

Members Present: Danene Brown, Sunny Cooke, Brett Houser, Tina Ngo Bartel, Barbara Gallego, Wes Lundburg, Will Olmstead, Marciano Perez, Tina Recalde, Sharon Sampson, Christina Sharp, Michael Speyrer, Al Taccone

Regional Staff: Stephanie Bradley

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of [Minutes](#) from [May 21, 2025](#)
 - Motion to approve by M. Speyrer, second by W. Olmstead, **Motion approved** with one abstention (B. Gallego)
3. T. Ngo Bartel shared [update on Center of Excellence](#)
 - Research Investment
 - Reminder: funding for research experts will end June 30, 2026 (Original funding commitment ended June 30, 2025). Colleges must plan to institutionalize roles or identify alternative/braided funding.
 - COE hired and payrolled research experts through MiraCosta and placed them at colleges under MOUs; positions remain temporary
 - a. Not every college has a research expert
 - Some colleges have been able to absorb the position; some colleges faced HR challenges with soft money
 - Building Institutional Capacity
 - Research expert positions were intended to help colleges build long-term IR capacity around CTE data.
 - Over the past two years, researchers created dashboards and templates for recurring data needs, allowing IR offices to update with new data easily.
 - Goal was to leave behind sustainable systems and processes so that, when positions end, the burden on IR offices is reduced.
 - Concern remains about handling ad hoc requests once positions expire, as those require deeper capacity beyond dashboards/templates.
 - Discussion
 - W. Lundburg emphasized the importance of sustaining the research expert roles and raised the possibility of exploring a regional-level solution. He suggested that CEOs could discuss funding a shared regional position or two under the Center of Excellence, which could help colleges while avoiding 50% law challenges.
 - S. Cooke expressed strong support for the value of the research experts, noting that MiraCosta would like to retain its researcher but is facing significant funding losses (e.g., HSI grants). She agreed that a potential solution could be for colleges to contract with the COE for research services, funded through categorical Strong Workforce dollars. This approach could allow continued access to data expertise without creating permanent positions that strain college budgets under the 50% law.

- Both leaders recognize the complexity and lack of resources makes this challenging, the roles are critical to institutional research capacity and decision-making, and creative funding models at the regional level should be explored to sustain them beyond June 2026
 - Potential for regional data access agreements to allow COE to analyze and provide reports while following FERPA
- Community Forums for Comprehensive Needs Assessment
 - Perkins requires colleges to complete a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) with broad stakeholder input (employers, workforce boards, community orgs, parents, students, and special populations)
 - To ease this burden, the Center of Excellence (COE) conducts a Comprehensive Regional Needs Assessment (CRNA) every two years, fulfilling much of the requirement
 - Community Forums are hosted at each district, presenting district-specific demographic and labor market data and gathering feedback to inform the CRNA
 - Each district receives a District Profile Report with census and labor market data, service-area demographics, fast facts, and interactive dashboards for deeper analysis.
 - Reports and dashboards support strategic planning, Perkins compliance, and grant writing
 - COE is also conducting an adult learner survey (students 25+ who exited in the last three years) and will complete additional interviews with underserved groups to ensure all Perkins requirements are met
 - Feedback from Colleges
 - B. Houser (Imperial Valley College): Reported that the Imperial forum was “amazing,” highly productive, and created new networking opportunities and relationships. He praised the dashboard as an excellent tool
 - M. Speyrer (Southwestern College): Shared that the Southwestern forum surfaced important issues, such as lingering impacts of COVID and the challenges of younger students (7th and 8th graders) entering college environments. Noted the value of hearing directly from employers and community partners
 - S.Cooke (MiraCosta College): Thanked COE for building institutional capacity and creating tools colleges can continue using. Praised the model as a best practice for the state and noted that in the recent statewide COE survey, she highlighted the San Diego/Imperial COE as exemplary
 - Additional Notes
 - T. Ngo Bartel emphasized that these forums also help reconnect community stakeholders to campuses, showcasing college facilities and services many have not seen in years.
 - T. Ngo Bartel expressed appreciation to S. Cooke for completing the COE survey and encouraged all participants to submit the [statewide COE survey](#) to document impact and strengthen recognition at the state level
- Capacity Building Summit

T. Ngo Bartel shared plans for a Capacity Building Institute to support adult learners, outlining its structure, timeline, and the need for colleges to commit participation and identify a project lead

4. Regional Updates given by D. Brown – [presentation here](#)

- Legislative Updates

- AB 323: Clarifies use of local Strong Workforce funds for work-based learning; currently on governor's desk
- AB 1400: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program; reduced from 15 to 10 colleges; on governor's desk. Multiple support letters submitted from our region
- Board of Governors is supporting backfill of \$60M Strong Workforce set-aside for FY 26-27
- Discussion:
 - a. S. Cooke noted CCLC and others backing the \$60M request; outcome for BSN pilot uncertain due to governor's previous vetoes
 - b. D. Brown mentioned additional language supporting rural areas in AB1400 (e.g., Inland Empire) to encourage approval
- Refresh on our Workgroups
 - Deans proposed shifting workgroups to committees for stronger leadership, equity focus, and outcomes tracking.
 - Committees will be led by CTE deans/associate deans with district representation & include Adult Learner Success Committee, Employer Engagement Committee, Data & Innovation Committee
 - The Adult Learner Success Committee will begin as an Advisory Committee to the Building Capacity Summit
 - Existing workgroups will transition to practitioner-led Communities of Practice.
 - Communities of Practice will cover Apprenticeship, Career Navigation, Credit for Prior Learning, JPCM/WBLC, Data & Research, AI, and Institute follow-ups
- Budget
 - Round 9 funding included a \$65M set-aside; Round 10 saw a slight increase due to a \$5M return
 - Additional funding (\$6,954,145) has supported colleges through apprenticeship-related grants (CAI, COYA, Apprenticeship Pathways Demonstration Project, Irvine Foundation, IDRC)
 - Round 10 RFAs will continue prior investments and add the Capacity Building for Adult Learners initiative
 - Final regional budget submission includes RC staff support, ongoing projects, and RFA allocations; hope remains for restoring the \$60M set-aside next year
- CTE Impact Report
 - The CTE Economic Impact Report is being updated by Lightcast, with regional, district and college-level reports planned for completion by January 2026
- New Regional Collaboration and Coordination Grant RFA
 - Will be release October and due December
 - This grant, issued by the Chancellor's Office, provides guidance for the regional consortium on implementing Strong Workforce and EWD funding
 - Feedback from the region requested by the Regional Consortium before submission
- Chancellor's Office Regional Convening – December 4th and 5th
 - D. Brown confirmed the Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 Regional Convening is scheduled for December 4–5 at the Omni Hotel downtown, with the first day focused on Vision 2030 metrics and the second day highlighting regional achievements
 - a. Save the Date will be shared when received from the Chancellor's Office
 - Planning committee is coordinating content to showcase workforce partnerships, employer engagement, and work-based learning initiatives

- S. Cooke emphasized this is an opportunity to demonstrate the region's impact, including structures and partnerships developed over the past five years
 - Attendance details are unclear; the Chancellor's Office will contact college presidents and invite participants, including college teams, guided pathway coordinators, K-12 program coordinators, and partners
 - T. Recalde noted the convening allows mutual sharing of best practices and strategic planning.
 - D. Brown will follow up on potential stipends for Imperial Valley participants to support attendance.
 - [September 2025](#) - The Consortium Connection Newsletter
5. 2025-2026 [ROC Membership](#)
- All positions have been filled

Next Meeting: November 19, 2025 @ 3:30pm (virtual)
[ROC Meeting Calendar](#)