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Higher Education Task Force Outcomes Supporting Workforce Sub-Committee April 27, 2017 Meeting Summary

Overview: The first meeting of the “Workforce” Work Group took place on April 27, 2017 from 10:00AM to 12:00 PM in the Clearwaters Conference Room in the Len B. Jordan building. Co-chairs Don Soltman and Ray Stark presided over the meeting. The meeting agenda included two presentations discussing how the higher education system is included in meeting current and prospective employers’ workforce needs. The work group also discussed the whether there is a nexus between its efforts and the Governor’s Workforce Development Task Force. The next meeting of the work group is scheduled for June 8th at 1 PM.

Meeting attendees (in-person as well as phone-in participants) for this meeting are posted on the SBOE HETF/Funding Formula website.

1. Workforce from an Economic Recruitment Process: Charity Nelson, Director of Economic Development for the Boise Valley Economic Partnership provided an overview of workforce considerations when recruiting a business to the Treasure Valley.

Nelson explained that in recruiting businesses, workforce pipeline is an important issue that they are usually asked to address when receiving a Request for Information from a prospective company. Companies want to know how many students are in both the K-12 and higher education systems. Graduation rates in both systems and areas of study in higher education (both available programs and headcount in specific programs) are also important. Oftentimes, workforce pipeline is a driver in the decision-making of a company, even more so than quality of life.

Right now, the top workforce demand areas, in regard to recruiting new companies to the Treasure Valley, are 1.) Computer science / information technology; 2.) Trades such as CNC machinists; 3.) Healthcare; and 4.) Manufacturing / food processing. Workforce needs tend to be regional, with the exception of the software workforce need, which is statewide.

Nelson said that higher education institutions need to better market the workforce-ready ability of their students AND to better market to students the programs in place to meet regional and statewide workforce needs.

2. Idaho Power's Apprenticeship Program: Shawna Potter, HR Professional with Idaho Power, gave an overview of their apprenticeship program. The slides are attached. Potter provided the following recommendations:
 - a. Soft skills are hard to find. Employers value soft skills.
 - b. More awareness is needed for "dirty jobs" such as electric line workers. In coming years there will be a great need for a replacement workforce.
 - c. Many "dirty jobs" require a higher education certificate or degree plus apprenticeship. Apprenticeship participants are screened / assessed for technical skills and soft skills.
 - d. For purposes of attraction and recruitment, could apprenticeships translate to higher education credits? Idaho and Montana are the only two states without this process. Other states have seen it as beneficial to attracting students to professions.
3. Workforce Development Task Force: David Hill gave an update on the progress on the WDTF, which is more Department of Labor and CTE focused. It is clear through the WDTF work that industry needs to engage with education and students. A draft of the WDTF recommendations will be done in late May and presented at its June 7 meeting. At this time, it does not appear that the role of higher education is being considered. This work group should review those recommendations to see where we can be complimentary or have alignment.
4. Group Discussion: The group discussed that outcomes supporting workforce should include both replacement workforce and future workforce needs. The higher education system needs to adjust its system to meet both needs. This will require a more quantitative assessment of demand and an analysis of the implication to higher education infrastructure. An example was the identification 10 years ago of the increased need for computer science and Boise State University's response with a bolstering of its Computer Science Department.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of Outcomes Supporting Workforce Subcommittee is scheduled for June 8, 2017, at 1 PM. Details to be provided.