

OC LEADER BOARD

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Developing the Talent Pipeline in OC



By Edward Mora
Managing Director
Orange County, San Diego
BNY Mellon Wealth
Management

Editor's Note: Edward Mora leads all aspects of wealth management in Orange County and San Diego for Bank of New York Mellon, one of the world's largest asset managers. Amy Kaufman is senior vice president at the CEO Leadership Alliance of Orange County (CLAOC), a nonprofit of 55 top executives in Orange County who are tackling critical local issues.

The last few years have seen unprecedented disruptions in how, when, and even why we work.

As we look to 2023, future-proofing our workforce will be more important than ever, and a region's ability to supply an evergreen, diverse, and innovation-oriented talent pool will differentiate OC from our peer regional competitors.

Let's acknowledge the fact that all employers in the U.S. and around the globe are competing for innovation talent. With collaboration and public-private partnerships at the forefront, the **CEO Leadership Alliance of Orange County (CLAOC)** aims to position the county as a powerhouse of economic innovation and cultivate this county of 3.2 million—the sixth-largest county in the nation—into a premier, inclusive, innovation talent hub.

What is it going to take? Much can be learned from CLAOC member **Bank of New York Mellon**, which wants to ensure the sustainability of the talent pipeline.

BNY Mellon knows continuing to innovate and lead in wealth management requires active nurturing and cultivating of early talent. It has long-standing summer internships for college students that are a gateway to full-time career and internship opportunities within BNY Mellon as well as other major corporations.

However, BNY Mellon recognizes we could increase the inclusiveness of the banking industry by tapping into our first-generation college-going population of OC for such internship opportunities.

CLAOC was a natural partner to accomplish this goal. CLAOC's flagship program, the **Career Exploration Experience (CEE)**, provides students, high school through university, the opportunity to explore careers, develop new technical skills, gain practical work experience, and refine their professional skills as they collaborate in small teams on company relevant projects.

Working with the **"I am First"** program at **California State University, Fullerton**, CLAOC selected 10 students for CEE that engaged BNY employees from across the U.S.

Following that experience, **Madelyn Castaneda**, a participant in the BNY Mellon CEE, was selected to participate in the very competitive 2023 BNY Mellon summer internship.

The business executives involved in CLAOC have made a concerted effort to build an evergreen talent pipeline around innovation jobs and roles across all OC industry sectors, undergirded by artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, and emerging technologies.

The talent supply in our nine local community colleges and one community college school of continuing education is vast and underappreciated. If connected to employers more effectively, this "hidden" talent pool can be an important source of highly sought-after diverse talent. For instance, all 10 BNY students from CSUF were transfers from community colleges.

However, to really meet our goal of an innovation talent hub, we must look to talent pipelines that go beyond university-level graduates, which represent only 40% of the OC population.

CLAOC has partnered with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** and local community colleges to expand valuable cloud-based tech certifications and offer on-the-job training opportunities. Discussions are currently underway to further collaborate by focusing on entry-level tech roles and effectively match training with the job skills needed by local employers. Being employer-led makes all the difference.



By Amy Kaufman
Senior Vice President
CEO Leadership Alliance
of Orange County



Irvine student **Keyon Jazayeri** and Tustin students **Mahita Adluri** and **Suhina Chand** were selected as national winners in Intel's AI Global Impact festival. Their projects were developed as part of the 'Careers in AI' course sponsored by CLAOC, Intel, Orange County Department of Education, and Coastline ROP.

This approach is in line with recommendations from a recent study published by **Harvard University** titled, "The Partnership Imperative: Community Colleges, Employers, and America's Chronic Skills Gap." It points out that 59% of employers agree that relationships between employers and community colleges are important and is an opportunity for businesses to reach recruitment and retention goals.

Focusing on high school recruitment will also pay dividends for employers.

Intel has already seen the benefits of it through its **AI for Workforce** program. Launched in the U.S. in 2020 through partnerships with governments and community colleges, AI for Workforce prepares current and future workers with critical skills in AI. Over 70 schools in 32 states have joined the program since last July.

Intel joined forces with CLAOC to be the first to partner and offer the program exclusively to OC high school students, which has already proven successful.

Students hailing from **Tustin Unified School District (TUSD)** and **Irvine Unified School District (IUSD)** became winners in the Intel AI Global Impact Festival—an annual Digital Readiness celebration for next-generation technologists and teachers to showcase AI innovation and impact.

Suhina Chand, **Mahita Adluri** (TUSD), and **Keyon Jazayeri** (IUSD) took home the top U.S. honor in the 13-18-year-old category for their project created during CLAOC's Careers in AI CEE, designed in partnership with the **OC Department of Education** and Intel's AI for Workforce program and delivered by **Coastline ROP**. Additionally, **Abhishek Rao** (IUSD) received another top honor for the U.S. in the Impact Creators for his project in the 13-18-year-old category.

Ongoing investment in developing and retaining our local talent, beginning early in the talent pipeline continuum, will move OC forward as a significant influencer in innovation industries and create a robust, evergreen pool for all employers. A newly formed **OC Talent Collaborative (OCTC)**, organized by CLAOC, is made up of leading business leaders, educators, funders and nonprofits and has adopted clear goals and metrics for success. For instance, the creation of internships, mentoring opportunities, and certifications tied to jobs will be achieved for at least 20,000 participants through OCTC coalition members by 2030. We hope to influence other business leaders to drive that number to 100,000.

As purposeful leaders in Orange County, we must contribute to the region's growth by building a deep and diverse talent pool, especially to attract jobs of the future such as in AI-infused innovation industries.