Across the recommendations made by regional stakeholders, all share the following regional strategies: Collaboration, Innovation, Equity, and Employer Engagement. Listed below is a brief description of each regional strategy.

Collaboration: Stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of deep, cross-sector collaboration to strengthen alignment across community colleges, K12 districts, Workforce Development Boards, employers, and regional partners. Shared priorities included improving data-sharing, coordinating sector engagement, expanding dual enrollment and work-based learning pathways, and establishing regular communication structures that ensure coherence across systems.

Innovation: Across all stakeholder groups, there is a strong commitment to advancing program innovation that responds to evolving labor market demands and emerging industries. Priorities include expanding programs in AI, cybersecurity, biotechnology, drone technology, and non-traditional apprenticeships, while also building sustainable baccalaureate and noncredit-to-credit pathways. Stakeholders reinforced that innovation must be scalable, data-informed, and aligned with Vision 2030 to ensure that regional programs remain competitive and future-focused.

Equity: Equity emerged as a central theme, with stakeholders highlighting the need to expand access, participation, and success for special populations, including adult learners, veterans, rising scholars, UDW members, foster youth, students with disabilities, and English learners. Many emphasized the importance of wraparound supports, career counseling, and targeted student services that reduce barriers to completion. This shared commitment reflects the region's dedication to eliminating opportunity gaps and ensuring that all students benefit from high-quality education and career pathways.

Employer Engagement: All groups underscored the critical role of employers in shaping relevant, high-quality career education. Stakeholders emphasized expanding work-based learning, leveraging Workforce Development Board business service teams, strengthening advisory participation, and aligning sector engagement to avoid employer fatigue. Improved coordination with industry partners is viewed as essential to preparing students for in-demand jobs, supporting apprenticeship development, and ensuring that regional programs remain responsive to workforce needs.

The remaining pages of this document illustrate the analysis and recommendations made by each regional stakeholder: Chancellors, Voting Member Deans, Workforce Development Boards, K12 CTE Executives, Center of Excellence, and the OCRC.

Community College District Chancellor Analysis

Generative AI District/Regional Integration: Foster a regional ecosystem that promotes the responsible integration of AI across institutional programs, student services, and administrative operations. Encourage the sharing of effective practices, tools, and professional development strategies among colleges and employers to accelerate AI adoption, enhance teaching practices, and prepare students for an AI-enabled workforce.

Workforce Development Partnership: Strengthen regional collaboration with Workforce Development Boards through formal MOUs to facilitate data sharing and enhance opportunities for community college students to access external resources that may support retention, completion, and job placement rates.

Program Innovation: Advance regional commitment to focus on programs related to emerging industries such as drone, cybersecurity, and AI, while also enhancing non-credit to credit pathways and baccalaureate attainment.

Student Equity: All investments to support strategies and programs that increase accesses and participation of special populations such as adult learners, veterans, rising scholars, foster youth, students with disabilities, and English language learners.

Dual Enrollment and Early College Credit: Expand participation among K12 partners by strengthening agreements, aligning courses offerings with college pathways, and increasing access to early college credit opportunities to accelerate degree attainment.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Enhance accountability and regional investments by evaluating project outcomes and continuously monitoring progress to ensure measurable impact.

Scalable and Sustainable: Implement initiative that can be replicated across the region and sustained over time by leveraging cross-sector partnerships, aligning funding streams, and utilizing data to guide continuous improvement.

Regional Lead CTE Dean Analysis

Program Innovation and Implementation: The region has leveraged Regional SWP to develop and implement innovated programs. The region has demonstrated strong program innovation and implementation through initiatives in drone technology, biotechnology, cybersecurity, and simulation labs. These efforts have expanded educational opportunities, created non-traditional apprenticeships, received specialized accreditations, and will include baccalaureate pathways.

Intersegmental Collaboration and Partnerships: Fostering strong connections across the regions workforce development boards, cross-regional project collaborations, K12 systems, and Labor Union is a cornerstone to regional success. Currently, a few Regional SWP projects are working to strengthen these collaborations such as the Transforming Intermediary Partnerships for Student and Employer Success (TIPSS). Further investment in such strategies will ensure students and residents of the county are aware and able to leverage the various resources offered within this regional, ultimately increasing student success.

Special Programs, Population, and Strategies: The region seeks to further invest in strategies that advance special programs and expand opportunities for diverse student populations. Priority areas include expanding baccalaureate offerings and establishing a transfer baccalaureate infrastructure streamlining a student's academic journey. The region also shared the interest to provide services and support for adult learners, non-credit to credit pathways, rising scholars, and UDW member to increase retention and completion rates. Lastly, increased investment in counselors, career centers, and faculty development will enhance student career support services, ensuring equitable access to high-quality education and workforce preparation across all communities.

Workforce Development Analysis

Data Sharing Agreement – advancing a consistent DSA across all colleges to improve coordination and co-enrollment tracking.

College Career Center Collaboration – The Orange County Workforce Development Board is piloting a program in partnership with the Career Centers at Orange Coast College and Irvine Valley College, establishing dedicated office hours on specific days to serve students. If successful, this initiative could be considered for future funding and expansion to additional campuses.

ETPL Expansion – Increase the number of Career Technical Education (CTE) courses and programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to provide WIOA-eligible participants with greater choice in training opportunities and establish a designated campus department to accept training vouchers and facilitate the enrollment of WIOA clients.

Work-Based Learning Collaboration – Workforce Development Boards seek to work more closely with colleges to expand work-based learning opportunities that can be supported through WIOA funding.

Employer Engagement Collaboration –Leverage WDBs business services teams to lead and expand employer engagement across Orange County, enhancing coordination, connecting students to industry opportunities, and supporting colleges in developing apprenticeships and other employer-driven programs.

Sector Engagement / Advisory Alignment – Coordinate industry sector activities jointly to avoid employer fatigue and reduce the burden on industry partners. Building on the OCRC team's efforts to conduct regional advisory meetings, Workforce Boards and colleges can expand collaboration through broader industry sector engagement that strengthens alignment between education and workforce needs.

Regular Coordination Meetings – as discussed previously, establishing a standing meeting between WDB Executive Directors and the OCRC Executive Director to sustain communication and alignment.

K12 CTE Executive Leadership Analysis

Pathway/Program Sustainability: Investing in innovative and new pathways is essential to meet the ever changing and growing industry demands. Funding streams such as K12 SWP, CTEIG, CCAP, K16 Collaborative, and Catalyst grants allows for these investments to be developed and established. Grant fatigue is also a reality so it is essential to focus on developing a more integrated regional investments and CTE infrastructure that would set aside Regional SWP funds to focus on K12 engagement and partnerships.

Early College Credit: Investments to expand and focus on CTE early college credit is of interest for all the ROPs and their partner LEAs. Leveraging Saddleback College's ATEP facility, training qualified K12 instructors to teach these courses, cross-regional articulation agreements, and focusing on special populations would be a great investment to further strengthen cross-system collaboration and increase CTE early college credit offerings. Additionally, setting a practice in place to leverage WBL Dual Enrollment with partner colleges would be a great avenue to not only increase these sections, but have a focus on CTE. Additionally, investing in an early college credit infrastructure would significantly accelerate these offerings to ensure the region meets Vision 2030 goals.

Increased Collaboration: A series of actionable activities were discussed to increase collaboration between K12, community college, workforce development, and union/non-union associations such as: community college CTE program mobile units to visit K12 career fairs, data, sharing agreements with K12 and WDB to track student outcomes across systems, increase awareness of workforce development services and resources students and members of the community can leverage to meet basic needs and assist in paying for industry training programs, expand K12 and community colleges engagement with union/non-union programs such as Simon Builders, MC3, and WINTER (women in non-traditional employment roles).

Center of Excellence Recommendations

Regional Alignment: Adapt and maintain regular training updates and evaluator rotations to uphold consistency and alignment with regional priorities, including identifying regional/Governance Council priorities and refining the application, instructions, or corresponding rubric to support projects that align with those priorities.

Timelines: Recalibrate application and review timelines to afford adequate planning and review periods, provide applicant guidance, and leverage annual strategic meetings to align regional funding priorities with Governance Council directives in advance of the application cycle. Allowing more time for these activities will further align projects with priorities.

Review Committee Make-up: To foster continuous, broad-based regional leadership engagement and ensure the integration of diverse viewpoints, it is recommended to establish formal term limits for Review Committee members. Members should be limited to a maximum two-year term, followed by a mandatory minimum on-year period of ineligibility before they may be considered for reappointment. This structure will maximize opportunities for new perspectives and promote greater regional ownership of the decision-making process, including the exposure of applicants and project leads to the work of the review committee.

Focus Groups: Expand on surveys utilized for informational sessions and implement structured discussions to explore motivations, confusion points, and support needs for both applicants and reviewers, given the desire by applicants for more guidance during the application process, and ability of successful applicants to track measurable evaluation criteria at each phase of their projects.

Enhanced Survey Design: Integrate feedback collection at multiple touchpoints; issue reminders and summarize outcomes to demonstrate the impact of Regional SWP funding on program goals, either as through-puts or outputs in their programs.

On-Demand Training Resources: RECORDED modules such as previous informational sessions, interactive toolkits, or stepwise guides accessible beyond live sessions are recommended to increase application quality, in addition to implementing an applicant mentorship program for step-by-step application support.

Longitudinal Impact Studies: Partner successful applicants with regional Institutional Research groups to plan for and properly monitor funding program outcomes (job placement rates, wage growth, credential attainment) using mixed methods approaches to assess ROI and guide strategic evaluation to document success and challenges.

Orange County Regional Consortium Recommendations

Regional SWP Extended Project Funding: Allow the upcoming Regional SWP application (2026 – 2028) to include an option for a 4-year or 6-year funding cycle to allow for proper monitoring and evaluation of regional investments.

Positive Consideration Point System: Integrate a point system that would provide additional points to projects focused increasing access to special populations, strengthening partnerships with K12 and workforce development partners, advancing employer engagement practices and work-based learning opportunities for students, or other directions outlined by the Governance Council.

Regional Data Dashboards: Establish regional data dashboards, including those focused on Dual Enrollment and Work-based Learning, to track participation, outcomes, and equity metrics, enabling data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement across the region.

Workforce Development Boards: Establish Data Sharing Agreements with the three Workforce Development Boards to expand student access to external resources and services related to wraparound supports, job placement assistance, and funding for training programs.

Review Committee Stakeholder Representation: Elevate the involvement of community college career education faculty (instructors/counselors) by reserving designated seats to ensure balanced representation of both instructional and student support perspectives. Additionally, reserve designated seats for workforce development leaders to actively engage in the review and selection of Regional SWP investments.