

# STRONG WORKFORCE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

March 4, 2024 – EDITION 37

## DATA & RESEARCH

*Chairs: Eddie Matthews, Regional Research Associate, Center of Excellence (COE); and Alex Berry, Associate Dean, CTE, San Diego Mesa College*

The Data & Innovation Committee set its priorities for the 2024 calendar year, they are the following: 1) Create new regional process to ensure research is included in any regional grant requests; 2) Identify all the different definitions and sources CTE is being reporting across colleges; 3) Add capacity to support understanding of MIS Launchboard (and other MIS products) and internal data product alignments. The committee will leverage the new Regional CTE Research Expert positions to set up a streamlined system for Strong Workforce reporting. Moving forward, committee meetings will have a dedicated time for sharing of best practices. At a recent meeting, the programming software “Python” was introduced to several researchers who expressed interest in a follow-up workshop. This example reflects the community of practice this workgroup has become. The 2024 priorities demonstrate another purpose of this committee—streamlining data processes at a regional level to alleviate workload while standardizing and illuminating reporting across the 10 colleges in San Diego and Imperial Counties. The goal is to improve data reporting and processes to equip decision makers with the data they need to drive decision-making.

## MARKETING

*Chairs: Monica Romero, Dean, Business & Technology, Mesa College; Julie Lanthier Bandy, Director, Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs, Palomar College; and, Molly Ash, Program Manager, Region*

3fold and research partners, Stitch Market Research completed the post-campaign research. which will be used to measure current awareness and perception level since prior to the launch of the campaign. High-level findings include:

- A shift in perceptions of what is defined as “Higher Education”. Community College rose to second ranked among all profiles.
- Increased perceptions of the ability to get straight to a job indicate a broader awareness of the offering. Counselors are still more likely (50%) to consider a 4-year college or university as a direct pathway to a job than CC.
- Counselors have a better understanding of the CC offerings. Awareness of certification programs has increased.
- Over half of all respondents recall the Community Crafted campaign.

These findings will be used to influence future and current local and regional marketing efforts. The military-affiliated micro-campaign continues to make a strong appearance in local media markets including TV, digital advertising, and social media content and outreach events.

## CAREER PATHWAYS

*Chairs: Amertah Perman, Dean, Career Education and Workforce Development, San Diego Community College District; Al Love, Senior Director, College and Career Leadership, San Diego County Office of Education; and, Denise Cabanilla, Director, Higher Education and Adult Learning, Imperial County Office of Education; and, Suzanne Sebring, Manager, Career Pathways, Region*

*K14 Chairs: Amertah Perman, Dean, Career Education and Workforce Development, San Diego Community College District; Al Love, Senior Director, College and Career Leadership, San Diego County Office of Education; and, Denise Cabanilla, Director, Higher Education and Adult Learning, Imperial County Office of Education; and, Suzanne Sebring, Director, Post-Secondary Engagement, Region*

This spring, the workgroup will be providing feedback on the updated [K14 Program Finder](#) tool. This tool now includes K12 and Adult Education CTE programs. The workgroup also continues to work on the [K14 Equitable Career Pathways Project](#). This project aims to navigate a career pathway from K12 to employment, with a deliberate focus on documenting each step of the journey. By the project's conclusion, the group will produce pathway recommendations tailored to specific pathways (ICT for San Diego County; Health Sciences and Medical Technology for Imperial County), along with a replicable model for guiding future pathway development.

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*Adult Ed & Noncredit Chairs: Ute Maschke, CAEP/East Region Adult Education Program Manager; Kelly Henwood, Special Projects Manager, SDAERC Director, San Diego College of Continuing Education (SDCCE); and, Suzanne Sebring, Director, Post-Secondary Engagement, Region*

The updated K14 Program Finder tool has been launched. This new tool includes K12, Adult Education, Noncredit and Community College CTE programs. The interactive presentation and User Guide was presented at the Counselor Conference on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Adult Education/Noncredit workgroup continues work around horizontal alignment, keeping the adult education CTE data repository current, which informs the new Program Finder tool, and discussion around strategies to track student transitions. Ute Maschke has moved to Palomar College as their new Director of Continuing Education.

*Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Chairs: Nichol Roe, Associate Dean, Workforce Development and Extended Studies, Palomar College; Ben Gamboa, Associate Dean, Career Education, MiraCosta College; Suzanne Sebring, Director, Post-Secondary Engagement, Region*

The Credit for Prior Learning [course](#) developed through the regional Community of Practice is now housed in the CCCCO's Vision Resource Center. This course provides support system professionals in the planning and implementation of a local CPL program. Palomar College's Candace Rose continues to provide regional support and coaching through 1:1 meetings with the college's CPL leads; to guide the colleges with implementing CPL practices; answer any questions; and offer hands-on CPL training/professional development workshops for faculty, staff, and administrators on a case-by-case basis aligned with college specific goals.

*Rising Scholars Chairs: Chelsea Esquibias, Regional Coordinator, Rising Scholars, Educational Services and Support, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office; Suzanne Sebring, Director, Post-Secondary Engagement, Region*

The Rising Scholars Workgroup is organizing student workshops to be disseminated to the Rising Scholars Network statewide, via Zoom, on March 12th, April 19th, and May 7th at 10:00 am. The workgroup is also developing a concise one-page, double-sized, document to inform the community about available student resources across the region. Efforts are also ongoing to foster collaboration with partner programs at CSUs and UCs, facilitating the sharing of events and resources to create smooth pathways for students.

## CAREER NAVIGATION

*Chairs: Claudia Estrada-Howell, Acting Dean, Career Education, Miramar College; George Dowden, Dean, Career Technical Education, Cuyamaca College; and, Kevin McMackin, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Region*

As a core element of Career Navigation, colleges are asked to align aspects of the important work that started in the Pathway Navigation and Work-based Learning and Job Placement workgroups ([Career Navigation RFA](#)) to the NACE standards for a quality career center. The Career Navigation workgroup is progressing nicely with many colleges fully engaged in the process of reviewing the NACE standards and assessing their current structures and offerings. As a subsequent phase to this project, colleges will take the information and data gathered from the NACE standards and use it to inform a strategic plan for Career Services. It is anticipated that this plan will help to align college work to Vision 2030, college level DEI goals and program review. This work aligns to the workgroup goals for this year, which include: (1) create a career services experience that gives all students, especially populations of DI students, multiple opportunities for career awareness and career exploration throughout their student journey, (2) increase participation of students in work-based learning, (3) embed career navigation processes into all community college coursework, and (4) successfully implement colleges' unique Career Services Strategic Plans over three years with support and technical assistance from the Regional Consortium.

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## STUDENT RETENTION, SUCCESS, & SUPPORT

*Chair: Tina Ngo Bartel, COE Director, Region*

As of March 1, 172 counseling faculty from the 10 San Diego & Imperial Community Colleges continue to participate in the Strong Workforce Faculty Institute. The goals of the Counselor Institute are to 1) foster understanding and awareness of Career Technical Education/Career Education (CTE/CE); 2) learn how to use labor market information (LMI) and career exploration in advising students; 3) use inquiry, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous improvement to examine services provided to students; 4) support counseling faculty in building relationships and collaborating with CTE/CE instructional faculty and institutional researchers; and 5) inspire counseling from a culturally inclusive perspective. Since the kickoff event in October 2023, Counselor Institute participants completed two modules: 1) Examining Appointment Data and 2) Exploring Student Interests and Career Aspirations. The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence presented how to use labor market research in career exploration and career counseling at the Counselor Conference, which participants from the Institute attended to complete their second assignment. Additionally, the COE held special workshops for each college for participants who were not able to attend the Counselor Conference presentations.

The third and fourth assignments will be “Managing Day-to-Day Workflows” and “Developing Cross-Campus Relationships.” The final assignment will be an action plan, which is due before the wrap-up event on May 3, 2024.

## EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

*Chair: Kevin McMackin, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Region*

The Region continues to collaborate with the colleges as the [Employer Engagement Model](#) is implemented to increase WBL opportunities for students, increase student jobs and employment outcomes, and develop approaches that are more responsive to industry needs. So far, in the 2023- 2024 academic year, the Employer Engagement team has developed nearly 1550 new work-based learning and job opportunities for students in the San Diego and Imperial region. While developing these opportunities is crucial for students, it is vital that these experiences reach DI students in the region. The Region is collaborating with the colleges to collect work-based learning data to inform how opportunities can be more equitable for students. These data will provide valuable insight to the types of experiences students have access to and how processes can be adapted to better serve underrepresented students. Collaboration with external partners like the San Diego Regional EDC and the San Diego Workforce Partnership continues on a number of initiatives to further support students and businesses in the region.