The Programs Committee knows that not every proposal will fit nicely into one of the strands. Proposals that focus on partnerships, program development, program review, industry-based certification programs, are always welcome as they are important for the conference. The Programs Committee is also interested in proposals regarding the impact of state and federal policy and legislation on workforce education and research-based presentations. Additionally, community, technical, and tribal colleges have long been recognized for serving diverse student populations, embedding values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) practices and policies is mission-centric to success.

**College-to-Career Pathways**

The wide variety of expanded pathways include new and emerging educational models that comprise many approaches to education and training options. Competency-based education; noncredit to credit transfer; integrated education and training models; bridge programs to transition from ABE/ELA into career training programs; online programs; stackable credentials; micro-credentials; and hybrid online programs are designed to meet the needs of students and employers. Many of these pathway models include retention and completion strategies embedded in each program which are designed to better serve under-represented populations such as opportunity youth, 50+ learners, women in nontraditional fields, learners from marginalized communities, and others. Sessions in this strand highlight models that integrate foundational, technical, and psychosocial skills and orient students to a culture of lifelong learning in which students enter/re-enter education to gain skills to help them advanced in a career of choice. These sessions provide knowledgeable peer contacts to help you develop and implement expanded pathways for life-long learning.

**Employer and Community Based Organization Partnerships**

Strong engagement with schools, community partners and business and industry are key to creating a strong and sustainable workforce. Whether it is in the familiarization with different careers and pursue formal academic training or a hands-on job training environment, those who are willing to invest in working together will ensure that local employment needs are met and economic development is sustained. Effective partnerships can improve CTE curricula and short-term industry-based noncredit programs, as well as entice more employers to turn to their local community college to develop customized training that will improve their productivity. Inserting experiential on-the-job training and related technical instruction may also lead to college academic credentials, industry recognized certification, and greater
employee productivity. Sessions in this strand will address strategies for community colleges to use in forming, sustaining, and expanding robust partnerships throughout the community (e.g., K-12, adult education, workforce agencies, community-based organizations) and for working effectively with employers and industry organizations to create strategies for implementing the various types of WBL including pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, intern- and externships.

**Current and Emerging Technologies**
The fast pace of evolving technologies challenges colleges to create a culture that requires exploration of unusual and unlimited approaches and quick response to create and sustain better solutions to address our nation’s workforce training needs. Unconventional approaches to learning and skills associated with robotics and artificial intelligence is the wave of the future. Participants in this session will learn about current and emerging technologies and their role in sustainable development, and how they may affect the structure, content, and delivery of community college curricula. Sessions in this strand will also explore college practices in addressing the digital and workplace readiness skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving) that students need to be able to use more advanced technologies and the implications of these technologies for the types of college credentials that are offered.

**Data Driven Decision-Making and Program Support**
Using facts, metrics and data to guide business decisions has been gaining momentum year after year. Colleges collect a wide variety of data but using it for decision-making can often be daunting. However, when analyzed properly, many colleges can develop practices to increase student access, retention, and completion, and also better serve students who are tackling growing problems such as food/home insecurity, homelessness among at-risk student populations, and mental health issues. The utilization of data for program evaluation, performance and benchmarking can help colleges develop approaches for strategic planning and options to better use funding available in braided and blended investments. These sessions will concentrate on examples of how colleges are using data to drive decision making whether that be for funding utilization, staffing, student success or program expansion/contraction.