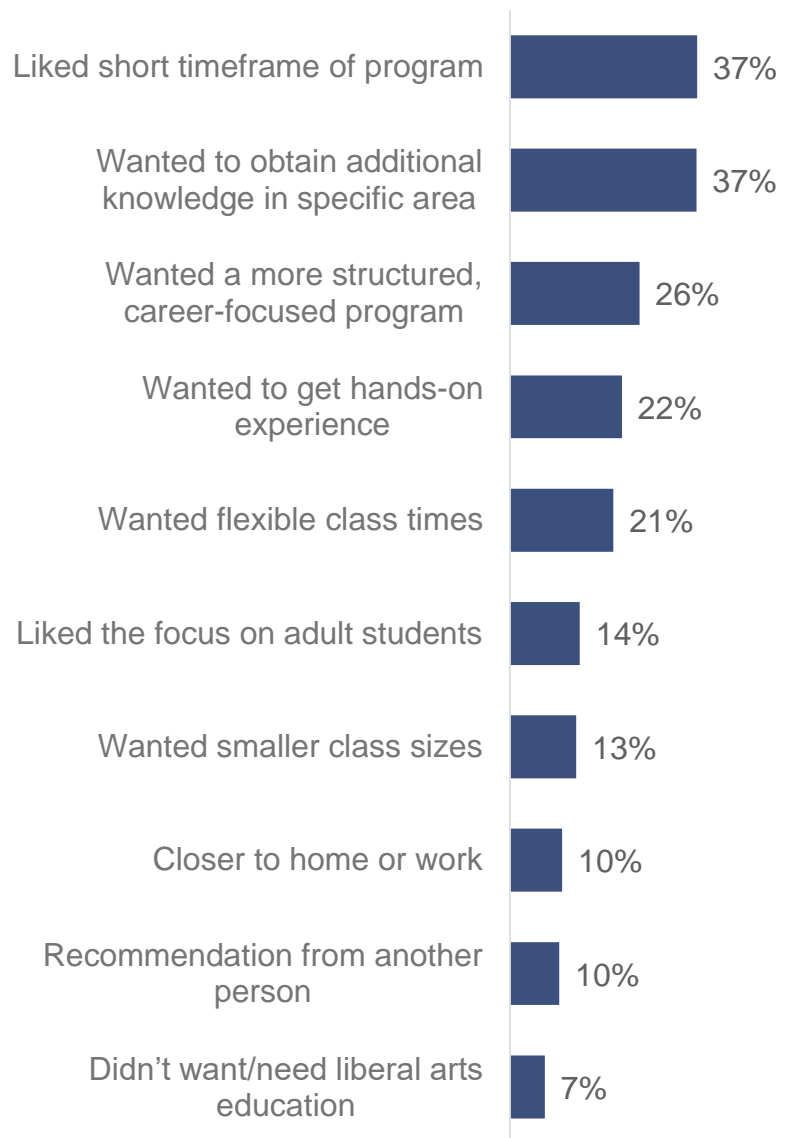
Students With Prior Higher Ed Exposure

CECU alumni who transferred to, or had experienced education from another institution prior to, CECU see value in CECU's programs because of the **short timeframe of the program**. They also wanted to **learn specific knowledge** and have a **structured career-focused program**. Others came to CECU because they wanted a structured, career-focused program.

Those who had previous higher ed experience are more satisfied with their CECU education than those who only attended CECU, perhaps indicating a better fit for these students.



Primary Reason Transferred/
Changed to CECU School
(Transferees or Attended Another School n=1,324)



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)



Great Impact: Key Subpopulations **5**

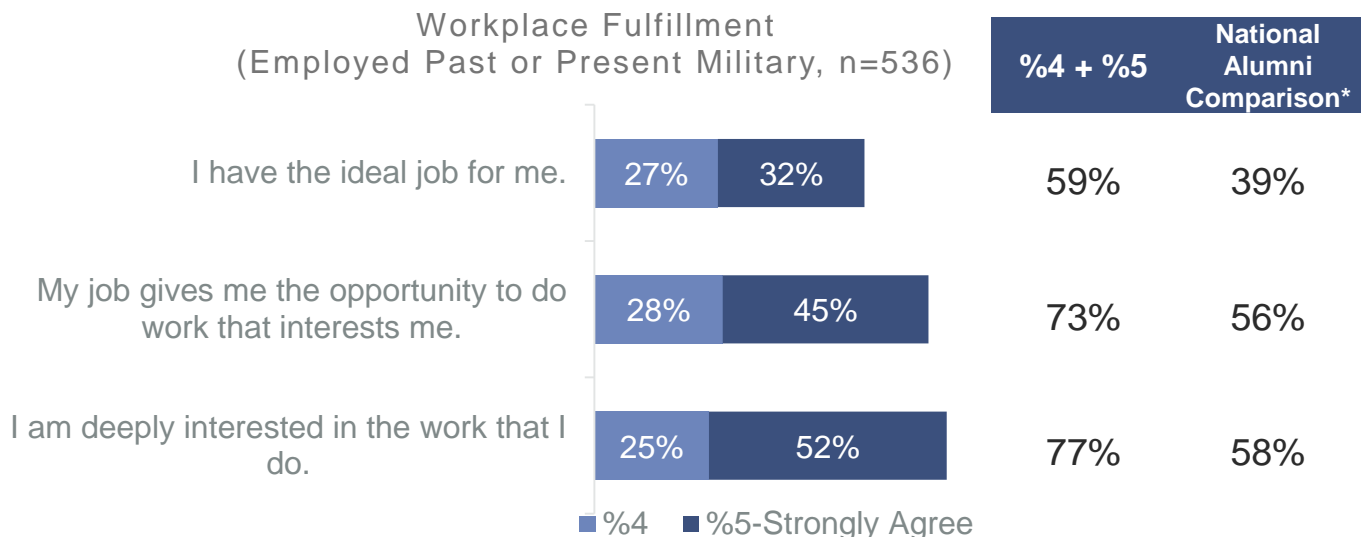
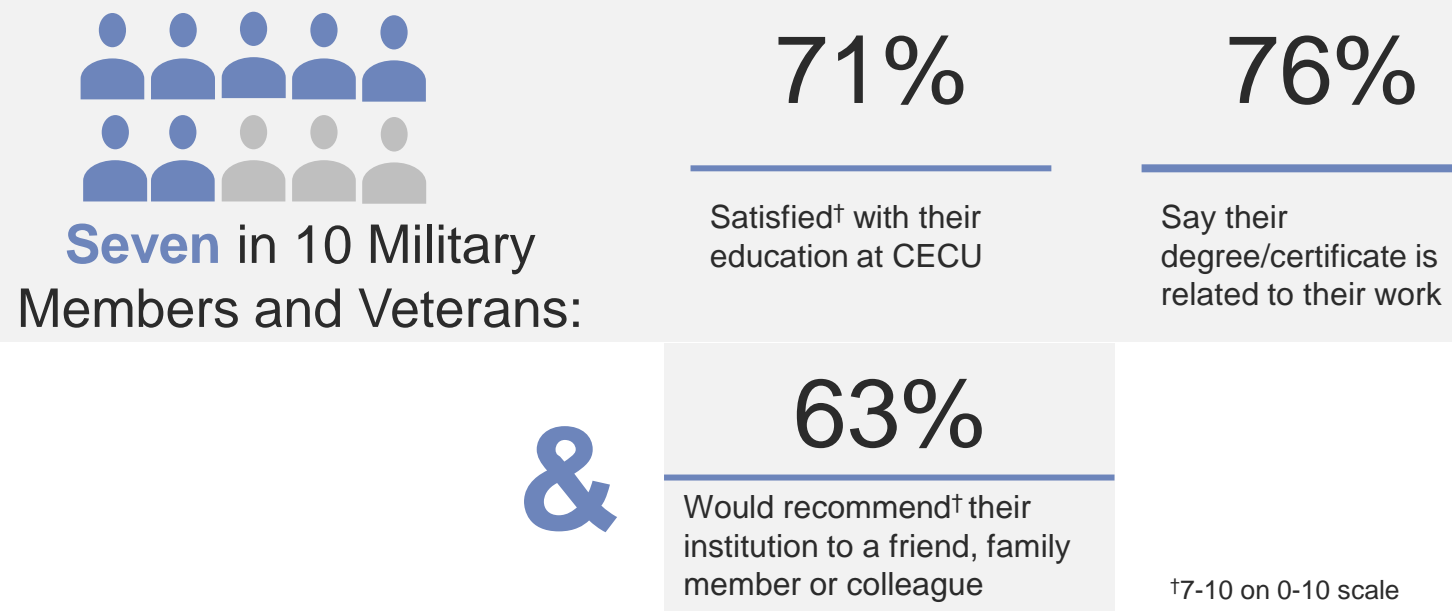
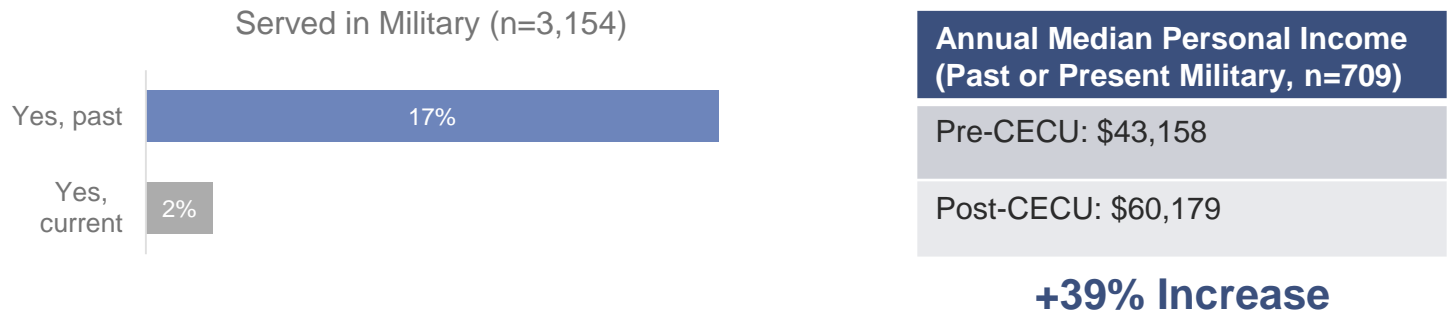
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20 Minority Students

Military Service Members and Veterans

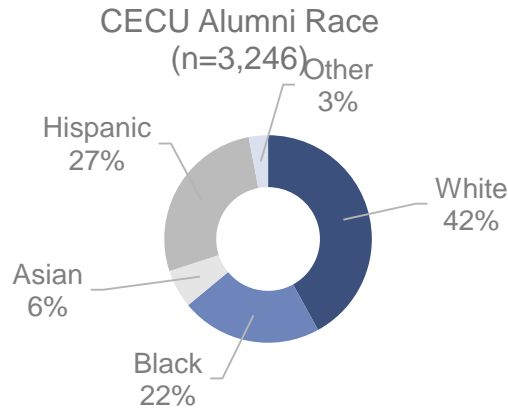
Military members and veterans find success after attending CECU schools. The vast majority are satisfied with their education, and would recommend it. They are fulfilled at work: three of four have a job related to their schooling, and have jobs that interest them and allow them to pursue their interests – much stronger outcomes than their peers.



* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)

Minority Students

The majority of black and Hispanic graduates are well satisfied with their CECU education. They feel their education was worth the time spent, and are earning 60% more than before attending CECU. They also report greater workplace fulfillment than their peers.



Annual Personal Income (Median)		
	Black Alumni (n=660)	Hispanic Alumni (n=406)
Pre-CECU	\$25,685	\$27,762
Post-CECU	\$41,575	\$44,071
Increase	+62%	+59%

Perceptions of CECU Education	Black Alumni (n=660)	Hispanic Alumni (n=406)
<div> <div></div> %4 Agree <div></div> %5 Strongly agree </div>		
(School) was the perfect school for people like me.	24% 37% 61%	24% 34% 58%
I had at least one instructor at (School) who made me excited about learning.	18% 65% 83%	18% 66% 84%
My education from (School) was worth the time I spent.	39% 22% 60%	37% 20% 58%
Satisfied overall with their education	59%	63%

Workplace Fulfillment	Black Alumni (n=660)	Hispanic Alumni (n=406)	National Alumni Comparison*
<div> <div></div> %4 Agree <div></div> %5 Strongly Agree </div>			
I have the ideal job for me.	27% 26% 53%	27% 28% 55%	39%
My job gives me the opportunity to do work that interests me.	28% 40% 68%	23% 44% 67%	56%
I am deeply interested in the work that I do.	23% 51% 74%	23% 50% 73%	58%

* Recent Associate Degree Holders Nationally (n=468)



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Methodology

CECU METHODOLOGY AND NATIONAL ALUMNI COMPARISON

Methodology – the CECU 2018 Student Survey

Results for the CECU alumni study are based on web surveys conducted Sept. 25-Oct. 19, 2018. The sampling frame consisted of 102 member organizations, some with multi-campus systems under parent entities, who are members of CECU, representing about 679 campus locations in the U.S. Gallup randomly selected 40 member organizations and invited them to participate. Nine member organizations, representing 75 campuses agreed to participate and sent Gallup alumni contact information to use in the study. Each institution or individual campus was asked to provide Gallup email addresses of alumni who graduated between 2008 and early 2018 (at least six months prior to the study date). CECU companies sent out pre-notification emails, which were followed by survey email invites sent by Gallup. Gallup sent up to five email reminders to alumni to encourage participation. Interviews were conducted via the web, in English only.

A total of 3,882 alumni responded to the survey, but due to incomplete responses, these data represent 3,203 CECU alumni who graduated between 2008 and early 2018. Data were weighted to match the known demographic distribution (gender, race and Hispanic ethnicity) of recent graduates of the 102 CECU companies based on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data.

For results based on the total sample of CECU Alumni, the margin of sampling error is ± 1.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

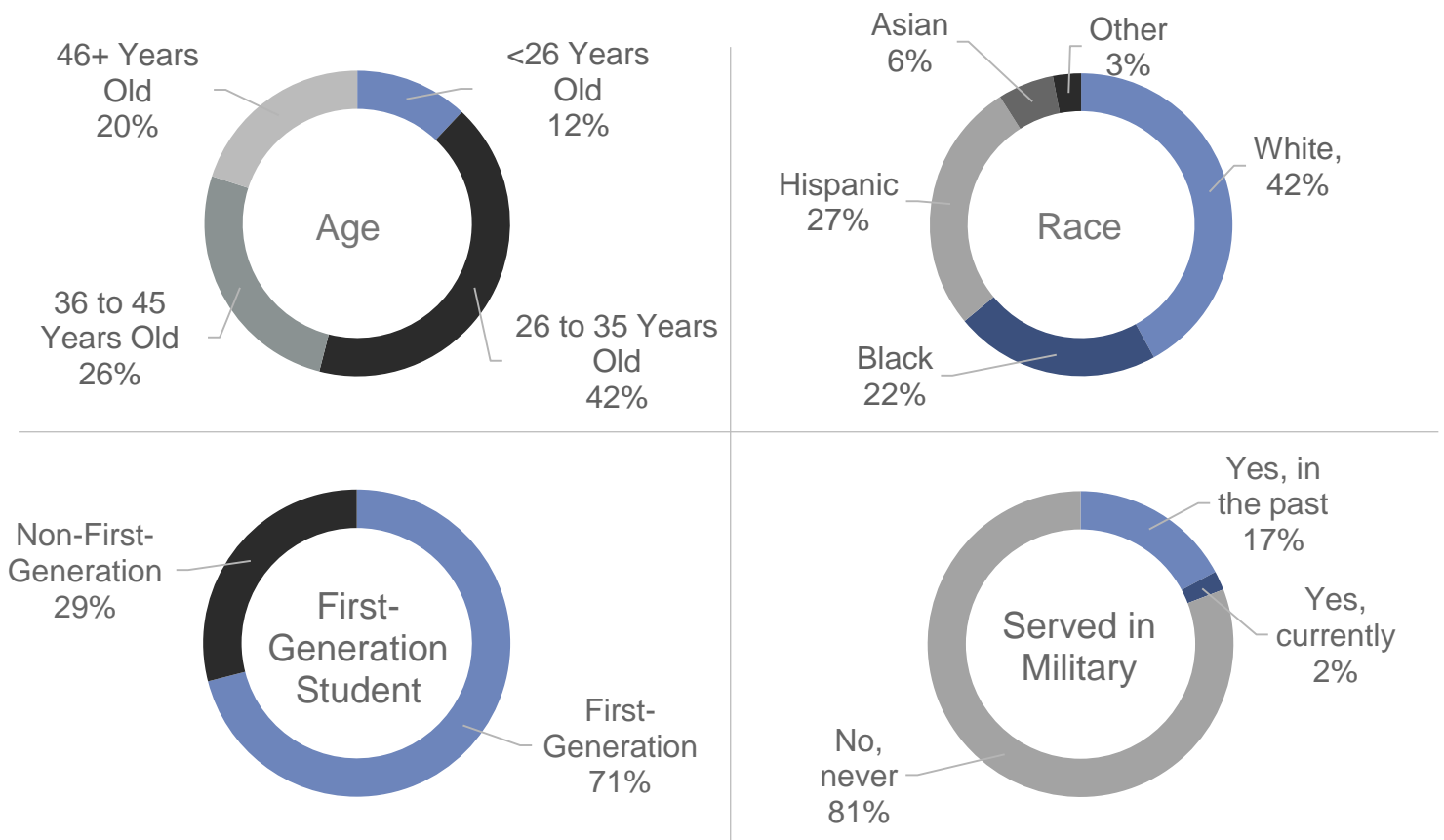
National Comparison

- For the purposes of this report, data from CECU are compared with data collected in the Gallup-USA Funds Associate Degree Graduates study, a nationally representative study of U.S. adults who have obtained an associate degree as their highest level of education. The Gallup-USA Funds Associate Degree Graduates study is based on web surveys conducted March 19-May 11, 2015, with a random sample of 2,548 individuals aged 18 and older, with Internet access, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.
- Some differences may exist between the national comparison points included in this report and national estimates that Gallup has previously released because this report focuses on graduates who received their associate degrees from 2007–2015. The comparison group included in this scorecard is:
 - **National Comparison Group:** Associate degree holders who graduated 2007-2015 surveyed via the Gallup-USA Funds Associate Degree Holders Study, which includes those who reported they have an associate degree from a two-year institution in the U.S. as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. Graduate represented public and private and both for- and not-for-profit institutions. The comparison sample includes 498 graduates.

Demographics

CECU Alumni Who Graduated Between 2008 and 2018

n=3,203



Total Annual Personal Income



Total Annual Household Income



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% +/-1%

About Us

Gallup

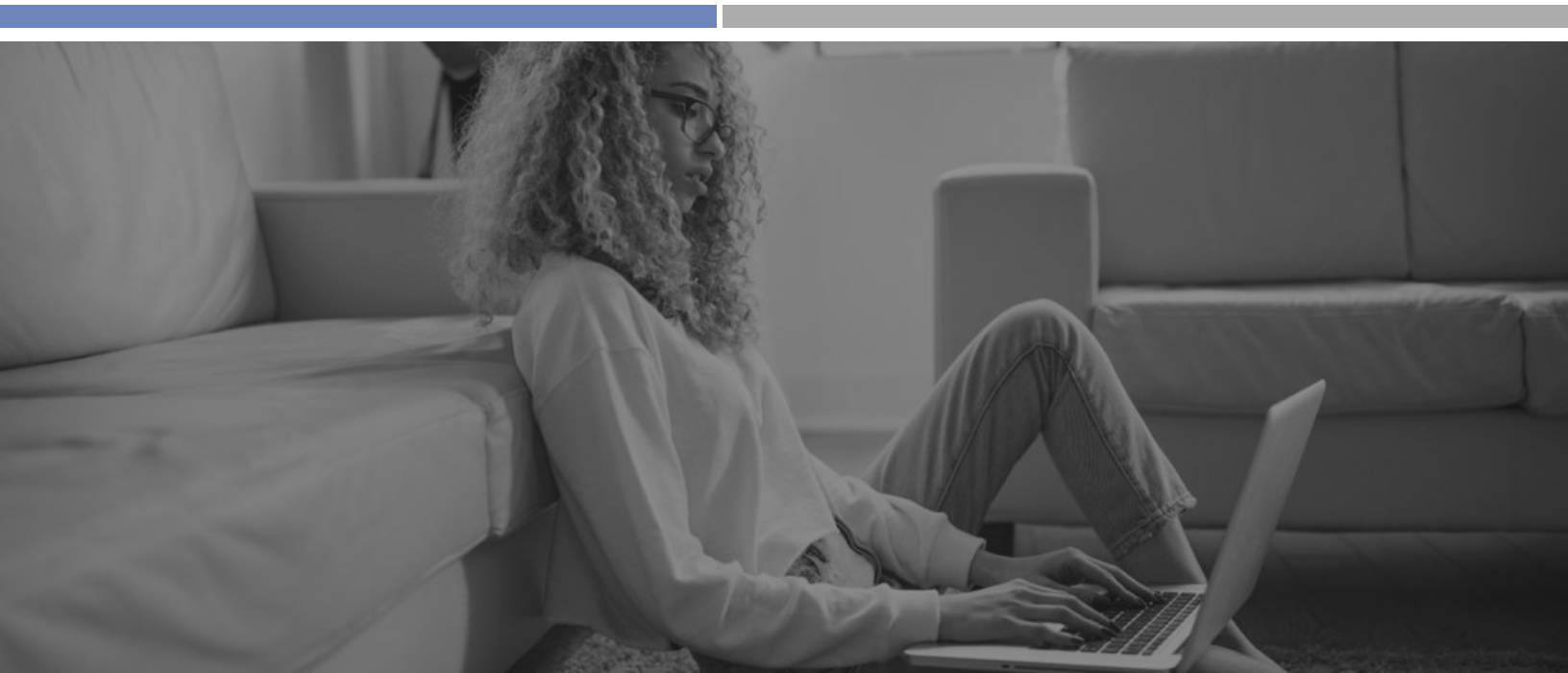
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CECU

The Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU) is a voluntary membership organization of accredited, postsecondary schools, institutes, colleges and universities that provide career-specific educational programs. CECU has about 500 member campuses that educate and support millions of students for employment in over 200 occupational fields. CECU member institutions provide the full range of higher education programs, including masters and doctorate degrees, two- and four-year associate and baccalaureate degree programs, and short-term certificate and diploma programs.

Some of the occupational fields for which CECU institutions provide programs include: information technology; allied health; business administration; commercial art; radio and television broadcasting; and culinary and hospitality management.

Most CECU member institutions participate in federal student financial assistance programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. In order to participate, they must be licensed by the state in which they are located, accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body, and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Many CECU member schools and colleges also participate in other federal, state and local education and workforce training programs.



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