Strategy 2030:
A Plan for the Quality, Integrity, and Continuous Improvement of Education that Works
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Dear Friend,

Education profoundly influences future earnings and overall prosperity. Research proves that educational quality directly correlates to strong outcomes. When the two assertions are combined, a critical and crucial conversation emerges – Irrespective of institutional type, is it possible to demonstrate a commitment to increasing the workforce talent pool while maintaining a high level of quality outcomes? Can employers collaborate with institutions to create work-ready graduates? As a nationally accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education, we believe the answer is yes.

Over the next five years, we will embark upon the most ambitious strategic agenda in our 50-year history. Our vision is to be the standard for education that works. Achieving this vision will require the following:

- Investing in and developing our People,
- Enhancing our virtual and physical Places,
- Reviewing and updating our Policies,
- Auditing and aligning existing Processes,
- Launching new Programs,
- Embracing different Practices, and
- Tracking our Progress.

Our Strategic Plan, “Strategy 2030: A Plan for the Quality, Integrity, and Continuous Improvement of Education that Works,” is built on these fundamental principles:

Quality: We aim to produce programs and outcomes that surpass the norm, ensuring all students, regardless of location, have access to high-quality education that provides opportunities for educational and occupational growth and increases in wage potential.

Integrity: We commit to transparency and accountability to those who depend on us and our members – students, communities, employers, legislators, municipalities, and economic development partners.

Continuous Improvement: Accreditation is a journey, not a destination. Through peer review and the spirit of “iron sharpens iron,” we continuously strive for better outcomes for our students, their families, employers, and the nation. Hence, we will strive to nurture a spirit of collective progress among our members and their communities.

I am extremely grateful for the work of the staff and Strategic Planning Committee under the leadership of Kim Ziebarth. Their tireless efforts, along with your valuable input from listening sessions, affinity groups, town hall meetings, surveys, and phone calls, were instrumental in shaping this comprehensive plan to this point. Finally, it is important to acknowledge those leaders who laid the foundation for this plan. Without the leaders who laid the foundation for this work, we would not be at this intersection of opportunity and obligation.

It is an exciting time to be a member of the Council on Occupational Education.

Let’s get started!

Dr. Kirk A. Nooks
President/CEO
Council on Occupational Education
Vision

Our vision is to be the standard for education that works.

By 2030, the Council on Occupational Education will be the premier accreditation agency for impactful occupational education by:

- Emphasizing quality outcomes as our top priority.
- Championing student success in programs, the workforce, and the community.
- Advocating collectively at both state and federal levels for advancing occupational education.
- Cultivating innovation to adapt and thrive in evolving educational landscapes.
- Increasing value to improve institutional performance by fostering collaboration and promoting compliance and institutional success through member development.

Mission

Our mission is to uphold quality, integrity, and continuous improvement in occupational education, meeting the evolving needs of students, employers, and communities.

Values

The Council on Occupational Education embeds the following values into its daily operations: fostering a culture of excellence, ethical conduct, and continuous improvement within technical education accreditation.

Ethical – We take an ethical approach that guides all interactions, decisions, and processes. Our membership and staff are unwavering in the collective commitment to being trustworthy and maintaining the highest standards of honesty and professionalism.

Transparent – We clearly communicate accreditation processes, decisions, and policies, ensuring information is accessible and understandable.

Accountable – We foster a culture of accountability by ensuring our operations, including accreditation decisions and communication with constituents, are transparent and accurate. This value also extends to the institutions we accredit, holding them to the same standards of responsibility and clarity.

Responsive – The Council is accessible and responsive to the needs and feedback of constituents. It acts promptly to address concerns, adapting its approaches to better serve the evolving requirements of educational institutions while adhering to the principles defined in Council policies.

Innovative – We foster an innovative culture by continuously exploring and implementing progressive approaches, identifying emerging requirements and developing strategies to ensure our practices remain effective, relevant, and responsive to the evolving landscape of higher education.

Collaborative – We prioritize collaboration as a core value, fostering partnerships among diverse entities. The Council actively engages with educational institutions, policymakers, and team members to collectively enhance the quality and effectiveness of occupational education through accreditation.

Inclusive – We uphold inclusion as a fundamental principle, ensuring that the Council’s accreditation processes acknowledge and respect the diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and needs of all individuals and entities involved in higher education.
Public Policy Issues
The most pressing public policy issues facing college and university boards of trustees and foundation boards in 2023 and 2024, as identified by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) and a higher education advisory panel, encompass affordability, accountability, legal complexities, and political influence. Boards are critical in guiding institutions toward sustainable solutions that uphold educational excellence and student welfare.

Affordability and Value
The issue of college affordability and student debt burdens impacts millions of students across diverse educational pathways. While private, nonprofit, and four-year institutions face scrutiny over soaring tuition costs, technical and community colleges also grapple with financial accessibility challenges. These institutions, often serving as gateways to higher education for economically disadvantaged students, face pressure to keep tuition rates affordable amid rising costs. Federal proposals for larger Pell Grants, short-term Pell Grants, and tuition-free community colleges hold potential benefits for students at these colleges, offering pathways to economic mobility and workforce readiness. The staggering student debt, which exceeds $1.76 trillion, disproportionately affects students at technical and community colleges, exacerbating enrollment declines and hindering access to higher education. As the affordability crisis persists, students and families question the value of a college degree, impacting enrollment trends and public perceptions of higher education’s return on investment.

Accountability and Regulation
The landscape of accountability and regulation in higher education is undergoing significant shifts, marked by ongoing efforts to ensure fairness, transparency, and student protection. The federal government’s focus on Title IX regulations aims to address issues of sex discrimination, with proposed changes awaiting evaluation and potential release. The reinstatement of the gainful employment rule seeks to prevent students from being burdened with excessive debt for low-paying careers, signaling a commitment to protect students from financial exploitation.

In addition to these measures, the Department of Education is actively negotiating to enhance program integrity and institutional quality, particularly through reforms targeting accreditation standards. By holding accreditors to higher standards and preventing institutions from seeking lenient accreditation to evade scrutiny, the government aims to improve educational quality and outcomes.

Judicial Rulings
Recent judicial rulings have significant implications for higher education. The Supreme Court’s decision on race-based admissions affects esteemed institutions and reverberates across the broader higher education landscape. This ruling challenges diversity initiatives and support programs for minority students at various institutions, including technical and community colleges, which often serve diverse student populations. Legal challenges surrounding Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) also impact these colleges as they enroll DACA recipients seeking educational opportunities.
Political Influence
Political influence significantly impacts traditional colleges and universities and technical and community colleges, shaping policies that affect their governance, funding, and educational programs. State lawmakers’ debates on funding for diversity programs and restrictions on classroom discussions extend to these colleges, influencing their curriculum and campus climate. Efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) face challenges, with bills introduced prohibiting DEI programs from impacting initiatives to foster inclusive learning environments.

Federal and State Funding
Federal and state funding dynamics have profound implications for technical and community colleges, influencing their ability to provide affordable education and support student success. While the near-term outlook for state budgets appears favorable, with increased funding for higher education over the past years, concerns linger about potential cuts or freezes amid budget uncertainties. Public technical and community colleges, often serving economically disadvantaged students, rely heavily on state funding to maintain affordable tuition rates and expand access to education. Federal funding initiatives, such as Pell Grants, offer critical support for these institutions, enabling them to offer scholarships and improve infrastructure. However, budgetary challenges and political dynamics impact the availability and stability of federal funding, affecting the capacity of technical and community colleges to fulfill their educational missions. Additionally, the reinstatement of earmarks provides potential funding opportunities, but limitations on earmark amounts and exclusions affect these colleges’ access to targeted funds. As technical and community colleges navigate the intricacies of federal and state funding, strategic financial planning is essential to ensure continued access to high-quality education for all students.

Evolving Federal Regulations
The level of bipartisan legislative collaboration has declined in recent years. Irrespective of influencing political parties in the White House, House, or Senate, it is clear that the type of political gridlock has increased the appetite for rulemaking by alternative processes. Hence, the Negotiated Rulemaking process is used to change existing regulations. While the approach allows affected parties to provide input through the consensus process, the final rules’ number, pace, and complexity have significantly impacted many member institutions. Accreditation agencies will also begin to realize the significant impact of the change to accreditation regulations following the election cycle of November 2024 and November 2028.

Student Enrollment and Success
Based on recent census data, the widely discussed “Enrollment Cliff” is beginning to impact attendance trends across postsecondary education. The decreased number of individuals traditionally interested in postsecondary education has significant implications. First, the decline in enrollment will create a higher level of competition among institutions vying for the same student. Those schools that cannot attract students at a certain level will experience financial instability as tuition-driven revenue streams begin to recede. This issue will exacerbate increasing expenses due to inflation, rising healthcare costs, and fixed operating expenses. Hence, the enrollment decline will result in several hundred schools closing due to financial necessity. Second, to mitigate the effects of the enrollment decline, institutions must ensure that students succeed at higher rates. Understanding and implementing the best student success interventions will benefit the student, school, employers, and communities. Those postsecondary providers who excel in the student success arena will be able to withstand some of the pressures due to the “enrollment cliff” we will experience over the next several years.

Conclusion
The public policy issues facing college and university boards in 2023 and 2024 present significant challenges and opportunities. Boards must remain vigilant, proactive, and responsive to navigate these turbulent waters, ensuring the advancement of academic excellence and student success. Through strategic governance, boards can champion policies that promote equity, transparency, and institutional resilience, positioning their institutions for continued success in the dynamic higher education landscape.

References
Quality

Please note: All references to the "organization" or "agency" refers to the Council on Occupational Education

Communication and Information Sharing

Objectives

1. Provide a dynamic website to share resources and keep constituents informed.
2. Develop processes for information dissemination to member institutions, commissioners, and other constituents.
3. Develop systems to communicate information with commissioners, committees, member institutions, and teams about significant Department of Education issues and changes that impact regulatory requirements institutions must comply with to improve the organization’s and member institutions’ compliance.
4. Develop and execute a long-term strategy to build COE’s brand nationally as a prominent and trusted institutional accreditor.
5. Ensure accreditation web resources are searchable to support ease of access.

Outcomes

• A dynamic website is crucial for disseminating resources and updates, ensuring that member institutions are consistently well-informed.
• Processes and systems for sharing information ensure regulatory changes are communicated promptly, enabling members to be compliant and informed.
• Executing a long-term strategy to build COE’s brand elevates its reputation and visibility, positioning it as a trusted authority in institutional accreditation.
• Sharing information about significant Department of Education changes fosters transparency and collaboration, thus reinforcing trust and confidence.

Organizational Structure and Operational Efficiency

Objectives

1. Grow the agency in terms of membership, sector, and reach.
2. Evaluate and improve organizational structure, job titles, and staffing needs.
3. Enhance cybersecurity efforts to protect technical resources.
4. Implement strategies for improved financial strength and transparency with contract and vendor performance reviews.
5. Improve process documentation and cross-training among staff to ensure continuity.
6. Develop a system for purchasing equipment and technology to ensure staff have the necessary resources to work efficiently and streamline processes.
7. Evaluate commission size and composition to ensure broad and diverse representation.
8. Improve efficiency by identifying and prioritizing the automation of processes.
9. Improve the timeliness of reimbursement of travel claims.

Outcomes

• Evaluating the organizational structure to ensure clarity and efficiency enables staff to work more effectively towards organizational goals.
• Strengthened cybersecurity and streamlined processes improve operational resilience, ensuring continuity and reliability in service and delivery.
• Streamlined resource utilization and automation increase efficiency, enabling the organization to allocate resources effectively and focus on its core mission.
• Providing timely reimbursement of travel claims ensures financial commitment does not hinder team member or commissioner participation.
Recognition and Appreciation

Objectives
1. Celebrate longstanding quality by recognizing high-performing COE members and institutions.
2. Recognize and reward institutions for excellence in accreditation.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to valuing volunteers’ contributions.

Outcomes
- Increased morale and motivation among COE members and institutions foster a positive working environment, leading to greater engagement and productivity.
- Enhanced compliance support provided by knowledgeable staff improves institutional adherence to regulations, enhancing overall organizational effectiveness.
- Specialized expertise developed among staff enhances the organization’s ability to address complex compliance issues and adapt to changing regulatory landscapes.

Innovation

Objectives
1. Explore COE’s potential role in ensuring the quality of additional workforce-oriented, non-traditional, or non-credit credentials and degrees.
2. Establish relationships with occupational education thought leaders and collaborate with accreditation agencies to explore innovative ideas and policies.
3. Ensure Council staff and the commission represent the diverse demographics of member institutions.
4. Explore opportunities to expand the scope of accreditation to include various types and levels of workforce-oriented degrees.
5. Consider expanding distance education opportunities and assisting institutions with quality and development.

Outcomes
- The organization’s expanded portfolio of accreditation services, including workforce-oriented credentials and virtual education alternatives, broadens its appeal to diverse institutions. This expansion is poised to attract new members and solidify the organization’s financial stability.
- Establishing relationships with thought leaders and collaborating on innovative initiatives positions the organization as a forward-thinking leader in the field. This reputation drives discussions and policies that address emerging needs, attract a wider audience, and expand the organization’s influence.
- Creating an appropriate framework for expanding distance education and sharing curricular resources ensures distance education is not a barrier to accreditation.
Integrity

Advocacy and Collaboration

Objectives
1. Solicit innovation, success stories, lessons learned, and community impact to represent the quality, value, and relevance.
2. Foster collaboration between public, private, federal, and apprenticeship agencies.
3. Foster collaboration and networking among peer institutions to strengthen the overall quality of innovation and student outcomes.
4. Strengthen relationships with the Department of Education for better collaboration and influence.
5. Invite accreditation champions from presidents, accreditation liaison officers, state higher education officials, and elected officials or staff to participate in discussion and training related to accreditation advocacy with elected officials on an as-needed basis.
6. Reinforce the value of occupational education by promoting a widespread understanding of the diverse institutions we accredit and the role of accreditation in measuring quality and encouraging institutional improvement.
7. Strengthen national and state legislative support to enhance the overall knowledge of and impact of COE.

Outcomes
• Improved collaboration among agencies and institutions cultivates a rich knowledge-sharing environment, improving occupational education’s quality and effectiveness.
• Heightened recognition of occupational education’s quality and relevance strengthens its standing in the education sector, attracting more support and investment.
• Strengthened advocacy efforts and legislative support ensure that the importance of accreditation and occupational education is effectively communicated and supported at all levels of governance.

Data and Reporting

Objectives
1. Annually evaluate and report on the Council’s contributions to professional practice, advocacy, economic impact, and student success.
2. Conduct an inventory of all data COE collects from member institutions, identify gaps and redundancies, and determine how best to improve data practices.
3. Develop comparative data for institutions to aid in the quality assurance process.
4. Evaluate data included in the annual report with consideration for improving the quality, integrity, and relevance of information gathered.
5. Develop an annual reporting process to communicate progress on the strategic plan and overall status of the agency to the commission and member institutions.

Outcomes
• Improved reporting and data practices provide transparency and accountability, enabling interested parties to make informed decisions based on reliable information.
• Improved annual reporting processes enhance organizational transparency and accountability, fostering constituent trust and confidence.
Leadership Development

Objectives
1. Drive innovation by including industry and occupational education thought leaders in relevant conferences.
2. Establish requirements for Commissioners to participate in a designated number of team visits.
3. Encourage Commissioners and committee members to uphold high engagement standards by attending in-person meetings and conferences.
4. Facilitate a nomination process to recommend volunteer leaders with a proven history of engagement, the ability to connect with constituents, and the ability to advocate for the organization’s best interests.
5. Develop a mentoring system to connect emerging leaders with occupational education leaders from various institution types.
6. Establish mentoring programs for leaders of newly accredited institutions.

Outcomes
- Commissioners’ active participation in designated team visits ensures a deeper understanding of constituent needs and enhances their ability to make informed decisions, contributing to effective governance.
- Developing mentoring systems for emerging leaders fosters talent and knowledge sharing, strengthening the organization’s leadership pipeline.
- Encouragement of in-person attendance at meetings and conferences facilitates networking and idea exchange, promoting professional growth and collaboration among accredited institutions and team members.

Governance and Compliance

Objectives
1. Create a supportive assistance and advocacy culture among staff and leadership to guide institutions to compliance.
2. Establish guidelines and mechanisms for staff to provide commissioners with information, perspective, and support to ensure the commission makes informed decisions.
4. Formalize a calendar cycle for meetings, convenings, communications, internal processes, practices, conducting and compiling evaluations, and policy review.
5. Establish internal expectations for institutional service, accessibility, and responsiveness.

Outcomes
- Improved compliance and accountability instill confidence and ensure that the organization operates ethically and transparently.
- Improved decision-making processes promote efficiency and effectiveness, enabling the organization to achieve its objectives more effectively.
- A culture of advocacy and support fosters collaboration and trust among constituents, strengthening the organization’s position and influence.
Continuous Improvement

Accreditation Process Improvement

Objectives
1. Evaluate team composition policies and procedures to ensure a broad and diverse membership representation on visiting teams to provide a consistent, comprehensive, and objective evaluation process.
2. Create an extensive annual review process for staff and standing committees to study U.S. Department of Education rules, actions, and decisions.
3. Implement an accreditation management system and an annual enhancement plan to improve the system’s functionality, performance, and data reporting.
4. Assess and streamline the process and timeline for processing initial accreditations, reaffirmations, and substantive changes.
5. Educate and inform related groups of COE policies, procedures, and timelines for accreditation maintenance and institutional actions.

Outcomes
- An improved institutional evaluation process with broad team representation ensures a thorough, impartial, and consistent assessment, contributing to more robust accreditation decisions.
- Continued compliance and alignment with U.S. Department of Education rules strengthen regulatory adherence, fostering trust and confidence.
- Optimized accreditation management system functionality streamlines operations and improves the user experience, facilitating smoother accreditation processes.
- Streamlined accreditation processes for initial accreditations, reaffirmations, and substantive changes expedite decision-making, providing timely support to member institutions.
- Improved compliance is achieved by disseminating updated guidance and information to member institutions through published resources.
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Objectives
1. Develop comprehensive systems for staff, the commission, committee members, institutional leaders, accreditation liaison officers, and team members and leaders to evaluate policies, processes, practices, and services.
2. Utilize results from member surveys and other feedback mechanisms to identify ongoing and emerging trends in occupational education.
3. Assess the effectiveness of practices in elevating quality and integrity in occupational education.
4. Convene member institutions, state agencies, and others to identify policy and process improvements to ensure that COE remains a leader in accreditation and occupational education.
5. Provide an extensive review of Council resources with the assistance of a professional writer to improve organization, clarity, and quality that contributes to confidence and trust.

Outcomes
• Evaluation and feedback systems drive ongoing improvement and accountability, ensuring the organization remains responsive to evolving needs.
• Assessment of practices ensures that occupational education maintains high standards of quality and integrity, adapting effectively to changing requirements and expectations.

Staff Development

Objectives
1. Ensure staff and experts with extensive and relevant occupational education experience are designated to provide compliance guidance and support to teams and member institutions.
2. Adopt professional development opportunities appropriate to COE employees’ work responsibilities and strategic priorities.
3. Develop professional development opportunities for staff specializing in relevant and complex compliance topics.
4. Strengthen the use of technology by staff and members to improve efficiency, professionalism, and trust.
5. Provide professional development opportunities to improve staff’s professional command of Council policies, rules, and procedures.

Outcomes
• Specialized expertise developed among staff improves the organization’s ability to address complex compliance issues and adapt to changing regulatory landscapes.
• Increased staff proficiency in Council policies and procedures ensures consistent and effective organizational implementation, further strengthening operational efficiency and compliance.
Training and Development

Objectives

1. Offer in-person and remote training for visiting team members, leaders, and member institutions, including training to address unique requirements for each accreditation sector.
2. Develop online webinars, seminars, and workshops in complex compliance areas and on topics of value to member institutions.
3. Create and support various communities of practice (e.g., student success, assessment, outcomes, development of industry partnerships).
4. Implement innovative programming at annual conferences to meet the unique needs of attendees.
5. Collaborate with leaders in occupational education and accreditation agencies to pinpoint gaps in COE’s training offerings and actively explore opportunities for potential collaborations to address these gaps.
6. Develop training and resource centers for accreditation liaison officers, accreditation team members, and commissioners to define their roles and expectations and centralize information and digital files required for their respective roles.
7. Support smaller and less resourced member institutions with professional development.
8. Enhance the diversity of information presented during COE conference sessions, fostering meaningful interactions and engagement to create a more enriching and dynamic learning experience for participants.
9. Explore virtual options for recertification to provide some flexibility to active members who have completed certifications.
10. Provide an informal and open forum for member institutions to connect with, discuss interests and challenges, and ask staff, commissioners, and committee members questions.

Outcomes

- Improved skills and knowledge among members and leaders through flexible training options empower leaders to adapt to evolving challenges and drive organizational success.
- Enhanced compliance understanding and access to valuable resources for member institutions support their ongoing compliance efforts and promote best practices.
- Strengthened collaborative networks within COE foster knowledge exchange and innovation, creating a supportive professional growth and organizational advancement environment.
The Council on Occupational Education (COE) used feedback from the strategic planning process to revise its mission and vision. This feedback showcased strengths that highlighted excellence aligned with our commitment to quality and integrity. Additionally, it revealed opportunities for our strategic plan to grow and strengthen COE’s impact, emphasizing continuous improvement.

Recognizing the significance of diverse perspectives, COE conducted extensive listening sessions that engaged various interest groups; Affinity Groups to consider the specific needs of different institutional types; encouraged members to participate through surveys, utilizing QR codes for accessibility; and townhall meetings.

The results reflected the solicitation of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) with the following themes:

**Strengths**
- Peer learning platform
- Enhanced credibility
- Effective communication
- Community engagement
- Public recognition
- Financial aid opportunities
- Credibility and connectivity
- Guidance and supportive framework
- Effective oversight and collaboration
- Empowering student outcomes

**Opportunities**
- Expansion of accreditation scope
- Advocacy/education platform
- Enhanced professional command
- Information dissemination
- Cultivate culture of data-informed storytelling
- Targeted marketing
- Engage trade/apprenticeship/organization programs and partnerships
- Streamline accreditation criteria
- Enhance documentation and guidance
- Utilize technology

**Aspirations**
- Establish support networks
- Enhance communication
- Provide additional resources
- Streamline accreditation process
- Improve accessibility of information and data
- Maintain standards and quality
- Value and support volunteers
- Enhance digital training
- Strengthen relationships and partnerships

**Results**
- Improved communication channels
- Enhanced documentation
- Innovative conference programming
- Maintain a collaborative approach
- Expanded accreditation scope
- Simplified information processes
- Improved online resources
- Strategic engagement and learning
- Streamlined processes and compliance
- Continuous improvement and growth
Strategic Planning Committee

Commissioners
Kim Ziebarth, Chair, Associate Commissioner for Technical Education (Public Institutions)

Dr. Darline Glaus, Department of Defense – Defense Media Activity, Fort Meade, MD (Federal Institutions)

Dr. Stephanie Houston, San Bernardino County, San Bernardino, CA (Public Institutions)

Amit Shorewala, Ace Institute of Technology, Elmhurst, NY (Non-Public Institutions)

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Billy L. Clark, Delta College of Arts & Technology, Baton Rouge, LA (Non-Public Institutions)

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COE Staff
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Acknowledgments
We want to thank everyone involved in the strategic planning process. Your contributions, whether through listening sessions, feedback through surveys and town hall meetings, or facilitating meetings, have been instrumental in shaping our organization’s future. Your collective efforts ensure that our strategic plan reflects the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results that will benefit the students, employers, and communities we serve.
Strategic planning serves as a vital governance mechanism, steering organizations toward their envisioned future while ensuring coherence between activities and overarching organizational principles. Over the past year, the Council on Occupational Education (COE) held strategic planning discussions and outlined ideas and concepts to maintain its relevance and position. This comprehensive strategic planning effort coincided with the appointment of the new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dr. Kirk A. Nooks. This endeavor included multiple voices and perspectives and resulted in charting a course to align initiatives with the Council’s mission, vision, and values through 2030.

The strategic planning process unfolded in several key stages:

• **Initiation and Introduction**

COE held a series of one-on-one listening sessions with numerous individuals, including current and former staff, current and former Commissioners, accreditation agency colleagues, U.S. Department of Education representatives, Chief Administrators, and members. Additional group sessions provided opportunities to gain further insight and knowledge. In November 2023, after gathering initial information, the Commission met during a planning session to discuss the organization’s current state, evaluate its mission, vision, and values, and introduce the strategic planning framework. President Nooks spearheaded this endeavor, emphasizing the alignment of future endeavors with organizational aspirations.

• **Stakeholder Engagement**

Recognizing the significance of diverse perspectives, an additional feedback layer reinforced earlier observations. First, COE launched a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) survey after the November 2023 Annual
Meeting. Members were encouraged to participate through surveys, utilizing QR codes for accessibility. Second, COE formed Affinity Groups to consider the specific needs of different institutional sectors (Public, Non-Public, Federal, and Registered Apprenticeship).

- **Drafting and Refinement**

COE evaluated and synthesized feedback from members and partners into a draft strategic plan. This draft underwent iterative refinement by the Strategic Planning Committee, focusing on solidifying the mission, vision, and values and fine-tuning strategies, objectives, and outcomes.

- **Review and Finalization**

The Commission reviewed the strategic plan draft during the March 2024 Commission Meeting. The Strategic Planning Committee hosted two virtual Town Hall Meetings on April 17-18, 2024, to solicit feedback on the document. The working draft was later unveiled at the 2024 COE Spring Accreditation Institute, showcasing the culmination of collaborative efforts and stakeholder input. A final feedback session was also held on the first morning of the Institute to provide an opportunity for additional discussion and refinement. Finalization efforts integrated additional feedback and established an annual evaluation and reporting process for the Commission and the Annual Meeting to gauge progress toward strategic objectives.

- **Approval and Implementation**

In June 2024, the COE Commission approved the mission, vision, values, and strategic plan, “Strategy 2030: A Plan for the Quality, Integrity, and Continuous Improvement of Education that Works.” Implementation began in fiscal year 2025, marking the beginning of a transformative journey guided by a clear and comprehensive strategic roadmap.

This strategic planning process is grounded in our mission to uphold quality, integrity, and continuous improvement, and the COE remains committed to meeting the evolving needs of students, employers, and communities. By diligently implementing this strategic plan, we aspire to fulfill our mission, ensuring that our organization remains a beacon of excellence for Education that Works.
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