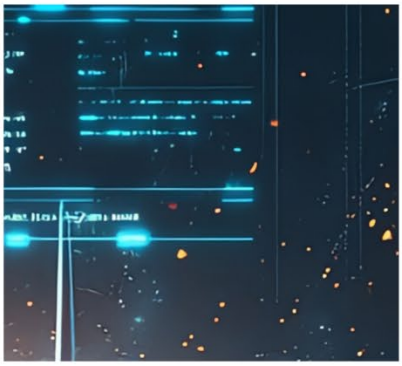
Sector Partnership Launch

An industry-driven regional partnership of business leaders within the industry, who work together with public partners to address the shared workforce and broader competitive needs of the industry.



JUNE 04, 2025
FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM
DALLAS, TX

Facilitated by:
Dallas College
Strategic Initiatives

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PARTICIPANTS | 3
SECTOR LAUNCH OVERVIEW | 5
OPPORTUNITIES & ACTION AREAS | 6
PHOTOS |17

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Adrian Doko | CEO, Imperial Aerial

INDUSTRY LEADERS

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Thkisha "DeDe" Sanogo | Airbus Helicopters

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Jim Catlin | American Airlines

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Mitch Patterson | Executive Jet Management

Sherry Sanders | HAECO Global Engine Support

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James Delgado | Jet Access

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SECTOR LAUNCH OVERVIEW

LAUNCHING THE AEROSPACE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

What are Next Generation Sector Partnerships?

Next Generation Sector Partnerships are regional partnerships of business leaders within one industry, who work together with public partners from economic development, workforce development, education, and training, alongside other community organizations, to address the shared workforce needs and broader competitive challenges of the industry. These partnerships are **industry-driven**, with a shared agenda, supported by a cohesive team of community support partners, and sustainable over time, and respond directly to the industry's evolving needs. Best practices and successful partnerships across various sectors nationwide continue to shape and inspire these models.

Dallas College serves as a "catalyst" for launching sector partnerships in these areas: aerospace / aviation; arts and entertainment; biotechnology; business and financial services; construction, freight, mobility, and logistics; healthcare; information technology; and manufacturing.

The Sector Partnership Launch

On June 4th, 2025, industry leaders across the Aerospace sector gathered at the Frontiers of Flight Museum in Dallas for a facilitated conversation to **identify** sector opportunities in the region, **determine** common denominators across the sector, and **prioritize** those that require action to unlock the potential growth of the sector. These leaders then explored forming **industry-led action teams** to further consider and flesh out ideas as well as determine what is going to be required from industry and public partners to capitalize on growth opportunities — launching the sector partnership.

While industry leaders participated in a facilitated conversation, conveners and public partners came to *listen only* and observe the industry-led discussion for future connection possibilities.

As an outcome of this sector launch, industry leaders will form action teams to address key priority areas in the industry. These teams will meet to consider needed resources, information and ideas for action and connect with public partners ready to support their **industry-driven**, shared agenda to address critical areas for sector growth and economic impact in the region.

All participating industry leaders will be invited to the first Sector Partnership Quarterly Meeting, to share updates from their action teams and explore how to move forward as an impactful leadership group in this sector.

DEVELOPING AN "OPPORTUNITY-GROWTH" AGENDA FOR AEROSPACE

To start the conversation, industry leaders were encouraged to share their thoughts and insights on opportunities for growth in the aerospace sector. These opportunities will drive future action planning conversations for the sector partnership.

What are the biggest opportunities to grow the aerospace sector in our region?
(What could drive growth in the next few years?)

Workforce Preparation and Development

- Train the workforce (in all areas, including drones) to prepare for ongoing leaps in technology that require an increased knowledge base
- Bridge the generational gap in the existing workforce (with a focus on digital literacy)
- Update unmanned aviation maintenance training programs to meet current and future needs
- Attract youth into the industry (with a focus on the technical side)
- Support airframe and powerplant (A&P) education tracks by funding programs and attracting more students
- Attract talent to the region by improving quality of life measures (housing, education)

Technology and Innovation

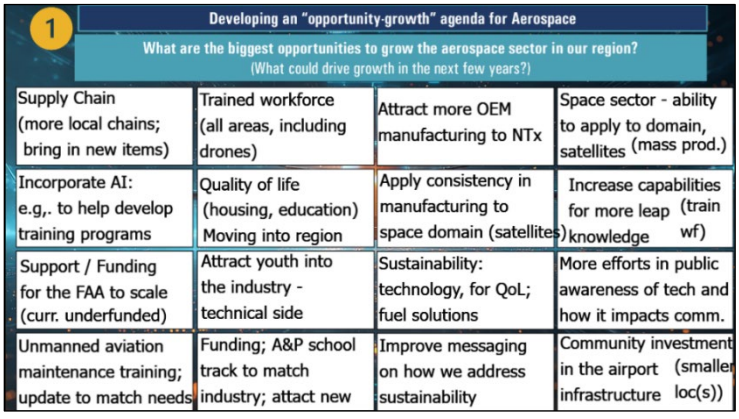
- Incorporate AI (e.g., to help develop training programs)
- Establish consistency in space-domain manufacturing (e.g., for satellites) to enable mass production
- Pursue sustainability solutions (e.g., alternative fuel sources) with a focus on quality of life

Public Awareness and Investment

- Increase public awareness of new technology and how it impacts communities, including ongoing sustainability efforts
- Attract community investment in airport infrastructure (for smaller-scale locations)
- Attract more original equipment manufacturing (OEM) operations to North Texas to support and improve local supply chains

Public Policy and Legislative Support

- Increase support and funding necessary for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to scale
- Pursue improvements to public policy regarding Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO)

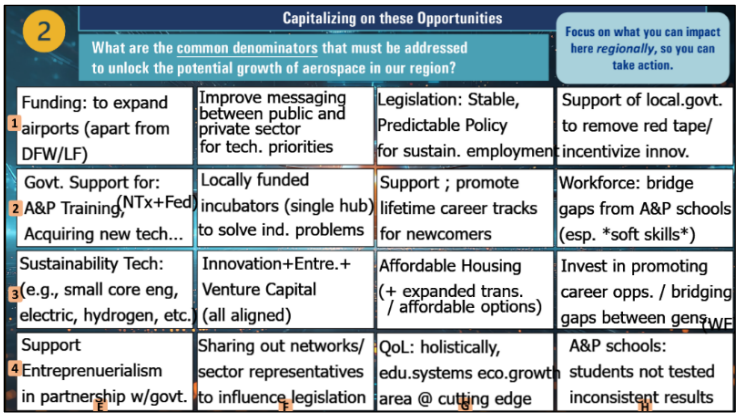


CAPITALIZING ON THESE OPPORTUNITIES – COMMON DENOMINATORS

Understanding that the aerospace sector faces a variety of unique challenges, there are also common denominators that impact companies across multiple levels. Industry leaders were prompted to identify these common denominators that must be addressed to unlock the growth potential of the sector in our region.

Once all ideas were captured, each industry leader selected their top three priorities in a poll, resulting in the ranking of common denominators listed below.
The top three priorities overall were then further explored in the next section as **priority areas**.

What are the common denominators that must be addressed to unlock the potential growth of the sector in our region?	
1	• **Legislative Support**: Champion stable, predictable legislative policies for sustainable employment at the local, state, and federal level (e.g., for airframe and powerplant (A&P) training and acquiring new technology)
2	• **Workforce Preparation**: Bridge gaps between A&P schools and industry expectations (with a focus on soft / professional skills development in addition to technical skills and test completion)
3	• **Generational Connections**: Bridge generational gaps by supporting both newcomers and workforce veterans with professional skills training (e.g., communication skills, digital literacy skills) and highlighting career pathways / opportunities
4	• Tech Communication: Improve messaging between the public and private sector on tech priorities
5	• Infrastructure Funding: Attract community investment in airport infrastructure (for smaller-scale locations)
6	• Career Pathway Support: Promote lifetime career tracks for newcomers
7	• Cutting Edge Education: Partner with education systems to keep North Texas at the cutting edge, attracting investment and spurring economic growth
8	• Entrepreneurialism: Attract capital investment and innovation through public policy
9	• Sector Representation: Share networks of sector representatives to influence legislation
10	• Sustainable Technology (e.g., small core engineering, alternative fuel sources)
11	• Affordable Housing and Transportation
12	• Single Hub Incubators: Fund problem-solving innovation incubators



PRIORITY AREAS

Industry leaders were then asked to consider what will be required from both industry and public partners within each top priority area to effectively capitalize on emerging opportunities in aerospace. Each leader outlined their action ideas on note cards. Once each priority area had been discussed, industry leaders self-selected to join one or more action teams as **industry champions** for further collaboration. These teams will explore potential actions, identify resources needed from public partners, and prepare to report their progress to the sector partnership at the first quarterly meeting.

Priority 1: Legislative Support: Champion stable, predictable legislative policies for sustainable employment at the local, state, and federal level (e.g., for airframe and powerplant (A&P) training and acquiring new technology)

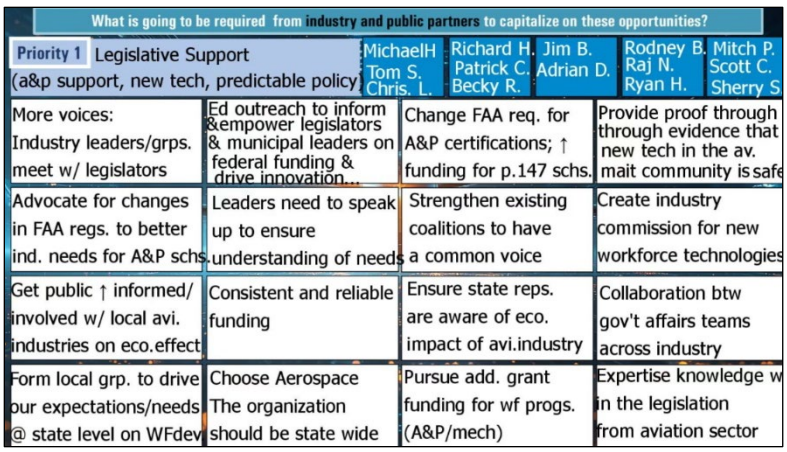
To capitalize on this opportunity to promote stable, predictable legislative policies for sustainable employment in aviation, industry and public partners must engage in coordinated advocacy and education efforts. This includes building coalitions, securing consistent funding, and ensuring legislators at all levels understand the economic and workforce needs of the aerospace sector—especially in areas like A&P training and emerging technologies. Active participation in the legislative process, outreach to lawmakers, and public engagement are essential to drive policy changes and regulatory updates. A unified, evidence-based message and strong local leadership will be key to influencing state and federal support.

Champions	Adrian Doko	Becky Redman	Christopher Lee	Jim Bridenstine	Michael Hill	Mitch Patterson	Patrick Carreno
	Raj Narayanan	Richard Heitzman	Rodney Burchfield	Ryan Hamilton	Scott Colling	Sherry Sanders	Tom Sri

Adrian Doko	• Identify and support champions in the aerospace sector, and create funding for their legislative campaigns
Bethani Culpepper	• Secure consistent and reliable funding
Brad Jacobs	• We need to have a local (North Texas) group that can drive our expectations, needs, and gaps to the state level especially as it related to A&P workforce development; federal initiatives exist but I am not sure our needs are properly being conveyed at a state level
Catherine Lovett	• Education Outreach: Inform legislators and municipal leaders on the need for federal funding and support to drive innovation, safety, and a skilled workforce, and empower them to act
Chris Morriss	• Meet with legislators at the city, state, and federal level (as industry leaders / groups) to bring in more voices to impact legislation
Christopher Lee	• Participate in the legislative process • Launch joint advocacy efforts (regionally, within the industry sector; commercial and defense)

Eric Rose	• Provide evidential proof that new technology in the aviation maintenance community is safe and improves the tasks for which they are designed
James Delgado	• Support transparency and authenticity • Increase the presence of aviation knowledge and expertise in the legislative process
James Woodliff	• Ensure state representatives are aware of the economic contributions of the aviation sector; make this a priority
Jim Bridenstine	• Communicate a unified message on legislative priorities (e.g., jobs, economic impact, political benefits to members)
Katie Rodriguez	• Encourage collaboration between governmental affairs teams across the industry
Michael Hill	• Get local, regional, and federal representatives more involved with this committee and the aviation industry in Texas
Michael Lawson	• Strengthen existing (and where appropriate, build new) coalitions within the industry to have a common voice on emerging needs
Michael Young	• Grow Choose Aerospace into a state-wide organization
Mitch Patterson	• Update FAA regulations to better suit the needs of Part 147 (FAA) A&P schools to fit current industry needs and update programs
Patrick Carreno	• Support legislative alignment with all sectors for North Texas Aerospace Sector initiatives
Richard Heitzman	• Put pressure on the FAA to change federal regulatory requirements for A&P certificates • Secure state and federal funding for Part 147 (FAA) schools to update training tools • Update legislative requirements on maintaining licensing and continuous training
Ryan Hamilton	• Secure additional grant funding for workforce needs (focused on A&P mechanics)
Scott Colling	• Bring awareness to the government that the aviation industry is at risk; this industry needs a strong workforce—it requires focused investment to sustain it and allow it to grow
Sherry Sanders	• Ensure legislators understand what the industry needs; industry leaders need to speak up
Thkisha “DeDe” Sanogo	• Create an industry commission for new workforce technologies (e.g., AI, quantum computing)
Anonymous	• Secure commitments from local, state, and federal governments • Encourage state and local legislators to visit / engage with maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities and airports; develop an engagement forum • Establish standards and funding to support new ways of working that integrate future technologies

Anonymous	• Engage in community outreach to understand needs assessments and promote opportunities • Encourage businesses to educate themselves about who and what impacts their business and how to become more involved: actively contacting legislators, joining associations that work on their behalf, and meeting with and informing elected officials • Inform the public and encourage them to become more involved with their local aviation industries to show how they affect the economy as a whole; this will help open the conversation about increasing funding and mentoring the workforce



What is going to be required from industry and public partners to capitalize on these opportunities?

Priority 1 Legislative Support (a&p support, new tech, predictable policy)	MichaelH Tom S. Chris. L.	Richard H. Patrick C. Becky R.	Jim B. Adrian D.	Rodney B. Raj N. Ryan H.	Mitch P. Scott C. Sherry S
More voices: Industry leaders/grps. meet w/ legislators	Ed outreach to inform &empower legislators & municipal leaders on federal funding & drive innovation...	Change FAA req. for A&P certifications; ↑ funding for p.147 schs.	Provide proof through through evidence that new tech in the av. mait community is safe		
Advocate for changes in FAA regs. to better ind. needs for A&P schs.	Leaders need to speak up to ensure understanding of needs	Strengthen existing coalitions to have a common voice	Create industry commission for new workforce technologies		
Get public ↑ informed/ involved w/ local avi. industries on eco.effect	Consistent and reliable funding	Ensure state reps. are aware of eco. impact of avi.industry	Collaboration btw gov't affairs teams across industry		
Form local grp. to drive our expectations/needs @ state level on WFdev	Choose Aerospace The organization should be state wide	Pursue add. grant funding for wf progs. (A&P/mech)	Expertise knowledge w in the legislation from aviation sector		

Priority 2: Workforce Preparation: Bridge gaps between A&P schools and industry expectations (with a focus on professional skills development, in addition to technical skills and test completion)
To capitalize on this opportunity to promote stable, predictable legislative policies for sustainable employment, industry and public partners must collaborate closely with educational institutions to align training programs with current and future workforce needs. This includes updating curricula to reflect emerging technologies, with a focus on both technical and soft skills development. Early exposure to aviation and aerospace careers, with immersive hands-on training, is essential to building robust pipelines from high school through to employment. Industry must take an active role in mentoring and promoting a culture of continuous learning and adaptability.

Champions	Brad Jacobs	Dominique Chrabasz	James Woodliff	Jim Catlin	Michael Hill	Michael Young	Richard Heitzman	Thkisha "DeDe" Sanogo
	Chris Morriss	James Delgado	Jane Lim	Maruchy Cantu	Michael Lawson	Mitch Patterson	Sherry Sanders	

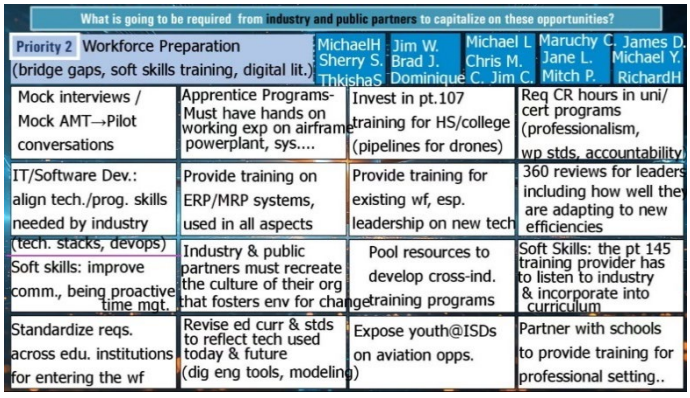
Adrian Doko	• Foster communication between industry and educators on their needs / requirements, and predict upcoming technologies to better integrate into real world applications
Brad Jacobs	• Collaborate with industry members to design internal training programs • Update Part 147 (FAA) curriculum to focus on industry needs, directed by the industry
Catherine Lovett	• Pool resources to develop robust and immersive cross-industry training programs for high school and college students; these will be required to address the looming workforce gap that will hit the industry in the next 5 years • Invest in Part 107 (FAA) training courses for high school and college students to build pipelines for the drone sector • Create immersive, skills-building programs with dedicated mentors to support cross-generational learning and collaboration
Christopher Lee	• Ensure alignment with high / mid / low-level skills specific to the aerospace sector
Chris Morriss	• Promote company industrial training programs with on-the-job training; there is too much web-based training, which has not been effective
Dominique Chrabasz	• Focus on bridging the gap and merging skills between newer generations coming into the aviation workforce and older generations, so that everyone is well-rounded on interpersonal skills, relationship-building, and new technology; we must do this to keep the legacy of the aviation industry alive and thriving in this new "golden age" of aviation
Eric Rose	• Form a partnership between industry leaders, their retiring workforce, and ISDs, to create a literacy bridge to bring old school and new school together
James Delgado	• Work with ISDs to expose aviation opportunities to youth in high school and junior high • Hold workshops where younger generations can share their IT skill set with older generations, and holder generations can explain their difficulties with current IT.

James Woodliff	• Work with Part 145 (FAA) training providers to incorporate wider soft skills into their curriculum; ensure they listen to industry needs
Jim Bridenstine	• Revise educational curriculum and standards to reflect technologies used today and in the future, including digital engineering tools (for workforce), modeling and simulation, digital twins, and artificial intelligence

Jim Catlin	• Keep colleges and ISDs aligned at industry levels (for IT / software development)
	  • Ensure educational institutions are up to date on the latest trends and what programming languages are required for the workforce
	  • Incorporate "agile" development skills and group projects into the curriculum, where students work together to build a program, requiring communication and an understanding of the requirements and constraints (what it takes to solve the problem)
	  • Technical Skills: familiarity with new technology stacks, responsibility to take ownership of one's own code, and development and operations (DevOps) best practices
	  • Soft Skills: communication, the ability to speak up, and time management

Katie Rodriguez	• Provide training for the existing workforce, especially leadership on new technologies and efficiencies • Hold 360° reviews for leadership, including reviews of how well they are adapting to new efficiencies • Require credit hours in university or certification programs regarding professionalism, workplace standards, accountability, etc.
Maruchy Cantu	• Develop change management course content and weave principles throughout the programs to help assist with the multi-generational workforce coming together to achieve common goals • Develop core courses (required to graduate) that teach professional standards while also focusing on critical forward-looking technical skills • Promote and market new technology tracks to incoming students to attract interest
Michael Hill	• Put more effort, funding, and interest into the unmanned aviation programs at Dallas College (piloting, cybersecurity, and maintenance programs)
Michael Lawson	• Demonstrate an industry-wide commitment to be present at schools to share about aviation / aerospace careers; exposure to the industry is important, as many students do not know about the career paths that are available
Michael Young	• Host mock interviews and mock aviation maintenance technician (AMT) to pilot conversations
Mitch Patterson	• Include live skills class or training in high school level curriculum (e.g., how to do an interview, first impressions) • Provide incentives for additional training for current employees; motivate employees to keep learning / advancing
Patrick Carreno	• Provide training for new and emerging technology for both the incoming and existing workforce

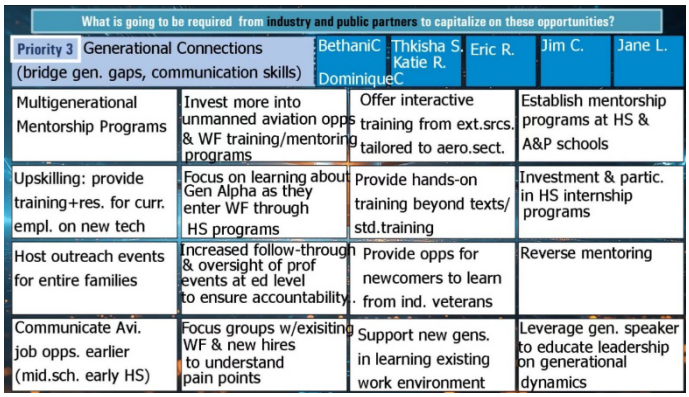
Richard Heitzman	• Incorporate trade school curriculum at high school and middle school levels • Incorporate life skills training at high school and middle school levels • Push for technical employment versus white collar jobs
Rodney Burchfield	• Encourage industry and public partners to recreate the culture of their organizations in order to foster an environment for change
Ryan Hamilton	• Standardize requirements across educational institutions ahead of the entering workforce
Scott Colling	• Encourage tech schools and companies to all invest in soft skills training to prepare people to enter the workforce and support them in their continuous career growth
Sherry Sanders	• Provide training in schools on enterprise resource planning (ERP) / material requirements planning (MRP) systems which are used in all aspects of the business
Thkisha "DeDe" Sanogo	• Ensure ISDs support students by uplifting / advertising those who innovate, and awarding scholarships
Anonymous	• Ensure the industry is prepared to take advantage of technology skills students are already learning (including AI related skills) from K-12 / college by incorporating new technology in a way that allows them to translate their skills into the industry • Partner with schools to provide training for students to be successful in a professional / corporate setting (with industry leaders teaching this courses) • Ensure apprentice programs include hands-on working experience on airframe, powerplant, and systems prior to those students entering the workforce • Ensure businesses support / partner with educational institutions to advance their mission in workforce preparation: speak out; contribute; be involved; advocate; don't wait for someone else to solve the problem



Priority 3: Generational Connections: Bridge generational gaps by supporting both newcomers and workforce veterans with professional skills training (e.g., communication skills, digital literacy skills) and highlighting career pathways / opportunities							
To capitalize on this opportunity to bridge generational gaps in the workforce, industry and public partners must collaborate with educational institutions and community organizations to create inclusive, multi-generational training and mentorship ecosystems. This includes developing hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that pair seasoned professionals with newcomers, while also integrating both legacy knowledge and emerging technologies into training programs. Early and sustained exposure to career pathways—through internships, outreach events, and school partnerships—is essential to cultivating interest and readiness across age groups. *Industry must lead in fostering a culture of mutual learning, communication, and adaptability, ensuring all employees are supported in their professional growth regardless of generation.*							
Champions	Bethani Culpepper	Dominique Chrabasz	Thkisha Sanogo	Katie Rodriguez	Eric Rose	Jim Catlin	Jane Lim

Adrian Doko	• Host outreach events, inviting entire families to attend
Bethani Culpepper	• Develop multi-generational mentorship programs • Provide upskilling training and lectures for current employees in new technologies and principles
Brad Jacobs	• Establish mentorship programs at high school and airframe and powerplant (A&P) school entry points
Chris Morriss	• Develop internal mentorship programs, assigning junior and senior technicians together
Christopher Lee	• Work with Dallas College to offer employer-specific training for new systems and technology, bringing students in-house, to the company
Dominique Chrabasz	• Provide hands-on training for new generations entering the workforce, so they may be familiar with the unique nuances and needs of such a unique industry, that textbook / standardized training may not be able to deliver by itself (There is a world of knowledge to gain from industry veterans and the new generations need to absorb and preserve the legacy.)
Eric Rose	• Incorporate maintenance and mechanical theory into training to teach youth the way things were prior to new technology and why; teach how new innovations were inspired
James Woodliff	• Ensure training organizations inform students of workplace realities prior to them entering the workforce; employees from newer generations need a lot of support to understand existing work environments
Jim Bridenstine	• Establish mentorship opportunities outside of work
Jim Catlin	• Bring high school students on campus to employee workplaces (where leaders will host interns for the summer) to provide an insight day with skill building activities

Katie Rodriguez	• Hold focus groups with the existing workforce and new hires to understand pain points • Increase follow-through and oversight of professional events at the educational level (e.g., colleges, A&P schools) to ensure students learn accountability, commitment, and professionalism before they enter the workforce
Maruchy Cantu	• Create the infrastructure for 360° mentoring where different generations can cross-mentor • Develop industry programs that can be shared across educational institutions at all levels to promote various career tracks • Leverage generational speakers to educate leadership teams on generational dynamics
Michael Hill	• Invest more into unmanned aviation opportunities and workforce training / mentorship programs
Michael Lawson	• Invest and promote participation in high school internship programs
Michael Young	• Better understand how generation communicate
Mitch Patterson	• Hold quarterly employee meetings where ideas can be shared and concerns addressed
Richard Heitzman	• Expose students to aviation job / career opportunities at a younger age (middle school, early high school) • Encourage mentorship between the younger and older generations • Introduce students to technical / trade schools at a younger age
Ryan Hamilton	• Offer training courses hosted by external sources that are interactive and tailored to the aviation / aerospace sector
Scott Colling	• Provide effective training programs that close knowledge and skills gaps, regardless of generation, and account for employees who learn differently
Sherry Sanders	• Provide internal and external mentorship program opportunities • Urge continuous education and provide constant training, company-wide
Anonymous	• Encourage reverse mentoring • Create opportunities within your company that foster / support this in the workforce • Create inter-generational mentorship programs / team building activities • Focus on learning about Gen Alpha as they are also now entering the workforce through high school programs



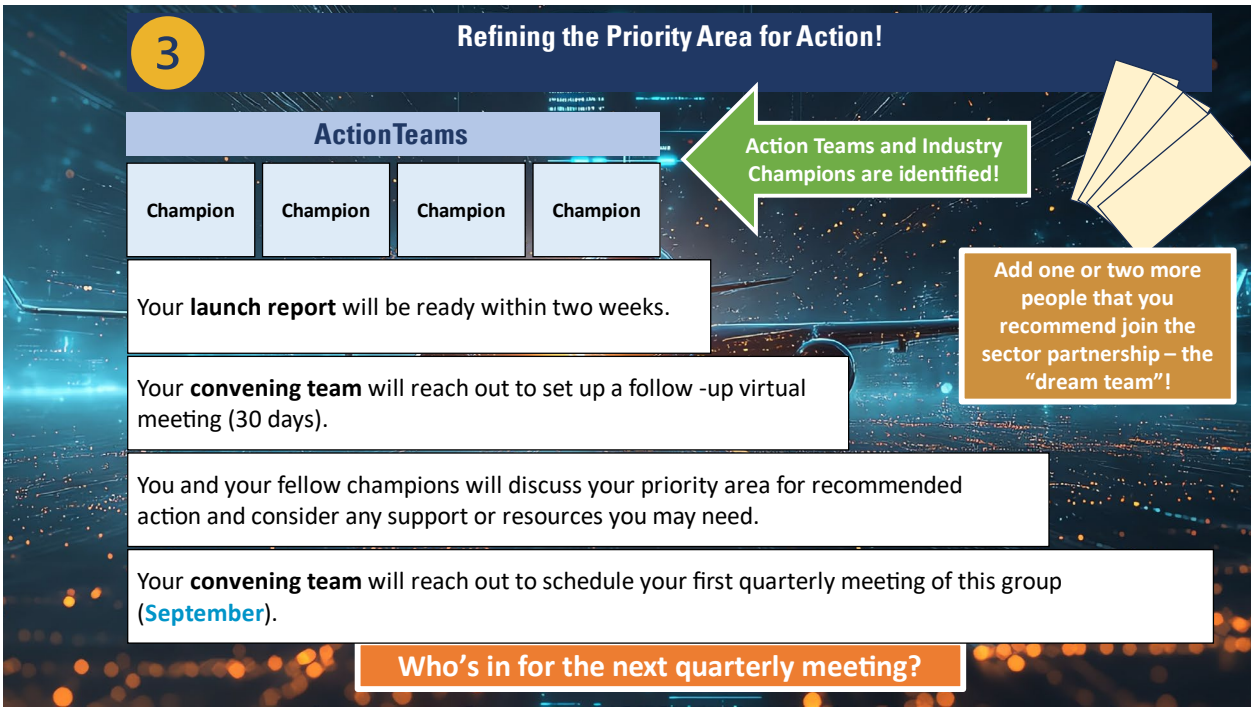
What is going to be required from industry and public partners to capitalize on these opportunities?			
Priority 3 Generational Connections (bridge gen. gaps, communication skills)	BethaniC DominiqueC	Thkisha S. Katie R. Eric R.	Jim C. Jane L.
Multigenerational Mentorship Programs	Invest more into unmanned aviation opps & WF training/mentoring programs	Offer interactive training from ext.srcs. tailored to aero.sect.	Establish mentorship programs at HS & A&P schools
Upskilling: provide training+res. for curr. empl. on new tech	Focus on learning about Gen Alpha as they enter WF through HS programs	Provide hands-on training beyond texts/ std.training	Investment & partic. in HS internship programs
Host outreach events for entire families	Increased follow-through & oversight of prof events at ed level to ensure accountability.	Provide opps for newcomers to learn from ind. veterans	Reverse mentoring
Communicate Avi. job opps. earlier (mid.sch. early HS)	Focus groups w/exisiting WF & new hires to understand pain points	Support new gens. in learning existing work environment	Leverage gen. speaker to educate leadership on generational dynamics

REFINING THE PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION

As the official sector partnership launch wrapped up, industry leaders became **industry champions** and joined together under the previously highlighted priority areas to form **action teams**.

With support from the sector convening team at Dallas College, industry champions will be invited to meet with their action teams over the next two weeks for a virtual call.

The first sector partnership quarterly meeting will be scheduled in September, in collaboration with the industry champions and facilitated by the conveners from Dallas College. The meeting will be held in a similarly industry-led, facilitated format, with updates from the action teams and an emphasis on an **industry driven** shared agenda to address critical areas for sector growth and economic impact in the region.



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PHOTOS

Industry Champions
Scott Colling

Industry Champions
Scott Colling
Adrian Duke
& Introductions

Andrea Coker
Dr. Justin Lonon
Dr. Macario Hernandez

Andrea Coker
Dr. Justin Lonon
Dr. Macario Hernandez
To Support Y

Dr. Justin Lonon
Dr. Macario Hernandez
To Support You

Thank You!