

Michael Patrick Partners Works To Change Market Perception Of Community Colleges

San Francisco design studio is helping large metro two-year institutions grow enrollment.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, USA, February 9, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Michael Patrick Partners](#), a nationally recognized design studio, announced today that it has been hired on multiple fronts to help change the market perception of community colleges and communicate the critical role they play within the higher-education landscape. Recent campaign outcomes resulting from the studio's participation have demonstrated how novel creative approaches can be applied to heighten relevance and brand awareness of two-year programs.

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The creative strategy featured whimsical, avant-garde illustration.

For the past 20 years, the San Francisco design studio has developed an expertise in education marketing — from creating admissions enrollment campaigns and fundraising initiatives to refreshing institutional brand identities. And while the lion's share of its education portfolio does come from four-year colleges and universities, opportunities to promote community colleges and technical schools are now on an upward curve.

City colleges, community colleges, junior colleges and technical colleges consist primarily of public institutions

that offer continuing-education programs to students in search of an affordable and convenient path to obtain associate degrees, certificates and diplomas — programs that attract many career-focused students who are weighing the cost-versus-value proposition of attending a four-year college or university.

Traditionally, the purpose of community colleges has been to assist students with a goal to transfer to a four-year university, provide career education, and build foundational skills in math and English. According to the Community College Research Center, historically, community colleges have educated roughly 44% of all undergraduates in the United States. However, a 2022 study conducted by INSIDE HIGHER ED revealed that total community college enrollment has declined every year since 2010, with a slight increase for the 2021-22 academic year attributed to events that arose from the COVID outbreak.

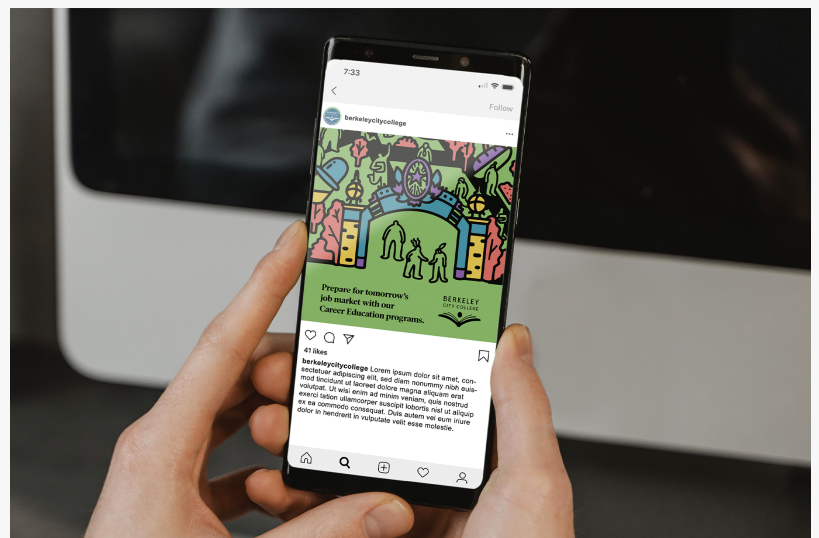
Two recent strategies have surfaced to combat the declining numbers: One approach is to advance the phenomenon of dual enrollment — that of high schoolers who are also enrolled at community colleges. For this target audience, the goal is to get the young demographic to return after graduating from high school. Another strategy includes a commitment to developing Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that provide curricula for an older target audience that is contemplating pursuing applicable skills that can be applied to secure work within industries that are currently experiencing a limited supply of laborers.

One of Michael Patrick Partners' clients, Berkeley City College (BCC), is a prime example of how the desires of CTE learner demographics are being met. Nourished by an active community advisory board, the [BCC CTE program](#) faculty includes academic and industry professionals who prepare enrollees to enter careers or transfer to four-year institutions.

To support BCC in its efforts to attract students, Michael Patrick Partners accepted a two-tiered assignment to establish a brand communications strategy and develop campaign tactics that would provide an engaging market-leader image. An overarching goal was to make the program's



Engaging photography included colorful portraits of enrolled students.



Social media also showcased the novel creative positioning.

brand purpose clear and convey why audiences should think about only BCC within the landscape.

Students benefit from the BCC CTE program through work-based learning, training for informational interviews, job shadowing, paid and unpaid internships, cooperative educational experiences and employment.

End-to-end CTE program brand infrastructure was developed to promote the initiative — a competitive audit, messaging system and creative positioning strategy. Plus, a suite of campaign touchpoints was created that spanned a viewbook, online display advertising, paid social media, campus environmental graphics and a campaign asset guide.

On the creative side, Michael Patrick Partners' goal was to develop engaging admissions enrollment campaign tactics — stop-and-think moments — that would stand apart from the competitive Northern California educational landscape and articulate key aspects of the CTE program to segmented target audiences. The design studio took an unconventional path — rather than relying on typical snapshots to weave a story; a creative positioning was devised that combined expressive student portraiture and dynamic campus architectural photography. And whimsical, avant-garde illustrations were also commissioned to depict how program graduates contribute to industry's growth — from business to computer sciences, multimedia arts, educators to lab technicians, academic researchers to health care.

Robert Maidens, Michael Patrick Partners' co-creative director, and his teams have completed multilevel marketing campaigns to heighten brand awareness for myriad top-tier schools, including Santa Clara University, Stanford University and the University of Portland. Additionally, its entree with two-year environments has included Portland Community College and other specialty programs.

Maidens stated: "This was a market relevance challenge — we were hired to develop a value proposition to rival top-tier universities and reinforce program attributes. Few community colleges devote time to distinguishing their brands. For Berkeley City College, it was critical to communicate why its CTE program exists, how it's different from competitive programs and the expected student outcomes."

Maidens continued: "The BCC CTE program deserved a distinctive story. A story that would connect on a personal level with prospective applicants. A campaign that would generate excitement and lead students — and their guardians — to believe Berkeley City College is their first choice."

As a result of the studio's efforts, the University & College Designers Association, a prestigious creative organization within the education industry, acknowledged the BCC CTE campaign marketing materials with two honors of creative distinction.

Michael Patrick Partners has received 500+ awards from the nation's most sought-after creative organizations and possesses a body of work that spans banking to beer, education to energy, hard seltzer to health care and technology to transportation — startups to the Fortune 1000 and the Fortune 500.

About Berkeley City College

Berkeley City College's mission is to provide its diverse community with educational opportunities, promote student success, and transform lives. The college achieves its mission through instruction, student support and learning resources that enable students to earn associate degrees and certificates and to attain college competency, careers, transfers, and skills for lifelong success. Visit berkeleycitycollege.edu to learn more.

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