

# THE CONSORTIUM CONNECTION



Strengthening Our Workforce, Empowering Our Communities

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photo credit: SDI RC

## Welcome to the Quarterly Newsletter!

Hello Friends,

As the year comes to an end, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our colleges, employers and workforce partners for your support and commitment to workforce development and student success. Thanks to your efforts, students have the opportunity to engage in industry-relevant curricula, gain real-life career experiences, and access support programs that prepare them for rewarding careers. From classroom collaborations to internships and other work-based learning opportunities, each activity has been instrumental in transforming students into industry-ready professionals.

Thank you for being an essential part of the San Diego & Imperial Counties workforce development ecosystem. We look forward to building on our accomplishments together in the new year and reaching even greater heights.

*Danene Brown, Ph.D.*  
*Regional Consortium Chair*

# News Center



*Palomar College's Dual Enrollment team,  
photo credit: Palomar College*

## SDI RC Strengthens Dual Enrollment Initiatives Across the Region

This year, SDI RC enhanced its support for Dual Enrollment (DE) programs, providing each regional college with Strong Workforce funds, resources, and technical support to develop robust DE strategic plans. Aimed at expanding equitable access across K-12, Adult Education, and County Offices of Education students, these efforts align with the Chancellor's Vision 2030 plan to make higher education accessible to all.

To support implementation, SDI RC offers office hours, communities of practice, and data dashboards for colleges, helping address shared challenges and expand DE pathways for diverse student populations.



*REC Innovation Lab, photo credit: Miramar College*

## Miramar College Launches New Regional Entrepreneurship Center Innovation Lab

Supporting Miramar College's expansion of hands-on learning for its business and entrepreneurship programs, SDI RC helped fund the new Regional Entrepreneurship Center (REC) Innovation Lab. This multi-phase project provides students with a collaborative, tech-equipped space to develop cross-disciplinary skills and bring their startup ideas to life.

Through this space, students – particularly young women and minority entrepreneurs – gain opportunities to pitch their ideas to investors, receive mentorship, and develop the skills needed to turn their ideas into real businesses, building a strong economic engine for small businesses in the region.

[Learn more about the REC Innovation Lab](#) and [hear what students have to say about it.](#)



*Dr. Tara Yosso presenting at the October 18th Faculty Institute, photo credit: San Diego & Imperial COE*

## 500 Faculty Members Transform the Student Experience with Data and Equity in San Diego & Imperial Community Colleges

SDI RC and San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) hosted its third Strong Workforce Faculty Institute on October 18, featuring 12 Institute alumni presentations on various topics from classroom expectations and grading policies to inclusive communication. This professional development program empowers faculty to examine course data, reflect on teaching practices, and develop data-informed action plans for student retention and success.

Since its inception in 2020, the institute has served 500 full-time and part-time faculty across Career Technical Education and other disciplines, supporting the region's 165,000 community college students. Keynote speaker Dr. Tara Yosso encouraged faculty to consider how cultural assets shape student outcomes, while faculty like Cerise Myers from Imperial Valley College observed how higher success rates in short-term courses can boost achievement.

[Keep reading...](#)

## Partner Spotlight



## Port of San Diego Collaboration

Since early 2023, SDI RC has partnered with the Port of San Diego to strengthen workforce connections and create new opportunities for community college students—a key talent source for the Port's future success. Together, we have hosted two highly successful “People of the Port” career fairs, attracting thousands of San Diegans, and showcasing critical waterfront careers from government and maritime, to hospitality and tourism.

The Port regularly collaborates with local community colleges by participating in college advisories, connecting with public safety programs, and serving as panelists at work-based learning events. As part of this ongoing partnership, the Port hosted an event on November 7 to engage San Diego’s academic leaders in understanding and addressing its workforce needs. Additionally, the Port has introduced colleges to other key waterfront partners, like the Ship Repair Association, further expanding opportunities for students.

“The partnership between the Port of San Diego and the San Diego & Imperial Counties Community Colleges Regional Consortium has been instrumental in driving economic mobility and fostering innovative industry-education collaborations,” said Elba G. Gomez, Vice President, Administration/Chief Administrative Officer, Port of San Diego. “Our joint efforts at the People of the Port Career Fair and upcoming workforce development initiatives are making a significant impact on our community’s future.”

[Learn more about the People of the Port Career Fair](#)

## Committee Corner



photo credit: SDI RC

## Advancing Equitable Apprenticeship Opportunities for Local Youth and Adult Learners

SDI RC is leading efforts to expand apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs across San Diego and Imperial Counties. Through the apprenticeship “earn-and-learn” model, students gain hands-on experience, industry certifications, and valuable connections while earning wages, building both student skills and the employer talent pipelines.

SDI RC is helping to build these pathways across the region. With support from state Strong Workforce funds and a grant from the James Irvine Foundation, SDI RC has expanded its team to include a Regional Director of Apprenticeship and an Apprenticeship Employer Relations Liaison. These roles foster collaborations between community colleges, K-12 districts, and industries to launch apprenticeship programs in sectors like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation.

Recent California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) grants awarded to Miramar College, San Diego College of Continuing Education, and the San Diego County Office of Education are further supporting pre-apprenticeship programs in critical areas such as fire and emergency services and information technology, providing onramps to high-wage careers.

Read more in this article, ["Creating Equitable "Earn-and-Learn" Opportunities for Youth and Adult Learners."](#)

## In the News



*San Diego & Imperial Counties Regional Scholars teams mark 10 years, photo credit: MiraCosta College*

### Rising Scholars Celebrates 10 Years

On September 25, we celebrated 10 years of Rising Scholars at the DEIA Pre-Conference! Rising Scholars is a transitional services program for formerly incarcerated students with effective on-ramps to assist them in obtaining the resources and support services needed to achieve their academic and career goals.

Congratulations to the San Diego & Imperial Counties Community College programs for being recognized by the Chancellor’s Office for their outstanding work.

Learn more about Rising Scholars in the video below as Marquis Jiles shares about his journey as one of the first Rising Scholars in the state to participate in face-to-face college programming while incarcerated. He is now preparing to go before the parole board.

[Watch Video](#)



*Manufacturing Expo 2024, photo credit: ECEDC*

## Connecting Students and Industry: Cuyamaca College hosts 2024 Manufacturing Expo

Cuyamaca College hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> annual East County Manufacturing Expo on October 1, gathering over 1,500 attendees including more than 800 students, 65 exhibitors, and the support of local government officials. This year's event, organized by the East County Economic Development Council (ECEDC), celebrated the innovation and career opportunities in manufacturing, while also promoting pathways for community reintegration.

The collaboration between the East County Economic Development Council (ECEDC), Cuyamaca and Grossmont Colleges, and dedicated community members from the planning committee, underscores the vital role of manufacturing in our region. These partnerships foster the next generation of industry leaders, create stronger connections within our community, and pave the way for future growth and innovation.

Check out highlights from the 9th annual East County Manufacturing Expo in the video below created by El Cajon Valley High School students with the guidance and mentorship from Taylor Guitars videographer:

[Watch Video](#)

# Happenings in 2025

January  
**10**

**Workforce Development Council:  
Equity Gaps in Priority Jobs & Programs**  
10:30am - Zoom  
[Register Here](#)

February  
**21**

**Workforce Development Council:  
Jobs for the Future**  
10:30am - Zoom  
[Register Here](#)

March  
**28**

**Save the Date:  
Inclusive Workplace Champion Awards Reception**  
9:00am - 10:30am  
Jacobs Center



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