

Aug.29 Workforce Practitioners' Talking Points

Panel Includes: Kevin Jeans-Gail, Paul Molino, Stephen Dobbs

PORTLAND WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

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I. How do you connect with clusters?

- Portland Workforce Alliance is a coalition of Portland Public Schools, businesses, labor organizations, and the City of Portland that is working to prepare students for employment success and meet the city's future workforce needs.
- In May 2005, over 30 companies involved in the Metals Industry Consortium (MIC) organized a Metals Expo that was designed to increase high school students' interests in the metals/manufacturing industry. Of the over 2100 students who attended the Expo, 1400 were from Portland Public Schools.
- As a result of the Expo, the MIC has organized an Education Committee that is working with PPS teachers to develop specific strategies that continue to inform high school students about career opportunities in the metals industry.

II. What is your niche in the workforce system?

- The Alliance is working to build capacity at Portland Public Schools to develop school/business partnerships that improve the rigor and relevancy of the program. This effort is part of a larger strategy of Superintendent Phillips to develop Career Pathways in all Portland high schools. The goal of the pathways will be to improve academic performance and better prepare students for life after high school.
- The Alliance is also working with educators at Portland Community College and Portland State University to connect high school students with post secondary educational opportunities at PCC and PSU to improve students' employability.

III. How do you involve the clusters in developing and producing their workforce deliverables?

- MIC members are intimately involved in the development and execution of strategies to inform PPS students of career opportunities in the metals industry. These strategies are developed by the MIC Education Committee.
- MIC members are also working collaboratively with teachers to develop a plan to improve the relevancy of the metals/manufacturing curriculum at

four PPS high schools. Strategies to improve the curriculum include classroom presentations by industry representatives, plant tours, job shadows, and an industry expo in May 2006

Paul Molino
Mt. Hood Community College

Historical picture of SWC beginnings

- Called together by OEDD and PDC
- Michael Dillon, Fujitsu, OEDD, and other in the 1990s
- 5 community colleges
 - MHCC, PCC, Clackamas, Chemeketa, Linn Benton, and later Lane CC with Hyundai and
 - Eleven companies banded together to give high technology a priority in workforce and economic development in Oregon
- Goal:
 - Create collaboration among community colleges around the needs of the high technology sector in Oregon
- First product
 - Operator Training at PCC
- Second product
 - Technician AA degrees (microelectronics)
 - 1996 MHCC begins MTC through the Multnomah County SIP
 - 1996 Dave Hata at PCC started the annual educator conferences that are now called SameTech

PANEL QUESTIONS:

1. How do community colleges connect with their respective consortia?
 - CC's have been active (more in the past) through developing operator training and sharing information about AAS degrees in the SWC.
 - CC's have been active the NSF funded MATEC in Phoenix, AZ
 - Cross walk skills and course linkages across campuses
 - Phase I and Phase II reports clarifying current and future projects of workforce needs in Oregon.
 - Career Awareness with the Connect to Jobs Web Site
 - Marketing studies and actual with local TV and radio
 - Sharing knowledge regarding the needs of math improvement in K-12

2. What training or education products were delivered?
 - a. At MHCC:
 - OEDD grants to LSI and Fujitsu supported MHCC operator training
 - PDC grants to MHCC support initial K-12 technology projects in east Multnomah County
 - a. Technology for Schools project \$50,000
 - The Tech for Schools grant created momentum and was a pilot project for
 - a. 600K Career Pathway Technology Project funded through the LSI SIP for east Multnomah County schools
 - b. NEED \$10,000 to sustain electronics class for 100 students in five schools after June 2006**
 3. How did the Community College involve the SWC in developing training deliverables?
 - Most of the deliverables were determined by individual companies
 - SWC was valuable for sharing and for obtaining information within the industry on an on-going basis.
 - a. Proprietary concerned in the early stages prevented a lot of sharing of technical training expertise.
 4. What can be done to improve relationships between industry and the workforce system?
 - SWC needs to evolve (morph) into a larger manufacturing group.
 - a. There is more “blending” of skill sets now
 - b. Knowledge based training works across industries
 - c. We are less industry specific at least in entry level manufacturing skills
 - d. We can move to a greater scale in community colleges with a broader manufacturing base because there are less cyclic hiring influences in a broad approach.
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**Steve Hobbs,
College of Forestry, Oregon State University¹**

1. How does the College of Forestry connect with the forestry cluster?

- The College of Forestry (COF) supports the forestry cluster through its research, teaching, and continuing education programs. Each year the College conducts several hundred research projects focused on issues specific to the forestry cluster. The College also has over 500 undergraduate and graduate students in degree programs designed to meet workforce needs.

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- New information resulting from research demands the existing workforce stay abreast of new developments and technologies. To meet this need, COF faculty conduct numerous continuing education events each year.
- Established in 1941 by the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Forest Research Laboratory (FRL), as part of the COF, is mandated to conduct well-coordinated, problem-solving research that enables the management and use of Oregon's forests for multiple values and products to meet society's needs, with special attention to social and economic benefits.
- The COF has long-standing relationships, some of which have been in place for decades, with various elements of the forestry cluster. These include collaborative endeavors with primary and secondary manufacturers, industrial forestland owners, family forestland owners, public forestland managers, and more recently, the outdoor recreation and tourism industry.
- College extension forestry agents are stationed throughout the state and interact on a daily basis with family and industrial forestland owners and public land managers.
- College faculty and administrators interact with cluster leaders through the many boards, committees, and professional associations and societies they participate in. Significant among these are the Oregon Society of American Foresters, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, and the Oregon Board of Forestry.

2. What is the College of Forestry's niche in the workforce system?

- The COF is the only academic institution in Oregon awarding BS, MS, MF, and PhD degrees in Forestry and Forest Products. Degree programs are fully accredited by nationally recognized accrediting organizations.
- The COF graduates well trained professionals ready to fill a wide array of workforce needs. The COF plays an increasingly important role as a source of qualified graduates as forestry programs in California and Washington continue to retract. In addition, during the next five to six years the leading edge of the baby boom generation will start to retire creating more demand for COF graduates.
 - Each year the COF provides numerous continuing education workshops, symposia, and conferences to convey the latest information to the forestry workforce. The College also develops publications and other educational materials to enhance workforce education.

3. How does the College of Forestry involve the forestry cluster in developing and producing its training deliverable?

- Annually COF administrators spend a day with leaders from the forestry cluster. The discussion is primarily focused on College programs designed to meet industry research and education needs and what changes need to be made in these programs to address emerging issues.
- The College has frequent interaction with the Oregon Forestry Industries Council and meets regularly with the FRL Advisory Committee.
- There is frequent interaction with stakeholders through the activities of the College's 9 research and service cooperatives and 12 special and integrated research programs. There is also considerable interaction with the many industrial cooperators involved in individual COF research projects.
- College extension forestry agents work directly with family forestland owners, industry, and public forestland managers. This represents another important link between cluster elements and the COF. Extension forestry agents are faculty members in the College's academic departments, thus providing valuable information to administrators about client research and education needs.
- There is a strong, highly integrated connection between the research, teaching, and continuing education missions of the College. The College's substantial research program provides new knowledge and innovations that are taught in degree and continuing education programs.

4. What could be done to improve relationships between industry and the workforce service system?

- Relations between the COF and industry are strong as reflected by many long-term cooperative programs and support by the industry of College and FRL programs. A good example of this support is the self-imposed harvest tax to support the FRL.
- But more could be done systematically to understand industry education needs and to help potential students understand the career opportunities in forestry, forest products, and outdoor recreation and tourism.
- Continued support of higher education budgets and other programs that reduce the cost of a college education is essential. Achieving affordable access for students to our institutions of higher education remains an important element of workforce development. In an era of increasingly complex subject matter and the demand by employers for well educated, technically competent graduates with good communication skills, providing workforce-ready graduates during a time of rapidly rising costs continues to be a challenge.