Advance CTe Board of Directors

# SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING retreat (2/21-23/16)

**Board members of Advance CTE and Center to Advance CTE met for a strategic planning retreat in Baltimore, MD, from February 21-23, 2016.**

**The agenda was focused around four broad topics**

* Making Connections between Current Strategic Plan and New Vision
* Career Clusters®: Defining Our Next Steps
* Smart Growth
* Membership and Board Governance Structure

***Making Connections between Current Strategic Plan and New Vision***

* Board reviewed current strategic plan and made recommendations for change.
* Board reviewed first draft of updated vision principles and made recommendations for improvement and clarification, which informed the final vison paper
* Board discussed the ideal relationship between the strategic plan and the vision and determined that the connection between the two should be strengthened.

*Recommendations Related to Strategic Plan*

**Strategic priority #1 - Partnerships**

UPDATED STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: Lead, build and maintain strategic partnerships that expand awareness of and support for CTE.

* Maintain focus on federal policies (WIOA, ESSA, Perkins, HEA), but strengthen focus on state policy that is focused on advancing high-quality CTE (supporting states rights/needs)
* change language from “business-led” to “employer” involvement
* Potential new language: Engage in strategic partnerships with employers/representatives of employers to strengthen CTE’s involvement in workforce development
* Employer engagement is both a goal and a strategy.
  + Strategies can be to engage employer associations, strategic partnerships as a means to accomplish the work.
* 1.4 /1.5 merged – increase visibility of CTE – with employer-led organizations
* Remove specific reference to ACTE as there are other priority partners

**Strategic Priority #2 – Public Policy**

* Add language to the strategic priority that acknowledges existing accomplishment
* 2.1 – split into two goals; keep federal policy and create a separate goal around state policy
  + Expand state policy to include more of an analytical role (e.g. ECS dual enrollment paper that identifies criteria of HQ policy; evidence-based)
* Do we need to elevate a “communications” to a strategic priority rather than being a goal? The purpose is not just to have a campaign but it is to have communications to accomplish the strategic priorities; communications is a cross-cutting strategy.

**Strategic Priority #3 – Professional Development**

* + Being more inclusive than just the members of the association when conducting PD; although members should be primary beneficiary
  + 3.5 – Concern about how we meaningfully engage postsecondary community
  + Broaden “secondary” to be “K-12” – a lot of energy about what happens before high school

**Strategic Priority #4 - TBD**

* + Revisit after Board retreat, given focus on these topics
  + Capacity discussion – fundraising and sponsorship are different levels of “energy”
  + Modification of language implement action, we recommend, review, guide actions.

*Idea: Potentially create a new strategic priority that focuses on influencing the policy agenda of employer organizations and connecting employers to state CTE.*

Note: After discussions with the board about changes to board structure and potential changes to membership structure, everyone agreed that there needed to be more intentionality in the way different groups of associate members are engaged. Board discussed that this does not need to be added to the strategic plan, as elements related to this are already included.

*Exploration of the Vision Principles*

At the end of the retreat, we were discussing outcomes and what board members were excited about. During that conversation, board members expressed that they were somewhat underwhelmed by the overall vision document. They felt they were *really pushed* *to be bold* during the Vision Summit, but that boldness didn’t come through in the vision document. Most of the vision principles discuss work that the organization is already doing well. The principles do not push the organization out in front or indicate that the organization will be leading in new ways.

***Feedback specific to new vision principles***

**A. All Students have access to high-quality CTE programs of study in a career interest of their choosing in a sector of opportunity. (i.e., has in-demand, “good jobs”)**

* Need criteria to define what high-quality CTE is. This could be done by gathering state’s info on “quality.”
* Identify strategies/practices for integrating CTE/Academic teaching and learning
* Build a state policy framework for the implementation of HQ POS and build training tools to support the implementation

**B. All Students have access to knowledgeable experts who can facilitate career-focused learning.**

* Redefine role of teacher/classroom. (more facilitation to support student learning)
* Lift of different modalities of learning (flipping the classroom)
* Promote integrated teaching with academies
* Embedded credits
* Facilitate a general CTE teacher certification that is multi-state/online.
* Create training materials for industry and community to support this goal. Develop online resources to support.

**C. CTE Learning is competency-based and delivered in multiple ways and places**

* This is about what we deliver, but not about how students learn.
* Need piece on empowering students, parents, teachers to help students pick and navigate meaningful/effective pathways.
* Develop a guiding framework to implement and measure work-based learning structures.
* Identify true models of competency-based learning

**D. All students have access to counselors and mentoring and established career academic goals linked to career interest.**

*Overall feedback was that the language didn’t feel as “visionary” as the conversation at the Summit. Participants felt this principle was missing the focus on students discovering their career interests and seeing a path for themselves in CTE. Participants would like to see systemic change in CTE that would support this type of career exploration and guidance.*

* Promote specific example of successful programs so others can learn and replicate
* Professional development guides for teacher, counselors, industry, community about students’ inspiration persistence, resilience, economic success

**E. CTE is fully committed to quality and is results-oriented.**

* State and local responsibility; statement should be re-written
* Identify data elements (national, state) that will inform POS development, connect key data points from states to determine trends
* Identify research and share elements of high-quality programs of study from states (including career readiness accountability systems)

*Alignment of Strategic Plan and Vision*

*How much should the vision influence the strategic plan?*

* General agreement that the vision should focus on the big picture, and the strategic plan should reflect that big picture and identify action steps for accomplishing it.

*Should all parts of the strategic plan align directly to vision principles?*

* General agreement that they should align at a high level, but that there may be some parts of the strategic plan that relate to operations, governance, financial stability, etc.

*Should there always be a 5th “flexible” target or strategic priority?*

General consensus was that a) there’s no need to be limited to 5 strategic priorities, and b) additional strategic priorities can be added by staff during the life of the strategic plan as needs arise.

***Career Clusters®: Defining Our Next Steps***

*Note: Scenarios below were recommended by table groups and then voted on.*

1. Align and merge existing resources by revalidating and repackaging the Career Clusters Knowledge and Skill Statements (so that they absorb the CCTC) into one cohesive resource for states to access as an industry vetted framework, renaming the pathways that exist in the Career Clusters Framework, and keeping the Career Ready Practices.
2. Align and merge existing resources by renaming, revalidating and repackaging the CCTC and Career Cluster Knowledge & Skill Statements into one cohesive resource for states to access as an industry vetted framework. Incorporate program level (secondary/postsecondary) designations into the CCTC to expand relevance for postsecondary programs. Create clear links and/or crosswalks to industry standards and technical competencies.
3. Refresh and/or reorganize the Career Cluster Framework to reflect emerging occupations through the Career Pathways. Revisit the Career Pathways names and sectors, and develop a rubric around rigorous POS of states can make good decisions.
4. The Career Clusters Framework should be retained, and the Career Ready Practices should be lifted up. Approach CCTC as a framework for how states could develop their own standards.

11 board members voted, and 64% of those chose scenario A.

**What does success look like for the Career Clusters Framework? What would constitute ‘moving the needle’ for Career Clusters?**

* Career Cluster Framework is universally recognized by education, workforce development, economic development, etc.
* Full alignment with sectors/workforce development industries and DOL/DOC adopt CC
* Short-term outcome: Revalidation of Knowledge and Skills Statements/CCTC into one framework
* Full awareness and understanding of CC by parents and students

***Smart Growth:***

* Does our current funding provide enough capacity to fully support our members?
* In light of our recent fundraising successes, how should we prioritize fundraising?
* Have we achieved enough diversity in our funding streams (balance of dues versus non-dues revenue)?

**Funding streams:**

* It isn’t about chasing money – it’s about doing the work of the strategic plan.
* The right question is: is the work appropriate and does the grant afford the team the funds for it? Feel like what’s happening now is appropriate.
* Consider a development staff person – someone whose job it is to nurture relationships within the philanthropic community
  + With this large infusion of funds, build that capacity before seeking more funds; this is different than how to respond to funders that approach Advance CTE
* Funders are reaching out to Advance CTE now
* Do we need a set of criteria for determining which funders to go with?
* Look at the whole picture of the funding chart – grant makes it appear typical revenue streams have decreased, but they have actually grown. They’re just being outpaced by grant funding.

**Capacity:**

* Will the staff be large enough to handle the capacity for the grants?
* Need to manage a balance between new staff/old staff
* Consider reaching out to consultants to flex the capacity of the staff as new funding emerges?

**Members:**

* Need to make sure members still feel like services are being delivered and they are the focus of the organization
* Some outcome of the grant needs to result in services to members
* If we do have excess money in bank, how do we use it to grow the organization?
* Used some of the reserves funding to pay for Summit and vision doc
* Emphasize what members get from paying dues – associate members have a different investment, so need to think differently about their ROI

**Smart Growth (continued)**

How do current members perceive the changes we have recently been through – changes to the name, the brand, and now our funding streams? (bolded items were the most common responses)

* **Too early to tell**
* **Associate members feel like they were left out of the vision/name change conversation at the Summit.**
* Why are we changing? What does it mean? What’s the direction? Does this mean there will be a new vision? What does this mean for Learning that Works campaign?
* Still a mindset that this org is for SDs. We need to be intentional about how we engage other members.
* Who is making sure that policymakers and those with influence know what Advance CTE is and that it’s the same org as NASDCTEc?
* How do we explain the name change to our counterparts at the state level? Need talking points.
* FL Directors don’t really know what Advance CTE is all about (they only know it by its materials); they won’t know about the name change until they see it on printed collateral
* Superintendents want to be on the cutting line and want to help lead the organization; we need to equip them (talking points, slides, branding packages)
* What do the state CTE systems get from the SD membership in Advance CTE (others may not see the value as much with SD out of the name)? What’s the message members can give to their states and counterparts to share ROI of membership?

*Note: Kate explained that the branding campaign is not changing. All that is changing is the branding surrounding the organization. Need to make this clear to all. This news was met with great relief, as most board members thought they would be asked to rebrand all messaging. They weren’t complaining, but they were bracing for the lift that would represent and the need to guide local CTE leaders through that.*

***Membership & Board Governance Structure***

*What are the benefits of membership? (most common responses in bold)*

* **Networking with peers**
* **Advocacy**
* **Participating in the development of federal legislation/information about federal policies**
* **Professional development**
* **Resources and strategies for state office and for faculty/staff in field**
* Collective leadership to guide a national framework for CTE (for quality)

*What additional benefits should we include on this list? (most common response in bold)*

* **Access to clearinghouses of relevant information**
* **Show more/better understanding of how postsecondary CTE works, and design services and benefits targeted to this audience**
* **Expand to a broader focus on K-postsecondary and disseminate best practices for all levels of education**
* CTE Learning Community, for both policy and practice levels
* Dissemination of research and best practices

Attendees added another level of conversation – *What* *benefits do they receive that members (especially associate members) may not know about?* (most common responses in bold)

* **Access to a responsive staff and technical assistance**
* Helping connect state leaders to congressional delegation
* Organizational leadership
* Forum for community development – meetings, conferences, face-to-face interaction
* Latest information on CTE

*How should the member benefits we discussed influence fundraising efforts?*

* Fundraising should be aligned to strategic plan

*How should the new brand platform impact the member benefits we offer?*

* It should reaffirm strength of common purpose
* Gives opportunity to communicate and reinforce member benefits currently available

*As we grow, what steps can we take to ensure that states see we’re still serving our membership?*

* Communication
* Continue to focus on SD needs first and foremost (meetings, in particular)

*What would make members say, “My membership in this organization has real value to me.”*

* Be responsive to emerging issues, challenges, opportunities
* Offer immediate access to a peer network
* Demonstrate that Advance CTE is influencing and contributing to federal policy

***Who are “state leaders”?***

We began by asking attendees to brainstorm a list of “state leaders”, and the brainstorming session was robust. The list generated is below.

* \*State Directors and their counterparts (including the person who manages Perkins Funding
* Workforce Development
* State Director’s deputy or staff
* Other state agencies
* Governor’s policy staff
* Economic Development
* Elementary/Primary education
* State Chambers/Business Associations/Business and Industry
* Administrator Groups
* CTSO leaders
* Parent Organizations
* Chairman of state CTE board
* Schools and colleges of education that support CTE
* ACTE – chapter at state level
* ACTE school-level leaders
* American Association of Community Colleges
* 2-year institutions of higher ed
* 4-year institutions of higher ed
* Curriculum Directors
* School Counselors Association
* State Superintendents
* State Board of Education
* Legislators

\*This group is considered a given. Most view this as the only group that should be afforded full membership.

Many board members explained that they view this as a list of groups that can become associate members, but there not general interest in creating other tiers of membership beyond those that currently exist. Some board members expressed concern that allowing states to have larger numbers of full members, would make it hard to insure fair representation for smaller states in a vote at a business meeting. That grew into a discussion about how a change in membership structure would affect the governance structure. One board member recommended that we talk about the governance structure first and then see where that led us with regard to membership structure. The findings of that discussion follow.

***Board Governance Structure***

Board decided to select a subcommittee to explore board governance options, so board members worked in teams to develop scenarios for the subcommittee to explore.

Next, attendees were asked to individually think about questions like, “What will this help the organization accomplish?”, “How would the membership receive this?”, and “What unintended negative consequences might this create?” Board members then developed pros and cons for each scenario (or problems solved by the scenario vs. problems created by the scenario).

We promised that the subcommittee would get the full list of recommendations, as well as the pros and cons, so that they could make informed recommendations for the board to consider.

**Recommendations are listed below, and the pros and cons directly follow the recommendations they relate to.**

Team 1:

3 classes of membership –

* Full membership (active members):
  + Leave as is (1 vote per state) OR
  + 2 votes per state – one secondary, other postsecondary – one would have to be Perkins signatory (Question: would this change the dues structure)
* Associate membership (individual members):
  + Leave open, as it is now
  + Use the “state leaders” list we generated (on page 20 of this document) as a potential target audience
  + TBD: passive or active recruiting of associate members
  + TBD: dues structure for associate members
* Contributing member (institution, organization, agency)

Board Structure –

* Only one recommended change: shift from the current regional representation, but maintain some regional component to the organization of the board

Pros:

* Larger regions may improve geographic diversity
* Active membership needs to be retained with a focus on SDs
* This would be received well by postsecondary.
* There is support for the Perkins state director in either scenario

Cons:

* Need to get rid of regional structure.
* If associate membership continues to grow, their lack of representation on the board may become an issue.
* Inconsistent representation across states based on members/structure
* Could be an increased cost

Team 2:

* Board representation for/with various organizations (ACTE, CTSO, etc.)
* Consolidate regions (from 11 to perhaps 6) – all SDs
* Elect Officers (must be SDs)
* Add “at large” board members like:
  + Associate members, and/or
  + Postsecondary, and/or
  + Rural/Frontier, and/or
  + Small states, etc.
* Cap board at 15 people (or at least don’t grow beyond current size)
* Explore a scholarship to encourage board participation from smaller/more distant states

Pros:

* Capping board at 15 is good
* Regional structure does need to shift to be relevant
* Would achieve better representation on the board
* Balance and equity are good things to have. Diverse voices need to be heard.
* Like the idea of at-large members
* Think this structure has promise with some small changes
* Scholarships a useful way to engage voices that can’t afford to participate on board

Team 3:

* Membership dues cover SD + 2 others (who would be listed as associate members). Each state would still only get one vote.
* Board of Directors:
  + Executive Committee (4 people)
  + 6 state representatives
    - Based on size (or population?) of state: S, M, L. 2 people from each category.
    - Nominating committee would help ensure geographic diversity
    - Must be an SD (secondary or postsecondary)
    - 3-year, staggered terms, selected by like-size states
  + 2 associate members
    - must be different states than those above
    - one must be postsecondary
  + Consider a stricter attendance policy for board members
  + During transition from current board structure to new board structure, the board may need to swell in size. Would need to map the current board to determine the timeline for replacing each board member with the new representatives as board members go off the board (instead of “dumping” them wholesale).

Pros:

* Very positive way to engage critical partners
* This addresses Vanessa’s concern that larger states would get more votes if they are allowed to bring others in with them. She worried about small states like hers losing their voice if larger states were encouraged to expand membership.
* Like the expanded dues model to cover more members at the state’s discretion – will bring more partners
* Added members
* Additional input
* With section 13 allowing for board attendance by phone, a stronger attendance policy seems appropriate
* This would provide options for participation and would address specific small/large state differences

Cons:

* Would the small, medium, large state segmentation also allow for recognition of geographic differences in CTE programs?
* May need 2 postsecondary representatives
* Would some current regions feel they are not represented?
* Associate membership identification up front may result in limiting who comes to meetings. Would rather identify meeting attendees based on agenda.

Some board members had feedback that cut across all three scenarios:

Pros:

* These provide better member representation and opportunities for associate members to serve leadership roles
* Balance and equity are good things. Diverse voices need to be heard.

Cons:

* All dilute SD authority on board
* Consider how these scenarios will be received by existing members. We will need to explain why we felt the need for change and how we weighed the pros and cons of all options.

Question:

* If number of board seats is changed (from current), how will that be phased in with consideration of current member terms?

**Recommended Timeline for Determining Changes to Governance and Membership Structures:**

* Form a subcommittee to explore
* Work with staff to explore ramifications of different scenarios
* By 2016 spring meeting, come with recommended approach to board
* Discuss/give feedback at 2016 spring meeting
* Draft revision to bylaws
* Get board approval of revision to bylaws before 2016 fall meeting
* Full membership vote on revision to bylaws at 2016 fall meeting
* Begin transition to new board governance structure by 2017

**Timeline related to defining and potentially differentiating member benefits:**

* Focus groups at 2016 spring meeting to understand needs and interests of different types of members (related to benefits).
* Staff distill focus group data, identify emergent findings
* During call-in board meeting, board prioritizes and gives staff direction
* Staff implement board’s decision
* Report out to members at fall 2016 meeting (or earlier) to share how their input is being used

Recommendations to consider related to member benefits (bolded items represent those the group was most excited about):

* **Solicit input from attendees at spring meeting. Conduct focus groups with stratified groups of members (i.e., associate members, state directors, new state directors, organizational members) and ask, “what do you want from your membership?” Train the board to facilitate the focus groups, and board members would lead in with the fact that they really want all members to feel like they have a voice and see real value in their membership, then explain how member feedback will help determine whether there should be a differentiated membership structure.**
* **At spring meeting, conduct discussion panels for states to share about state policy. Potential topics: Framework, Technical Assistance, Resources/Tools, Forums, etc.**
* **Establish a repository of resources, past reports/data and best practices that “only members can access. Note: This group was not recommending that research and publications should be restricted to state directors; they believe those should be available to all. They just want to be equipped and empowered with data and reports that they can disseminate when needed.**
* **Group registration rate to provide state “Team Time” during meetings (like Team Ag Ed model)**
* Board members are largely comfortable with current benefits to each membership type
* Need to ensure that secondary and postsecondary are included in each state
* Maintain commitment to supporting and informing full CTE community
* Onboard new associate members
* Tactics of strategic plan need to be laid out first to guide what can be provided to members (need purposeful and aligned development)
* Design workshops for specific groups of members (i.e., postsecondary, workforce development, etc.)
* Direct state support is seen as a tremendous benefit. Keep doing that. If it becomes overwhelming to staff, there may need to be differentiated access so that the direct support is limited to SDs.