



DATE: September 25, 2019

TO: Career Education Deans, Lead Researchers, and Chief Instructional Officers,
San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges

CC: CEOs, CSSOs

FROM: San Diego-Imperial Regional Consortium

**Regional Strong Workforce Program (SWP) Request for Applications (RFA)
Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion – Research Investment**

Please complete the forms attached with the details about your Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion Project Plan. This will be used as a scope of work for the contract with your college. This is also the information needed to submit a Strong Workforce Plan in the statewide system NOVA.

If you have questions about the scope of this RFA, feel free to contact Tina Ngo Bartel at tngobartel@miracosta.edu or Mollie Smith at mollie.smith@gcccd.edu. If you have questions about the RFA process and details, please contact Sue Fisher at sue.fisher@gcccd.edu or (619) 644-7095.

Regional SWP Request for Applications Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion – Research Investment

Context and Purpose of the RFA

The San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges serve a population that has critical economic as well as educational needs. In San Diego County, 12% of the population lives in poverty; in Imperial County, that number is almost 24%. Further, nearly 28% of the regional population lives below the “self-sufficiency” standard. While unemployment overall is around 4%, it is more than 13% for African-Americans and more than 9% for Latinx. Fourteen percent of San Diego adults over the age of 25 lack a high school diploma; in Imperial County, that number is 33%. These adults have little opportunity to advance beyond low-wage jobs.

Despite past reforms, the colleges are not yet meeting student needs. College completion rates range from 42% to 56% in the region’s colleges, and attainment of a living wage after exit remains low – 62% for Career Education students and only 33% for General Education students who do not transfer.

Retention, Success, and Support – Research Investment

To support examination of student retention, persistence, and completion in the region’s community colleges, the San Diego-Imperial Regional Consortium will host a “**Strong Workforce Faculty Institute: *Rethinking the Student Experience for Retention and Success.***”

The purpose of the Institute is to inspire faculty to 1) think critically about their courses in terms of retention, persistence, and success outcomes; 2) examine course data with researchers to better understand current outcomes; and 3) use that information to develop promising solutions in the classroom that improve outcomes.

The Institute will have three components:

1. Two in-person professional learning events
2. Faculty project
3. Research investment to support the work at each college

1. Professional Learning Events

The Regional Consortium will invest up to \$50,000 per college to support faculty in the Institute. Priority is given for Career Education Faculty to participate in this project. The first in-person (kick-off) professional learning event for the Institute will be held on February 28, 2020. At the kickoff event, faculty will:

- Learn from keynote speakers as they share promising practices (i.e., interventions supported by data and research that contribute to increased student retention, persistence, and completion).
- Observe an example of how to complete the project (see “Faculty Project” below)

- Understand what they need to complete by the next convening (i.e., expectations are set)

The follow-up professional learning event will be held in September 2020. At the follow-up event, the faculty will:

- Share lessons learned from participating in the Institute
- Explore promising practices and learn how to operationalize their ideas in the classroom

The faculty will receive a \$2,000 stipend if they attend both events and complete the project.

2. *Faculty Project*

At the end of the first professional learning event, faculty will begin an investigative project that has two parts. The first part comes with a set of research questions (quantitative and qualitative) to assist faculty in gaining insight about their students' retention and success outcomes. The faculty will work collaboratively with researchers to obtain information about their courses before using that information in the second part of the project.

The second part of the project includes developing and implementing an action plan that addresses the findings from the research. Faculty will use the information learned from answering the research questions to develop a data-driven intervention/support at the classroom level that improves student retention, persistence, and completion.

Participating faculty will be expected to complete sections of the faculty project on a monthly basis and check in with the researcher(s) and Career Education Dean assigned to the Institute from their college. Each section will be due as follows:

- Section I: March 31, 2020
- Sections II and III: April 30, 2020
- Section IV: May 29, 2020
- Section V (action plan): July 31, 2020

3. *Research Investment*

The Regional Consortium will invest \$2.5 million over 3 years to support the 10 community colleges' research efforts. Through this RFA, colleges have the opportunity to submit a response, describing the details of how they will allocate their funding (e.g., purchase a research tool, dedicate more research hours, hire additional research staff, facilitate convenings with faculty) to help faculty work collaboratively with researchers.

Project Outcome

The outcome of this research project is to identify classroom-level interventions that will have a positive impact on student retention, persistence, and completion including students from traditionally underserved populations.

The college will submit quarterly reports using a template provided by Regional Consortium. In year 1 of the period of performance, the progress report will describe the collaboration activities between researchers and faculty. In years 2 and 3, the progress report will describe how researchers, Career Education Deans, and faculty continued their collaboration beyond the Institute. The progress report must also detail if any progress had been made in the faculty's action plans.

Funding Allocation

The purpose of this RFA is to support colleges in their research efforts related to student retention, persistence, and completion. Specifically, the funds provided through this RFA will help colleges examine their current practice in ensuring student retention and persistence; identify potentially successful interventions or strategies; and develop action plans for moving forward.

Funding will be allocated and disseminated in the form of 1) faculty stipends and 2) research investment for each college.

1. Faculty stipends

- \$2,000 per faculty member will be provided for no less than 20 faculty (but no more than 25) at each college. If more than 25 faculty at a college are interested, then the college is encouraged to create a waitlist.
- A minimum of 20 faculty must sign up for the Institute, which entails attending the two events and completing the faculty project in order for the college to receive the research funding.
- A list of participating faculty must be submitted with the response to this RFA, including their first names, last names, and email addresses. A form is provided in Appendix A.
- An intake form will be emailed (upon receipt of completed response to the RFA) to the participating faculty, requesting information about their classes. Faculty responses to this intake form will assist researchers in pulling the necessary data for faculty to complete the project.
- Faculty who sign up for the Institute must sign a letter of commitment, agreeing to complete the faculty project in its entirety and to work on the project collaboratively with the CE Dean and researchers from their college. The letter of commitment indicates that the faculty understands that:
 - The project (i.e., investigative research and action plan) will be approved by the researcher and CE Dean designated to this project, Regional Chair, and Center of Excellence (COE) Director.

- If the project is not complete (e.g., the faculty did not complete the final project thoroughly), the faculty member will have the opportunity to complete the project within 30 calendar days.

The letters of commitment must be submitted with the response to this RFA. A template is provided in Appendix B.

- \$250 will be provided for participating in the February 28, 2020 event.
- The remaining balance of \$1,750 will be provided at the completion of the project and attendance at the follow-up event in September 2020.
- The Regional Consortium will provide the funding for stipends to the colleges and the colleges will pay the stipends to participating faculty.

2. Research investment for each college

- A maximum of \$250,000 will be provided to each college to support research efforts; this funding is exclusively for increasing research capacity (e.g., purchase a research technology tool, expand research staff hours, provide staff support for logistics).
- In response to this RFA, the college must assign, at minimum, one researcher (1.0 FTE for 2 years) who will work with the Career Education Dean to support the faculty projects and continue working collaboratively with faculty beyond the Institute.
- Researchers assigned to the Institute must attend both professional learning events as described above.
- Researchers assigned to the Institute must participate in the monthly regional SWP Data and Research Committee meetings. Researchers will receive technical assistance at these meetings to help them prepare for the Institute. The meetings will also include a community of practice designed to support research efforts at the colleges during the two years after the Institute.
- Researchers must pull and compile student data for courses taught by faculty participating in the Institute to support faculty in completing their projects.

Funding Model¹

Activity	Total Funding	Allocation Method
Faculty Stipends	\$50,000	\$30,000 (60%) funded up front \$20,000 (40%) funded after initial allocation is expended and progress on projects is demonstrated
Expanding Research Capacity Year 1	\$125,000	\$75,000 (60%) funded up front \$50,000 (40%) funded after initial allocation is expended and progress on projects is demonstrated
Expanding Research Capacity Year 2	\$125,000	\$75,000 (60%) Progress on projects is demonstrated \$50,000 (40%) funded after initial allocation is expended and progress on projects is demonstrated

¹ This funding model is consistent with the Strong Workforce Program Master Agreement.

RFA Process and Project Milestones

Milestone 1: A full response to this RFA is due by November 22, 2019 and must include the following:

- A list of at least 20 faculty, but no more than 25, who will participate in the Institute, and a faculty waitlist, if applicable (Appendix A).
- Letters of commitment from each participating faculty member (Appendix B)
- Detailed responses to the questions and prompts in this RFA (Appendix C)

Milestone 2: Faculty provide responses to the intake form no later than December 6, 2019, and researchers prepare for the Institute by pulling student data for the courses taught by participating faculty no later than February 14, 2020. The data may include demographic information, course retention rates, course success rates, etc., if available. The student data does not need to be submitted to the San Diego-Imperial Regional Consortium. The Career Education Dean designated to this project will confirm if the researchers have completed this task.

Milestone 3: Researchers and faculty must attend the kickoff professional learning event on February 28, 2020.

Milestone 4: At each college, faculty working in concert with their researcher(s) must complete the project for the Institute by July 31, 2020, which includes an action plan that will guide activities beyond the Institute, in years 2 and 3 of the funding.

Milestone 5: Researchers and faculty must attend the second professional learning event to be scheduled in September 2020.

Milestone 6: Progress reports must be submitted every quarter for the duration of the project (January 2020 – December 2022).

Timeline

Date(s)	Activity/Milestone
Sep 25, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFA released
Nov 22, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFA responses due Initial funding released upon receipt and approval of complete applications
Dec 6, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty respond to intake form
Feb 14, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers complete data preparation for faculty who signed up for the Institute
Dec 2, 2019 – Dec 31, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers attend monthly SWP Data & Research Committee meetings
Feb 28, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First in-person (kickoff) professional learning event
Mar 2, 2020 – July 31, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty work on the Institute project collaboratively with researchers at the college, with specific sections/milestones due monthly Faculty meet monthly with researchers and CE Deans to ensure that projects are on track to completion
Mar 31, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section I of the faculty project due
Apr 30, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections II and III of the faculty project due
May 29, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section IV of the faculty project due
July 31, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section V (action plan) of the faculty project due
July 31, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty submit their projects for approval; unapproved projects will have 30 days to resubmit Remaining funding released upon completion of faculty project
Sep 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second in-person professional learning event
Jan 1, 2020 – Dec 31, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly project progress reports due each year as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 1: April 15, July 15, October 15, and January 15 Year 2: April 15, July 15, October 15, and January 14 Year 3: April 15, July 15, October 14, and December 16

RFA Response Checklist: (Please check box when completed)

Appendix A: List of Strong Workforce Faculty Institute Participants

Appendix B: Faculty Letter of Commitment Template (required for each participant listed in Appendix A)

Appendix C: RFA Response Form (Project Plan)

Appendix D: Roles and Responsibilities (information only)

Appendix A: List of Strong Workforce Faculty Institute Participants

Fill in the following information, including the names of the Career Education Dean, researchers, and faculty who will participate in the Institute and support the scope of work as defined in the RFA.

Institution (College) Name

Designated CE Dean (First and Last Names)

Email Address

of Researchers Participating

Researcher Name (First and Last)	Email Address	Title

of Faculty Participating: (please list names and information on next pages)

List of Participating Faculty (Career Education Faculty have the first right of refusal for participation in the Institute)

First Name	Last Name	Email Address	Title	Adjunct or Full-Time?	Career Education? (Y/N)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					

List of Participating Faculty (Continued)

First Name	Last Name	Email Address	Title	Adjunct or Full-Time?	Career Education? (Y/N)
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					

Waitlist of Interested Faculty (If Applicable)

First Name	Last Name	Email Address	Title	Adjunct or Full-Time?	Career Education? (Y/N)
26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					
31.					
32.					
33.					
34.					
35.					
36.					
37.					

Appendix B: Faculty Letter of Commitment Template

(required for each participant listed in Appendix A)

Date:

To whom it may concern:

I, _____, fully commit to participating in the Strong Workforce Faculty Institute, *Rethinking the Student Experience for Retention and Success*. I understand that I will receive \$250 for participating in the February 28, 2020 event and the remaining balance of \$1,750 at the completion of the project and attendance at the follow-up event in September 2020. I also understand that my involvement requires that:

- I complete an intake form (sent via email) no later than December 6, 2019 with information about my classes so that researchers on my campus can prepare data.
- I participate in regular, monthly check-ins with the researcher(s) and Career Education Dean assigned to the Institute from my college.
- I attend both in-person events scheduled for February 28, 2020 and September 2020.
- I complete all sections of the faculty project (i.e., investigative research and action plan) no later than July 31, 2020.
- The project will be collaboratively reviewed and approved by the researcher and CE Dean designated to this project, Regional Chair, and Center of Excellence (COE) Director.
- I understand that if the project is not approved, then I will have 30 calendar days to resubmit.
- I will implement the action plan I developed in my project after the Institute (September 2020).
- I will continue to collaborate with the researcher(s) and Career Education Dean to implement the action plan beyond the Institute (September 2020).

Signature

Date

Title

Institution (College) Name

Appendix C: RFA Response Form (Project Plan)

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SECTIONS BELOW

Description of proposed project:

How will you prepare your institutional research department to support faculty in the Institute? How will your Career Education Dean and researchers engage with faculty on a monthly basis to ensure the faculty are completing the project? How will this project and investment increase the capacity of your research department to work more regularly with faculty (i.e., increase collaboration between researchers and faculty on campus)?

Target Population:

What types of faculty members are you targeting with this project? How will the faculty benefit from your proposed project?

Implementation and Sustainability:

At the completion of the September 2020 event, how will you institutionalize the collaboration between researchers and faculty beyond the Strong Workforce Faculty Institute? How will you ensure ongoing implementation beyond the period of performance of this funding?

Strong Workforce metrics and leading Indicators that you expect to impact with this project, with Baseline & Baseline Year:

Relevant Strong Workforce Metric (e.g., course enrollments or number of students who received a degree or certificate):

Relevant Outcomes or Leading Indicators (e.g., college action plans completed):

Industry Sector: All sectors

Start date: January 1, 2020

End date: December 31, 2022

Participating Institutions: Region 10

Lead Institution:

Budget:

This funding includes \$50,000 for faculty stipends for the first year only. There is up to \$250,000 available to expand research capacity to support this project. Allowable uses of these funds include a researcher, a research tool to support data analysis, and staff time to coordinate logistics. Please provide a detailed budget for each year. Funding can be used for up to three years.

Year 1 Budget (January 1 – December 31, 2020):

Object	Classification	Itemized List of Budgeted Expenses	Total
1000	Instructional Salaries		
2000	Non-instructional Salaries		
3000	Employee Benefits		
4000	Supplies and materials		
5000	Other Operating Expenses & Services		
Total Program Costs			

Indirect is not permitted on this project.

Year 2 Budget (January 1 – December 31, 2021):

Object	Classification	Itemized List of Budgeted Expenses	Total
1000	Instructional Salaries		
2000	Non-instructional Salaries		
3000	Employee Benefits		
4000	Supplies and materials		
5000	Other Operating Expenses & Services		
Total Program Costs			

Indirect is not permitted on this project.

Year 3 Budget (January 1 – December 31, 2022):

Object	Classification	Itemized List of Budgeted Expenses	Total
1000	Instructional Salaries		
2000	Non-instructional Salaries		
3000	Employee Benefits		
4000	Supplies and materials		
5000	Other Operating Expenses & Services		
Total Program Costs			

Indirect is not permitted on this project.

Investment Plan:

Please describe how you will leverage additional resources to accomplish your goals, as appropriate.

Signature Page

Researcher

Signature Date

Title Institution (College) Name

CE Dean

Signature Date

Title Institution (College) Name

CIO

Signature Date

Title Institution (College) Name

College President

Signature Date

Title Institution (College) Name

Appendix D: Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty will be responsible for:

- Signing up for the Institute through their college's Career Education Dean
- Signing a letter of commitment, and acknowledging they are required to:
 - Complete an intake form (provided via email) no later than December 6, 2019
 - Participating in monthly check-ins with researcher(s) and Career Education Dean to review their progress in the Faculty Project
 - Attend both in-person events scheduled for February 28, 2020 and September 2020
 - Complete the Faculty Project no later than July 31, 2020
 - Complete the Faculty Project in its entirety, in collaboration with researchers and the Career Education Dean from their institution

Career Education Deans will be responsible for:

- Submitting a list of faculty members (no more than 20 and no less than 25) who will participate in the Institute in response to the RFA
- Convening faculty who participate in the Institute on a monthly basis to review their progress in the Faculty Project; this will be done in collaboration with researcher(s)
- Attending both in-person events scheduled for February 28, 2020 and September 2020
- Working with their respective institutional research offices to provide support to participating faculty
- Working with their respective institutional research offices to determine how the funding (\$250,000) will be spent over the three-year period of performance to operationalize/sustain the collaboration between researchers and faculty beyond September 2020
- Approving each Faculty Project from their college by August 31, 2020—in conjunction with the researcher(s) designated to the Institute, Regional Consortium Chair, and COE Director

Researchers will be responsible for:

- Convening faculty who participate in the Institute on a monthly basis to review their progress in the Faculty Project; this will be done in collaboration with the Career Education Dean
- Attending both in-person events scheduled for February 28, 2020 and September 2020
- Compiling data for faculty participating in the Institute to assist them with completing the Faculty Project
- Attending the regional Data and Research Committee meetings, which will include technical assistance the researchers as they become data coaches
- Working with their respective Career Education Deans to provide support to faculty participating in the Institute
- Working with their respective Career Education Deans to determine how the funding (\$250,000) will be spent over the three-year period of performance to operationalize/sustain the collaboration between researchers and faculty beyond September 2020