SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

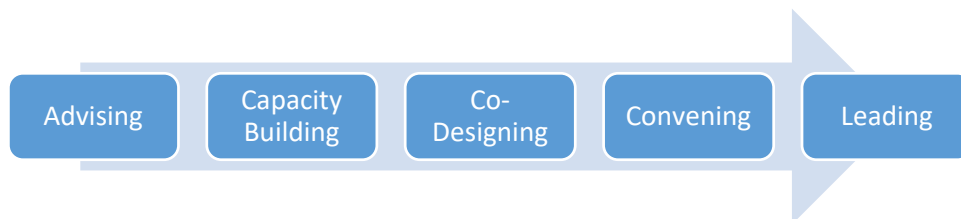CITY COLLEGE • MESA COLLEGE • MIRAMAR COLLEGE • CONTINUING EDUCATION

## Career Education Advisory Committee
Employer Inquiry Guide

A guide to engaging in a strategic conversation and relationship with Industry Advisory Committee members

A Continuum of Employer Relationships in CTE

Advising	Capacity Building	Co-Designing	Convening	Leading

Employer engagement occurs a continuum from general advising through capacity building to co-designing, convening, and leading programs that truly meet workforce needs

Formal meetings with industry advisors are just one-piece of an on-going process.

Before | During | After
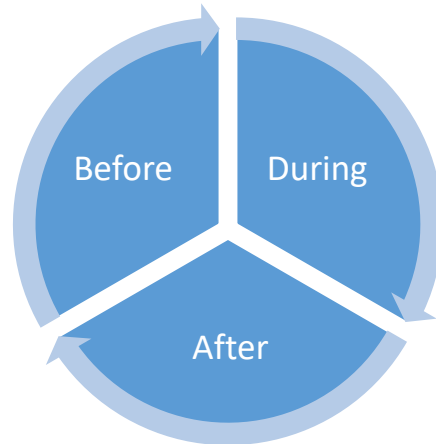
Intentional, strategic conversations are needed to build relationships, increase alignment to employer needs, and best prepare your students for the workforce.

Before the Industry Advisory Committee Meeting:
Get prepared

Research the needs of the industry advisory committee members hiring needs and skills gaps.

> *Consider using a software like Burning Glass or Emsi to identify specific skills needs of your employer partners. Don't have access to LMI software? Reach out to the Regional Center of Excellence or use existing sector/LMI reports.*

Gauge the willingness of employer partners to engage in institutional strategic needs outside of just the meeting.

> *Consider engaging employer partners in a pre-meeting survey or virtual engagement to understand what business value they are seeking by attending the industry advisory committee meeting.*

Assess industry advisory committee membership levels.

> *Consider, do you have enough industry representation? A majority of the advisory* committee *must be from industry. It is recommended that there are at least 5-7 active industry members.*

Identify potential new advisors and partners based on industry needs and standing employer relationships through existing programs, local workforce investment boards, or other partner agencies.

> *Consider reaching out the Regional Directors for Employer Engagement to help with advisory member search efforts.*

Plan and develop the meeting agenda to maximize the time and resources of the industry advisory committee members.

> *Use the information gathered to inform the dialogue by focusing on industry partner needs as the starting point of the conversation.*

> *Publish meeting agenda at least one week in advance to advisory committee members to help members to come prepared for dialogue.*

During the IAB meeting
Facilitate inquiry that builds relationships, solicits information from employers, and gets them engaged in informing your programs and courses

Validate and verify the needs of employer skills. As employers to identify basic skill requirements, technical/occupational skill requirements, and soft skill/employability competencies of entry-level and incumbent workers in the program.

> *Consider using Burning Glass reports to ask employers for more specific examples. This will also demonstrate basic understanding of employer's needs and will help with validation instead of compilation of needs. Don't have access to LMI software? Reach out to the Regional Center of Excellence or use existing sector/LMI reports.*

> *Example: Instead of asking during the meeting key skills needs of employers, bring a list of specific competencies in job postings to confirm understanding of those needs.*

Work with employers to review and align existing or develop new curriculum that supports local job market needs.

> *Start the dialogue with employer skills needs and work backwards.*

> *Example: Before listing the soft skills taught currently in your program, work with the employers to help them document to you what a specific soft skill means in the context of the industry and how we can replicate that in our classrooms.*

Request authentic workplace materials, scenarios, and examples from employers to assist in contextualizing the instruction.

> *Consider engaging employers who indicate willingness to share scenarios in a more in-depth relationship within the classroom.*

Ask employers to identify the credentials they value for occupations in the chosen pathway(s).

> *Example questions: Do your employer partners recognize the credentials we are awarding? Is there work needed to help inform employer partners of the value of our credentials?*

Ask employers to provide work-based learning experiences for students (e.g., job shadowing, internships).

> *Be specific in the ask, and ask for commitments to support student success. Most non-profit boards ask members for contributions or in-kind support. Consider engaging industry advisors in the same manner as non-profit board members.*

Example: If they are unable to donate equipment or funds to the program, could they commit to hiring a student? Providing an internship? Coming to campus to assist in a capstone project?

Make sure to provide a variety of ways that employers can participate or lend a hand. Remember, you don't know unless you ask!

Invite employer partners to participate in the job placement process (e.g., conducting mock and actual interviews, hiring graduates, assisting with job placement at other businesses).

Ask employers how you can partner together to meet work-place diversity needs. Identify needs in advance of your employer partners as they relate to company diversity practices and goals.

Example: In the meeting, devote time to discussing the goals of company's diversity initiatives and how we can help partner to meet their goals.

Ask employers to provides support in the form of in-kind donations or scholarships.

Focus the ask on reducing barriers to student persistence and completion. Be clear about the barriers students face and the opportunities to reduce these barriers. Ask employers about providing funding, equipment, or other resources to help reduce barriers to student persistence and completion.

After the meeting and on-going
Stay in regular communication, follow-up on items discussed, and build in evaluation processes

Document and communicate to employer partners how their feedback has informed program structure and changes.

Consider creating an action item registry and include quarterly updates on action item progress.

Keep employer partners informed about the development of the program throughout the year.

Recognize employers for their input, support, and guidance as the program matures.

Ask employers to provide feedback about the success of program participants once they are hired.

Establish a program revision schedule to ensure program content continues to be responsive to changes in the industry that your employer partners are identifying.