# Creating Pathways to Prosperity – Innovation, Collaboration, Focus on Outcomes

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## Santa Cruz County is much like the rest of California

Changing demographics: 29% Hispanic overall, K-12 50% Hispanic, Spanish language spoken in 28% of the households
High cost of living: median price of home $700,000+
Economy: Growth in high skill, high wage and low skill, low wage jobs. Jobs requiring high school education or less are disappearing.

The challenges we face are similar to those faced throughout the state. We believe what we have learned in our efforts to provide pathways to prosperity may be applicable elsewhere.

## *Cabrillo's Key Strategies*

Cabrillo College and our many partners in workforce development have spent the last decade attempting to build career ladders that served our residents, our employers and our community. Over that time three key strategies have emerged: collaboration and alignment, innovation and design for sustainability, and focus on outcomes.

## Collaboration and Alignment

**Concept**: We can't do it alone. Create joint ventures with other public agencies and industry. Work towards creating an integrated, seamless workforce development system. Everybody wins.

**What we have learned**: We can create "marketplaces" where civic entrepreneurs can form joint ventures, find venture capitalists to support innovation, and produce social capital. Agencies participate in collaboration when it is clear that they will be more successful in meeting their mission by doing so. It's not evangelism, it's capitalism. The concept of marketplaces has proven to be a useful way of thinking about how to increase collaboration and alignment.

**Successes – Local**
**Health Careers Partnership**
All major healthcare employers, high schools, ROP, adult schools, college, WIB, EDD, county social services department. Working together for 6 years to build and strengthen health career ladders. Expanded programs, new programs, serving new populations. This marketplace has thrived because all the players are at the table. Employers can access their whole supply chain.

**Fast Track to Work**
Partnership between county social services department, WIB, Grove Foundation, provides integrated support services to CalWORKs, WIA recipients and recent high school graduates to decrease time to completion, increase program completion, job placement.

**Pajaro Valley Regional Training Center**
County supervisor identified need to provide CTE training center to portion of county that is 80% Hispanic, unemployment in the 15-20% range (higher for youth). WIB received EDA grant to conduct feasibility study. Study recommended college operate facility. WIB supported college application for $2,500,000 grant to be matched with $7,000,000 bond funds to build center. (Pre-application approved, application under consideration.) Now in talks with high school district and ROP to have them join in as partners in development of center.

**Industrial Technology Consortium**
Modeled after our Health Careers Partnership. Focused on mechanical and construction trades in the construction, agriculture, and transportation industries. Developing middle school, high school, ROP, community college pathways that lead to careers in construction, mechanical trades, engineering, and engineering technology. High school district superintendents COE, ROP, and college recently committed to a joint effort to rebuild the CTE capacity of the county.

**New Energy Workforce**
Recently joined with other colleges in the greater SF Bay Area and Silicon Valley Leadership Group to explore how we can mount a regional effort to develop the workforce necessary to support the growth of the solar technology, energy conservation, and green building industries. Industry is eager for community colleges to meet their needs. We are working to build our capacity to offer a regional response from the education sector to this clear regional industry need.

**Health Information Technology in Healthcare**
Experimenting with using an existing biannual conference of community college CTE administrators and educators as a marketplace to facilitate collaboration and alignment within targeted industries. Our first effort is focused on Information Technology in Healthcare. Have convened multi-track sessions at two conferences to explore whether there is a role for community colleges in helping large healthcare providers make the transition to electronic medical records. Most recent session brought representatives of Kaiser Permanente and Sutter together with colleges. Reached agreement to pilot assessment of HIT skills at 15 colleges scattered throughout the state. Continue exploring possibilities for regional and statewide partnerships.

**Failures**
**Early efforts at collaboration**
In our first few years of building collaborative efforts we invested our resources in developing and offering services that were jointly sponsored by the members of the

collaborative. These efforts added to the investments of the partners rather than leveraging the resources of the partners. They had little or no impact on how core services were delivered. We learned to use our resources to leverage existing resources resulting in long term, sustainable returns on investment.

**Bay Information Technology Collaborative**
30+ colleges signed on to participate in campaign to raise computer proficiency of workforce to an international standard. 15+ major corporations signed on. Effort died because shoestring operation did not have funds to support it between grants. Developing the capacity for education to respond to regional workforce development needs is crucial. Finding funding to build that capacity is challenging.

## Key Strategy: Innovation and Design for Sustainability
**Concept**: Increase the productivity of existing resource streams through innovation in the delivery of services.

**What we have learned**: Dramatic improvements in outcomes are possible with radical redesign of services. However, highly successful innovation is useless if it is not sustainable. (Learned the hard way!) Industrial research/product design methodologies are powerful tools and quite applicable in an education environment. Skillfully applied they can result in significant, sustainable improvements. But this design process is not cheap. The investment is worthwhile if the costs can be amortized by widespread replication. So, the way forward is to get good at redesigning the way we deliver education, to build cost constraints into the design and development process and to get good at replicating the innovation so that investment in design is a good value proposition to funders.

**Failures**

**ACHIEVE program**
Highly successful program to prepare English language learners for work in office environments. Instruction in a simulated office environment. High retention, success and placement rates. Design not explicit, replicable, or sustainable. Heroic instructor burned out and took early retirement. Lessons learned: Important to have explicit design that can be communicated, replicated. Program must be designed to work with existing resource levels without relying on extraordinary efforts of exceptional instructors.

**New Horizons**
Recruit women into non-traditional programs. Successful while grant funds supported interventions. No lasting effect when resources ended. Lesson learned: Invest grant and other temporary funds in redesign of services not delivery of services. Sustainability must guide all design and development decisions.

**Successes**

**Fast Track to Work**
See above for description of program. Substantial investment at beginning of program in design. Three month design process involving multiple teams from college, county welfare and workforce development agencies. High level of integration. Staff from county located within Fast Track office, college provided access to county MIS system, integration of funding streams. Program identified as model for collaboration by MDRC Opening Doors Study.

**Digital Bridge Academy**
Program developed by community college graduate who was an ex-CEO of high tech company, a manager at Hewlett Packard, and Harvard MBA. Brought industrial research/product design methodology to development of a program to serve at-risk Latino youth. Intention from beginning was to create program that would be highly successful, sustainable and scaleable with existing college funding streams, replicable at community colleges across the country. Design began with over 120 interviews with those serving this population and local and national experts asking what are the challenges and what works? Effective practices identified from education and industry. Weeklong pilots conducted with students from pilot populations to test and refine concepts and curriculum. Almost every aspect of program "instrumented" to track performance and support research and replication.

Success at the college led to piloting replication at other colleges to test whether curriculum could be taught by other faculty, replicated at other colleges, adapted to other target populations. Program now being scaled up at Cabrillo to identify and address issues with expanding program to larger scale. Groundwork being laid by for replication across the country. "Venture capital" provided by Hewlett Foundation, Irvine Foundation, Packard Foundation, Walter S Johnson Foundation, National Science Foundation and Chancellor's Office.

## Key Strategy: Focus on Outcomes

**Concept**: Trying hard is not good enough. Data is essential to identifying what works, what doesn't, what investments are worthwhile and which would be better shifted elsewhere.

**What we have learned**: Gathering data to measure the effectiveness of cross institutional efforts is really hard! Some of the challenges include confidentiality requirements, differences in how students are identified, the quality of the data, how it is stored, and data entry practices. Gathering the data is not sufficient. How the data is organized and presented is critical to whether it can be used to inform our practices. Even more essential is integrating the use of data into our design, planning and evaluation processes.

**Data Match between Cabrillo and Social Services Department**
The Fast Track to Work program matched our student records with the records of the county welfare department. We discovered that many students receiving welfare were not applying for financial aid for which they were clearly eligible. This led to a number of collaborative efforts to increase welfare recipients' awareness of financial aid and to assist them in applying for it.

**Data Sharing Agreement**
With the support of a grant from the County Human Resources Agency (includes WIB and CalWORKs) we conducted an exchange of student data between ROP, adult schools, college, county welfare department, and EDD to track student progress across institutions and answer the question of whether our efforts to knit our institutions together are working. Once we had most of the data collected (we are still waiting for the EDD earnings data) we had a "Data Day" in which members of each of the partner institutions got together to review the data, try to make sense out of it, and plan next steps. The bad news: the transfer rates were not nearly as good as we hoped. The good news: now we know what's working and what isn't and are motivated to try smarter. Gathering this data was an expensive endeavor. We are still working on finding a way to fund this on a sustainable basis.

**Completer/Leaver Study**
For about 10 years we have been conducting an annual survey of completers and leavers of our CTE programs. Survey respondents are asked about their current employment, earnings, and how that compares with their employment and earnings prior to entering the college. We also ask for their assessment of the effectiveness of their education at Cabrillo. According to our most recent data the average annual increase in earnings for certificate and degree completers was over $24,000, the median annual increase was almost $20,000. We have used this data to evaluate where to focus program improvement efforts and to assess whether programs are effective at placing students in jobs. Having access to EDD UI wage data for our students would provide us with more accurate data.

## *How Could the State Help?*

The state is making massive investments in education and workforce development. For the most part these funds are distributed in silos. There is substantial value to be gained through coordination, integration, and alignment of these resources.

There is also great value to be gained by innovation. The diversity, scale, and decentralization of our educational system can be strength if we can foster more rigorous innovation at the local level and develop ways of speeding the dissemination of successful innovation.

Our successes and failures with collaboration and innovation lead to the following suggestions for how the state could foster the application of these strategies.

**Staffing to support collaboration**
Creating productive partnerships requires staff time. Each of the partners must develop some capacity within their institution for the work of collaboration. Most importantly there is a need for staff that is accountable to the whole partnership. Finding the funding for this is an on-going challenge. It takes a while for the partnerships to become productive, so short term funding is problematic as it makes it difficult to find and retain high quality staff. We have found that over time, as the partnership becomes more productive, it has been easier to piece together funding. Much of our success can be attributed to the early support of the Packard Foundation. They saw the promise of our strategy and provided four years of funding that enabled our partnership to establish a solid footing. Relatively small and sustained investments to support collaborative efforts will pay large, long-term dividends.

**Expertise in collaboration, design, and development**
The work of innovative redesign of services, forming partnerships, and designing and developing integrated programs required methodologies and practices that were not part of our skill set. We suspect this is true for most institutions in the public sector. We have learned much by trial and error, an expensive and painful way of acquiring knowledge. More recently we have been able to move up this learning curve much more quickly by bringing in people who have substantial expertise and experience in addressing these kinds of challenges in industry. Providing grants to support this transfer of knowledge and experience would accelerate our ability to form productive partnerships.

**Consider giving community colleges the role of serving as integrators of workforce development systems**
Cabrillo is the primary provider of workforce development within our community. Some years ago we realized that it made a great deal of sense for us and for our community to see our responsibility as extending beyond serving those students who made it to our door. We realized that we could be much more effective and our community would be much better served if we saw ourselves as being responsible for fostering the integration of all of the community's investments in workforce development. We have been successful in this role because we have understood that our interests were served when the interests of our partners were also served. Institutionalizing this role and providing financial support to colleges to assume the role could accelerate efforts at integration.

**Develop an infrastructure to support regional collaboration**
Over the last seven years we have become increasingly conscious of the need for education to be able to respond to regional workforce development needs and opportunities. Our economy is organized around regional clusters and our workforce is regional in nature with people living in one district and working in another. If we are to effectively serve the residents and employers in our districts we must develop the capacity to work regionally. The community college regional consortia and the Economic and Workforce Development centers, initiatives, and grants are important components of this infrastructure, but more assistance is necessary. We have found industry and colleges, high schools, and ROP/Cs are very interested in working together, however

finding resources to support the education side of those partnerships remains very challenging.

**Data collection and reporting systems**
Working towards consistent, high quality data collection and reporting systems that support matching of individual student records across education, social service and employment agencies would be of great value to our efforts. It is important that these systems provide regular reporting of recent data. Successful program improvement efforts rely on quick feedback. Ideally these systems would allow sharing of data at the local level as well as at the state level.