

Workforce Steering Committee – Bridging the Gap Between Higher Ed & Business

BUSINESS CASE:

In order to meet the demands and expectations of the region's employers, post-secondary educators must know what employers need to maintain and grow their business. Therefore, an open dialogue must exist through which educators and business can work together to produce our future workforce.

The Goal of the Workforce Development and Education Summit is to identify strategies and tactics that will lead to the development of the workforce of the future.

HYPOTHESIS:

If educators are aware of what the employers expect from their workforce, they will be better able to prepare students for those needs and expectations.
If students are exposed to careers and the skills associated with them, they will be more prepared for the workplace.

TASKFORCE OBJECTIVES: This group will identify opportunities and create action plans to connect post-secondary educators with business on a continual and sustainable basis so

CURRENT CONDITION: Issues between business and education

- Different goals and expectations
- Issues a common language; Qualifications in tech fields... different “speak”
- Subject matter relevance and opportunities
 - Educators instruct students according to what they believe business needs.
 - Businesses are for the most part not involved in the alignment of curricula to their needs.
 - Lack of exposure to the workforce (for students and teachers).
- Awareness and availability of internship opportunities
- Lack of career services and guidance, both in high school and college
- Respect of all professions
- Communication must exist outside media
 - Funding and Resources
- Funding for community outreach
- Technology and R&D
- Staffing
 - Resistance to change
 - Education moves more slowly than business – unable to react fast

Facts and Statistics

- ✓ Only 18% of high school graduates in TN met all 4 ACT benchmark scores and were ready for college work in 2007.
- ✓ 60% of freshman entering TBR public colleges (73.9%) and universities (39.9%) require remedial course work.
- ✓ By 2017, 33% of jobs will require a high school degree, 39% will require some post-secondary training, 35% will require a 4-year degree and/or long-term training, and 3% will require advanced training/degrees.
- ✓ Tennessee currently ranks 3rd worst in the education pipeline.

TARGET CONDITION: Bridging the Gap

- Industry and educators at the table together, on a frequent and consistent basis.
- An open and continuous dialogue is established.
- They use a common language to outline the curriculum for future workforce.
- Business shares future expectations and education shares expected issues.

Initiatives and Opportunities

- ✓ Diplomas Count 2008. Tennessee established a P-16 Council in 2005.
- ✓ Tennessee Association of Colleges and Employers (TACE). An association of TN colleges and universities, state and technical institutes, and employers of students and graduates of these institutions

ACTIONS:

	Task	Person Responsible	Complete Date
1	Benchmark with other state/regional Chambers and other universities/colleges to determine best practices in bringing career resources and employers together.		
2	Create a standing committee/task force to sit at the table together and open dialog through a “Summit” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify a leader b. Develop a charter c. Identify potential invitees/participants (assure all sides are represented - education and industry (all sectors - health care, service, manufacturing, tech, etc)) - Incentives for participating? d. Schedule “Summit” - (revisit quarterly, annually?) 		
3	Skills Inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a format/collection instrument to solicit feedback from businesses re: skills b. Create process/procedure to collect/complete and compile data c. Determine cycle (annually?) run similarly or along side wage surveys 		
4	Develop a communication campaign (or tie Bridging the Gap to the overall communications campaign) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline for education and for businesses more specifically what's in it for me. Communicate that participation and deliverables directly impact the company's bottom line. b. Increase # of bus. through a “traveling” committee 		
5	Set a Job Fair/Career Expo focused on top 100 employers w/ info exchange on skills, training, education, etc. Work with News Sentinel		

METRICS:

Metric	2008	2009	SPA:
Reduced internal training cost			
Reduced time to fill			
Increased qualified candidate pool			