

Update: Program Opportunities for an Associate's-Level Agriculture Degree

Initial Insights

Low Employer Demand and Low Program Completions Suggest *Gavilan College* Should Not Develop an Associate's-Level Agriculture Program

Regional employers seek associate's-level agricultural professionals with skills easily developed through high school or vocational education or employer training. Employers predominantly seek administrative and technical skills that require less than an associate's-level degree, such as 'budgeting' and 'forklift operation.' Regional employment projections suggest growth in the agriculture market, but in positions that do not require beyond a high school education. Although the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects the employment of "agricultural workers" to increase in the region by eight percent between 2012 and 2022, individuals in this occupation typically hold less than an associate's-level degree.¹

Low Opportunity in Vocational Training

In addition to opportunities for associate's-level offerings, the Forum also examined opportunities to develop partnerships for vocational or high school training offerings. Ultimately, due to low employer demand, existing competition in the high school space, and a lack of identifiable employer partners, the Forum determined **Gavilan College** should not develop agriculture offerings at these levels as well.

Cabrillo College and **Hartnell College**, two regional competitors, offer associate's-level agriculture programs. The presence of these programs and the low demand for associate's-level agriculture professionals suggests little opportunity for a new regional program to succeed. In addition, Cabrillo College and Hartnell College experienced low completions in 2014, suggesting already low student demand for associate's-level agriculture programs.

Gavilan College currently offers basic business coursework that would provide training for individuals seeking business knowledge to complement their agriculture experience. The College's certificate offerings in "General Office Skills," "General Business," and "Business Computer Applications" help students develop skills demanded by regional agriculture industry employers (e.g., 'budgeting'). Market these programs to prospective students looking to enter the agriculture industry to prepare them for employment and increase certificate enrollments.

1) Bureau of Labor Statistics

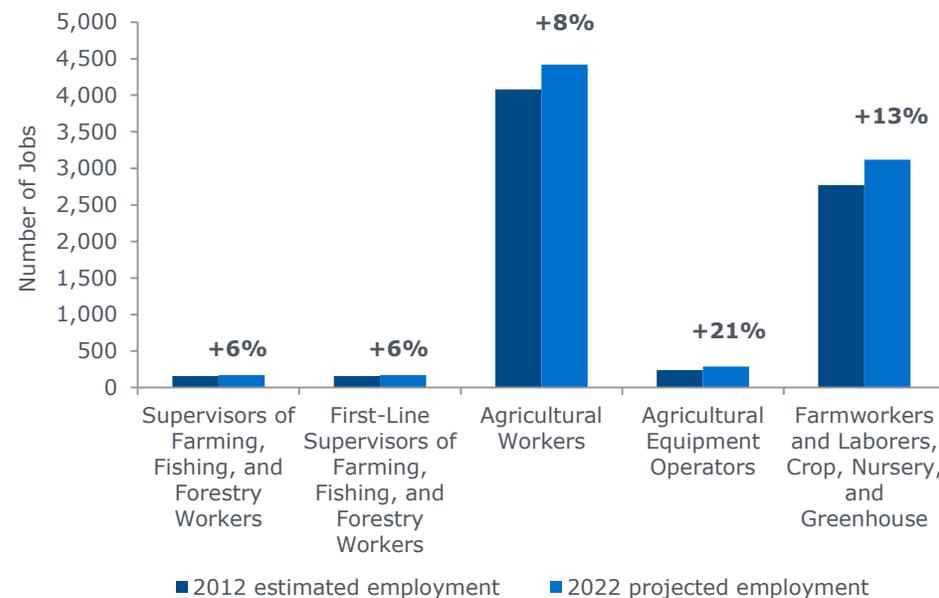
Regional Employment Statistics Indicate Little Growth in the Number of Agricultural Positions that Require Associate’s-Level Degrees

Due to the lack of demand for agricultural sector employees with an associate’s-level degree, program administrators at **Gavilan College** should not create an associate’s-level agriculture program. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), agricultural workers require a high school degree or less to qualify for their positions.²

Within San Benito and Santa Clara counties, most professionals in the agriculture industry serve as “agriculture workers” and “farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery, and greenhouse.” However, these occupations all require less than an associate’s-level degree. In 2012, 4,080 individuals served as “agriculture workers” and 2,770 as “farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery, and greenhouse.” Between 2012 and 2022, the BLS projects the employment of “agriculture workers” to grow eight percent, and the employment of “farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery, and greenhouse” to grow 13 percent nationwide.³ Despite the positive employment growth projected by the BLS for agricultural occupations, the projections do not offer an opportunity for a new degree program as these occupations do not require an associate’s-level education.

Projected Employment Growth of Agricultural Workers in the San Benito and Santa Clara Counties

State of California Employment Development Department⁴



2) [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
 3) [O*Net OnLine](#)
 4) [State of California Employment Development Department](#)

Employers Seek Individuals with Administrative and Technical Skills Conferred through High School Education, Vocational Training, or Employer Training

Program administrators at **Gavilan College** should not develop an associate’s-level program in agriculture as agriculture professionals do not require additional education to qualify for agricultural positions and can attain these skills elsewhere. Agriculture professionals develop demanded administrative and technical skills through high school education, vocational training, or employer training and do not need an associate’s-level degree.

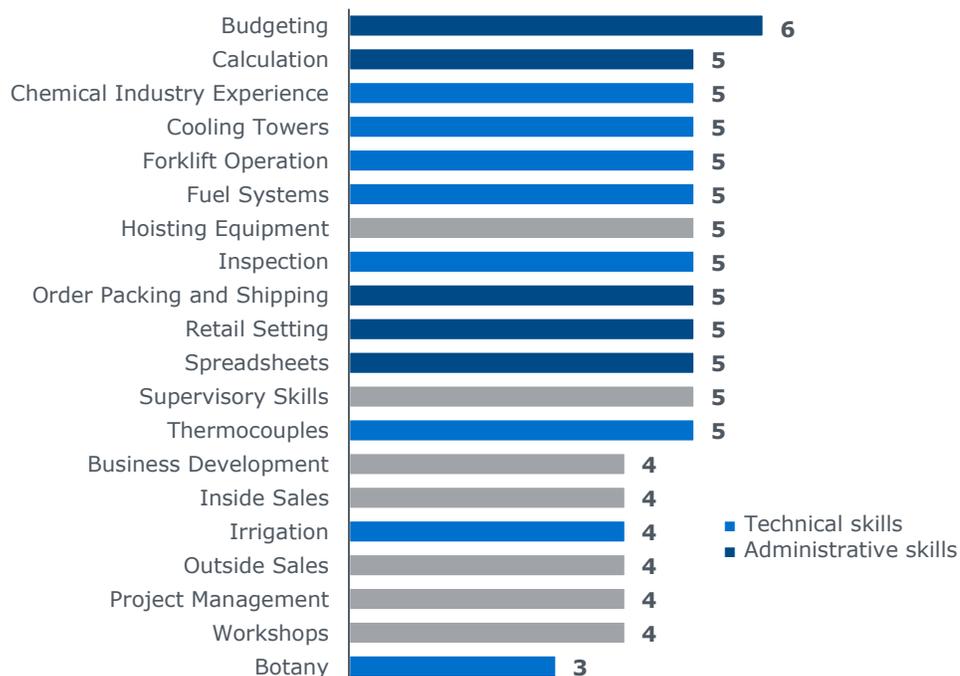
Statewide employers predominantly seek associate’s-level agriculture professionals with technical and administrative skills. Administrative skills, such as ‘budgeting,’ ‘calculation,’ and ‘order packing and shipping,’ compose five of the top 20 demanded skills. Technical skills, such as ‘chemical industry experience,’ ‘forklift operation,’ and ‘irrigation,’ compose five out of the top 20 demanded skills. Individuals typically develop these skills through high school education, vocational training, or training provided by employers.

Currently, California Agricultural Education provides agricultural training programs for high school students throughout the state to develop skills needed in the agriculture industry. The skills taught in these courses include employer demanded administrative and technical skills. The program offers classroom and laboratory, work-based, and career success opportunities to develop skills in the agricultural field.⁵

Top Skills for Associate’s-Level Agricultural Professionals in California

September 2015-August 2016, Statewide Data⁶

n= 30 job postings, 5 unspecified postings



5) [California Agricultural Education](#)
 6) [Burning Glass Labor/Insight™](#)

Competitor Landscape

Regional Competitors Experience Low Program Completions

Program administrators at **Gavilan College** should not develop an associate's-level agriculture program due to the low completions at regional competitor institutions. Two competitor institutions, **Cabrillo College** and **Hartnell College**, report low completions for associate's-level agricultural programs in 2014. These institutions provide the only associate's-level agriculture programs within the profiled region. Low regional completions indicate a small market for associate's-level agriculture programs. An additional program would likely experience low program enrollments as well.

Competitor Program Completions

Profiled Institutions; National Center for Education Statistics⁷

Institution	Programs	Reported Completions (2014)
Cabrillo College	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A.S. in General Horticulture and Crop ProductionA.S. in Landscape Horticulture	14
Hartnell College	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A.S. in Agriculture Business Technology, concentrations in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agricultural BusinessAgricultural ProductionFood Safety	8

7) [National Center for Education Statistics](#)

Methodology

Methodology: To assess the skills required of agricultural workers demanded in the profiled region, the Forum consulted both local economic data and the Burning Glass Labor/Insight™ Tool. The Forum identified the top occupations and skills for associate's-level agricultural professionals in the profiled region. Due to the little data available for the region using Burning Glass Labor/Insight™, the Forum gathered data for skills demanded in California, analyzed specifically for the positions demanded in the region. Unless stated otherwise, this report includes data from online job postings from September 2015 to August 2016. In addition, the Forum profiled local competitor institutions.

Definitions: "Region" refers to the San Benito and Santa Clara counties of California.

Burning Glass Labor/Insight™

EAB's Partner for Real-Time Labor Market Data

This report includes data made available through EAB's partnership with Burning Glass Technologies, a Boston-based leader in human capital data analytics. Burning Glass Technologies specializes in the use of web spidering technology to mine more than 80 million online job postings and analyze real-time employer demand. Under this partnership, EAB may use Burning Glass's proprietary Labor/Insight™ tool to answer member questions about employer demand for educational requirements, job titles, and competencies over time, as well as by geography. The tool considers job postings "unspecified" for a skill, industry, employer, geography, certification, or educational requirement when the job posting did not advertise for one of these particular job characteristics. Unspecified postings represent null values and should be excluded from the total number (n value) of job postings analyzed in the query. A more complete description of the tool is available at <http://www.burning-glass.com/products/laborinsight-market-analysis/>.

For more information about the Labor/Insight™ tool, please contact Betsy Denious, Director of Business Development Learning and Policy at bdenious@burning-glass.com or 301-525-6596.