**Kentucky Association of Career Colleges and Schools to Join Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU) Campaign to Produce 5 Million Skilled Professionals**

For immediate release

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Kentucky Association of Career Colleges and Schools, led by Candace Bensel, announces its support and commitment to the [Campaign to Create 5 Million Career Professionals](http://www.career.org/campaign.html) in the decade ahead, led by Career Education Colleges and Universities (CECU). Using research that connects the academic programs of postsecondary institutions in our sector to related occupations, and calculating projections using state-specific data on occupational growth demands and replacement needs, the sector has outlined its role in America’s economic and social future.

Independent research conducted by Dr. Wallace Pond and Ian N. Creager developed the protocols leading to this important set of data. The analysis, based upon a sophisticated, program-level, 50-state “cross-walk” of the Department of Education’s IPEDS education data and Bureau of Labor Statistics labor projections, suggests career colleges could produce nearly 8.5 million professionals in critical fields over the next decade. The state of Kentucky alone is projected to produce over 76,000 academic awards from private sector career colleges and universities in the next decade.

The research shows that in over 200 occupations, career colleges produce between 25-100% of the academic credentials in a given occupation area. Many of these occupations are important to our daily life. The study shows that career colleges will produce 90% of professional divers, 83% of cosmetologists, 78% of vocational nursing and nursing assistants, 64% of dental assistants and 55% of heating, ventilation and A/C (HVAC) engineering technicians.

“The importance of this research is that, for the first time, we are connecting academic and occupational data from the government with local projections to provide policymakers and employers a clear outline of job skill demand in their community and state,” said Steve Gunderson, president of CECU. “We have combined this data nationally in ways that emphasize the incredibly important role this sector provides in meeting our nation’s skill demands.”

At a time of educational focus on outcomes, the study lifts up the important achievements of this sector of higher education. Wallace Pond, the director of the study said, “In all higher education career programs, the private sector institutions represent 11% of all students, but 14% of all graduates. It is this sector’s focus on retention and completion rates that shows such positive results.”

Joining in the official announcement, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich called upon the new administration and the Congress to use the campaign and supporting study as an opportunity to work together in creating higher education policy. Gingrich stated, “This study makes clear America cannot succeed without the role these career schools play in giving all citizens the skills needed for real work with real pay.”