

Cheryl Broom [00:00:09]:

Hi, I'm Cheryl Broom, CEO of GradComm and host of Higher Ed Conversations sponsored by EdtechConnect. And today's guest is someone who I had the pleasure of working with many years ago at Miracosta College, who's just done absolutely amazing work in growing community, education and workforce development. Linda Kurokawa is the executive director of that program, and on today's podcast, she talks about how she has been able to open an institute completely dedicated to workforce development, how she has made allies and marketers out of faculty and out of employers in the region, and just how her division, and really overall, how community education and workforce development really is playing a role in the future of education and in the future of training our workforce. This is an absolutely fantastic conversation, and I think it's going to give you a lot of food for thought, both in how you can structure programs that meet community needs and for you marketers listening, the role that you can play in getting the word out to the community about these amazing course offerings. I hope you enjoy the conversation.

Linda [00:01:26]:

Well, hi, Linda.

Cheryl Broom [00:01:27]:

Thank you so much for joining me today. I'm so happy to have you on the podcast.

Linda [00:01:31]:

Thank you, Cheryl. It's a pleasure to be here. Yeah.

Cheryl Broom [00:01:34]:

For those of you listening, Linda and I used to work together at Miracosta. And I don't know if you knew this, Linda, but one of the first things I ever did when I was hired at Miracosta was write a press release for one of your programs.

Linda [00:01:47]:

Oh. Because that's what we do now.

Cheryl Broom [00:01:50]:

This was back in, like, 2002, and that was when press releases were the way to get the word out.

Linda [00:01:57]:

Great. I'm glad to know that.

Cheryl Broom [00:02:00]:

I loved that press release so much, I ended up taking that class. It was wine tasting.

Linda [00:02:06]:

Well, of course it was. Wine tasting is probably our most popular enrichment class we offer, and it's a marvelous class.

Cheryl Broom [00:02:17]:

Oh, I learned so much. I also learned I have a terrible nose for wine. I couldn't, I couldn't smell any of the things the instructor could smell.

Linda [00:02:26]:

Now you have to come to our brew tasting.

Cheryl Broom [00:02:32]:

One of the reasons I wanted to have you on the podcast is that more and more colleges are starting to really invest in workforce development and employer relations. And you have just done such an amazing job at Maricopa and growing your programs. And from where you were when I worked there back in the early two thousands to where Maricosta is now with community education and workforce development has just been explosive. And I think Maricosta is really a model for colleges around the nation. So I'm excited to hear about your journey and to learn more about what you do.

Linda [00:03:10]:

Yeah, well, thank you very much. It's been a journey for me, too. When I came to Miracosta 16 and a half years ago, I thought the enrichment programs and all that we were doing and the small part of workforce development was. Was what I was going to be doing. But as things shifted and changed, and they have shifted and changed a lot over the last 1015 years, it's become really clear that the community college has a vital role to play in making sure that we serve all of our community, not just those who are bound for traditional education. And I like to say we put the community in community college by doing the kinds of innovative things that my department can do. So what we've found that has changed during that 15 year period is that we've become more conscious as a country that not everyone is destined for college in the traditional sense or college right away, and that we need to offer individuals the opportunity for other paths that lead to living wage jobs and great careers. And as we began to realize that as a college and as a community, based on what industry was telling us, we had to respond.

Linda [00:04:37]:

And my department is the place where innovation and flexibility can happen. We're able to do that in my department, community ed and workforce development, because the California Ed code allows a college to offer a department that is not, that is not funded by tax dollars and is not in the oversight for that department, is not through the chancellor's office, but rather through its own governing board. That means that my department is self funded. Both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is that it makes me very innovative and responsive to what is needed in the community. It allows my department to function outside of faculty purview, outside of chancellor office requirements and laws, and be more nimble. The downside of that is it's sometimes hard to run programs that are expensive without charging a lot of money to the, those who participate. Therefore, I have to rely on grant writing and donations and that type of thing to

keep the cost as low as possible, especially for work skills training, because you want the diversity in the community to attend, but they can't if it costs too much.

Linda [00:06:00]:

So we write a lot of grants, we get a lot of grants, and luckily, our federal and state and local governments do see the need for workforce development. And so that has been the way we've been able to fund that.

Cheryl Broom [00:06:14]:

Now, one of the grants that you were awarded, and I remember, I think it was there when I was still at Miracosta was to create the TCI, and that's this fantastic center. Is it technology? What does TCI stand for?

Linda [00:06:31]:

The technology Career institute.

Cheryl Broom [00:06:33]:

Technology Career Institute.

Linda [00:06:35]:

It was landing in Carlsbad, so we wanted a kind of lofty name because Carlsbad likes to have things sound really great. I might have just called it the Miracosta Training center, the technology Career Institute. And it actually is that. It's a technology career, and it's an institute of learning that's very skills based, but it's still an institution of learning. So as part of the college, and.

Cheryl Broom [00:07:00]:

Talk about some of the programs that you've developed that are offered there.

Linda [00:07:04]:

Yeah, that'd be great. Well, we developed our own center because as a part of the college that isn't credit oriented, isn't funded through tax dollars. It was difficult for us to find classroom space and plant great big machinery and great big computers and robots and things that we were going to need to develop work skills training at the college. There just wasn't space. So we were able to locate a facility owned by the city of Carlsbad. We went in partnership with them and got a discounted rate for that. So we're very grateful to the city of Carlsbad, and it's 22,000 sqft. We are able to run.

Linda [00:07:49]:

We have labs and classrooms in areas that are advanced manufacturing, healthcare, emerging technologies, and relevant technologies. And so some of those courses are engineering technician, machining, biomedical equipment technician, where individuals learn how to repair equipment in hospitals and labs. We have a welding course. We have the most comprehensive grain to glass brew tech program in San Diego. And it is the only master Brewers association

approved course in California. And so we make our own beer, and it's award winning beer. So we also offer phlebotomy and real estate. We offer emergency medical technician, drone technician, and we're about to launch next month an electrician's program and an H vac program.

Linda [00:08:51]:

So those are exciting for those who want to go into those trades, because those are high wage jobs and really vital right now. If you ever try to find an electrician or an h vac specialist, you know, you either go on a long waiting list or you get someone who you may not know if they're doing just the right job you're hoping for.

Cheryl Broom [00:09:13]:

Gosh, it's fantastic. And listening to all these programs, it's just amazing how much you can do and how fast you can respond to community employer needs when you don't have to develop for credit curriculum. So for you, like, an employer can come to you and say, we really need this type of skill to be trained, and you can have a program up and running relatively quickly.

Linda [00:09:41]:

That's true. That's exactly what we do. I wanted to mention that not only can we do that, and I'll talk about that in a second, but we are able to run our courses in an accelerated fashion. And I think that's where we really add value to the college. When you can run a college course, it's inexpensive for students. There's a set fee in California to take a credit course, but it might take two years, and life happens in two years, even just in that period of time. Sometimes it's hard for somebody to fit that into their life, and they have to take finals and they have to take at midterms, and maybe that's not for them. We can, on the other hand, run a course quickly, in a semester or less, and somebody can just concentrate all of their focus on that one core course with just the core foundational skills, and they can do it quickly.

Linda [00:10:45]:

It's rigorous. It's very hands on. And so all of our courses offer that to the person who really thrives in an environment where hands on accelerated learning can take place. And so our retention rate, those who graduate very high in the high nineties, those who find employment afterwards because of our relationship with industry and how close we communicate with them, and we bring them in, and our students go visit their places of work. We have this great. We have this great employment pipeline, and so many, many more students find jobs right after our programs than is typical for even a credit class that we find at the college. So that's a really huge bonus. Our relationships with industry become vital because they inform the content of our coursework so that we are relevant.

Linda [00:11:49]:

And so we keep those relationships going through advisory boards, through these visits, through these times when they come and talk to our students. So that happens all the time.

Cheryl Broom [00:12:02]:

Do you ever find that any of your programs get, like, pushback from the credit side? And if so, how do you work with the credit side of the house or faculty who may feel like, oh, this isn't our area of study, how have you built those relationships?

Linda [00:12:20]:

Yeah, we have found that to be the case that it sometimes happens like that. I bring the faculty in, and our college colleagues in. Our own advisory boards are in internal advisory boards, so that they help guide us and that our coursework becomes complementary rather than competitive with what they're doing. It serves no one well if we're competing with what the college is doing. But if we're in, we're a pre college program, or we're a complementary to what they're doing. And I'll give you a good example. We run an engineering technician program, and it teaches people the fundamentals of robotics and automation and gets them skilled in mechanical and electrical so that they can go into businesses and help repair automation equipment. Well, we have an engineering technology design portion of the credit side, and what that does is it takes a student through many, many classes, whereupon they can learn the design behind engineering and use 3d design and printing for that.

Linda [00:13:34]:

And even though we have 3d design, it's just a small portion of our of engineering course. But if somebody wanted more exposure to design work, and that's the area of engineering technology that they wanted to go into, having them take our course and then go into Miracosta design department is like a one two punch. It's a great thing to do. It only adds to their wealth and breadth of experience and offers industry a person who has even more to offer. So we like to have it be that kind of program where it can add more. Or conversely, sometimes the college runs a program where it can be accelerated and it doesn't fit well as a credit program. This is what happened with the real estate program. They were running it in the credit.

Linda [00:14:27]:

It took two full years. Somebody who wanted a real estate license could easily do the basic course and get a license in much less time, and they realize that. And so now it is in our department, and somebody can get in and out in a much quicker, you know, six months or less. So that fits. And so that's how we can work together well with the college as a complementary department.

Cheryl Broom [00:14:56]:

I love that. I love that. Complementary, not competitive. Right. I feel like that's a great mantra, to have to put people at ease, because you are. I mean, this, especially in today's environment, with micro credentialing and skills based learning, employers might not necessarily want you to have a full degree, or they want you to have a full degree and have some additional hands on experience. So in either case, you can really complement the credit program, which is exciting.

Linda [00:15:25]:

You know, Cheryl, you're right on target. Society is really changing, and technology is part of that. Or maybe the main reason we are changing so rapidly. To keep up with that, we have to be

ready to upskill both employed individuals and those who are going into the employment. And so it's really, really important that we offer programs where we're both relevant and we're planning for jobs that don't yet exist. So, Miracosta's TCI can do that with the flexibility needed. We saw a huge change in the way industry has been viewing these bachelor's and master's degrees, or maybe not so much master's degrees, but definitely bachelor's degrees. As so many individuals approached their new jobs with their happy bachelor's degree and found that their skill level still was lacking.

Linda [00:16:31]:

They had some general knowledge, but the industry needed to see a little more skill development. And so complementing general education with skills training wherever they can gain it, is better than just general education alone. And so we have seen a switch in what industry is especially advanced manufacturing and the trays and that sort of a thing, where they really want to know what does the individual know how to do, not just know about. And that's become more and more critical because they want them to hit the deck a little bit running and more prepared. They don't have this much time with technology changing so rapidly. So that brings us to the other idea of having the colleges respond very quickly to the needs of their local businesses, who have employees that now need upskilling because of new technology. And where do they get that, especially if they're a small company? They can't afford to run trainings. They can't afford that, and they don't.

Linda [00:17:43]:

They sometimes don't even know how to go about it. They don't have a training department. And so having the college have a workforce training center where that becomes part of their mission, like TCI, is really helpful for the community. They can lean into their college and say, help, and the college can say, no problem, we've got you covered.

Cheryl Broom [00:18:06]:

I love it. And it's such a great way to keep your employers engaged with the college. And positioning the college as someone that can support them and can advance their business is fantastic.

Linda [00:18:18]:

Yeah, I'll be honest. Colleges have thought that they have really been. It's going to be very controversial, but colleges have thought they've been really in tune with what their local community, businesses, and industry needs. So there they are, you know, oh, I'm the college. We're doing everything possible, and here's the industry. And they're saying, not so much. And there's been this. There's disconnect.

Linda [00:18:44]:

But if you can. If you can respond quicker, if you can listen closer, if you can develop programs and you have the ability to do that through a department like ours, where we hear about it, next thing we know, we put it in a grant so that we have seed money, or we even ask industry for perhaps some donations, which we've received in the past. We can start a program and we can

start it in six months or less. That just never happens in the credit side where there's a lot of committee meetings and faculty input and going back to the chancellor's office and back and forth, it just doesn't happen that quickly. And so, but we can. And with technology changing quickly, that does need to happen quickly. So it makes for a wonderful option and opportunity for a college to have a department like ours that does that.

Cheryl Broom [00:19:39]:

And speaking of starting programs fast, we're going to take a quick break to hear from our sponsor. And when we get back, I really want to talk to you about how you market these programs, because it's one thing to create them right? But then you have to get people to show up for them, especially because you're self funded. So I want to hear some of the things that you've done that have been the most successful. So we'll be right back and we'll talk about marketing.

Cheryl Broom [00:20:04]:

How do higher education decision makers find the right solution when technology evolves at light speed? Well, we usually start with our network. Edtech Connect is the network that's democratizing the higher ed technology conversation. Edtech Connect is free, so anyone with a dog email address can sign up and list the software and services they use and their role at their school.

Cheryl Broom [00:20:29]:

Once you're in, you can find out.

Cheryl Broom [00:20:31]:

What solutions similar schools are doing all over the country. Whether you're looking to find the hot new AI tool or maybe learn options, you have to upgrade your campus search engine or even get to your short list of marketing solution vendors, edtech Connect is the place to go. So visit edtechconnect.com and set up your free profile to get a pulse for what's happening with higher ed technology today.

Cheryl Broom [00:20:56]:

All right, Linda, welcome back.

Linda [00:20:58]:

Thank you.

Cheryl Broom [00:20:58]:

So before we heard from our sponsor, we were talking about how quickly you can get programs up and running, which is amazing because we know on the credit side there is curriculum review. There has to go to the chancellor's office. It can take two to three years where you can get something up and running really quickly in a matter of months. But then you also have to market it. And as you've grown so big, I'm sure your overhead has grown large as well. And so

you, you have to break revenue and you're self funded. How, how have you approached marketing? What's been successful for you in growing your programs?

Linda [00:21:34]:

Marketing is always that really tough thing in marketing and outreach. It's, it's, it's challenging to make sure that you get the word out. You're, as a community college, you're really only supposed to market to your district. So. And yet, if your district bumps up against one that's only 5 miles away, you certainly want those people who are 5 miles or 10 miles or 15 miles away to be able to join something that maybe that next door neighbor college isn't even offering. So that adds another level of challenge. I'm the kind of person that sees a challenge and likes to just figure out how to get over it. So we try every method possible.

Linda [00:22:19]:

But the most important marketing tool we have is by offering such a great program with so much oversight of it, to make sure that students needs are being met, that industry needs are being met, that word of mouth becomes your best selling way of marketing or your best way to market. And so that's what we've discovered, that as we start a program, it may, it may flounder a bit for the first cohort or two because we do run them in cohorts, but after that, we start to see more and more and more people. That's what happened with the wine tasting. We now end up with like 35 in a class. This is the enrichment part of my department. We now end up with 35 in a class and a waitlist. I mean, that's how well received the instructor is and how good he is. And we'd like our work skills programs to be like that also.

Linda [00:23:20]:

And most of them are. And so we end up with, if we can keep the cost low enough through grants, then we definitely end up with waiting lists. But the marketing is done through social media. It's done through a catalog that we send out to our community members three times a year. It's done through constant contact. It's done through Pio, our public information office, sending in press releases like you did. So we try, I call that the shotgun approach. When we've brought in marketing firms to do specialized marketing, sometimes it works okay.

Linda [00:24:01]:

Sometimes it's about the. So that must mean that our staff is doing a pretty good job of mirroring what they're suggesting anyway. But we try everything we possibly can to make sure that the word gets out, including this podcast.

Cheryl Broom [00:24:18]:

Yeah. Well, first, I have to say, I absolutely love that you started with the product itself, because so many people that we work with think that marketing is going to come in and it's going to be like this, like a magic. Like once we have a marketing firm and they do all these tactics, everybody's going to show up. But then it turns out maybe what your marketing is not very good to begin with, so it's not going to sustain. You have to start with high quality product that gets people excited and that builds that word of mouth and then find out what is drawing people to

the program and what makes the program so special, and then that becomes what you market. So I love that you started with that and not just with a bunch of tactics.

Linda [00:25:04]:

Yeah, no, that doesn't work and it never has. And so you have to be prepared to have a lull at the beginning when people don't know. We just ran into that with our new electrician and H Vac programs. We ran an orientation. The response was kind of small. And so, you know, we're going to run our first pilot classes with small course classes, hoping that we not only get the word out, but that they get the word out. And so the other part of marketing, it really has to do with how much our instructors are out in the community and letting people know about it. If they have a good relationship with alumni, if they have a good relationship with industry, it makes a world of difference.

Linda [00:25:50]:

If they are posting things on their Facebook because they're excited about what their class, if they are posting things on LinkedIn is because they're excited and their students in the class are also posting, that's the best way for us to get the word out also. So we know that that's a really strategic marketing tool. Without the instructor engagement, we do not do well.

Cheryl Broom [00:26:14]:

Yeah, that's great. And do you encourage that? Like, do you ask them to do that or do you just find. Yeah, you do. So you're really specific.

Linda [00:26:21]:

Yeah, we're very, very strategic and intentional in asking our instructors to do that. And then when they come to me and ask for a pay increase, I do what I can to do that because they're working extra and they're working hard. And we find that we end up by, we end up with excellent instructors because that becomes part of what they do and the students see the engagement and they become interested in. Yeah, it just, it's a great circle.

Cheryl Broom [00:26:52]:

Everybody needs to be marketing. This is one of my messages that I tell I like, be my drum all the time. It's not one person's job to market. Every single person is a marketer. Everybody.

Linda [00:27:03]:

Exactly right. I couldn't agree more.

Cheryl Broom [00:27:06]:

And especially the faculty. That's a fantastic way to reach people, to show the passion behind the program, what students are learning. I can see why you get such great response from that. I've also been working a lot with colleges who are redoing their community education and non credit class schedules. And it's interesting because there was this trend a few years ago where a lot of the colleges we worked with stopped doing the mailing of those schedules, and they saw their enrollments, like, plummet as a result. Yeah. And so now they're coming back and they're

wanting to reimagine those pieces. So that's been an important part for you, too, right? That three time a year mailing?

Linda [00:27:49]:

Yes, it's really costly, I have to say. It's very costly, but it would be more costly for our department without it. That's how I justify it. And the reason for that is, and you know, I'm sure, Cheryl, you could speak to this way more than I could, but what we sense is that we have an entire population of people who still like to grab something, look through it and think about it and put it on their counter and show it to their niece or nephew or uncle or aunt or whomever. And so we need to keep attracting that interest. Otherwise, not everybody can find us.

Cheryl Broom [00:28:35]:

Yeah. And community education and non credit have something for almost everyone. So those catalogs and schedules, no matter who gets it out of the mail, there might be something in there for them where a credit class schedule is really just such a small population that mass mailing it never really did much for colleges. So I think there was some bleed over where non credit and community ed programs were like, oh, the credit's gotten rid of it. Maybe we should, too. And they found that it's probably their top marketing tactic that they do.

Linda [00:29:08]:

Yes, it is. It definitely is. And you can tell because the minute it hits everybody's mailboxes, our enrollments just explode. So if that weren't the case, we wouldn't see that explosion. We just see incremental enrollments all along.

Cheryl Broom [00:29:22]:

And you have a great publication. So I'll put in the show notes, a link to your publication, because I get asked all the time, can we see, do you have any examples of colleges who are doing this? Well, and that brings me to talking to you about how you fund marketing because you've even been creative in finding ways to get support from the college and bringing in your own graphic designer and having help yourself because you're self funded. And how have you accomplished some of those things?

Linda [00:29:49]:

Well, we realized early on that making yourself look professional, making yourself look as interesting and exciting as possible as we are, is really important. And it's going to take some really good graphic design. It's going to take some good thought. And so we hired a graphic designer as. And we. We are on such thin margins in community ed and workforce development. When we're nonprofit, we're self funded. We try to, you know, keep our prices as low as we can possibly get and then even lower by writing grants to offset those.

Linda [00:30:26]:

So, you know, we're just. We're just walking on that edge. So it's not like, you know, having a graphic designer would have been my very first choice, except it kind of was, because if you don't put out good marketing materials that look beautiful and that attract people and help

people realize that this is a very professional level operation, whether it's enrichment or whether it's work skills training, that their investment in their hard earned money may not be where they. It may not be what they want to do with it if they're doubtful. So having a great graphic designer, as we do, was a big key to that. And so we've been enjoying having that person. How do we fund it? It just becomes part of our operation and making sure that we do write those grants and that some of that cost is put into the grants, because without it, we wouldn't have, you know, we wouldn't have as many students. So we can do that.

Linda [00:31:27]:

That helps. Sometimes we get money from the college, not because we're allowed to have money, but because they pay for advertisements within our catalog. So if we have a cover or not a cover, but an inside the COVID and we tell them about the credit programs or the community learning center, then that becomes part of their marketing, and so they can, at that point, justify helping contribute to the cost of it. So those are ways in which somebody can help fund it. What we cannot do and you do not want to do as a community, in case you're listening and your community, ed, what you do not want to do is advertise local businesses as much as that would definitely pay for it, and they would probably love to do that. It puts your catalog into a for profit, and it takes you out of the status that you're in, and that becomes problem.

Cheryl Broom [00:32:25]:

Oh, that's really interesting. Because you can use your nonprofit status for a huge reduction on mailing.

Linda [00:32:32]:

That's correct.

Cheryl Broom [00:32:33]:

Yeah. And so if you're putting ads for for profit companies. Wow, I never knew that.

Linda [00:32:39]:

Yeah. So I want to do that.

Cheryl Broom [00:32:41]:

Great tip. Yeah, it's a great takeaway. I actually just told a division like yours. I used you as an example. I said, why don't you go talk to your non credit department and advertise to an ESL advertisement inside your small. Because they have a very small program, they could give you funds what they would spend on marketing elsewhere. And then you can print and mail these to people.

Linda [00:33:05]:

Yeah. And some colleges, I don't know who they might be out there, may have a foundation who would like to help sponsor some of the catalog they're allowed to do for their unrestricted funds. They're allowed to assist in any way they can. And if they choose that your programs are really necessary and needed, and that's one of their efforts, they can help offset the cost.

Cheryl Broom [00:33:32]:

So, for our marketing directors, a lot of our listeners to this podcast are marketing personnel or directors at community colleges. My takeaway for you from Linda is don't just say no to your community education department, because there are creative ways that you can support them without crossing, you know, any boundaries or breaking any rule.

Linda [00:33:53]:

Right.

Cheryl Broom [00:33:54]:

Just gotta think outside the box a little bit. There's always a workaround.

Linda [00:33:57]:

There's always a workaround.

Cheryl Broom [00:33:59]:

And that's. Linda has always, I told her, you're the one person at the college where she just never takes no for an answer, always finds a workaround.

Linda [00:34:08]:

Well, what did they say? Well behaved women never make history. But, you know, I don't think that there's anybody at the college that has a really negative opinion of us. It's kind of one of those, keep your friends close, keep your enemies closer. So whenever I have had somebody who has felt challenged by the things that we do, who has felt challenged by the pace at which we require things to move, I immediately include them in our internal advisory board, or I immediately chat with them about ways in which we can work well together and not be competitive and not be a pain in the neck and things of that sort. And so it seems to have worked. I like to be. I call it being unific. So trying to do things in a way where we don't let the automatic know or the automatic, it's never been done this way before, deter us.

Linda [00:35:06]:

But on the other hand, we don't make everybody mad at us, you know? So there's. There's that balance of being unific to make that happen. Sometimes it means being patient, and sometimes it means bringing in enough people to have a conversation to either come up with a different way to do it that still achieves the same goal or changing their mind.

Cheryl Broom [00:35:31]:

Well, you've definitely done a great job. I've always admired the work that you've done. And before we wrap up our conversation, just wanted to see if you had any advice for colleges out there that might have a smaller workforce development, community education department or hoping to grow? Like, what are some tips you might offer them so they can be successful in the next couple of years?

Linda [00:35:57]:

Well, I think the most important thing to understand is that a community college has so much more to offer than sometimes we limit ourselves to thinking. So that's the first thing. Community colleges, it is really time for us to grow up and become enterprising, entrepreneurial, innovative in ways that we haven't thought of before, with the needs of our community, with our needs of our industries. We must find a way to do that. And we know that that need is there because there are statistics about in the years 2035 and beyond, we don't even know what jobs those are going to be. So we can't rely on what we've always done and think that that's going to be enough. So the choice isn't almost a choice. We must progress if we are futures thinking if we are going to adapt, or else we will become irrelevant.

Linda [00:37:00]:

And we don't want that to happen. So to stay relevant, we need to invest in thinking first. Thinking first about how to go about creating these organizations within our organization, like community, Ed and workforce development, that could do more, that could meet those needs and add to the value of the college second, we need to be able to find individuals that are dynamic and have visionary ideas and innovation that can bring that to bear in those departments. I had to become that for the college. I didn't know I would be that. When I first came to Miracosta, I thought, wow. When I heard about a college that was doing really innovative things around the United States, I thought, that sounds exhausting. But, you know, once you take one step, the next one follows, and then the next one follows that, and suddenly you're in it.

Linda [00:38:06]:

You're in it and you enjoy it, and you become passionate about it. So find those people who have that motivation to help individuals because we save lives here. I know that college saves lives. We also save lives, but we save different people who are often marginalized, who are. Often think that the college is not a place for them. So this is really exciting. And then find ways to seek out that funding from your senators, from your congressmen, from the department of DoT Dot DoT, labor, commerce, education, whomever. Find those ways to bring in funds that get these things started.

Linda [00:38:51]:

Just start with one thing and then move out from there. But think entrepreneurial enterprise. Think that and bring that to your college. I read a statistic lately that said 70% of those coming out of high school think that they want to be entrepreneurs. That is a great statistic, because it means there's going to be all kinds of innovation. Now, we know, practically speaking, that not all the 70% are going to be entrepreneurial. We just know that that's probably an unrealistic expectation. But if our community colleges are not responding to their desire to be entrepreneurial, to think of enterprises as an option for them, and we're stuck in tradition, we are going to be irrelevant.

Linda [00:39:41]:

We are going to outdate ourselves to what needed. And our new generation are going to seek their knowledge and skills from other technology and methods available to them. So we're in a competition there. How are we going to stay relevant? So that is my comment to those out there who are thinking about it, think about futures and what is needed and find those people that can create these types of programs.

Cheryl Broom [00:40:14]:

Well, great advice. You got me all fired up now, too. I'm like, I don't know, I gotta find some more people to help these visions come to life. Yeah.

Linda [00:40:24]:

Yeah. And for TCI, we need a bigger building. We've got 22,000, every inch of it, and every day of the week is occupied in this building. So finding funders to help us actually build a facility that becomes the center of a community for innovation and enterprise and business entrepreneurship, that becomes really critical. And so that's my next development step. So if anybody out there who lives in our area in San Diego, north San Diego, would like their name on a building or would like to see that happen, please do contact me, because that is what's needed. And every urban area needs a center like that where that is happening. Accelerated work skills, entrepreneurship, blending the two all happens in one location.

Linda [00:41:19]:

That is the future of our community colleges.

Cheryl Broom [00:41:22]:

Well, congratulations on that growth. I remember the grand opening of the TCI, and you, I think you started with, was it machinist?

Linda [00:41:32]:

Yes, we did.

Cheryl Broom [00:41:33]:

And there were some empty classrooms, but you had these, like, big machines. And we brought in the chamber of commerce, and we brought in the assembly member, and now you've outgrown this space, so I hope you have another giant grand opening.

Linda [00:41:50]:

Thank you. I do, too.

Cheryl Broom [00:41:52]:

Over there. I'll bring my pom poms and be like, yay, Linda. Thank you.

Linda [00:41:55]:

I appreciate that very it very much.

Cheryl Broom [00:41:57]:

Yeah, thank you. Well, it's been a delight talking to you. It's been so great having you on the podcast. I think you've given some wonderful advice to other colleges out there, and I'm sure Linda is always available if anybody wants to connect with you. I'll put your website in the show notes.

Linda [00:42:13]:

Thank you. Well, Cheryl, it's always a pleasure, always a pleasure. And so thank you very much for having me on today.

Cheryl Broom [00:42:24]:

And that wraps up this episode of the Higher Education Conversations podcast. I'm host and GradComm CEO Cheryl Broom. A big thank you to our sponsor, Edtech Connect. Edtech Connect is free, so anyone with the email address can sign up and list the software and services they use in their role at their school. So visit edtechconnect.com and set up your free profile to get a pulse for what's happening with higher ed technology today. And while you're online, take a few minutes to leave our podcast, a five star review. It will help other colleges and universities find us and learn from the great experts we have on the show. That's it for now.

Cheryl Broom [00:43:04]:

Until next time.