



WASHINGTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT 17

January 16th, 2024

NOTICE OF WORK SESSION MEETING

(Notice Date: Wednesday, January 10th, 2024)

The Community Colleges of Spokane Board of Trustees will hold a Work Session meeting on Tuesday, January 16th, 2024 beginning at 8:30 AM.

The work session meeting will take place in person at Spokane Falls Community College, 3410 W. Whistalks Way, Spokane, Washington as well as a virtual space.

To connect to the January 16th meeting virtually, go to:

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 851 8703 0806

Passcode: 263075

A copy of the meeting material can be found online at:

<http://ccs.spokane.edu/About-Us/Leadership/Board-of-Trustees/Board-Minutes>

CCS MISSION

To provide all students an excellent education that transforms their lives
and expands their opportunities.

CCS VISION

Providing the best community college experience in the Northwest.

CCS VALUES

Students First | Equity | Access | Excellence | Integrity |
Leadership | Responsiveness | Stewardship

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Under RCW 42.30.110, an Executive Session may be held. Action from the Executive Session may be taken, if necessary, as a result of items discussed in the Executive Session.

PLEASE NOTE: Times above are estimates only. The Board reserves the right to alter the order of the agenda.

Washington State Community College District 17

The Lodge, 3305 W. Whistalks Way
Spokane, WA 99224

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 851 8703 0806

Passcode: 263075

Work Session Meeting
Tuesday, January 16, 2024

AGENDA

Trustee Mike Wilson; Chair, Trustee Todd Woodard; Vice-Chair
Trustee Anna Franklin, Trustee Glenn Johnson, Trustee Steve Yoshihara
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Times below are estimates only. The Board reserves the rights to alter the order of the agenda.

01/16/2024

Work Session Meeting Agenda

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---------------|
| 8:30 a.m. | 1. Opening of Session/Land Acknowledgement
↳ Mike Wilson, Chair | Action |
| | 2. Consent Agenda
a. Budget & Expenditures – Linda McDermott
b. Head Start – Bobbi Woodral | Action |
| | 3. CCS Campus Security Request
↳ Kevin Brockbank, CCS | Action |
| | 4. Alert of Tenure Consideration
↳ Greg Stevens, CCS | Report |
| | 5. Drake Cooper Rebranding Presentation
↳ Carolyn Casey, CCS | Report |
| | 6. Executive Session | |
| | Adjournment | |

Next Meeting will be a Tuesday, February 20th, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.
Spokane Community College, 1810 N Greene St, Spokane WA
99217 with a Zoom option

CCS MISSION

To provide all students an excellent education that transforms their lives
and expands their opportunities.

CCS VISION

Providing the best community college experience in the Northwest.

CCS VALUES

Students First | Equity | Access | Excellence | Integrity |
Leadership | Responsiveness | Stewardship

Washington State Community College District 17

Community Colleges of Spokane
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 16, 2024

Native Land Acknowledgment

We are honored to acknowledge that the Community Colleges of Spokane, and our main campuses for Spokane Falls and Spokane Community College, are located on the traditional and sacred homelands of the Spokane Tribe. We also provide services in a region that includes the traditional and sacred homelands of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Kalispel Tribe and Nez Perce Tribe.

We pay our respect to tribal elders both past and present as well as to all indigenous people today. This land holds their cultural DNA and we are honored and grateful to be here on their traditional lands. We give thanks to the legacy of the original people and their descendants and pledge to honor their stewardship and values.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

Community Colleges of Spokane
Business and Finance Office

BACKGROUND:

High School+ (HS+) is a competency-based high school diploma program for adult learners 18 and older who do not have a high school diploma or equivalency. This can be done through alternative means including, but not limited to:

- high school and college transcript credits
- work, life, military experience
- prior learning portfolio
- credit for testing

The HS+ program expands high school completion options already offered by the community and technical college system to include a comprehensive approach that aligns with adult learning styles and includes competency-based assessments that demonstrate the academic, career, and personal competencies needed in further education and employment.

Students who complete the HS+ program receive a Washington state high school diploma from their community college. As reported to the Board in June 2023, the number of HS+ students transitioning to college-level courses is lower than other Adult Basic Education students. To improve the HS+ to college transition rates, and to reduce barriers for students, the Board authorized in June 2023, the waiver of tuition and fees for up to ten (10) college-level credits for HS+ students enrolled in college-level courses. SCC and SFCC are working together to develop course options that establish a clear transition pathway for students in the program. The Board's action from June 2023 is reflected in the enclosed resolution as required by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

APPROVAL: The Administration requests approval of the enclosed resolution 2024-01 authorizing the tuition and fees rate of \$0.00 per credit, effective winter quarter 2024, for High School + students enrolled in college-level credits up to a lifetime maximum of ten (10) credits, in lieu of other tuition and fees.

Submitted by: Dr. Linda McDermott, Ed.D., CPA
Acting Chief Financial Officer
January 16, 2024

**COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF SPOKANE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Resolution No. 24-01

A resolution relating to tuition and fees for High School to College (HS+) students.

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees of Washington State Community College District 17 (Community Colleges of Spokane), hereinafter CCS, is responsible for administering the tuition and fees rates for students enrolled at Spokane Community and Spokane Falls Community Colleges (hereinafter College); and

WHEREAS to exercise its responsibilities to charge fees on a uniform and equitable basis, CCS seeks to establish the tuition and fees rate for Basic Education for Adult (BEa) students enrolled for the purpose of High School+ to College (HS+); and

WHEREAS CCS is authorized to establish tuition and fees rates per RCW 28B.15.100(1); and

WHEREAS CCS recognizes that a high school diploma is a pathway to furthering educational goals, sustainable employment, and contribution to community; and

WHEREAS CCS seeks to improve the BEa college transition rates and reduce barriers to college enrollment; and

WHEREAS adult students enrolled in the BEa High School+ program pay a quarterly fee of \$25 as determined by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and

WHEREAS BEa HS+ students are enrolled to complete their high school diplomas; and

WHEREAS BEa HS+ students being charged the full tuition rate for college level credit classes is a barrier to a clear transition pathway.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of CCS hereby authorizes, effective winter quarter 2024, the BEa HS+ tuition and fees rate of \$0.00 per credit, up to a lifetime maximum of ten (10) college level credits per student, in lieu of other tuition and fees.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED ON this ___ day of January 2024

Michael Wilson, Chair
Community Colleges of Spokane Board of Trustees

ATTEST:

Dr. Kevin Brockbank

Secretary to the Community Colleges of Spokane Board of Trustees

STATUS REPORT HEAD START/ECEAP/EHS

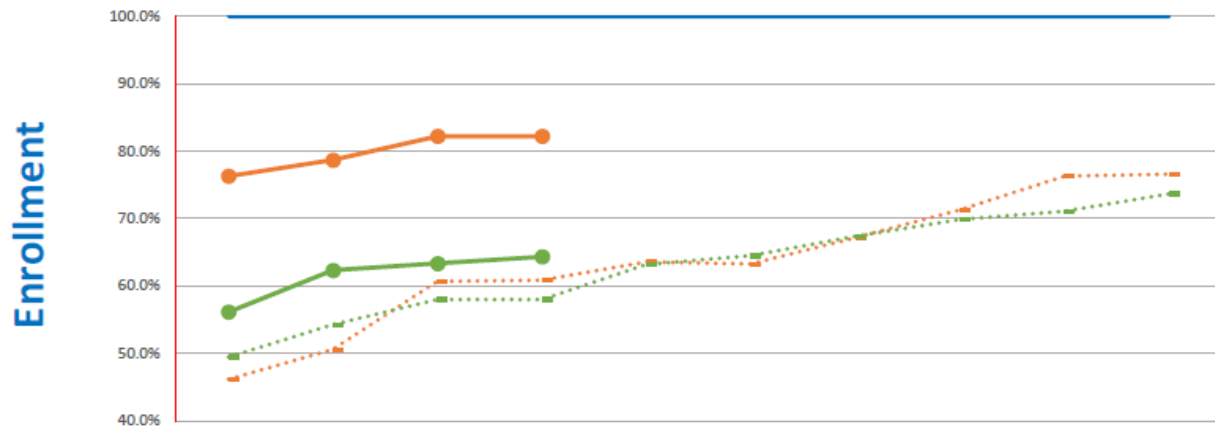
JANUARY 2024

ENROLLMENT

Head Start enrollment for the month of December was under-enrolled by 213 slots reaching 64.4% full enrollment. Early Head Start was under-enrolled by 60 slots, remaining at 82.2% fully enrolled.

December 2023

Head Start/Early Head Start
Policy Council Graphs



		SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
2023/24	EHS	76.3%	78.7%	82.2%	82.2%						
	HS	56.2%	62.4%	63.4%	64.4%						
2022/23	EHS	46.2%	50.6%	60.7%	60.9%	63.6%	63.3%	67.2%	71.3%	76.3%	76.6%
	HS	49.5%	54.3%	58.0%	58.0%	63.2%	64.5%	67.4%	69.9%	71.1%	73.7%

OHS UNDER-ENROLLMENT FOLLOW-UP LETTER

On January 2, 2024, the Office of Head Start (OHS) sent us an enrollment follow-up letter. The purpose of this letter was to assist us in successfully implementing our 12-month plan to achieve full enrollment. The letter addressed two important areas. First, it emphasized the importance of maintaining ongoing communication with our Regional HS office to access any additional support that may be required as we approach the end of the 12-month period.

Furthermore, OHS has restated its strong suggestion for grant recipients who are not on track to achieve full enrollment within the 12-month timeframe to consider submitting a change-in-scope application. This notification affirms the reduction and conversion plan that was previously submitted and approved by the Board during the December BOT meeting. The emphasis is on advocating for an enrollment reduction or slot conversion based on the needs of the community, with the ultimate goal of improving program quality. This flexibility to support full enrollment is readily accessible to us. Hence, our program's decision to exercise this option aligns with OHS recommendations, which advise against waiting until the end of the 12-month under-enrollment plan period.

Discussion: CCS Project List for Local Funds Use – Request for Board of Trustees Approval

Background: According to the 2023 point-in-time count, Spokane County reportedly has 2,390 homeless residents which is a 36% increase from 2022. Early in 2022, a campaign to increase support for the homeless population culminated in the occupation of a vacant lot owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) southeast of Spokane Community College (SCC), commonly referred to as Camp Hope. As a direct result of this, SCC has seen a 30% increase in transient related incidents from 2022 to 2023.

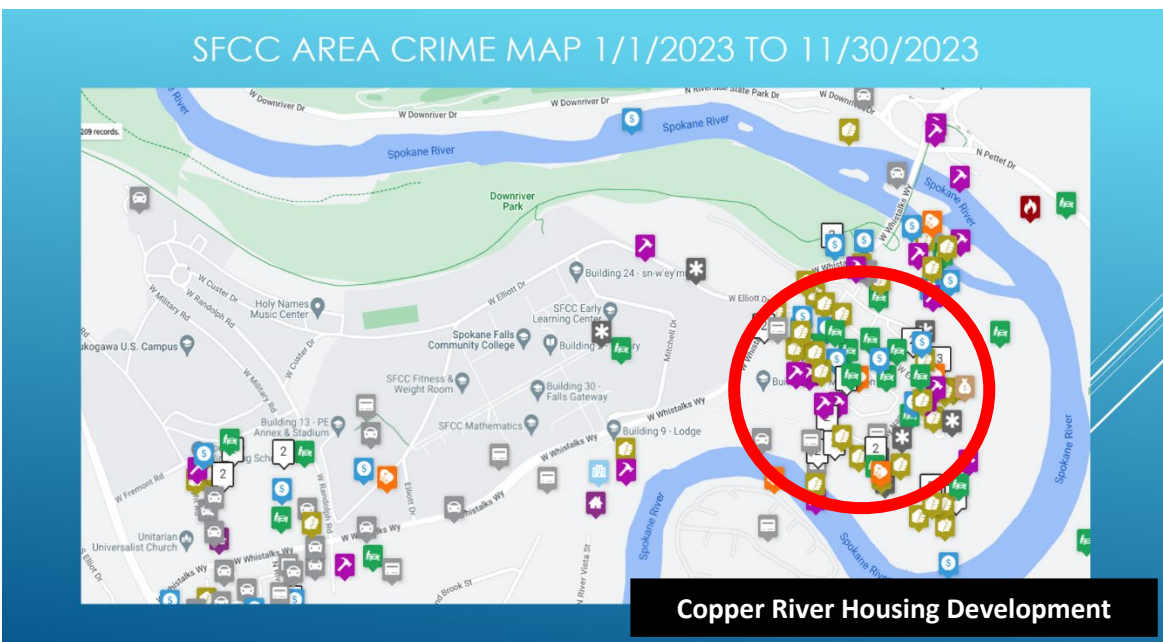
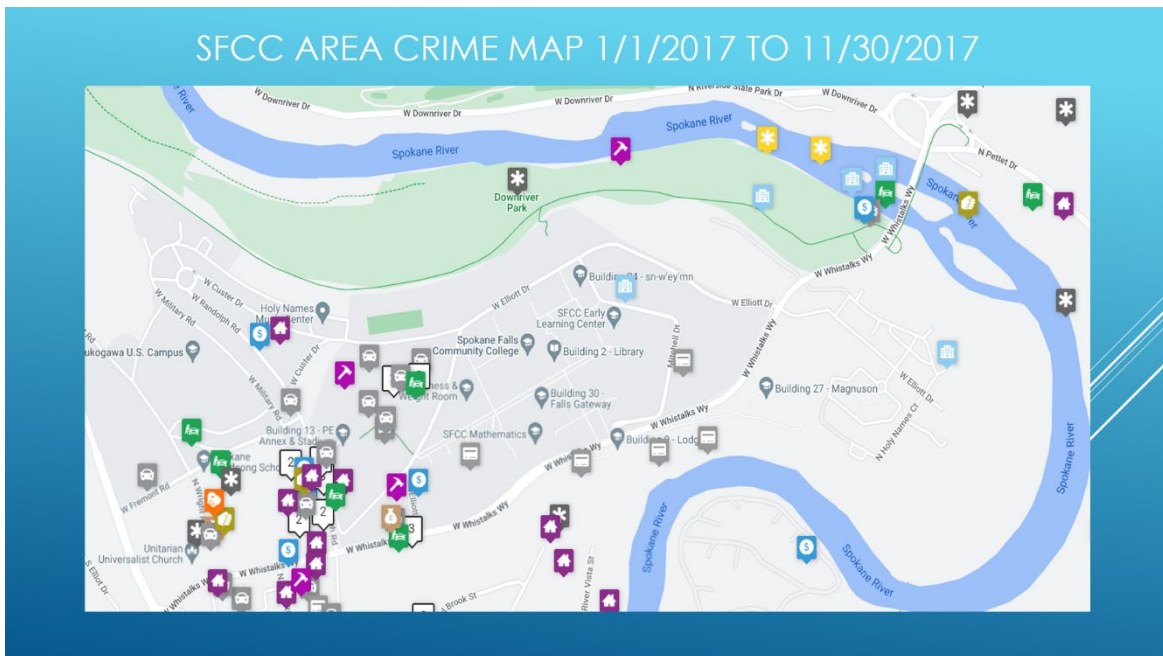


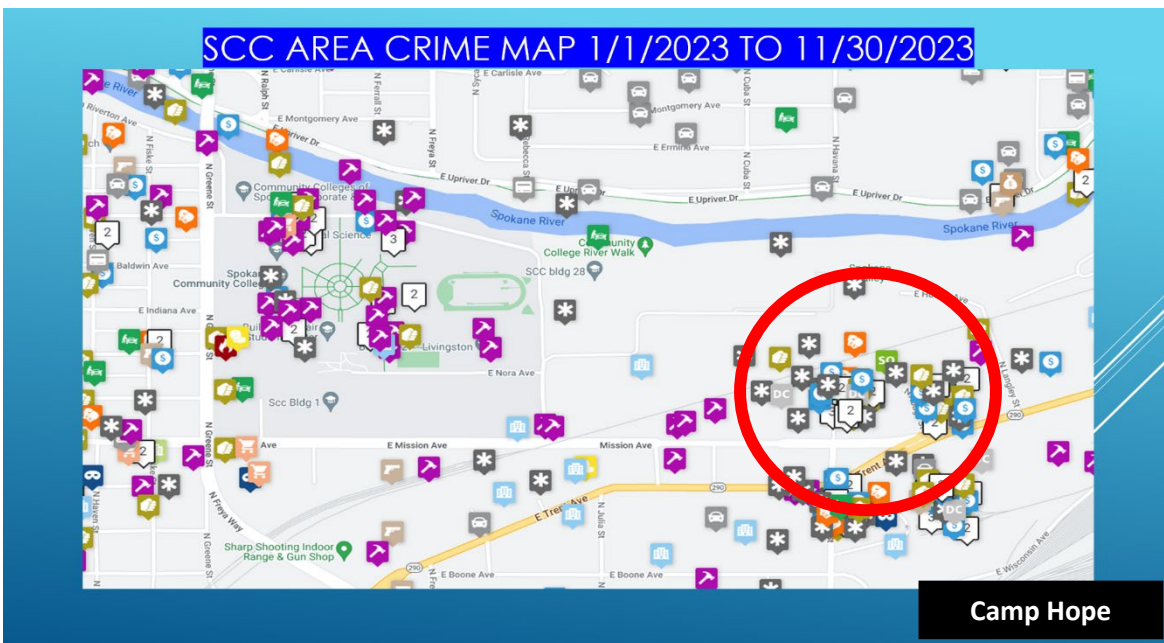
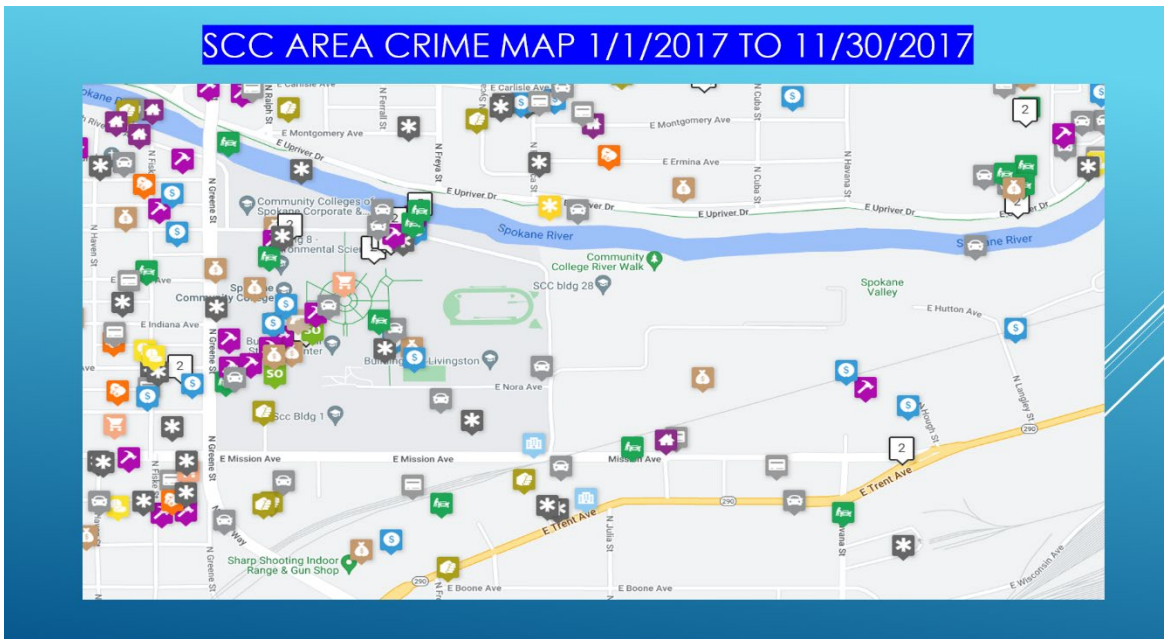
In 2017, Catholic Charities built 10 apartment buildings providing 240 low-income units known as the Copper River housing development located just east of Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC). Additionally, Catholic Charities developed a separate 76-unit housing site meant to house homeless families and repurposed a 30,000 square foot convent to serve as transitional housing for those who have been recently released from incarceration.



The ever-changing landscape surrounding both college campuses has had a negative impact that has spilled over onto both SCC and SFCC campuses. Increased residents at Camp Hope and Copper River Apartments created an unwelcomed presence of violence, mental health issues, loitering, drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism, theft, and misuse of college property to name a few.

Crime Statistics: The crime maps on the following pages provide a stark visualization of the concentration of criminal activity in and around both campuses between 2017 and 2023. Critical events such as the opening of Camp Hope in 2022, the relocation of the SCC STA transit center in 2019, increased activity at Copper River housing development, and the construction of the SFCC STA transit station in 2019 has only exposed our campuses to frequent, unwelcomed activities. Although Camp Hope has permanently closed as of early June of this year, the transient activity in and around SCC continues to be pervasive.





Alcohol Violation	All Other - Criminal	All Other - Non-Criminal	Arson
Assault - Aggravated	Assault - Simple	Attempted Homicide	Burglary - Commercial
Burglary from Motor Vehicle	Burglary - Residential	Citation / Summons	Civil / Court Violation
Death Investigation	DC Disorderly Conduct	Driving Under the Influence (DUI)	Drugs / Narcotics Violation
Family Offense	FI Field Interview	Fraud / Forgery	Harassment / Intimidation
Homicide / Manslaughter	Kidnapping / Human Trafficking	Missing Person / Runaway	Motor Vehicle Theft
Robbery - Commercial	Robbery - Individual	SA Sexual Assault	Sexual Offense
Shoplifting	Theft	Theft - Other	Traffic Incident
Trespassing	Vandalism	Weapons Violation	

Solution:

The Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS) capital construction team submitted a Minor Works, Program request for the 23-25 biennium for campus security upgrades and received an allocation of \$1,564,705 per campus with the intent to increase the security posture on both campuses and limit access to those with official CCS business.

The scope of the security upgrade packages include:

- Upgrade exterior and interior surveillance system with the latest technology in human detection and analytics and add additional surveillance cameras in high-risk areas.
- Upgrade existing interior and exterior access control systems and add access controls to all exterior doors that currently do not have this capability.

With this scope in mind, the capital construction team has partnered with Integrus Architecture to conduct a scoping study to draft cost estimates. Below are the results of that scoping study and proposed allocation of non-appropriated local funds needed to supplement the appropriated capital funds.

Budget:

<u>SCC 23-145 Security Upgrades:</u>		Funding Source	
Project:	Total Funding	MW Program	SCC Local
Phase 0: Study	94,788.97	-	94,788.97*
Phase 1: Ext. Cam	954,041.00	954,041.00	-
Phase 2: Acc Ctrls	2,358,875.53	435,664.00	1,923,211.53
Phase 3: Int Cam	1,342,294.50	-	1,342,294.50
Total Budget	4,750,000.00	1,389,705.00**	3,360,295.00

*Initially budgeted \$175K SCC Local for the Phase 0 study but ended up costing \$94.7K. Savings has been included in the Phase 2 budget.

**\$175K was allocated to the Greenhouse classroom remodel, leaving a remainder of \$1,389,705 shown above.

<u>SFCC 23-580 Security Upgrades:</u>		Funding Source	
Project:	Total Funding	MW Program	SFCC Local
Security Upgrades	4,750,000.00	1,564,705.00	3,185,295.00

Per the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) Policy Manual, Chapter 6.40.20, non-appropriated, or local funds, for a capital purpose require SBCTC approval and are based on a "recommendation to approve" from the local board of trustees.

Recommendation:

Approve \$6,545,590 in local funding to supplement the SCC and SFCC security upgrade projects so that we can move to pursuing approval for local funding expenditure authority by the SBCTC.

Presented by: Kevin Brockbank
Chancellor
Community Colleges of Spokane

January 16, 2024



Community Colleges of Spokane

DISCUSSION: ALERT OF TENURE CONSIDERATION

January 16, 2024

BACKGROUND

The following faculty members are in their eighth quarter of tenure review and will be considered for tenure by the Board of Trustees at the **March 19, 2024**, Board of Trustee meeting.

In addition, any probationary faculty member who is in less than eight quarters of his/her review process may also be considered, depending on recommendations from his/her tenure review committee.

NAME	DEPARTMENT	COLLEGE
BLACKBURN, SEAN	ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE	SCC
BLAKE, KARMEN	SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	SCC
COMPTON, RENEE	PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT	SFCC
DODD, CLAIRE	BIOLOGY	SCC
HOPKINS, STEPHEN	NURSING	SCC
MCQUEEN, ASHLEE	MATHEMATICS	SFCC

**All completed files for the above faculty members can be located online on the
BOT SharePoint Site
[CCS, BOT Tenure Review - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)**

The timeline established for Board review is as follows:

January 16, 2024:	Alert Board of Trustees of tenure consideration
February 20, 2024:	Executive Session review and discussion of files, if any
March 19, 2024:	Approval/Denial of Tenure

Prepared by: **Samantha Shelton**
Executive Assistant to the Chief Strategy and Administration Officer
1/4/2024

Presented by: **Greg Stevens**
Chief Strategy and Administration Officer



DRAKE COOPER



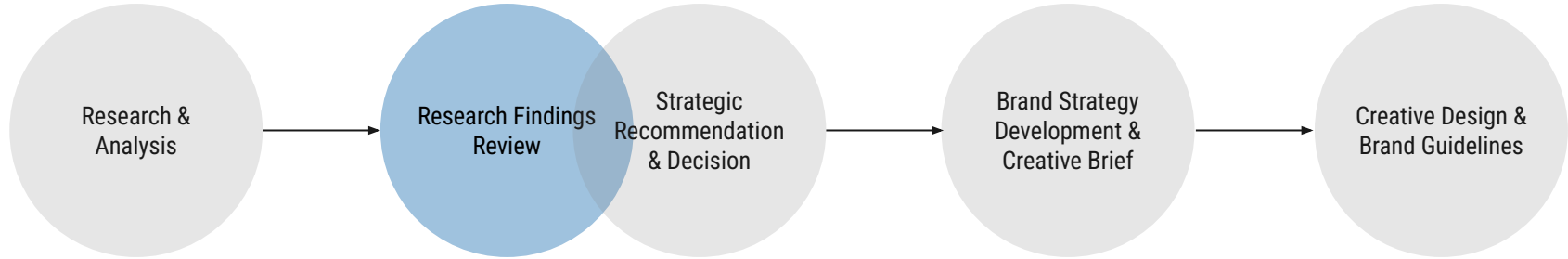
**Community Colleges
of Spokane**

Research Findings

January 2024

Overarching Project Timeline

YOU ARE HERE



PURPOSE:

Audiences won't tell us directly or definitively what decision to make, but their perspectives will guide us down the right path. Our goal is to provide the **right information** from **key audiences** to **inform smart decisions** about the future of the CCS brand.



Agenda

1. Method
2. Participants
3. Results
4. Questions & Discussion





Method

Research Objectives

1. Examine the perceived role of post-high school education in the Spokane area, clarifying motivators and considerations.
2. Analyze perceptions of and beliefs about community colleges.
3. Investigate existing perceptions of CCS, SCC, and SFCC and the relationship between them.
4. Explore perspectives on the current branding/messaging, and define the desired direction for the rebrand.



We worked with the CCS team to establish and recruit for key audiences.

EMPLOYEES



Faculty, Admin, and Executives of CCS, SCC, and SFCC

CUSTOMERS

CCS Students
SCC & SFCC



Non-CCS Students
High Schoolers & Rejectors

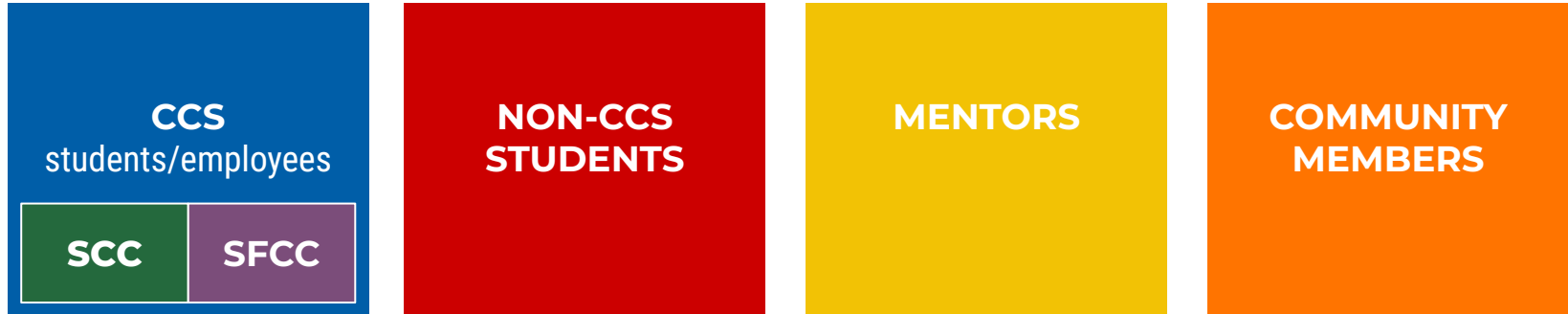


Teachers, Guidance Counselors, and High School Parents



Business Owners, Employers, Community Leaders, DEI Advocates, and Advisory Board Members

There are a lot of participant groups in this report, so we'll use consistent color coding to identify which participant group gave the response.



Greyscale refers to a mix of participant groups



EMPLOYEES



CUSTOMERS

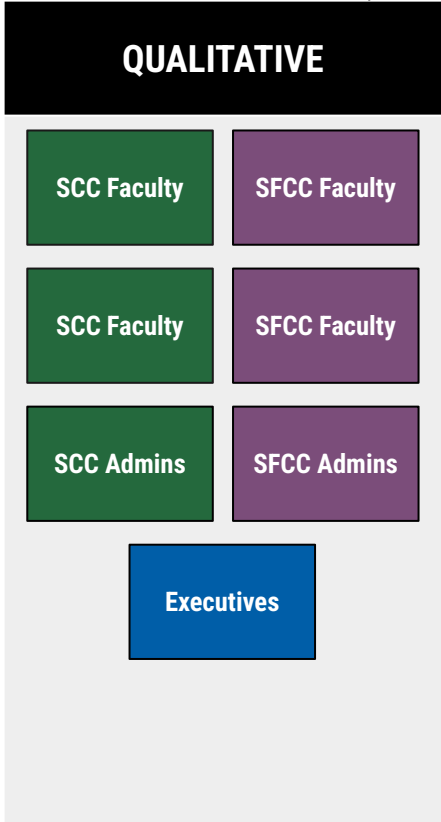
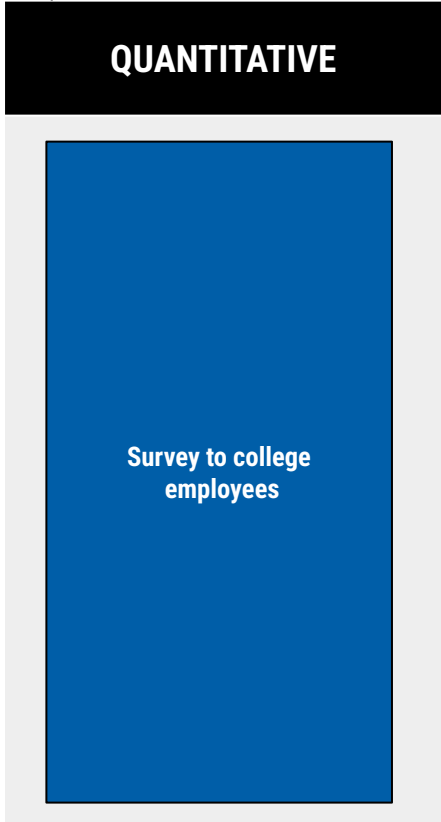
CCS Students



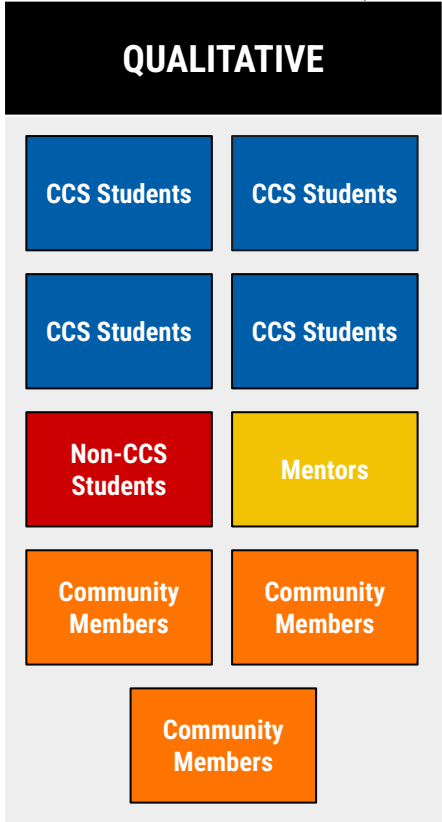
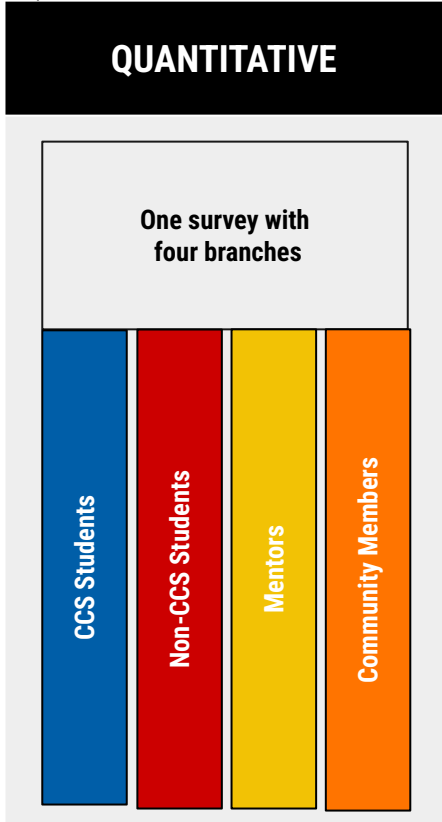
Non-CCS
Students



EMPLOYEES



CUSTOMERS

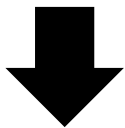




Participants

This research included over 1,300 participants across CCS faculty, admins, and staff, CCS students, high school students, students from other colleges, mentors, and community members.





EMPLOYEES



CUSTOMERS

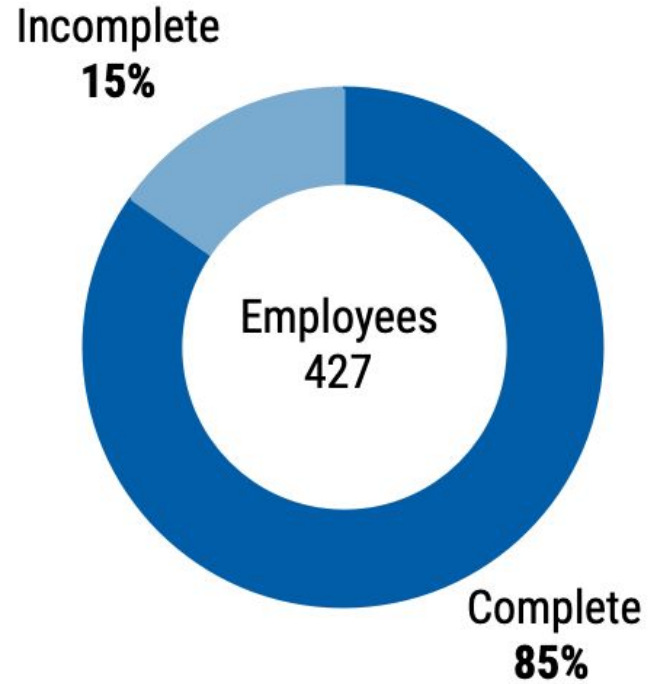
CCS Students



Non-CCS
Students



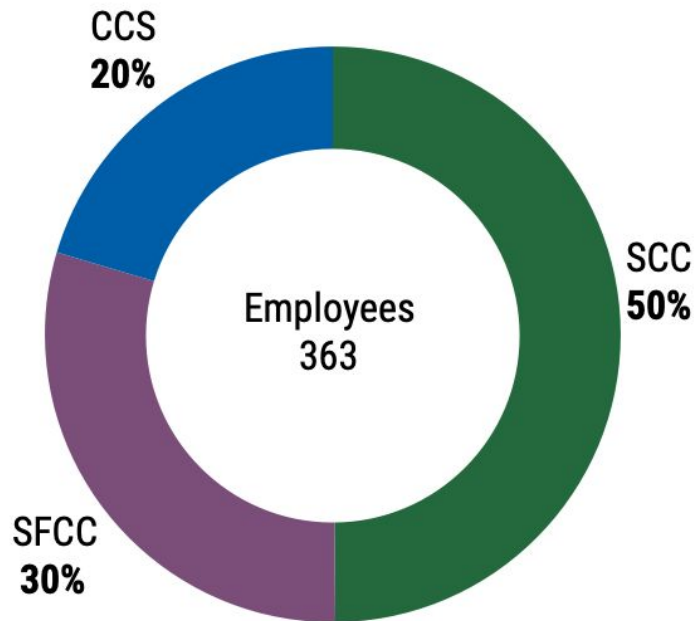
We received 427 survey responses,
85% of which were complete.



Employee's tenures ranged from < 1 year to 46 years, with the largest portion falling into the 5-9 year range.

Employees came from all branches of the organization. The largest proportion of responses were from SCC, mirroring the size of the college.

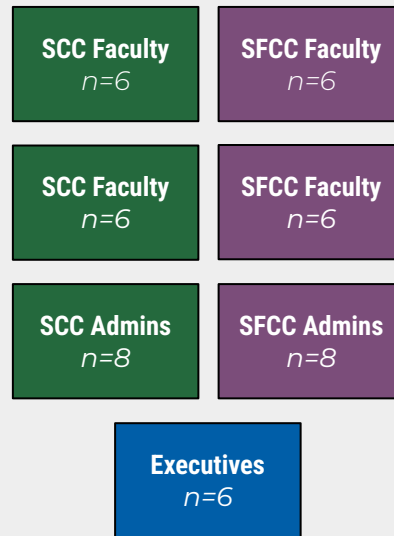
Which organization do you primarily work for?

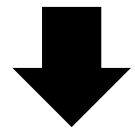


We interviewed 46 employees in small groups, including faculty, admin, and executives:

- + 20 faculty and admin from **SCC**
- + 20 faculty and admin from **SFCC**
- + 6 executives from **CCS**

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS





EMPLOYEES



CUSTOMERS

CCS Students

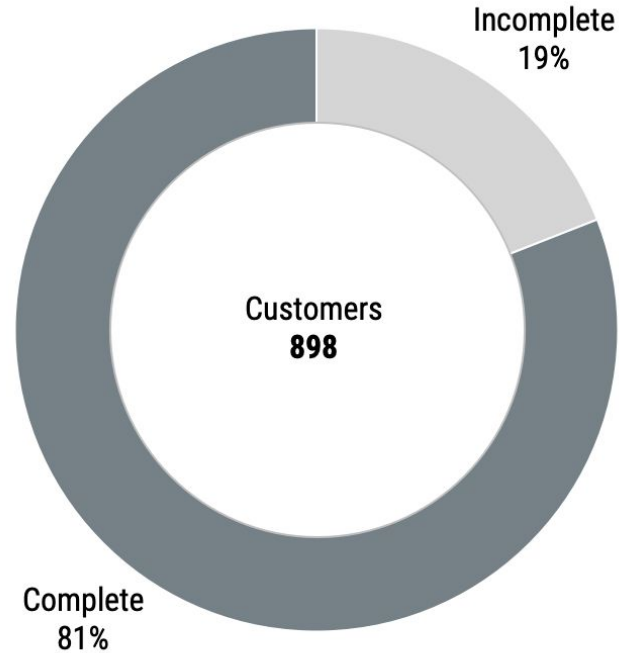


Non-CCS Students

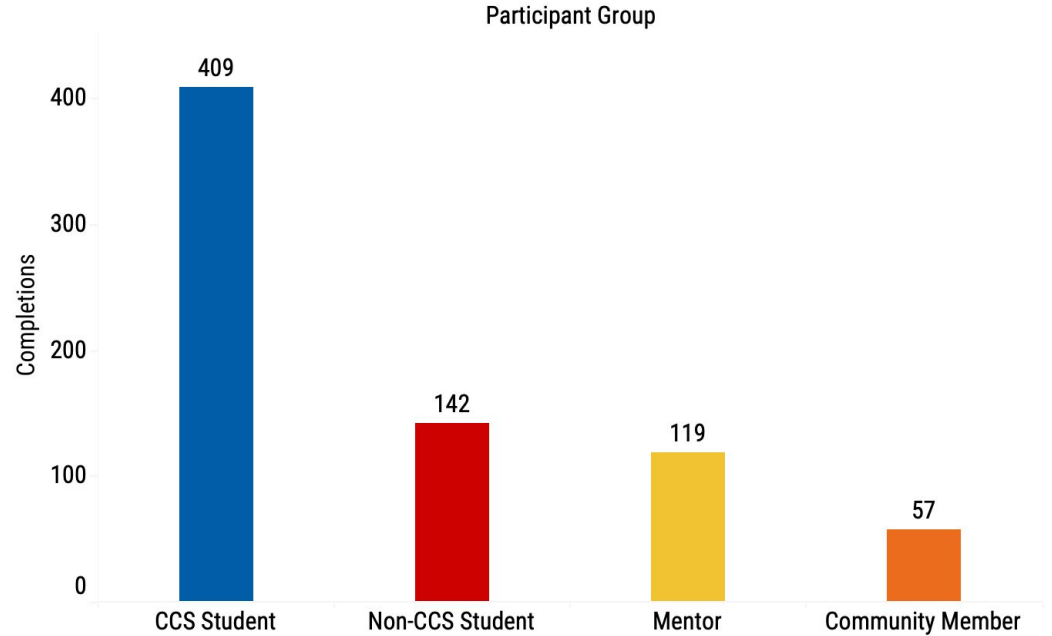


We received 898 total survey responses from customers, 81% of which were complete.

All customers came from one of the six counties that the Community Colleges of Spokane serve, with the majority (90%) from Spokane county.



CCS students represented the largest group of the 727 completed surveys.



In the **CCS Student** group..

- + We received a mix of students from both campuses (**55% SCC** / **45% SFCC**), from a variety of programs, representing a 60-year age range.
- + We took special care to include rural students (102), Running Starts (92), athletes (15), and students in Adult-Based Education (54).

CCS STUDENT MAJORS/FOCUSES



In the focus groups, we maintained this diverse mix, interviewing 87 customers total:

- + 8 were **Non-CCS Students**
- + 51 were **CCS Students**
- + 8 were **Mentors**
- + 20 were **Community Members**

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUPS

CCS Students
n=11

CCS Students
n=14

CCS Students
n=14

CCS Students
n=12

Non-CCS
Students
n=8

Mentors
n=8

Community
Members
n=7

Community
Members
n=5

Community
Members
n=8



Results

**COLLEGE DECISION
FACTORS**

#1

**INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE
REPUTATIONS**

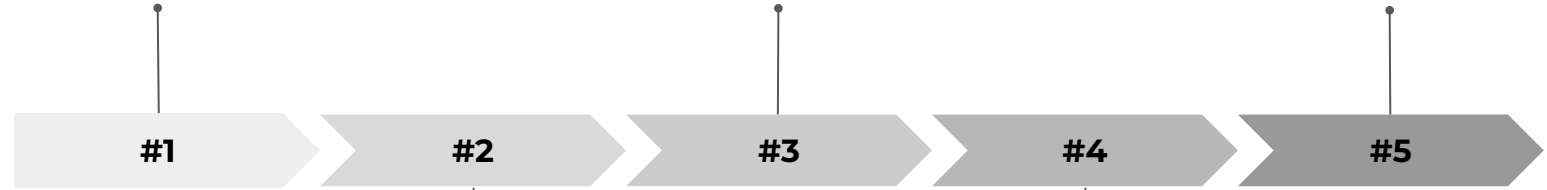
#3

**BRAND &
MESSAGING**

#5

**COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
PERCEPTIONS**

**RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
COLLEGES**



College Decision Factors

All customer audiences endorsed the importance of higher education, rating it somewhere between “Important” and “Very Important” on average.



Unimportant

Of little importance

Moderately important

Important

Very important

■ CCS Students

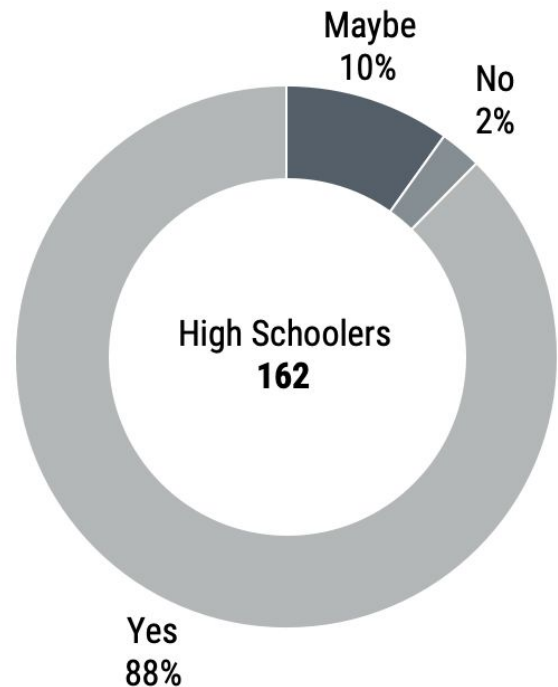
■ Non-CCS Students

■ Mentors

■ Community Members

In your opinion, how important is post-high school education?

High schoolers reinforced this point, with 98% at least considering higher education and 88% definitely planning on it.



Includes Running Start and non-Running Start high schoolers.

After you graduate from high school do you plan to continue your education?

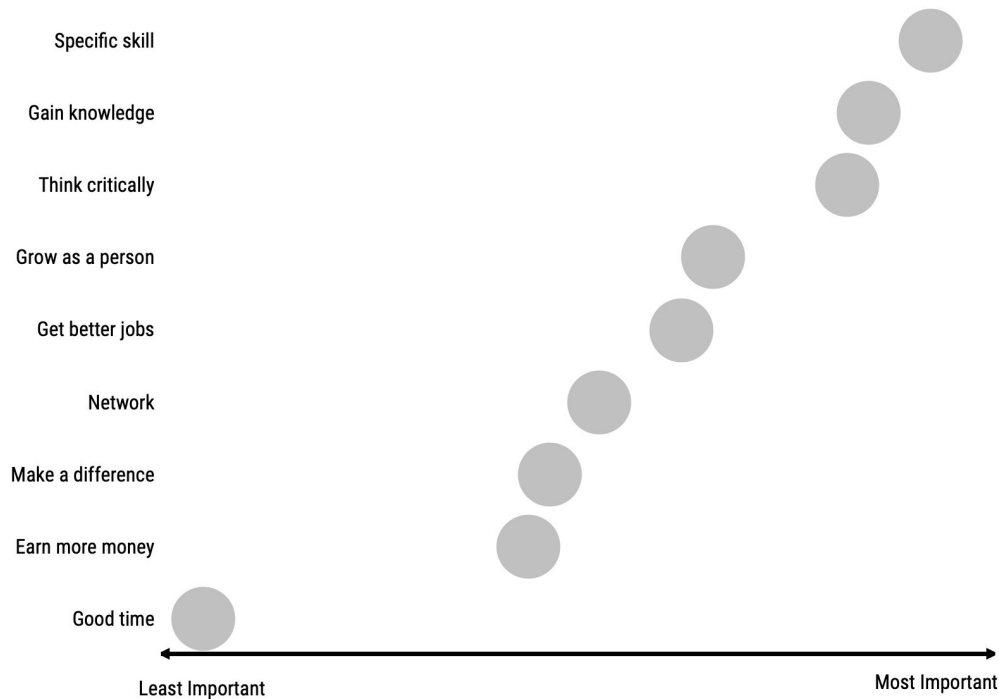
To get a sense of why they see college as so important, we asked customers to rank the importance of various purposes for going to college.

- + To earn more money
- + To gain specific skills or experience in a specific field
- + To grow as a person
- + To learn how to think, expanding perspective and critical thinking abilities
- + To have a good time
- + To gain knowledge or information
- + To make a difference in the world
- + To get better jobs
- + To network and build relationships, personal and professional



Across customer groups, gaining a specific skill, knowledge, and critical thinking ability were the top purposes for college.

However, customer groups prioritized these reasons differently.



For you, what is the purpose of college?

Current students rated specific skill mastery as the most important purpose of college, where mentors and community members prioritized more general critical thinking ability.

CCS Students

1. Specific skill
2. Gain knowledge
3. Think critically

Non-CCS Students

1. Specific skill
2. Think critically
3. Gain knowledge

Mentors

1. Think critically
2. Specific skill
3. Gain knowledge

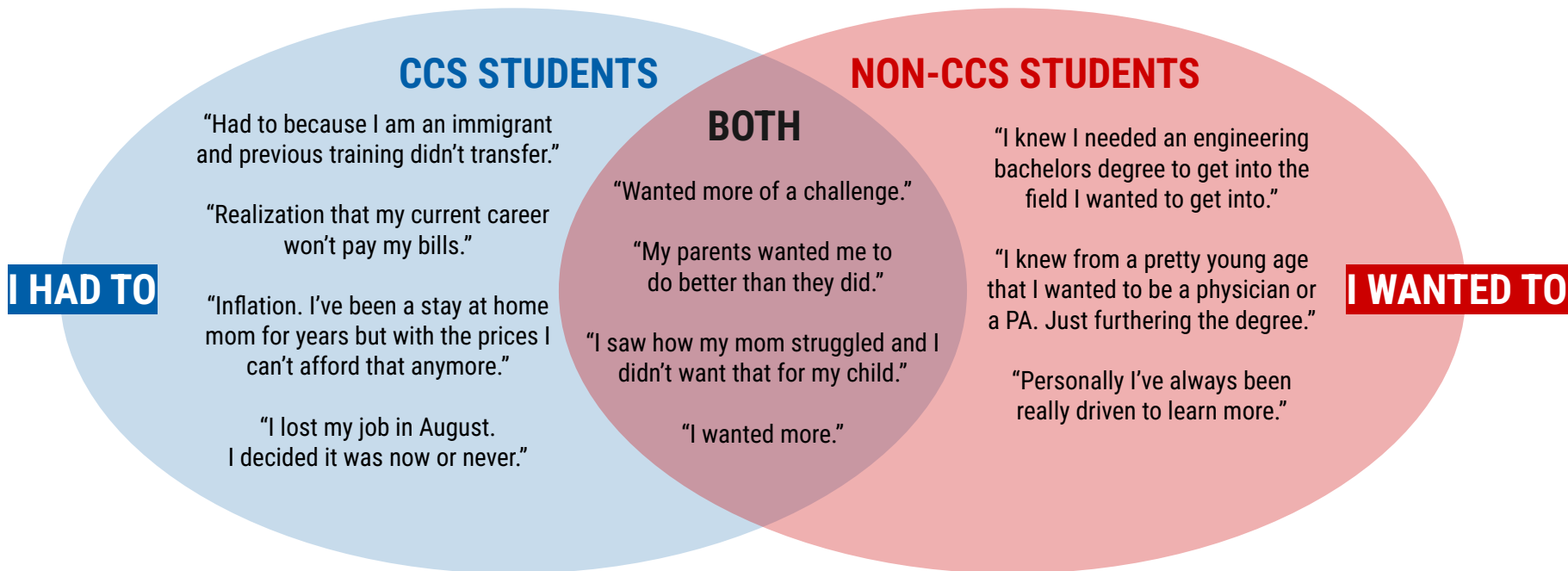
Community Members

1. Think critically
2. Specific skill
3. Gain knowledge

“Doing it for the joy of learning!?
Like who can afford it!?”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Both CCS and Non-CCS students were motivated by the desire for a better future. However, CCS Students tended to be motivated by extrinsic need, while Non-CCS Students cited intrinsic motivation.



When choosing a higher ed institution, customers consider:

What do I want to do and can this college take me there?

ALIGNMENT WITH GOALS

“Knowing your goals and what your path should look like.” “Where does your passion lie and where can you learn how to do it?” “Will it lead me to the track I want to do?”

Is it feasible for me?

CONVENIENCE

“For it to work with your life.” “It fit in with my life.” “How it meets the availability of the prospective student.” “Making it fit, timewise.”

What will I get for what I pay?

VALUE CALCULATION

“How much is it going to cost for what I'm going to be able to do?” “Return on investment.” “Low cost, high value.” “Best cost benefit.” “Cost and potential earnings.”

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

“Offer best degree opportunities.” “Best degree options.” “Good for my program.” “Does it offer the program you're looking for?” “What course offerings are available.”

AFFORDABILITY

“Cost for a lot of people is a really big factor.” “I would say cost. It depends on if you have a scholarship.” “Costs have gone up so much.” “If you're going to be able.”

CAREER OUTCOMES

“Good job placement.” “Degree options lead to careers.” “Jobs that are high paying.” “Students who go there are very successful.” “Employable programs.”

Why do you think these are the best colleges? / What do you think are the most important factors to consider when choosing post-high school education/training?

When choosing a higher ed institution, customers consider:

Is it considered good by external measurements?

REFERRALS

"My family went there." "Good recommendations." "Heard good things." "Most people I know go." "Referral from a friend." "Are they happy with their experience in buying this education?"

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

"Higher level of education." "Rigorous academics." "Quality of education & graduation rate." "Academic reputation." "High standards." "Selective in their process." "Challenging to get into." "Credibility of the institutions."

RECOGNITION

"Well known in area." "Highest ranking programs in the Northwest." "Near Ivy League." "Colleges I hear about all the time." "Widely known."

Why do you think these are the best colleges? / What do you think are the most important factors to consider when choosing post-high school education/training?

We Learned:

- + All customer groups consider higher education to be important, but current students are more focused on skill building towards a career.
- + CCS Students tend to see education as the answer to a specific problem or need state.
- + In evaluating higher ed options, customers consider: alignment with goals, feasibility, monetary/career payoff, and external references.

Community College Perceptions

Participants in employee interviews and surveys independently brought up advantages and drawbacks of being a **community** college.



While some employees appreciated the implication of ties to the local community, others felt that this positive was outweighed by negative connotations about the quality of education and students.



- + "There is an assumption made about community colleges not being as nice."
- + "Community colleges are considered subordinate to a 'real college'."
- + "There is a stigma around calling it a 'community college.' It devalues it."
- + "There is the misconception that you go to the community college if you can't cut it somewhere else."
- + "Not just a place for drop outs or never do wells."

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STATUS



- + "I like that our name says Community. We serve the community, we are a part of the community, we're embedded in the community."
- + "Our community could not function without CCS."
- + "We build the workforce backbone of this region."
- + "It's hard to find a person in Spokane who hasn't been touched by one of the schools."

We tested these assumptions among customers, and confirmed that community colleges had a defined reputation as subordinate to four-year universities.

“Universities have better job offers, especially if it’s a well-known program.”

“My friends said that I would get a better education from a university because the professors are better quality.”

“Community Colleges were looked down on.”

“Public perception is that universities are better.”

“It might hold more weight on your resume. Whereas a community college they might not take that as a professional college.”

“They believe the four years makes them better and more suitable for the positions.”

“There's the perception that you're getting a second rate education at a community college. If you're paying less for your education, your education is somehow worse.”

“It’s more prestigious to get a university degree.”

“Prestige that the university holds over the community college.”

“If you say you went to a community college, it’s not as great an achievement.”

“There’s this atmosphere of community colleges being treated more flippantly.”



Beyond reputational differences, customers believed that universities have more advanced degree options, increased campus community, and better academic resources.

**ADVANCED
DEGREE OPTIONS**

"Ability to earn a bachelor's, masters, etc." "Bachelor vs. Associate." "Larger range of degrees." "Universities have a much wider range of options."

**MORE VIBRANT
CAMPUS COMMUNITY**

"Traditional College Experience."
"Dorms." "Community feel and extracurricular activities."
"Mindset and culture."

**BETTER
RESOURCED**

"More extensive campus facilities." "Resources."
"Traditional universities usually retain better professors and have better resources." "Better resources and professionals."

To the best of your knowledge, what is the difference between a community college and a traditional, 4-year university?

CCS Students in particular were acutely aware of socioeconomic assumptions about community colleges and felt some resentment towards more “privileged” university students.

ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

- + “People assume that if you’re at a Community College you can’t afford a traditional university.”
- + “You’re poor, so you’re going to SCC!”
- + “It gets viewed as taking a handout, kind of in the same vein as food stamps.”
- + “You get looked down on and are considered lower class. It does feel insulting.”



RESENTMENT

- + “It’s just who has more money to flash around and say they’re better.”
- + “Four year university is for the wealthier people.”
- + “Private colleges are in this secure bubble.”
- + “Elitist. It feels like they’re better.”
- + “They’re a little bit more entitled.”

To the best of your knowledge, what is the difference between a community college and a traditional, 4-year university?

CCS Students recognized that the assumptions about community colleges are often inaccurate, but continued to feel their pull.

“It’s a name brand. You’re going to want the Apple phone because everyone has an Apple phone, but at the end of the day they both make calls.

...I have an Apple phone.”



Customers also identified some positive and descriptive differences between community colleges and traditional, four-year universities.

LOWER COST

“Cost is half.” “More affordable”
“Cheaper and faster.” “Lower
tuition.” “Start education while
spending less money.”

GEARED TOWARDS CAREER

“Train you for a specific job.”
“Real world skills first.” “Focused
on your career.” “Training and
skills to go directly to workforce.”
“You’re just learning skills for
certain field.”

GEARED TOWARDS TRANSFER

“Stepping Stone.” “Bridge to 4
year.” “1st Step.” “Prepare for
University.” “Helps you build the
basic necessary foundation.” “A
great starting point.”

FOR NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

“Flexible for all life stages.”
“Education to the non-traditional
student.” “For everyone.” “More
diverse and inclusive.” “More
opportunities for people with less
time and availability.”

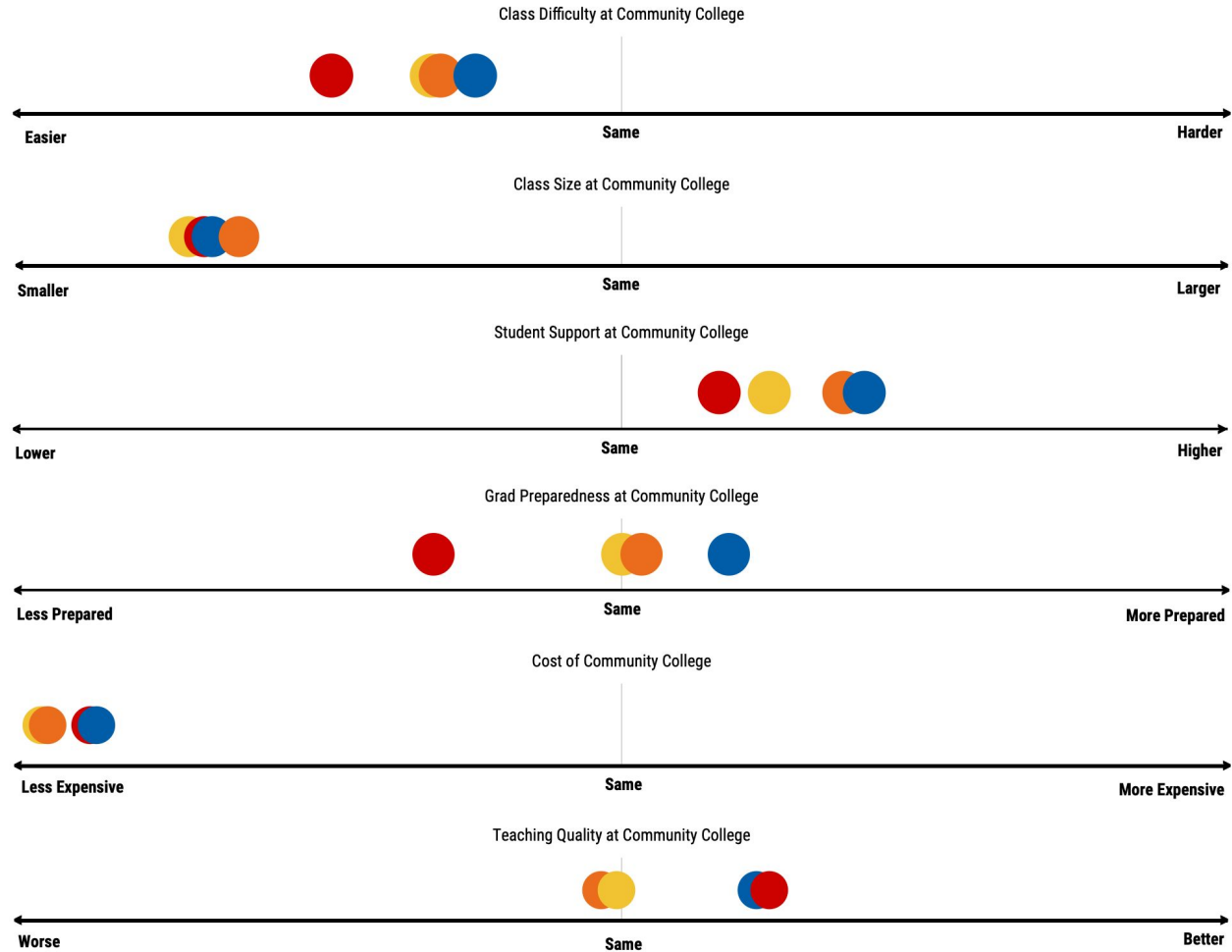
To the best of your knowledge, what is the difference between a community college and a traditional, 4-year university?

To understand and quantify these differences, we asked customers to directly compare features of a community college with those of a university.



Customers described the classes at community college as easier, but also noted smaller class sizes, more student support and lower costs compared to universities.

- CCS Students
- Non-CCS Students
- Mentors
- Community Members



Compared to traditional, 4-year universities, _____ at community colleges are: Less /The Same/More



We Learned:

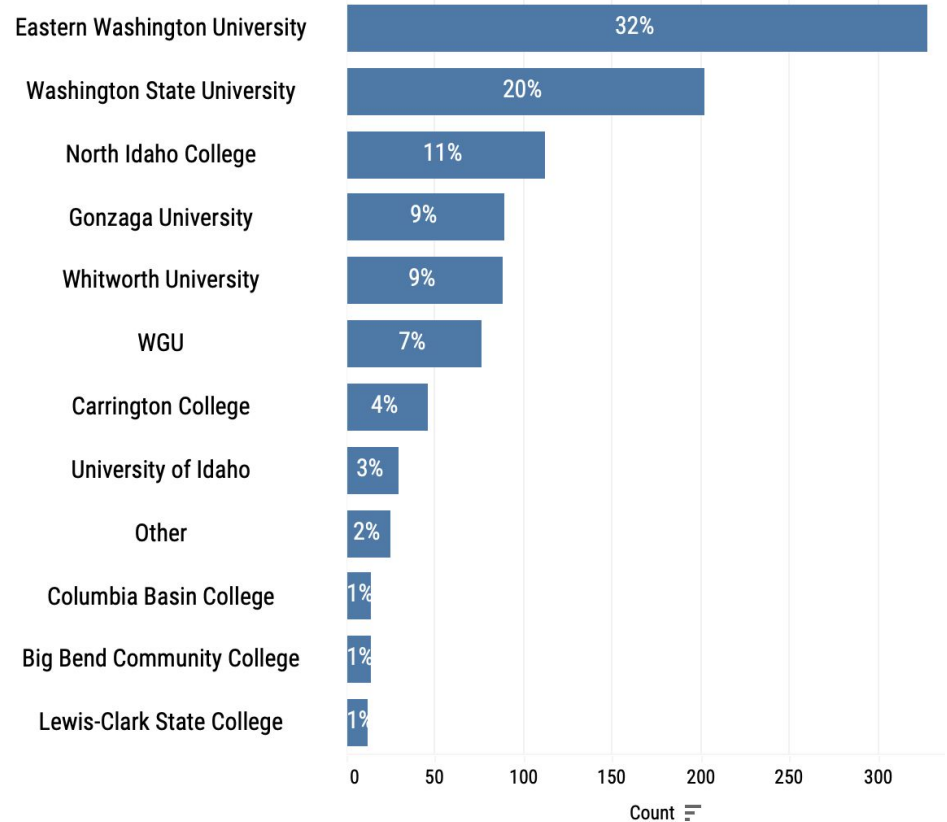
- + Customers and employees alike said community colleges have a reputation for being subordinate to four year universities—offering a lower quality of education, and meant for (economically/ academically) struggling students.
- + Community college status also comes with some positive, descriptive associations around smaller class sizes, more student support, and more affordable tuition.

Competitors

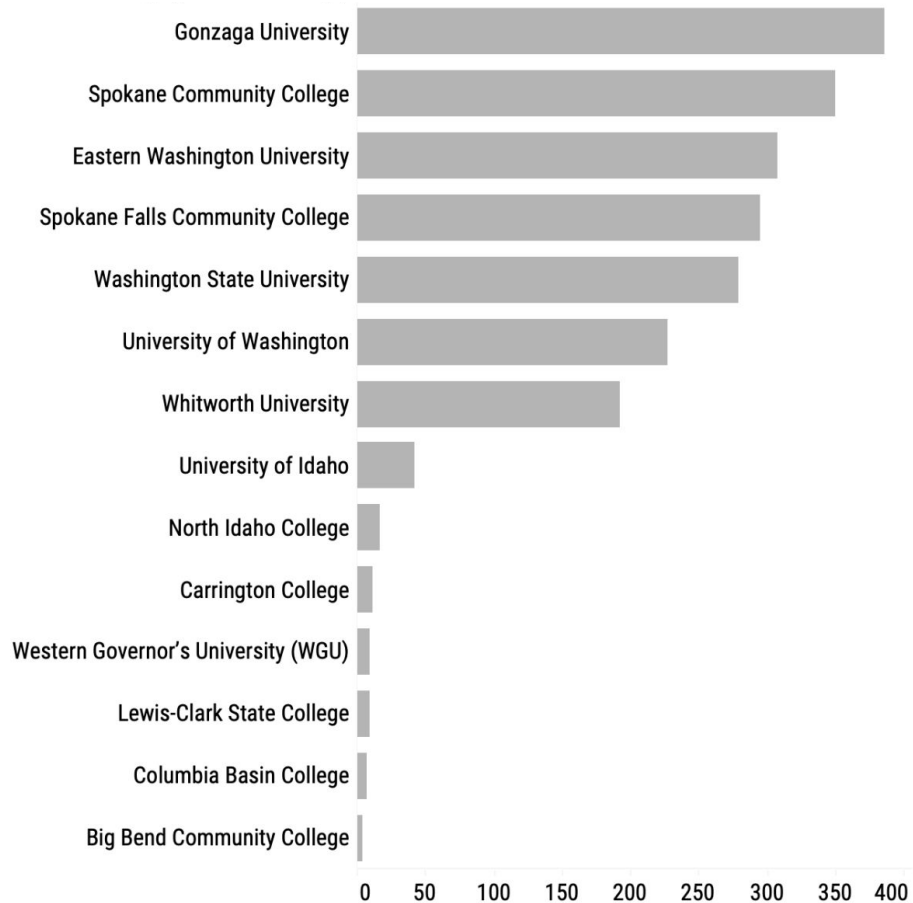
Employees considered Eastern Washington University and Washington State University to be the colleges' top competitors.

Note: Though we didn't include SCC and SFCC on this list, employees from both SCC and SFCC wrote in that the other college was their top competitor.

When students are considering enrolling at one of the colleges that make up the Community Colleges of Spokane, what other higher education competitors do they explore? (Select up to 3)



Customers validated employees' hunches, listing Gonzaga, Eastern Washington University, and Washington State University alongside SCC and SFCC as the top area colleges. However, Gonzaga was judged as being in a different tier financially.



What do you think are the best colleges in your area?

We focused on Eastern Washington University and Washington State University as proximal CCS competitors to get a sense of the higher education landscape from the customer's perspective.

Note: We will also deliver a competitive analysis that emphasizes area colleges' external messaging rather than customers' perceptions of them.





WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY IS KNOWN FOR:

What is Washington State University known for?
What kinds of students go there?

- + **Party School:** "I can attest to the party school thing. I live a block or two from campus and there are keggers." "There's more of a party vibe there. Work hard, play hard." "I agree with the party school thing, with the Greek system."
- + **Classic College Experience:** "Really strong culture." "The major college experience." "The bread and butter college for the area."
- + **Academically Superior to EWU:** "Above Eastern in terms of prowess." "WSU was the premier regional considered alongside UW. A competitive school."
- + **Polished:** "Very proud and presentable." "You're serious about pursuing a goal." "Very put together, they have high goals."





EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IS KNOWN FOR:

What is Eastern Washington University known for?
What kinds of students go there?

- + **Not a First Choice:** “It’s the small town everyone wants to get out of but they wind up coming back.” “A wannabe institution.” “People’s second-choice school.” “If I don’t make it here, I can at least go to Eastern.”
- + **Sports:** “Sport-oriented.” “Football fans.” “Big red field.” “Volleyball team.”
- + **Not Rigorous:** “You can get in with not-the-best academics.” “Glorified high school.” “Glorified community college.”
- + **Local Option:** “The ones who want to be closer to home.” “Mostly commuters from Spokane.” “More of a commuter campus.”
- + **Affordable Four-Year:** “Affordable cost.” “Less expensive option that still offers the four year experience.” “Cost-effective.”



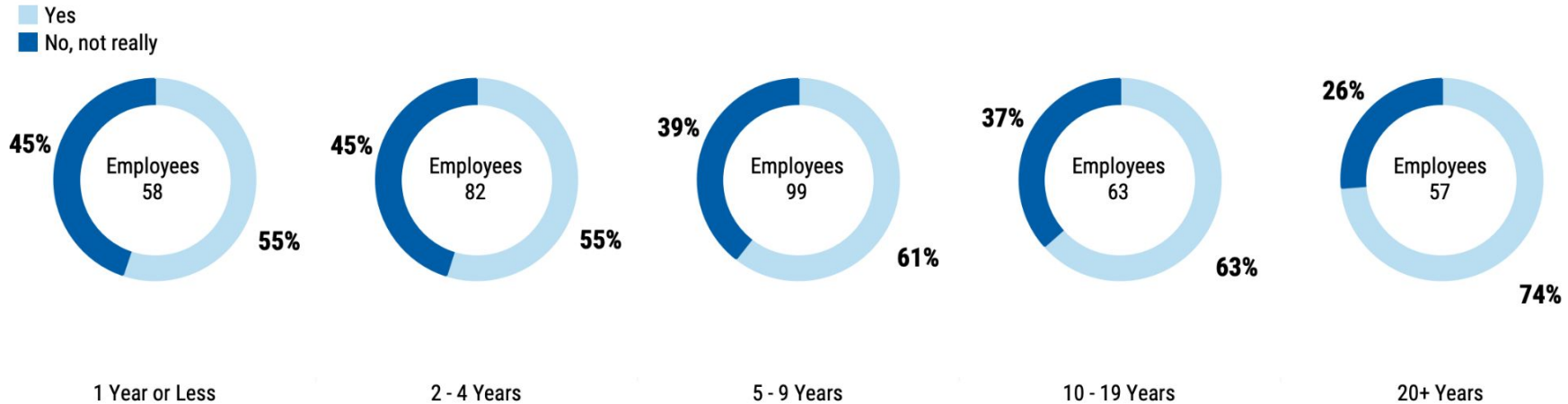
We Learned:

- + Eastern Washington University and Washington State University are considered comparable alternatives to the community colleges of Spokane.
- + Washington State University is perceived as a party school offering a traditional college experience, while Eastern Washington University is viewed as a second choice, positioned between a community college and a four-year university.

Reputation

COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF SPOKANE

While 61% of employees said that CCS had a reputation for something specific in the community, this perception varied by length of time working for CCS, with longer-tenured employees more likely to agree.



Is there anything specific the Community Colleges of Spokane are known for in the community?

Despite this assurance that CCS has an established reputation, many employees felt that the colleges were battling low awareness.

“We’re the best-kept secret.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“A student once told me ‘I didn’t know you existed!’”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“As a 45-year resident of Eastern Washington, I can attest to the fact that **our brand is simply not out there**. If we change the brand, but do not change how the brand is disseminated to the community, we will simply find ourselves in the same situation in the future.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Employees also expressed concern that naming the Community Colleges of Spokane created confusion and detracted from the established reputation of the included colleges.



**Community Colleges
of Spokane**

“Students associate with one of the colleges, not the district. District branding is confusing and has no meaning.”

“Why CCS? I don't think many know what that is. I didn't until I worked here, but I've lived here in Spokane for nearly 30 years.”

“No one ever asks about CCS... CCS doesn’t make sense to them. It doesn’t fit into their understanding of what we do.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“Not one student identifies with CCS.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“I spend my time clarifying which college is which. The names are similar, the initials are similar.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“What is CCS? CCS as a term doesn’t make sense to people.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

We asked CCS Employees to articulate what CCS offers compared to area competitors to reveal precise differentiators.



Key Differentiators

APPLIED

“A place where you can go to school for two years and have a career at the end of it.”

“We are the only ones who put as much emphasis on finding students employment.”

“A great place to learn a living that keeps on giving. A career that lasts a lifetime.”

“A more real-world view of the professions they are choosing.”

INCLUSIVE

“We have a softer front door. It’s okay to show up more misguided.”

“We serve students from birth to death row.”

“It is ok to have a messy past... there is hope for everyone here.”

“We’re welcoming of students who don't fit the traditional mold of college students.”

COMPREHENSIVE

“The community colleges have something to offer you no matter who you are or where you’re coming from.”

“[We have a] comprehensive offering of programs that targets multiple populations instead of just one or two.”

“Something for everyone. If you want to go into a technical field, we got you. Want to go into a more formal academic field? We still got you.”

SUPPORTIVE

“[We] go above and beyond to help the students.”

“We are rooting for every single student to be successful.”

“Someone has to run the other direction to fail here.”

“Everyone owns a piece... in getting students through. We have a sense of accountability to the outcome of the students.”



Key Differentiators

PERSONALIZED

"[We have more] ability to interact more with students on a one-on-one basis."

"Smaller class sizes and instructors who care about students."

"We are serious about breaking the model of students as passengers on their educational train and working to engage them individually."

RESPONSIVE

"Innovative throughout the years, adaptive to needs."

"Flexible instructional delivery. 'Yes we can help you!' compared to 'That is the way we do it here.'"

"We support students faster and know how to pivot to their needs better."

VALUE-ORIENTED

"Great education + Lower cost = Community colleges are the logical choice!"

"We provide a quality education that is on par with, and often exceeds, 4-year universities."

"Cost and efficiency - but branding should also emphasize that this does not come at the expense of quality."

PROFESSORS

"These are professors that care about teaching, not research or tenure."

"Instructors who are... deeply connected to the subject they teach as academics and working professionals."

"We have very qualified instructors whose passion is teaching, not research. They love what they do."

TRANSFORMATIVE

"A place where students can transform their lives."

"We transform lives and expand opportunities for students."

"We change lives."

"For students looking to rebuild themselves and restart their journey."



Moving value exchange:

Depends on the belief that the quality of education is equal.

What differentiates the Community Colleges of Spokane from competitors?



Employees found it challenging to describe the typical CCS student because the student populations are so diverse.

“[The student body is] as diverse in demographic and direction as the whole of Spokane.”

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Employees described CCS students as strong and resilient but often lacking confidence, requiring reassurance of their belonging and competence.

STRONG

“The students are strong - they don't want to give up.”

“It's powerful. We are strong.”

“They are experts in the art of overcoming adversity.”

“Our students are tremendously courageous. They are here against a lot of odds.”

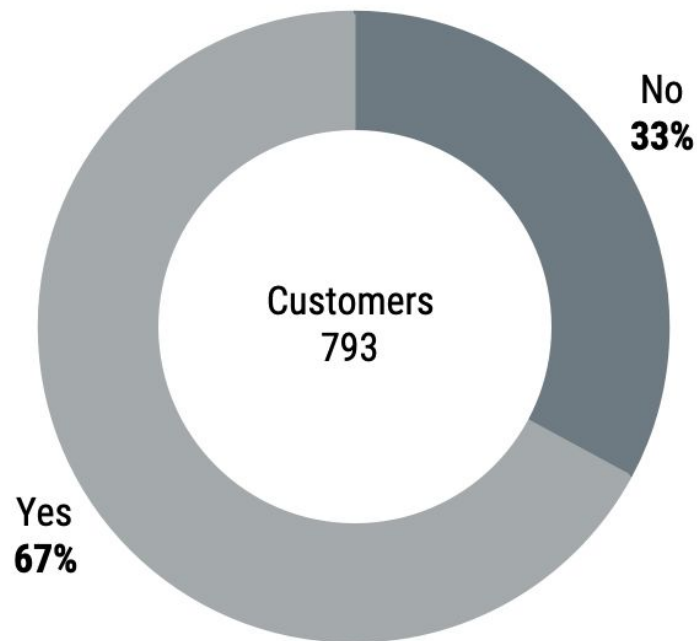
SELF-DOUBTING

“We help them understand they ARE college material... They often have gotten a message along their journey that they aren't.”

“We're helping students understand that they belong in college.”

“We want to grab the students who don't think they can, and show them that they can!”

We tested CCS awareness among customer audiences (including current CCS Students), and found that only 67% of customers had heard of the Community Colleges of Spokane prior to taking the survey—low for colleges of this size, and much lower than awareness of either SCC or SFCC.



Before taking this survey, which of the following had you heard of?

Customers validated employee suspicions around the lack of awareness, identifying improved communication efforts as the most substantial untapped opportunity for the colleges.

What do you think is the biggest untapped opportunity for the Community Colleges of Spokane?

- + “I don’t really see a lot of advertisements for them.”
- + “Just make it a wider audience of what they’re known for.”
- + “I don’t really see billboards downtown for the Community Colleges of Spokane. Commercials, billboards, stuff like that.”
- + “Maybe more outreach into schools. Like people who go in and talk to classes so people know what their options are.”
- + “These things need to be seeded and encouraged earlier because kids start thinking about it YOUNG.”
- + “Not well represented in high school.”
- + “More advertisements in general.”



Customers also quickly confirmed confusion around CCS terminology.

- + “The athletes are confused because they compete for CCS but that’s not where they go to school.”
- + “It [CCS] means nothing to me.”
- + “When they ask ‘What is CCS?’ you’re like I don’t really know.”
- + “When I saw CCS everywhere I was like what does that stand for?”
- + “I didn’t know the term CCS until this time last year.”
- + “They (students) think Community College of Spokane is a third campus.”

Do you think there is any confusion about the relationship between the colleges? If yes → What aspects are confusing?



“A resource base for students. They provide a list of scholarships.”

“SCC , SFCC, Community College of Spokane & Carrington Community College.”

“It is like SFCC and CCS are underneath it.”

“It's a public community college”

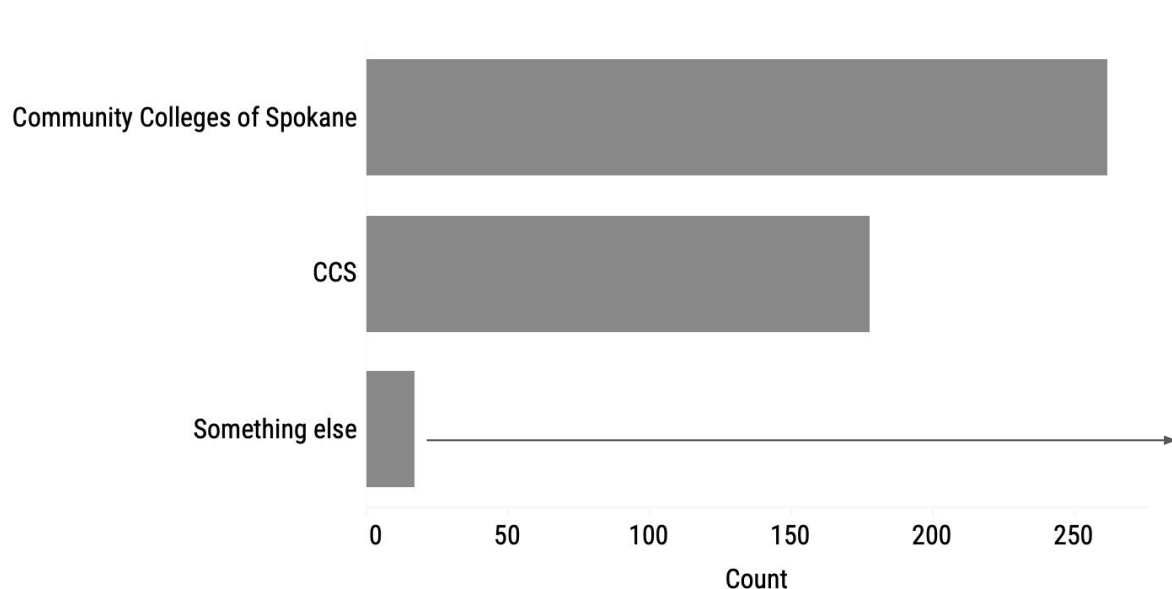
Asking participants to describe the Community Colleges of Spokane revealed misunderstanding and uncertainty, even among current students.

“All branches of SCC in different locations.”

“It another place you can go if you can't get into class at scc or sfcc.”

“FCC and the Falls and Carrington (I think).”

This confusion may stem from the tendency for people refer to the colleges by their individual names rather than their district designation.



“Nobody talks about it in this way.”

“Most people don’t. They either use SCC or SFCC.”

“No one calls it anything.”

“The individual community college they attend.”

“Rarely call it these, most specify the campus.”

“Most people just say SCC or SFCC.”

What do most people call the Community Colleges of Spokane?

We Learned:

- + Communication efforts face low awareness and pervasive confusion around what CCS is.
- + CCS is currently overshadowed by the better-known colleges that comprise it.

Reputation

SPOKANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE &
SPOKANE FALLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

We deliberately asked employees from each college to answer questions both about the college they work for and their sister school to assess disparities in perception.

Many participants **expressed discomfort with or inability to answer** because of a lack of knowledge or familiarity. This reaction illustrates the sense of distance between the colleges.

“N/A.”

“Unknown.”

“Idk.”

“?”

“Not familiar.”

“Don’t know.”

“I have worked for SCC for 8+ years and I know almost nothing about SFCC.”

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

SCC was described as more vocational, practical, and technically-focused, and SFCC as more academic, creative, and transfer-focused.

SCC



SFCC



What three adjectives would you use to describe SCC/SFCC.

And yet, there was the nagging concern that this stark differentiation fails to capture the full breadth of course offerings.

“There is the perception that SFCC is all transfer and SCC is all technical, when the reality is that SFCC is 25% technical and SCC is 25% transfer.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Physical differences between the campuses were evident as well.

SCC

Trades
Diverse Affordable Helpful
Accessible Supportive
Inclusive **Technical Industrial**
Friendly Practical Welcoming
Comprehensive Innovative
Community Vocational

SFCC

Artsy
Creative Accessible **Small**
Affordable Artistic **Academic**
Friendly **Welcoming Beautiful**
Supportive **Transfer**
Community Inclusive Traditional
Innovative

What three adjectives would you use to describe SCC/SFCC.

“On Google Earth, SFCC looks like a campus and SCC looks like a prison. SFCC has curb appeal.”

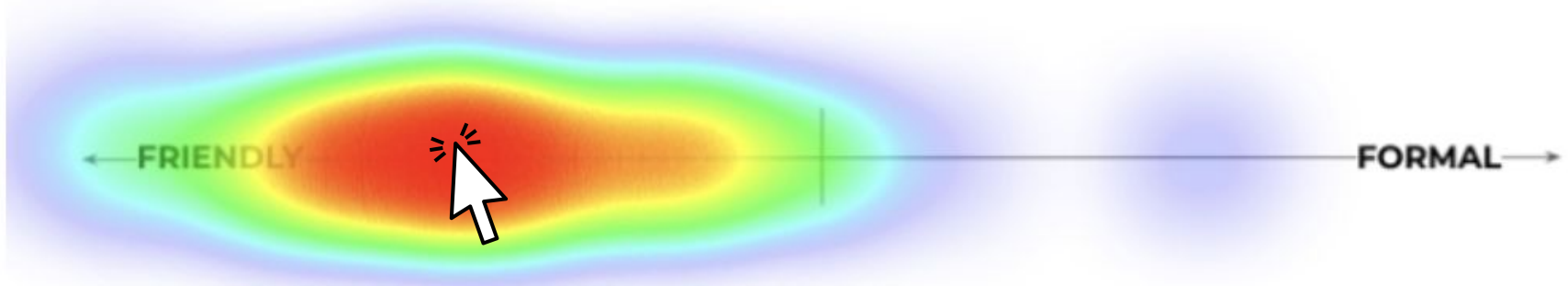
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Strikingly, the majority of the descriptors participants chose for each college were overlapping.



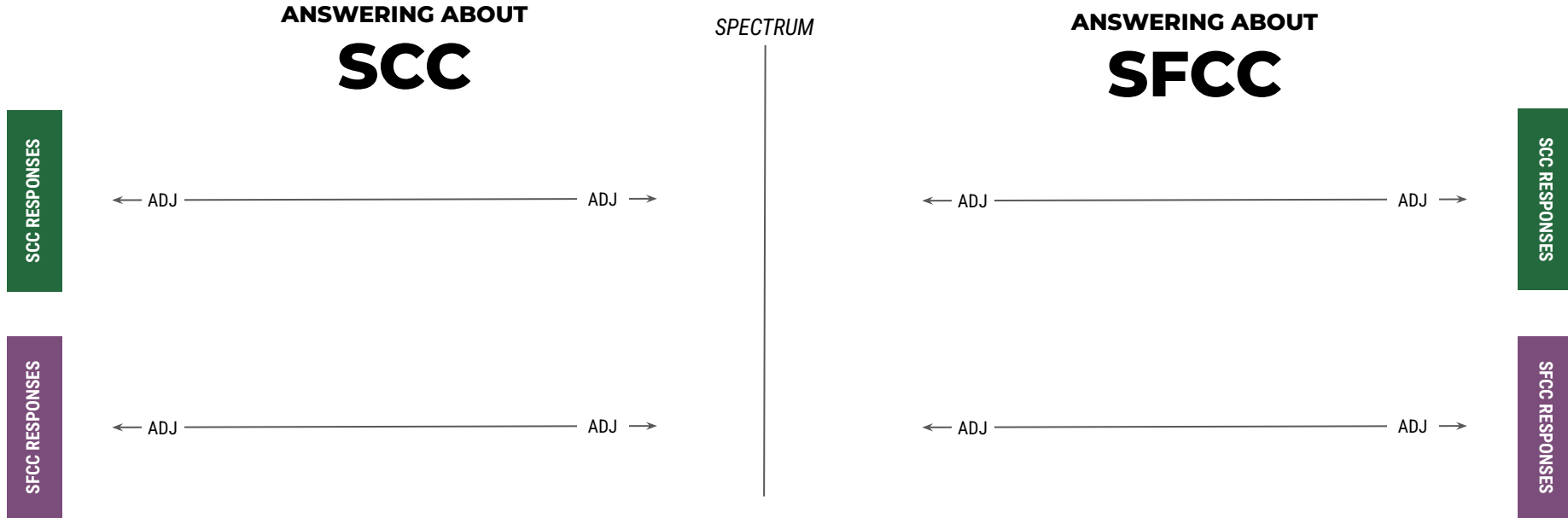
What three adjectives would you use to describe SCC/SFCC.

To get a sense of core similarities and differences between the colleges, we asked employees to click where they thought SCC and SFCC belonged on several spectrums.



On these heatmaps, red indicates the most-clicked areas, followed by yellow, green, blue, and purple sequentially.

We've isolated SCC employees from SFCC employees to showcase differences in perception.



what college is being described

ANSWERING ABOUT

SCC

SPECTRUM

ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

SCC RESPONSES

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

SFCC RESPONSES

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

SCC RESPONSES

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

SFCC RESPONSES

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

ANSWERING ABOUT

SCC

SPECTRUM

ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

SCC RESPONSES

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

SCC RESPONSES

SFCC RESPONSES

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

← ADJ ————— ADJ →

SFCC RESPONSES

who is describing it

On a scale from friendly to formal, the SCC and SFCC are more friendly. Both colleges described themselves as the friendlier of the two.

ANSWERING ABOUT

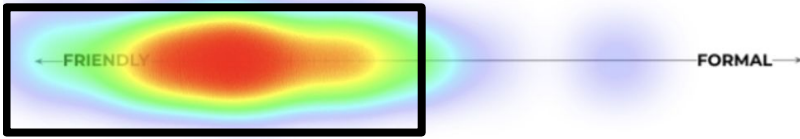
SCC

FRIENDLY TO FORMAL

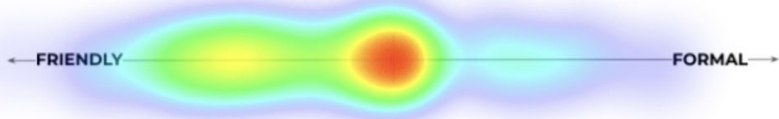
ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

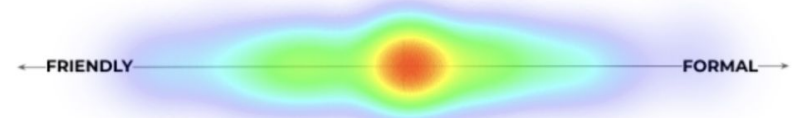
SCC RESPONSES



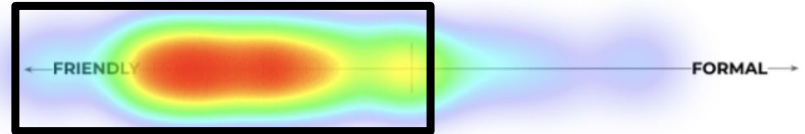
SFCC RESPONSES



SCC RESPONSES



SFCC RESPONSES



Click where you think the college belongs on the scale from friendly to formal.

SCC and SFCC are both more collaborative than competitive. Again, both colleges described themselves as the more collaborative of the two.

ANSWERING ABOUT

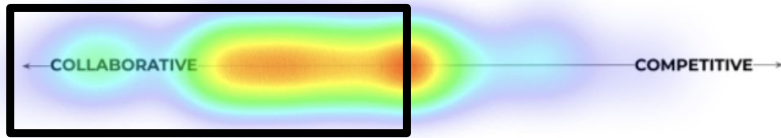
SCC

COLLABORATIVE TO COMPETITIVE

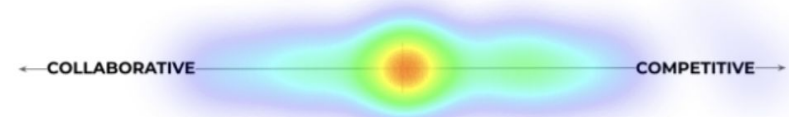
ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

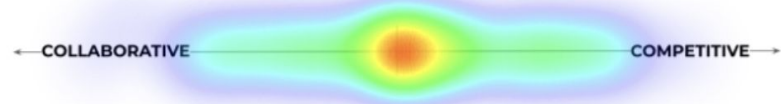
SCC RESPONSES



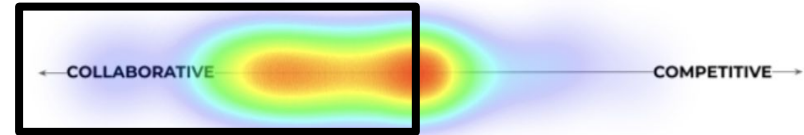
SCC RESPONSES



SFCC RESPONSES



SFCC RESPONSES



Click where you think the college belongs on the scale from collaborative to competitive.

SCC and SFCC are more innovative than classic. Following the same trend, both colleges described themselves as the more innovative of the two.

ANSWERING ABOUT

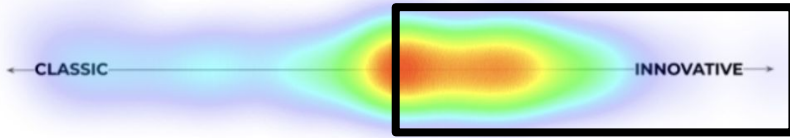
SCC

CLASSIC TO INNOVATIVE

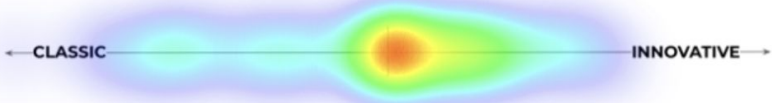
ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

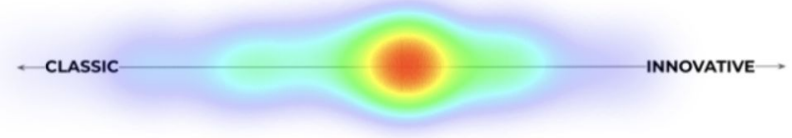
SCC RESPONSES



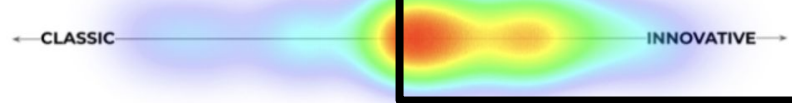
SFCC RESPONSES



SCC RESPONSES



SFCC RESPONSES



Click where you think the college belongs on the scale from classic to innovative.

SCC and SFCC are more authentic than polished. Both colleges see themselves as the more authentic of the two, with an especially strong effect for SCC.

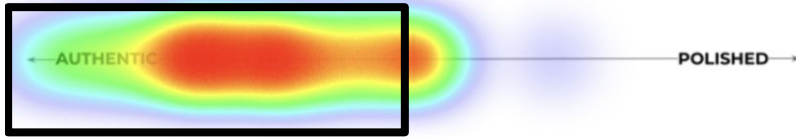
ANSWERING ABOUT

SCC*AUTHENTIC TO POLISHED*

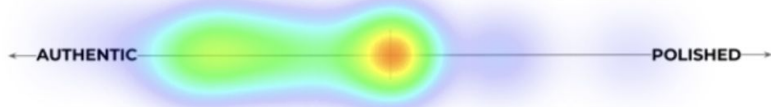
ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

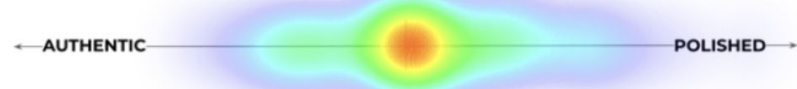
SCC RESPONSES



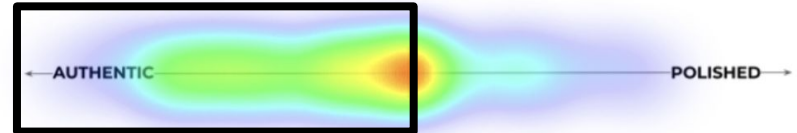
SFCC RESPONSES



SCC RESPONSES



SFCC RESPONSES



Click where you think the college belongs on the scale from authentic to polished.

On a scale from challenging to nurturing, both colleges lean towards nurturing. SFCC perceives itself as especially nurturing.

ANSWERING ABOUT

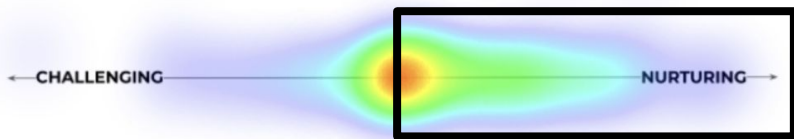
SCC

CHALLENGING TO NURTURING

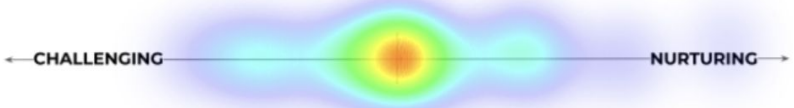
ANSWERING ABOUT

SFCC

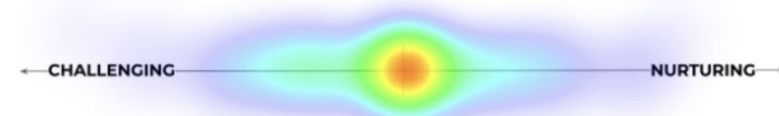
SCC RESPONSES



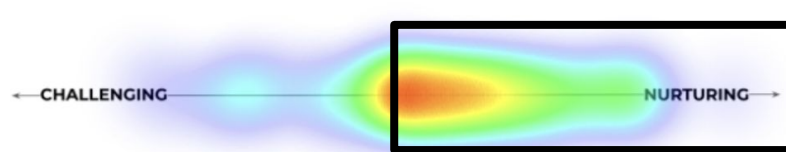
SFCC RESPONSES



SCC RESPONSES



SFCC RESPONSES



Click where you think the college belongs on the scale from challenging to nurturing.

We next asked college employees to define the type of student who is drawn to each college to get a sense any differences in the target audience.

Employees described SCC students as a driven, determined group, overcoming challenges and balancing commitments to pursue chosen, practical careers.

SCC STUDENT

DISADVANTAGED

"Someone who needs a chance." "Need a lot of support." "Facing a lot of challenges in life already." "Has no other options." "Desperate."

TENACIOUS

"Persevering against the obstacles of life." "Fighting for their chance to get an education."

PRACTICAL

"No nonsense." "Serious."
"Focused on results."

DECIDED

"They have a clearer understanding of what they want out of their education." "Know their path."

BLUE COLLAR

"Scruffy." "Gritty."
"Working class." "Rides the bus." "Low income."

JUGGLING

"Stretched thin." "A student, employee and parent all at once." "Performing a balancing act." "Wearing many hats."

STARTING ANEW

"Looking for a new direction and career." "Eager to begin a new chapter."

TIME-PRESSURED

"Wants to get in, and get out."
"Start making money right after graduation."

DRIVEN

"Hardworking."
"Motivated."
"Determined."

How would you describe the typical SCC student?

“This is a place for career or job development. It’s a different vibe. People go to work after class at SCC.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“The students are desperate, yet determined.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

By contrast, SFCC students were characterized as academically and artistically inclined, passionately chasing big dreams and exploring possibilities.

SFCC STUDENT

EXPLORING

"Not sure what they want to study."
"Seeking direction."
"Still exploring their options."
"Searching for who they are."

SEEKING AFFORDABILITY

"Cannot afford a four year degree."
"Looking for a cost-effective way to start."
"Constrained by finances."

ENTHUSIASTIC

"Eager to explore new things."
"Full of energy."
"Eager." "Excited."

ACADEMIC

"Education-focused."
"More scholarly."
"Academically inclined."
"Joyfully engaged in the pursuit of knowledge."

ARTSY

"Artistic and creative."
"Drawn towards the arts."
"Wants to put their creative mind to work."

ASPIRING

"Looking to use SFCC as a stepping stone to the next part of their career."
"Big goals."
"Achieving." "Ambitious."

STARTING OUT

"1st time student."
"Get started."
"Kickstarting an academic career."
"Get their start here."

PRIVILEGED

"Spoiled." "Pampered."
"Mom and dad are paying."
"Have the leisure to take things slow."
"White collar."
"More affluent." "Relaxed."

IDEALISTIC

"Interested in...helping others."
"Dreamer."
"Looking to find meaning in life."
"Committed to making a difference."
"Hopeful."

INVOLVED

"Love to engage in SFCC activities."
"Enjoy spending time on campus."
"Interested in social aspects of college."

How would you describe the typical SFCC student?

“SFCC is more inquiry-based. More innovative and creative. More about the process than the outcome.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“SFCC Students are not sure what to do. They want to go on with education but don't have a path yet. It's a younger population: Less decided, more inquisitive.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

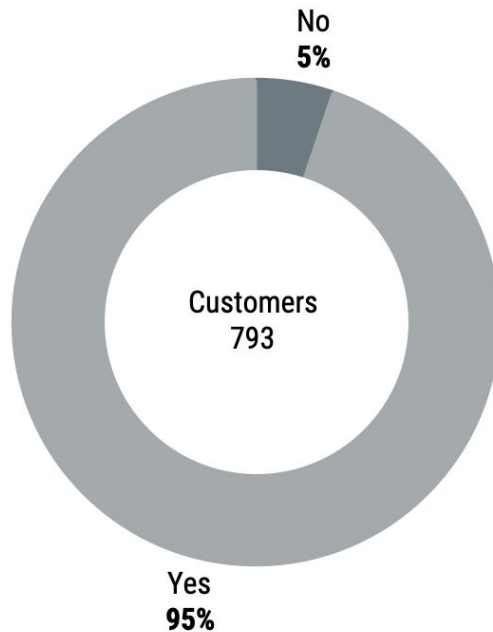
This exercise highlighted perceived differences in students' backgrounds, approach to education, and stage in their educational journey.

SCC		SFCC
Blue Collar	vs.	White Collar
Hands-On	vs.	Cerebral
Realistic	vs.	Idealistic
Seeking Training	vs.	Seeking Knowledge
Decided	vs.	Exploring
Getting In and Out	vs.	Involved Beyond Classes
Starting Anew	vs.	Starting Out

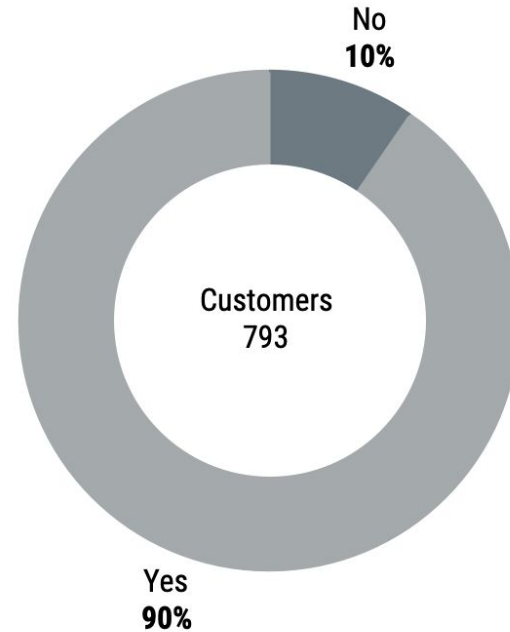
We then compared these assessments and perceptions to those of the customer audience.

90%+ of respondents had heard of SCC and SFCC prior to taking the survey, with SCC's awareness slightly outpacing SFCC's.

SCC



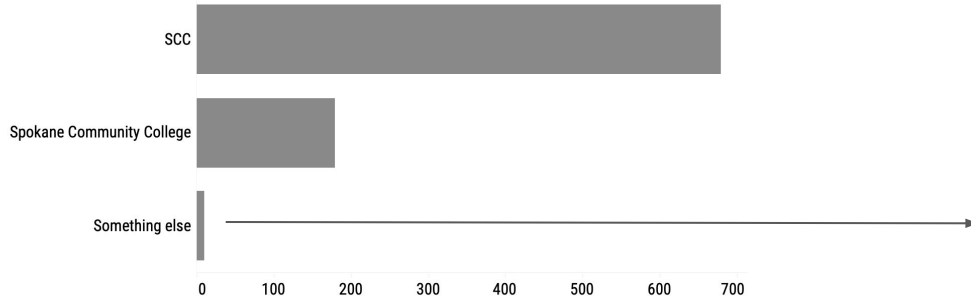
SFCC



Before taking this survey, which of the following had you heard of?

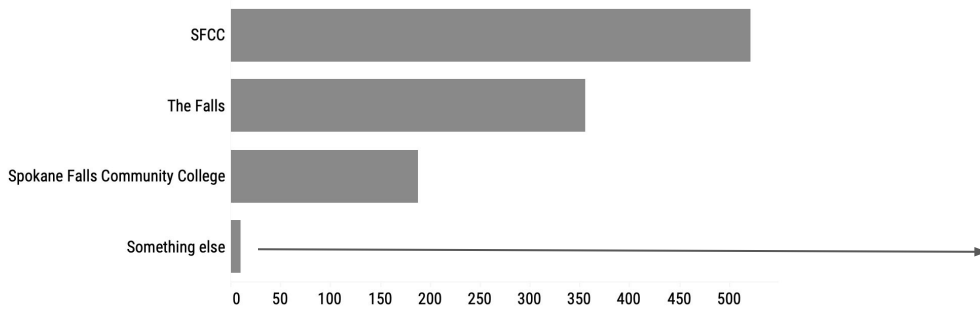
Both colleges were generally referred to by their abbreviation, though some confusion between the colleges was evident in the write-in responses.

SCC



“SFCC”
“The Falls”
“Spokane Falls Community College”

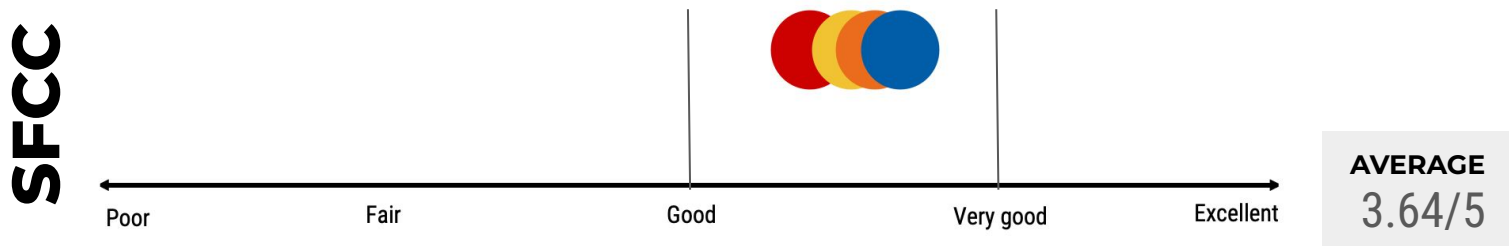
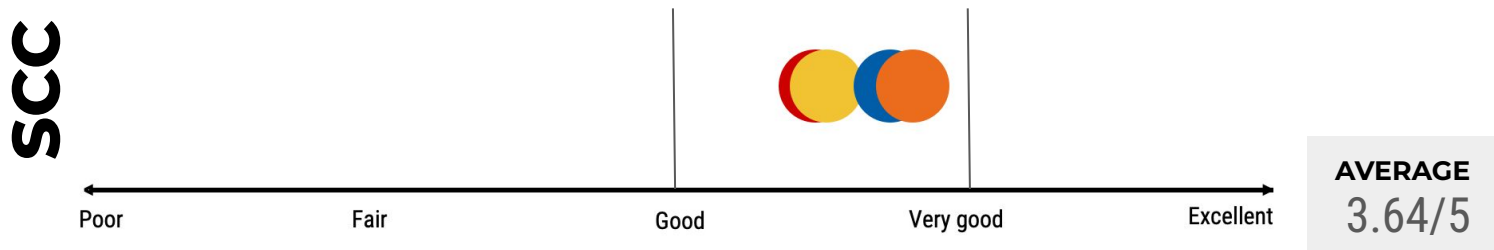
SFCC



“Spokane Community College”

What do most people call Spokane Community College / Spokane Falls Community College?

Customers described the quality of education at both SCC and SFCC as between “Good” and “Very Good” and gave them identical quality scores.



How would you rate the quality of education at Spokane Community College / Spokane Falls Community College?

Given this, it's not surprising that many customers struggled to meaningfully differentiate between the colleges.

“I know they're both the Community Colleges of Spokane. But like what makes one distinct from the other besides location?”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“If I'm being honest I can't really distinguish the two institutions from each other”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“Personally I don't know of any real difference.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“I was born and raised in Spokane and went to both of those colleges and I have no idea of the answer except the smart alec answer of location.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT



“The most common question I get is ‘Which one is that?’”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT



Many of customer's positive perceptions applied to both colleges. Customers perceived both SCC and SFCC as having an inclusive culture, supported by faculty who are committed to helping students succeed.

INCLUSIVE & WELCOMING

"Sense of community and welcoming."
"DEI-oriented." "Opportunity for everyone in any age or race." "Everyone belongs there."
"Aren't judging." "Accepting" "Inclusive." "Lots of diversity." "Sense of belonging." "Inviting."

OUTSTANDING FACULTY & STAFF

"Passionate." "Staff is wonderful." "Above and beyond." "High level of teaching." "Caring teachers who are good at their job."
"Teachers are amazing." "Patient and kind."
"Interactive and motivating." "Really know what they're talking about." "Professionals in their field." "Want you to succeed."

“It's the Planet Fitness of colleges in Spokane—no judgement.”

CUSTOMER SURVEY PARTICIPANT



Customers described both SCC and SFCC as removing barriers to education, with more affordable tuition, helpful resources, and more flexible course scheduling and modalities.

AFFORDABLE TUITION

“Education for a fraction of the cost.”
“Quality education that’s less expensive”
“Low cost, high quality.” “Affordable educational opportunities.” “ Makes going to college easy and cost-efficient.”

RESOURCES

“More scholarships.” “Resources to help you succeed and financially survive” “Free supplies.” “Food Bank.” “Child Care.”
“Financial help available.” “Countless grants, scholarships.”

FLEXIBILITY

“Option to be online or in person.” “They are willing to help and accommodate to your life.” “The ease of access.”
“Convenient.” “Gives me the flexibility I need.”

Customers shared many of the same negative perceptions of both colleges, focused on diminished college experience and lacking academic rigor.

LESS OF A COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

“Absence of extracurricular activities.” “Not a college experience.” “It is small without the college experience.” “They don’t feel like they’re in college.” “Low social life.” “Limited or no sports options.”

NOT RIGOROUS

“A lot easier.” “Classes are not taught at a high level.” “Less rigorous.” “Not serious about schooling.” “Easy to pass classes.” “Easier than the high school.” “You get what you pay for, doesn’t necessarily prepare you for continued higher education.” “Slackers.”

Seemingly aware of these perceptions, SCC and SFCC students refuted common misconceptions about their colleges.

**LACKING COLLEGE EXPERIENCE
VIBRANT CAMPUS CULTURE**

“You aren’t missing out on any part of the ‘college experience’ by going to a community college.” “Affordable extracurricular activities” “Tight-knit vibe.” “Atmosphere of a big friendly family.” “So many activities and events” “Easy to get involved.” “Lots of clubs.” “Like family” “So many activities and events that people can participate and grow their social networks in.”

**NOT RIGOROUS
QUALITY EDUCATION**

“That it’s not much different than a university.” “The programs are high quality.” “How good it is.” “I think community colleges are often undervalued.” “It is a good school.” “Great classes.” “That is an amazing college.” “It actually has one of the most respected graphic design programs in the state.” “You do not sacrifice quality of education.”

Key differences in perception between the colleges were apparent as well. While customers knew SCC for its trade programs, they recognized SFCC as a solid base for transfer to a four-year university.

SCC

STRONG TRADES PROGRAMS

"Great certification and skills/trade degrees."
"Specializes in trades." "Earn certificates or work in apprenticeships." "Good training in the trades."

SFCC

SOLID BASE FOR TRANSFER

"Great prep for 4 year." "Easy transfers."
"Great pathway to University" "Prepares you to move on to a specialized program." "Great for students intending to transfer."

Customers also identified differences in the campus environments, with SCC labeled as unsafe/rough and SFCC scenic but more remote.

SCC

UNSAFE / ROUGH CAMPUS

"Ghetto." "Bad part of town." "The homeless... here to start trouble." "Robbed." "Car break-ins." "Lots of property crime." "Lots of stolen property." "Run down." "Old and dirty." "Ugly." "Unsafe for students." "Looks awful."

SFCC

SCENIC BUT MORE REMOTE

"Beautiful area." "Remote." "Pretty campus." "Newer than SCC." "Campus is beautiful." "Nice gallery." "Lack of transit." "Nicer looking." "Bad location." "Scenery is beautiful." "Farther away."

What positive things do you know/have you heard about SCC/SFCC? What negative things do you know/have you heard about SCC/SFCC?

SCC

ACCESSIBLE

"It's actually a very easy process to start." "Really accessible." "It's so easy to get started!" "Starting or returning to college is just a few steps away."

STUDENT SUPPORT

"You will never be left alone with your problems." "Many resources I can turn to." "Helpful tutors." "Willing to help you as much as needed." "This is a place where they will always help you ☐☐."

RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED

"Waitlist." "Long delays."
"Slow." "Lack of advising."
"Understaffed." "Turnover"

When describing **SCC**, customers emphasized more comprehensive student support and ease of starting. However, they also noted that SCC seems to struggle against resource limitations.

What positive things do you know/have you heard about SCC? What negative things do you know/have you heard about SCC?

When describing **SFCC**, customers emphasized a fuller college experience and small class sizes, but shared frustrations around insufficient student support, administrative issues, and inaccessible staff.

COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

“Student community and involvement.” “Student life is good.” “More like real college experience.” “Good athletics.” “College feel.”

SMALL CLASS SIZES

“Smaller class sizes cultivates a personalized and engaging learning environment.” “Personal attention.” “Connections with their professors.”

LACKING SUPPORT

“Lack of guidance.” “Lack of academic advising.” “Student support lacking.” “No one at the school that cares for the UI of the student.”

FRUSTRATING PROCESSES

“Disorganized.” “Clunky and confusing.” “Hard to enroll.” “Unorganized.” “Complicated process.” “Very confusing and inconvenient.”

INACCESSIBLE STAFF

“Hard time getting ahold of people.” “Long waiting time to get a reply.” “Problems reaching staff.” “Hard to contact.” “No one.. ever returns phone calls.”

What positive things do you know/have you heard about SFCC? What negative things do you know/have you heard about SFCC?

Some customers (mostly SCC & SFCC students) were aware of differences between the students at each college; SCC students were described as older, lower socioeconomic status, and more diverse, while SFCC students were younger, more traditional, and more Running Starts.

SCC

“More blue collar.”

“Very diverse. I’ve met a lot of students from all over.”

“From a lower economic background and are trying to make improvements in their lives.”

“Lower SES compared to The Falls.”

“I wasn’t even close to the oldest.”

SFCC

“I see that more as the younger crowd.”

“More traditional students go to The Falls.”

“If you’re gonna do Running Start, SFCC is really the place to go.”

“Half of the students in my class are Running Start students.”

“All the young kids go here and all the old people go to SCC.”

We Learned:

- + Both colleges describe themselves as friendly, collaborative, innovative, authentic, and nurturing but fail to recognize the extent of their shared characteristics.
- + For customers, particularly those lacking personal experience, the colleges appear very similar.
- + Individuals acquainted with SCC and SFCC discern nuanced differences in program offerings and student populations.

Relationship

When asked what the colleges share, some employees struggled to find commonalities. Many cited superficial criteria like a shared district, home city, forms, website, and sports teams.

What do SFCC and SCC share? What unites them?



Those who were able to identify deeper commonalities homed in on the student-centered mission.

What do SFCC and SCC share? What unites them?



“We’re focused on helping students succeed in their life goals, regardless of what those goals are.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“We share a desire to see the students succeed.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

“Each college might have a different path...but in the end, they are united to obtain that goal [student success].”

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Employees noted lack of substantial connection between the colleges and described the overlay of the CCS brand as superficial.

“We are united because we are told we are united.”

“Pretty much the only thing they share is the governing body.”

“District. That’s it. We are not united.”

“Both want to be the better of the two.”

“It's been more of a competitive (us vs. them) mentality for the 15 years I've been here.”

“[The thing that unites them is] their shared belief that their campus is the better campus and the other campus is a dumpster fire.”

“[The colleges are] united by the determination to NOT consult with or respect the other institution.”

The reality employees described was much more of a competitive relationship than a collaborative one.

Though the disconnect between colleges was apparent, many employees expressed a desire for future collaboration and hope that the new leadership or employees would dispel old animosity.

“I have always thought that the 2 colleges compete with each other and there is not enough collaboration.”

“Very hopeful that the new chancellor will further unite us.”

“I wish it was more united.”

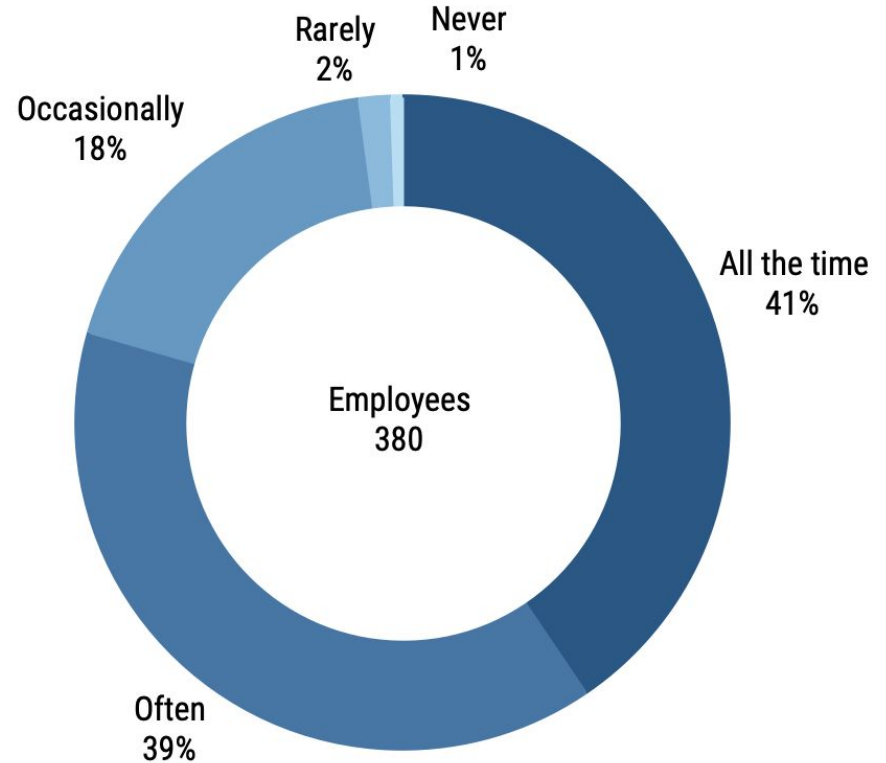
“They should be united by a common cause, but sometimes the idea that they need to fend for themselves is divisive.”

“I really love this place and would do anything to help the colleges progress.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Employees agreed that there is significant confusion among students about the relationship between SCC, SFCC and CCS with **97% saying there is confusion at least occasionally.**

Do you think students (current and/or potential) ever get confused about the relationship between SCC, SFCC and the Community Colleges of Spokane?



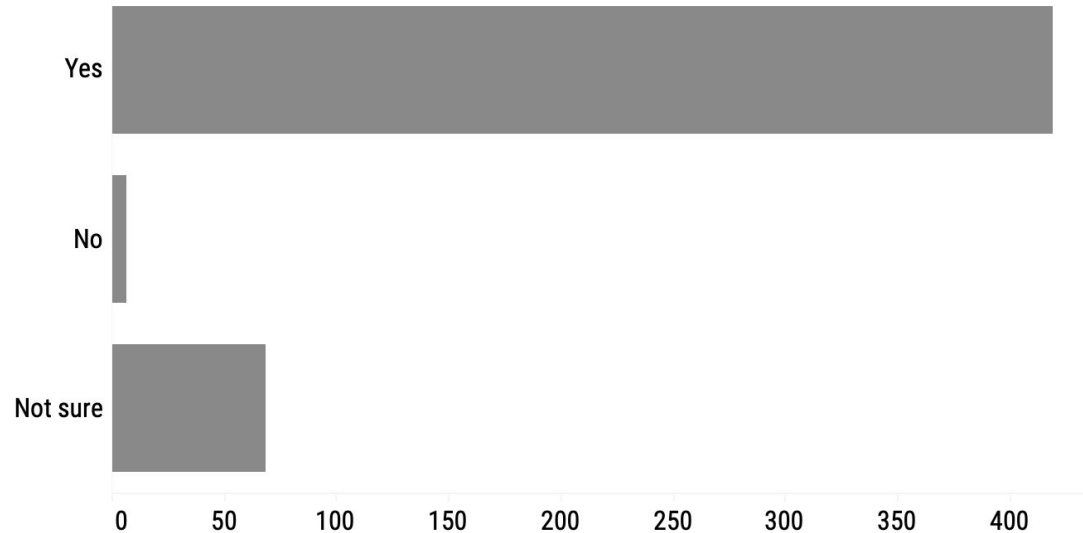
We then took this same topic to customers to get a sense of the perceived relationship between the colleges.

“They all sound the same. What kind of question is this!?”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Do you think there is any confusion about the relationship between the colleges? If yes → What aspects are confusing?

The majority of customers (86%) recognized that there is a relationship between CCS, SCC, and SFCC, but many were uncertain about the nature of that relationship.



Are the Community Colleges of Spokane related to Spokane Community College and/or Spokane Falls Community College in any way?

<p>CCS, SCC, & SFCC are all one entity.</p>	<p>CCS is the joint term for SCC & SFCC.</p>	<p>CCS is the system SCC & SFCC exist in.</p>	<p>CCS is the manager of SCC & SFCC.</p>	<p>CCS are colleges with shared features.</p>
<p>“I thought they were the same but now I'm not sure.”</p> <p>“Same entity.”</p> <p>“They are the same, just different campus locations.”</p> <p>“They are the same”</p> <p>“I think most people view them interchangeably nowadays.”</p> <p>“They are one in the same.”</p>	<p>“It is the broader name for SCC and SFCC.</p> <p>“CSS covers both SFCC and SCC”</p> <p>“Catchall name for SCC and SFCC together.”</p> <p>“I believe CCS is comprised of SCC and SFCC.”</p> <p>“It’s them as a collective, to my understanding.”</p> <p>“Overarching name for both colleges.”</p>	<p>“They all fall under the same community colleges of Spokane umbrella.”</p> <p>“They are different branches.”</p> <p>“Part of family tree.”</p> <p>“An administrative umbrella.”</p> <p>“They’re all part of the CCS network.”</p>	<p>“The Community Colleges of Spokane is like the big boss.”</p> <p>“Governing entity.”</p> <p>“I believe they are in charge of both”</p> <p>“Led by one president.”</p> <p>“They own/operate them? I’m not sure”</p> <p>“It’s the group that decides what happens on both the SFCC and SCC campuses.”</p>	<p>“They operate on the same computer systems, student and faculty email accounts.”</p> <p>“Related in the level of teaching and technology.”</p> <p>“Similar in how they are operated.”</p> <p>“Similar leadership but different curriculums.”</p> <p>“They both offer shorter programs.”</p>



CCS Students and Mentors especially voiced frustration and confusion, initially believing there to be more substantial connection between the colleges than there is.

SEEM CONNECTED...

"I thought they were the same thing. I got really confused when I went to the wrong college for my interview."

"I had no idea there was a difference for the longest time."

"I also was confused. I thought they were pretty much the same thing too... I thought I could just jump back and forth but that wasn't the case."

"I attended both schools but I never knew you had to apply for both. I just assumed they were together."



...BUT IT'S AN ILLUSION

"I think they want to give you the illusion that they are the same school... but they have barriers you have to go around."

"They just paint them the same color and call it good."

"They try to make it seem like we're the same but when it comes down to it we're really separate."

"There are different processes and placement testing. Admission is separate and requirements are separate and financial aid is separate. Two different processes."

Do you think there is any confusion about the relationship between the colleges? If yes → What aspects are confusing?

“No, I don't feel connected at all.”

“I absolutely don't feel any form of connection and think they're quite different.”

“Not at all. Completely separate.”

“I haven't felt connected at all.”

“I am not feeling any kind of connection with SFCC.”

“I feel like a distant cousin relationship where I know of it and I see it sometimes but aside from that not a lot of feelings towards it.”

And yet once they are on campus, CCS Students reported feeling no connection to the students at their sister campus.

Do you feel connected to the other college within CCS,

“Supposedly the same thing but completely different.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Do you think there is any confusion about the relationship between the colleges? If yes → What aspects are confusing?

Students and mentors both showed some awareness of contention between the colleges.

“They’re under one heading but they act so distinctly. The departments don’t like each other.”

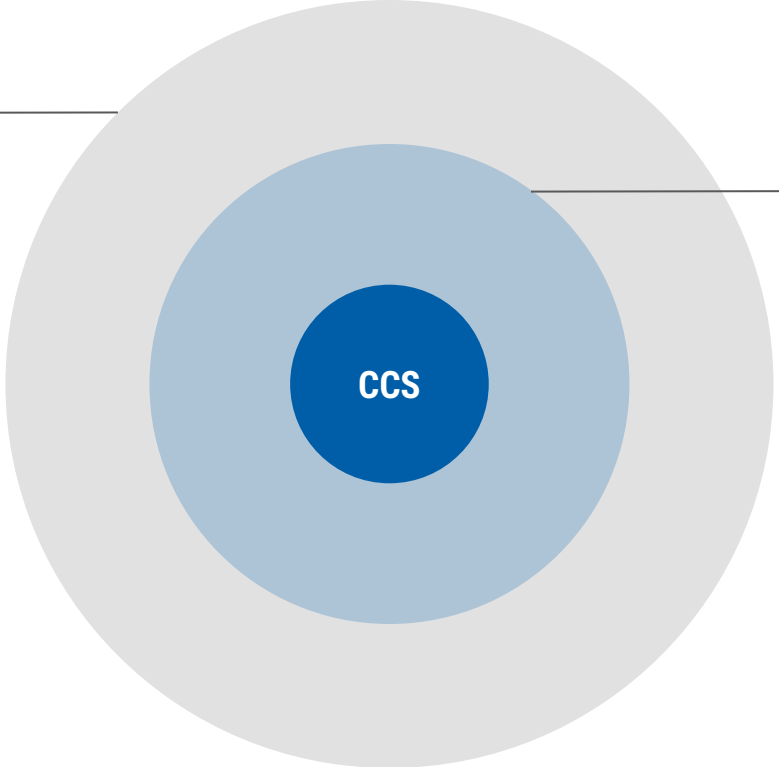
CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“They’re like twins that don’t talk.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

OUTER CIRCLE

Has little experience with CCS or the colleges that comprise it. Sees SFCC and SCC as mostly the same. Doesn't understand why there should be a divide between the colleges, feeling that it creates unnecessary barriers for students.



INNER CIRCLE

Has personal experience with CCS and the colleges that comprise it. Experiences the current, stark separation between the colleges, is aware of nuanced differences between them, and often fails to see their overlap/similarities. Is split between feeling that the colleges should acknowledge/celebrate their differences and feeling that the colleges should combine for student ease.

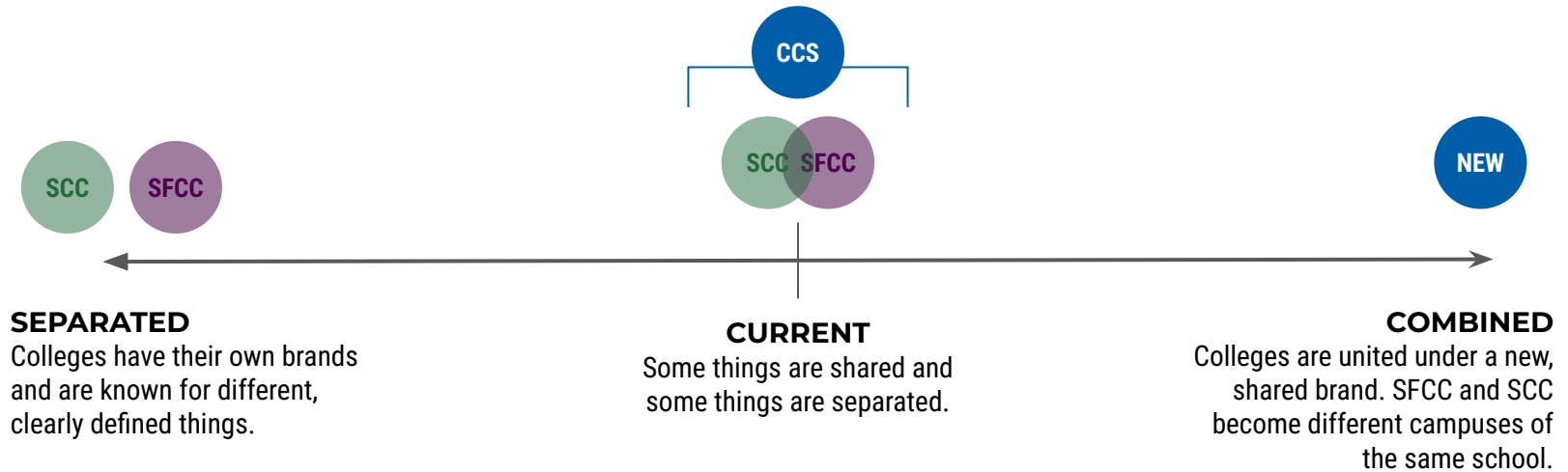


We Learned:

- + Customers are confused about CCS's relationship with the colleges.
- + Both employees and "acquainted" customers perceive the overlay of the CCS brand as superficial—concealing a reality of stark separation between the colleges.
- + This misleading overlap leads to frustration and confusion.

Separate or Combine

Some participants believed that the colleges should be branded separately and others thought the branding should be completely combined.



But in a surprising consensus, all participant groups agreed that the current middle-ground branding is contributing to confusion.



SEPARATED
Colleges have their own brands and are known for different, clearly defined things.

CURRENT
Some things are shared and some things are separated.

COMBINED
Colleges are united under a new, shared brand. SFCC and SCC become different campuses of the same school.

“They need to decide what they want to do.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“Either combine it or just separate it completely.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“I think it’s bad because they don’t know which way they want to go. It’s a label. They have the same color, mascot and logo, but they don’t integrate with each other.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT



SEPARATED

“Why would you want to go to either school? We need help explaining the difference so students can choose.”

“While there is a goal to ‘unite’ the two campuses, the reality is that geography has created a divide. Why not celebrate it?”

“Things need to be more clearly defined for them to help students understand what school they need.”

“We need a page that talks about the differences and talks about them directly.”

“Why am I pushed into this umbrella? I’ve only ever gone to The Falls. I’ve never really been to SCC.”

“They are two separate schools and they offer two separate things.”

Those who believed the schools should be branded separately advocated for acknowledging and defining the existing divide between the schools so that students could make informed decisions about which college to attend.

Those who believed the branding of the schools should be combined argued that the distinction creates unnecessary barriers and confusion for students.



COMBINED

“We aren’t accessible if you have to yo-yo back and forth between the two entities.”

“It really ought to be a unified brand. Those three different things just reflect bureaucratic stuff and no one cares about that except the bureaucrats.”

“[It should be] just one brand with two locations.”

“SFCC vs SCC is more about internal structure than it is about external things for the student.”

“One common brand would be really helpful.”

“They should combine it and make it a little bit easier for the kids who are here.”

“More advertised that they’re all connected and not in competition with each other.”

We Learned:

- + All participants agree that the current “middle ground” is not working.
- + Participants are divided on whether complete separation (to highlight the unique offerings of each college) or complete combination (to eliminate unnecessary barriers for students) would be more successful.

Brand

Before we asked them to comment on the brand, we shared an aggregate of brand assets with them.

ACCESS



EQUITY



RESPONSIVENESS



STUDENTS-FIRST

MISSION

To provide all students with an *excellent* education that *transforms* their lives and *expands* their opportunities.



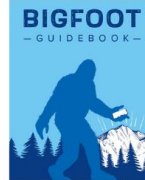
Community Colleges of Spokane

VISION

Providing the best community college experience in the Northwest.

STEWARDSHIP

LEADERSHIP



INTEGRITY



EXCELLENCE

OVERALL AESTHETIC

Employees and customers gave remarkably similar feedback about the overall aesthetic of the brand.

They liked aspects of the brand that paid homage the natural, local environment.

DISTINCTIVE PLACE



- + “It fits very well with the local culture in aesthetic and design.”
- + “It shares the comfort of Spokane. The beauty of Spokane.”
- + “The consideration of location, wilderness.”
- + “‘PNW’ elements (pine trees, mountains, wildlife).”
- + “It has the mountains and the trees that do represent Eastern Washington.”
- + “I like how it shows that we are part of the Pacific Northwest... Outdoorsy feel.”
- + “It captures the Washington and Spokane area.”
- + “We’re in the beautiful misty mountains of eastern Washington after all. Embrace the natural beauty.”

They appreciated that the brand colors are unique compared to area competitors, though some disliked the brightness of the yellow and the dullness of the blue.

DISTINCTIVE COLORS



- + “The colors are nice - not red like everyone else around here!”
- + “The blue, since it's different than almost all other color schemes for schools in the area.”
- + “I like the blue theme because I think it stands out, and it is something that I recognize CCS by.”
- + “The blue is an ugly kind of blue, we need something that pops and get rid of the yellow.”
- + “No other college in the area has a similar design or color scheme.”
- + “The colors stand out amongst other colleges.”
- + “I like the colors. They stand out well.”
- + “The yellow is too bright for my liking.”

NOT COHESIVE



- + “There is too much going on. I have no idea what the brand really is.”
- + “Are we the Sasquatch or Bigfoot? I think we have too many logos... Also, what are our colors? Light blue, dark blue, royal blue?”
- + “It seems like we are all over the place and cannot quite decide who/what we are.”
- + “It’s scattered and does not have coherence.”
- + “It feels chaotic.”
- + “Too many different things/logos.”
- + “Overall the whole package is just kind of underwhelming.”

However, they felt that the brand was chaotic and lacking a clear identity.

BLAND/DATED

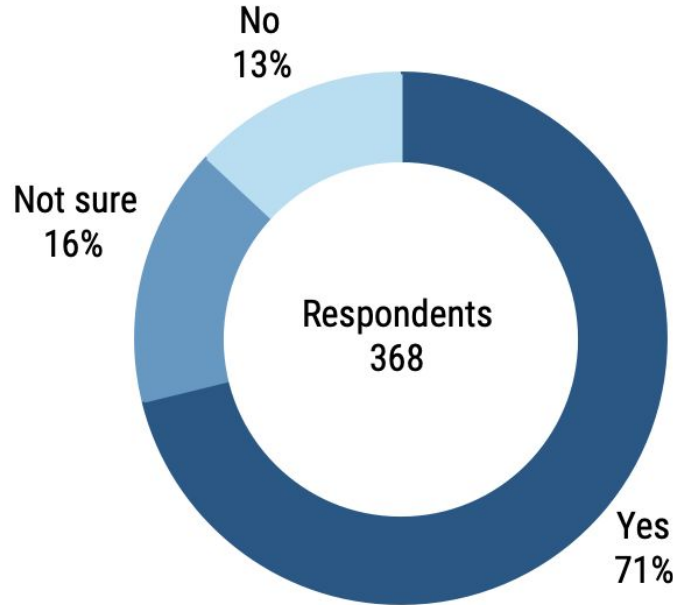


- + “Derisive of corporate America which, aesthetically speaking, is soulless and vapid.”
- + “Look like they were bought from a clip art company. There is no fun or joy in the branding.”
- + “A bit bland/boilerplate.”
- + “No personality.”
- + “Our overall feel is boring.”
- + “Dull and not distinctive.”
- + “There is something very 90's about the designs.”
- + “Out of style and have been since the late 2010's.”
- + “Dated, and frankly, boring.”
- + “It all looks dated. Nothing in particular grabs my attention.”
- + “It's so busy for being so plain.”
- + “Super bland, boring and not creative.”

They also felt that the overall aesthetic was generic, missing the vibrant personality of the schools.

MASCOT

Most employees endorsed the Sasquatch mascot, appreciating his ownability, versatility, and accurate representation of the colleges.



Do you think Skitch/Bigfoot is a fitting mascot for the Community Colleges of Spokane?

WHY YES?

- + Stands out among colleges
- + Locally relevant
- + Established and beloved
- + Like us: Quirky, scrappy, weird in all the right ways, unconventional, imaginative
- + Can have a sense of humor
- + Can be strong, powerful, fierce
- + Inspires intrigue with mystery, magic, and whimsy

“Everyone wants to believe.”

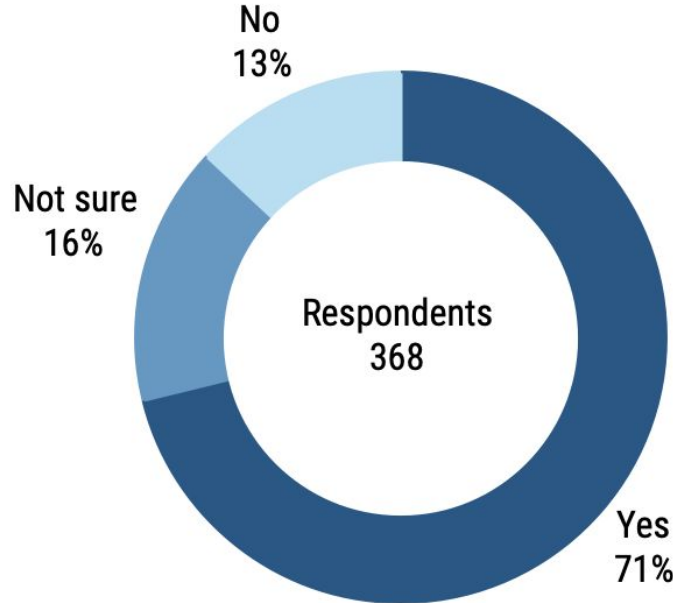
EMPLOYEE SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Do you think Skitch/Bigfoot is a fitting mascot for
the Community Colleges of Spokane?

Employees who were hesitant about Sasquatch mostly objected to current portrayals.

WHY NOT?

- + Dislike portrayal (and name Skitch), not the Sasquatch



Do you think Skitch/Bigfoot is a fitting mascot for the Community Colleges of Spokane?

They felt that current depictions of Sasquatch either undermine the academic seriousness of the colleges, or feel too mean/scary.

JUVENILE

"I do not like Skitch, he looks like he belongs in a daycare not a college."

"Looks like a kids cartoon."

"Looks like it is meant for a daycare. I'm more likely to put Barney...on my car than I am a Skitch sticker."

"Silly. People in Spokane laugh at it."

UNCOLLEGIATE

"Doesn't represent seriousness of education."

"Not very professional or collegiate. Our reputation of friendly and welcoming precedes us... we need to establish our value and professionalism."

"I wonder if Skitch detracts from our desire to communicate we are a quality, serious institution."

SCARY

"I've seen hideous or scary versions of the mascot, which are totally unappealing to me."

"The Skitch chatbox on the website appears to be angry."

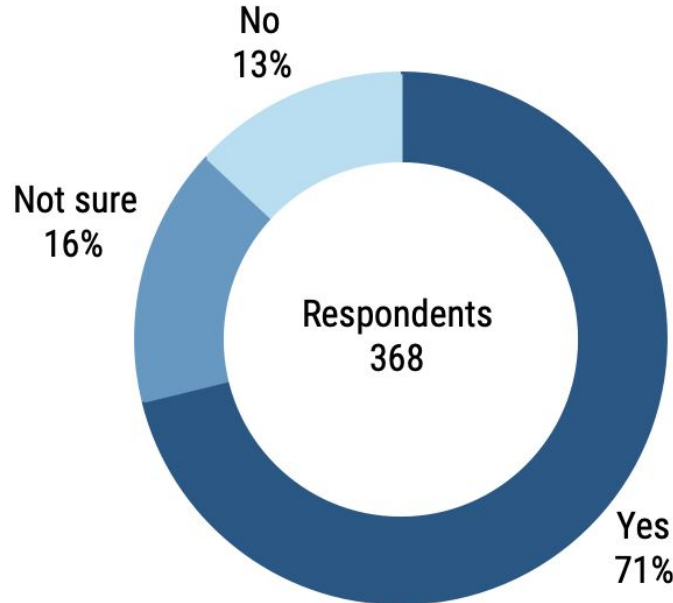
"Maybe small kids that come with the parents would be scared by the big scary one."

What do you dislike about the current brand?

Employees who were completely opposed to Sasquatch as the mascot (not just to current depictions) expressed concerns about his associations with primitiveness and conspiracy and how they reflect on the colleges.

WHY NOT?

- + Dislike portrayal (and name Skitch), not the Sasquatch
- + Better suited to other regions
- + Wrong associations: Scary, primitive, reclusive, conspiracy
- + Not taken seriously



Do you think Skitch/Bigfoot is a fitting mascot for the Community Colleges of Spokane?

Customers generally liked the mascot. Supporters appreciated his uniqueness and local significance while critics disliked current illustrations and fretted over potential connotations.



- + “The whole Bigfoot thing is just... not professional.”
- + “I do not want a conspiracy theory front and center. Bigfoot does not convey that you are an educated person.”
- + “Too childish for a college campus.”
- + “Goofy or somewhat elementary.”

SASQUATCH MASCOT



- + “The mascot is definitely the best part of the brand.”
- + “I love the investment in the Bigfoot mascot. I think it is weird and unique and draws attention.”
- + “Shows some humor, realness & character.”
- + “I find it fun that the colleges have embraced it.”

What elements do you like/dislike about the current Community Colleges of Spokane brand?

“Bigfoot just doesn't really do it for me in terms of taking it seriously. A lot of schools have crests. I think there ought to be some sort of evaluation of something a bit more respectable... Time to grow up and get something a little more traditional and more of a fit into the college format.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

What elements do you like/dislike about the current Community Colleges of Spokane brand?

“Bigfoot is so awesome and so unique to the PNW and I don’t feel like the branding does it justice.”

CUSTOMER SURVEY PARTICIPANT

What elements do you like/dislike about the current Community Colleges of Spokane brand?

The Sasquatch Foot received much less positive feedback. Customers acknowledged the foot's recognizability, but found it to be unappealing.



- + "The foot logo might be a bit too fetish-ey"
- + "Who wants a foot on their attire?"
- + "I haatteeeee the feet. like, I get it, the mascot is bigFOOT but I don't wanna see feet. :("
- + "Wearing a foot shows we're at the bottom."
- + "I think it's weird. I am not proud to wear it."

FOOT



- + "The footprint is a very clever design, and I can recognize it when someone has it on."
- + "Logo in the shape of Bigfoot's foot with the letters of the college is innovative and smart."
- + "These logos are ones that I have come to know CCS by and if I saw them by themselves I would know what it's for."

What elements do you like/dislike about the current Community Colleges of Spokane brand?

SUN & MOUNTAINS

Employees felt that the design and significance of the CCS logo were unclear.



**Community Colleges
of Spokane**

UNRECOGNIZABLE

“It looks like Pac-Man trying to eat the mountains.”

“It just feels like a weird Pac-Man.”

“Most people can't tell what it is.”

MEANING LOST ON AUDIENCE

“I know the meaning behind the logo of the mountains sun and trees but I do not think most people do.”

“I did not know about the meaning of the trees mountains and sun for 5+ years of employment.”

“No one when we see our logo would ever think that the sun is the district overlooking the mountains and the mountains represent our colleges.”

What do you dislike about the current brand?

Though participants appreciated the reference to Spokane's environment, they agreed that the depiction was unclear and requested more specific local references.



- + "Could be mountains, could be the Pyramids at Giza. But also reminds me of a shark attack from below."
- + "It looks like vampire teeth."
- + "It didn't read as a mountain range for me at first."
- + "Should represent Spokane better, maybe add the Spokane river or the pavilion."
- + "Lacks distinctiveness... hard to recognize."

MOUNTAIN LOGO



- + "Reflective of our regional landscape/nature."
- + "I like the Pacific northwest look of the mountains."
- + "The mountain logo in the name is recognizable."

What elements do you like/dislike about the current Community Colleges of Spokane brand?

We Learned:

- + The brand needs to be modernized to attract interest, define a more cohesive identity, and better reflect the spirit of the schools.
- + It is important that the brand feels ownable and distinctive from nearby competitors, and unique references to the local environment, the color palate, and the mascot achieve this goal.
- + There is tension between allegiance to Sasquatch and desire to be taken seriously academically.

Messaging

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Employees and customers also gave similar feedback about the mission, vision, and values.

They liked the emphasis on students-first and appreciated nods to equity, but felt that the broad, generic language seemed inauthentic.



- + “White noise.”
- + “Meaningless... Seems a little like virtue-signalling.”
- + “I think it's a bit too broad, and that makes it feel impersonal, it's just like every other brand.”
- + “Too much jargon.”
- + “It all sounds blah blah blah to me.”
- + “I feel that those are very generic corporate buzzword terms..”
- + “Conveys a generic set of ideals.”

MISSION, VISION, VALUES



- + “I like the access aspect. I think that's the most important part.”
- + “Grateful to see Equity and Access along with the other critical characteristics.”
- + “I feel like our connection to a student-first and equity mindset is important to our value added here in the Spokane area.”
- + “I like the focus on concepts like equity, accessibility, and students-first.”
- + “I appreciate the emphasis on student-success.”

ALTERNATIVES

In customer focus groups, we gauged the believability and compellingness of the differentiators that CCS employees provided during an earlier phase of research.

The Community Colleges of Spokane...

Offer a more personalized experience, where students can work with their professors one-on-one and shape their path.

PERSONALIZED

Feature professors who are passionate about their subject and their students, not distracted by research or tenure demands.

PASSIONATE PROFESSORS

Work hard to help every single student succeed, instead of trying to weed out students who are struggling.

SUPPORTIVE

Offer more practical, applied learning that helps students land the careers they want.

APPLIED

Are constantly adapting to meet student and community needs, instead of sticking to an outdated system.

RESPONSIVE

Provide the same quality of education you could get at a four-year university at a much lower cost.

VALUE ORIENTED

Welcome and embrace students of all backgrounds, not just traditional college students.

INCLUSIVE

Offer a wider range of courses, from academic, artistic, and philosophical to career, trade, and technical.

COMPREHENSIVE

Offer more than an interesting class or a good time, but a way for students to change the course of their lives.

TRANSFORMATIVE



Customers took issue statements that compared to universities, asserting that CCS should stand behind its value without criticising others.

Offer a **more** personalized experience, where students can work with their professors one-on-one and shape their path.

PERSONALIZED

Feature professors who are passionate about their subject and their students, **not distracted by research or tenure demands.**

PASSIONATE PROFESSORS

Work hard to help every single student succeed, **instead of trying to weed out students who are struggling.**

SUPPORTIVE

Offer **more** practical, applied learning that helps students land the careers they want.

APPLIED

Are constantly adapting to meet student and community needs, **instead of sticking to an outdated system.**

RESPONSIVE

Provide the same quality of education you could get at a four-year university at a much lower cost.

VALUE ORIENTED

Welcome and embrace students of all backgrounds, **not just traditional college students.**

INCLUSIVE

Offer a **wider** range of courses, from academic, artistic, and philosophical to career, trade, and technical.

COMPREHENSIVE

Offer **more than an interesting class or a good time**, but a way for students to change the course of their lives.

TRANSFORMATIVE

“I would struggle to compare these to a four year university because it’s just not apples to apples.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“Let’s not be vinyl trying to be leather.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“They can stand alone saying what they offer instead of ‘Compared to’ or ‘instead of.’”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“Comparison sounds desperate.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Do you believe all of these statements to be true/accurate? Which of these statements do you find most compelling as a reason to go to the Community Colleges of Spokane?

“Let's be who we are and be great at what we are.”

CUSTOMER SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Do you believe all of these statements to be true/accurate? Which of these statements do you find most compelling as a reason to go to the Community Colleges of Spokane?



MOSTLY NEGATIVE

RESPONSIVE

Seen as lagging behind universities.

TRANSFORMATIVE

Cheesy/melodramatic.



NEUTRAL/MIXED

PASSIONATE PROFESSORS

Depends on the class, not universal.

SUPPORTIVE

Depends on the program, not universal.

COMPREHENSIVE

Depends on seeing SCC & SFCC as one.

VALUE-ORIENTED

Depends on the belief that the quality of education is the equal to university.



MOSTLY POSITIVE

APPLIED

Compelling & believable.

PERSONALIZED

Compelling & believable.

INCLUSIVE

Compelling & believable.

Do you believe all of these statements to be true/accurate? Which of these statements do you find most compelling as a reason to go to the Community Colleges of Spokane?

We Learned:

- + Customers and employees lauded the focus on inclusion and students-first but expressed concern that they felt generic.
- + Customers preferred brand statements that highlighted CCS's value without comparison to university.
- + Statements around applied learning, personalized educational journey, and inclusive campus culture were well-received.



Key Takeaways

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Examine the perceived role of post-high school education in the Spokane area, clarifying motivators and considerations.

In the Spokane area, students tend to view higher education as a pathway to developing skills for a financially viable career. CCS Students in particular turn to higher education as the answer to a problem or need.

When choosing a higher education brand, top considerations include: program offerings, feasibility, financial/career trade-offs, and external references.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Analyze perceptions of and beliefs about community colleges.

It is a well-known stereotype that community colleges are subordinate to traditional four-year universities, offering easier classes and catering to students who either couldn't make it or couldn't afford to go elsewhere.

Beyond reputation, traditional four-years are seen as providing a more complete college experience and superior academic resources, while community colleges are recognized for offering smaller class sizes and more student support at a fraction of the cost.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Investigate existing perceptions of CCS, SCC, and SFCC and the relationship between them.

CCS is less known in the community than its constituent colleges. Confusion and frustration stem from SCC and SFCC being branded as part of a single entity while operating independently.

There is a notable lack of connection between students/employees affiliated with SCC and those affiliated with SFCC. Despite core shared attributes (friendly, collaborative, innovative, authentic, nurturing), employees of each college don't realize how much they have in common. SFCC is known for younger, transfer-oriented students, and SCC for older, trade-oriented students; proximity accentuates the perceived difference between the colleges.

All parties agree that the colleges should either be branded separately or completely combined, but they disagree about which would be most successful.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

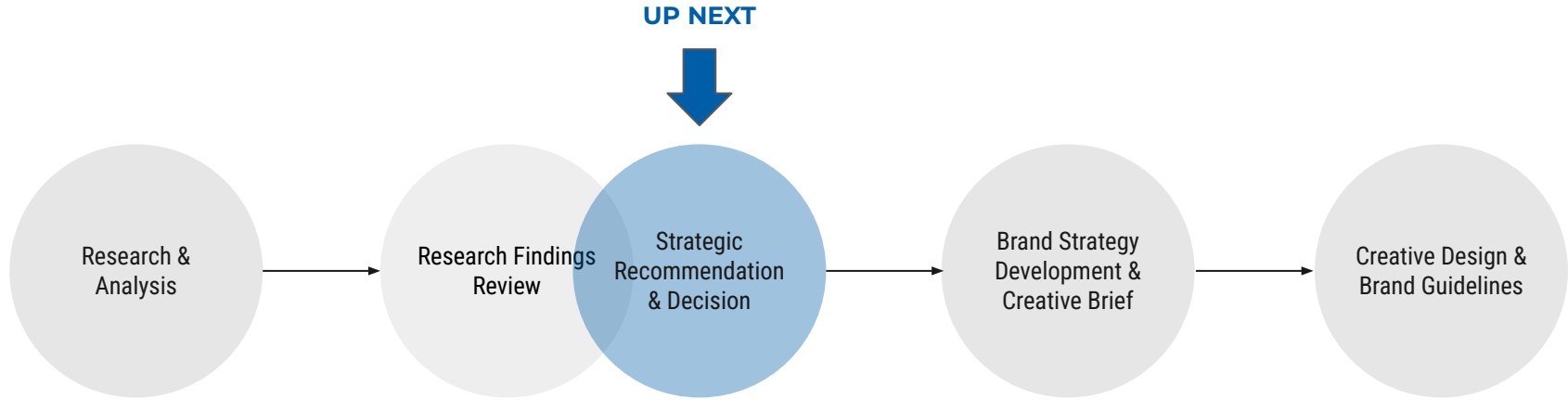
Explore perspectives on the current branding/messaging, and define the desired direction for the rebrand.

Participants approved of unique, ownable elements of the brand like the mascot, colors, and Pacific Northwest tie-ins. However, they agreed that overall, the brand is outdated and lacking in personality, maturity, and cohesion

In the mission, vision, and value statements, participants appreciated the emphasis on students-first and equity, but felt that the current expressions were too vague and generic. Customers resonated with messages about applied learning, personalized education, and inclusivity, but disliked direct comparisons to four-year colleges, seeing them as desperate-seeming and irrelevant.



Overarching Project Timeline



Drake Cooper will meet with executive branding group and collaborate on a strategic recommendations based on these findings. After the decisions are finalized, Drake Cooper will develop the strategic foundation for the brand and write a creative brief to carry insights from the research into design.

