



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Chris Christie, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2017

10 am – 12 pm

New Jersey Law Center, New Brunswick

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:06 am and welcomed members and guests to the New Jersey Law Center. Chairman Bone announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1978, notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and Star Ledger and was posted on the SETC website. Chairman Bone reviewed the agenda for the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Draft minutes from the February 7, 2017 meeting were introduced. Carolyn Wade made a motion to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Senator Rice. The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

II. Chairman's Report

Mr. Bone welcomed two new Commission members, John Franklin, Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Northern NJ and Catherine Milone, President of Junior Achievement of New Jersey.

Chairman Bone noted that the two "Big Ideas" seminars recently held at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development were fantastic; John Franklin and his United Way team provided impressive data in the ALICE presentation for the first seminar. The second event, Employment Growth Outlook Moving Forward, was presented by Dr. Paul Harrington, Professor, from Drexel University's School of Education and the Director of its Center for Labor Markets and Policy.

III. NJ Partnerships

a. Community Colleges & Workforce Development

LWD Acting Commissioner Fichtner thanked Mr. Franklin for the informative ALICE presentation. Dr. Fichtner stated that a mission of New Jersey's 19 Community Colleges is well-aligned with the Workforce goals to create and maintain a skilled and competitive workforce. Today's agenda focuses on building stronger bridges between the colleges and the workforce system. Dr. Fichtner distributed a Declaration of Commitment signed by Governor Christie on March 20, 2017 (attached). To achieve the *65 by 25 Initiative* goal, 65% of adults with a recognized credential by the year 2025, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the Department of Education and the 19 community colleges commit to expanding access to employer-driven career information to expand and build programs that create pathways to economic opportunity. Dr. Fichtner stated that this is an ambitious goal and an important step forward for our state.

Presentation

Allison Spinelli, Executive Director, Cumberland County Department of Workforce Development and Ismail Asadov, Director of Innovation, Cumberland County College, discussed developments to expand the workforce opportunities in their area. The One-Stop Career Center has moved onto the Cumberland County College campus and a full-time technology school has also opened, creating a “dynamic mile”. New programming has been created to meet employer needs; the genesis of this was bringing employers in for conversation. This has developed into key partnerships in Advanced Manufacturing, Food Processing, and other industries, to build credentials and career pathway opportunities. Mr. Asadov explained the coordination and transparency working with their partners, to constantly review programs and changing employer needs. An adult education center on campus works with area high schools to offer students credit-bearing programs that can be used towards a degree or credential. By locating the One-Stop Career Center on a college campus, this makes the center less of an unemployment office, and more of a career center, and friendlier to dislocated worker customers; it also facilitates easier transitions for students between school and workforce services.

Lisa Hiscano, Director of Continuing and Professional Education, Union County College, discussed the Union County Business Innovation Center at Jersey Gardens Mall. This began as a retail initiative to serve employers, with a recruiting and testing center for job candidates located on-site. The county has since developed a 40-hour soft skills training program at Union County College; all candidates for job training must first complete this course. The program includes team building, problem solving and computer skills that are key elements for successful training and employment. Union County College is the host for the Transportation, Logistics and Distribution Talent Development Center (TDC); the *65 by 25* initiative has refocused Union County College’s efforts to increase its own credential and graduation rates. The TDC has also moved forward with its own programs; UCC will offer an associate’s degree in supply chain management, starting this fall. Ms. Hiscano also discussed the local WDB role; they have been instrumental in linking Union County College with employers. The strong coordination and easy referral system between the Union County WDB and the College makes it seem as though they are co-located, though they are at separate locations.

The floor was opened for questions and comments. Members discussed the integration of the Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers in these models. Cumberland County College also will be conducting a business survey in the near future to garner more employer engagement. Members also suggested that articulation agreements could help students progress through pathways from private career schools to community colleges; Dr. Fichtner indicated that all partners will be needed in this effort, including career schools and community-based organizations, to achieve the *65 by 25* goal. Members then discussed the need to ensure gender equality in programs; most county college programs include outreach to diverse populations, especially non-traditional students. Ms. Hiscano noted that UCC programs seek to address both socioeconomic and gender gaps.

Members also discussed the importance of apprenticeships, internships and On-the-Job-Training as experiential pathways that can result in credentials. Ms. Hiscano noted that the UCC graduation rate is now 18.1%; however, this traditional measure of continuous completers fails to account for non-traditional students who may start and stop their education numerous times. Therefore they may not be counted in the traditional graduation rate.

Members also suggested a number of *65 by 25 Initiative* marketing efforts to generate excitement within the business community; for example, a logo could be created with the *65 by 25* goal

imprinted over the outline of the state, for items like car magnets, etc. Also, new language could be used, such as “certified extended classrooms” for designated employers, to drive interest and engagement; further language changes were suggested, including dropping negative “non” traditional and “non” credit, and switching to more positive career terminology.

Members asked about expanding employer engagement efforts and credential transfer opportunities; both these efforts are underway. Members also asked about the challenge of remedial education for many community college students; Ms. Spinelli indicated that the One-Stops utilize Workforce Learning Links funds to provide some remedial education before customers take the AccuPlacer test, in order to avoid their being placed in required remedial education when starting their programs. The NJPLACE model was discussed; this program placed students on an early track and could be a good model for local areas to follow. Ms. Hiscano indicated that UCC provides on-line preparation for its students to refresh their knowledge before they take the AccuPlacer test. Cumberland County College uses other methods besides AccuPlacer, such as student interest surveys, to help target student needs.

Chairman Bone asked the presenters for their thoughts on the positive or negative effects of co-locating the One-Stop at the community college campus. Ms. Spinelli stated that both customers and staff experienced positive effects; there is a high level of energy and enthusiasm generated by the environment. Jobseekers who would not ordinarily have visited the One-Stop, due to perceptions of it being a “welfare office” are now much more likely to stop by and use these services. Shared resources are also a positive; a full-time workforce counselor is provided to the Adult Education Center across the hall. Chairman Bone thanked all the presenters for a very informative discussion about the workforce system and community college partnerships.

b. Center for Student Success

Dr. Fichtner introduced Dr. Christine Harrington, Executive Director of the Center for Student Success (CSS) and Executive Director Robert Grimmie, LWD COEI, Workforce Field Services, and Career Connections. The Center for Student Success is in its third year of operations. The CSS, in conjunction with the NJ Council of Community Colleges, works collaboratively with all 19 community colleges in New Jersey to increase successful experiences and outcomes for students. The CSS provides guided pathways for students in association with LWD’s Career Connections initiatives. The presentation focused on the need for structure and guidance for students; many graduate with more than the needed credit hours; many do not begin their education path with clear career goals; and many students don’t complete. Just 38% of first-time community college students earn a credential from a 2- or 4-year institution within 6 years. The CSS provides guidance in helping a student choose and enter a path and to stay on target for that path; the partnership with Career Connections supports this goal. Also, Chairman Bone asked if a future presentation on pathways for K-12 could be presented by Department of Education.

Members discussed the need to recruit parents and school counselors as “pathfinders” for students; the importance of parents being on board with a student’s career plans was stressed. The CSS and Career Connections staff speak with community and faith-based groups, and use this as an opportunity to educate both jobseeker parents and their children about education and career paths. Members encouraged involvement with K-12 community. The Department of Education is working to train guidance counselors on new jobs and new career pathways, and is partnering with the LWD Talent Networks to create webinars on the seven key industries. Members also noted the Junior Achievement model, which includes financial literacy for young students. Chairman Bone suggested a future presentation on K-12 education and career pathways creation.

Members discussed the needs of non-traditional students, particularly those involved in the juvenile justice system; these students have the same needs and often need more support. Many non-traditional students also have to work 30-40 hours per week, in addition to attending school; the cost of college education was also noted as a challenge.

Senator Rice noted that funding is needed for communication and marketing efforts, and suggested outreach to parent-teacher associations (PTAs), faith-based groups and others. Ambassadors are needed to spread the message of career pathways initiatives to the broader community. Senator Rice also suggested meetings with Acting Commissioner Fichtner and legislators to garner support for this effort. A public audience member suggested the use of social media as well. Chairman Bone thanked Dr. Harrington and Mr. Grimmie and asked that a copy of their PowerPoint presentation be provided to all Commission members.

IV. Planning Updates

a. State Plan: Strategic Vision Document

SETC Deputy Director Sheryl Hutchison reviewed the draft strategic vision document which summarizes key elements of the State Plan. This has been created as a four-page marketing tool to make the State Plan more accessible, and to explain what New Jersey is doing and why. The tool focuses on the state vision and five strategic themes, and covers the major initiatives and elements that support each theme. Members discussed the layout and contents; it was suggested that credential data from each county might be included if the *65 by 25 initiative* is featured, either in this marketing tool, or future marketing efforts. Ms. Hutchison indicated that feedback and comments from members are welcome; an email will be sent to all members to solicit additional suggestions before the tool is finalized. Ms. Hutchison thanked the LWD graphic design team for their efforts to provide a professional layout and formatting for this project. When final, the document will be available for SETC members, committee members and all partners to share with their stakeholders, and will be placed on the SETC website for easy distribution.

b. Local and Regional Plans

Acting Executive Director Gary Altman provided an update on local and regional workforce planning efforts. The regional plans were completed in October; local plans were submitted to the SETC beginning in December; a number are still being finalized with local boards and elected officials. The regional plans are considered part of the local plans, and these should be developed in concert with the State Plan. Mr. Altman indicated that a combined team with SETC staff, LWD Workforce staff, and LWD Office of Research and Information staff are reviewing the plans; some areas have received letters with comments and requested revisions from the SETC and LWD. Generally, the local plans demonstrate good alignment with the State Plan and regional plans.

V. Public Comments & Adjournment

Commission member and Gender Parity Council Chairwoman Sally Nadler noted today, April 4, is Equal Pay Day. This date symbolizes how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year.

Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA) President Eileen Higgins announced that the annual GSETA conference is scheduled for October 4-5, 2017 in Atlantic City. GSETA is hoping to build on last year's successful conference, with the creation of action plans, and to increase business engagement. Dr. Ali Houshmand, President of Rowan University, will be the keynote speaker.

Gregory Williams, Office of Legislative Services, commented on the state budget process; he noted that the NJ Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (NJ PLACE) program was previously funded with a \$1.5M in the state budget. Mr. Williams asked if the college partnerships and articulation agreements are still active. Marsha Nivins indicated that Starting Points still has 2 programs in effect, which lead to college credit. Chairman Bone noted that the NJ Manufacturing Extension is also active in this area. LWD Acting Commissioner Fichtner commented that the Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers are also working to build apprenticeship programs into their models. Also, the NJ Institute of Technology (NJIT) is working on prior-learning credits. Senator Rice asked that the SETC monitor the state budget for LWD, DOE and other education program funding, and to speak out when budget does not reflect priorities; Senator Rice noted that New Jersey's Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) have experienced funding cuts and this is a concern. Chairman Bone stated that funding is a critical issue and that we need to ensure that people understand the effectiveness of our programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 pm.

Next SETC Meeting:

Tuesday, June 6, 2017

10 am – 12 pm

New Jersey Law Center, New Brunswick

NJ STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION
MEETING ATTENDEES
April 4, 2017

PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES

Bone, Dennis	Milone, Catherine
Borota, Nicolae (for Harrington)	Nadler, Sally
Brown, Kevin	Nivins, Marsha (for Berry)
Butler, Kate (for Richman)	Rice, Ronald
Ferrera, Anthony	Safrin, Michele (for Blake)
Fichtner, Aaron	Sen, Tapas
Franklin, John	Virella, Marie (for Hendricks)
Gerson, Amanda (for Connolly)	Wade, Carolyn Carter
Hornik, Stephen	Wise, Robert
Karsian, Andrea	

ABSENT MEMBERS

Carey, Michael	Reisser, Clifford
Donnadio, John	Willoughby, Melanie
Duda, Teri	Wimberly, Benjie
Gacos, Nicholas	Wowkanech, Charles
Orsen, Melissa	

OTHER ATTENDEES

Amos, Ben	Harney, Christine	Meyer, Cheryl
Armstrong, Jane	Higgins, Eileen	Miller, John
Asadov, Ismail	Hiscano, Lisa	Moran, Patricia
Badran, Mohsen	Howard, Donald	Morley, Mary
Baptiste, Jean	Janz, Greg	Scalia, Donna
Brown-Benson, Melissa	Kocsis, Violet	Stoller, Jeff
Custard, Donna	Kurdziel, Kevin	Spak, Gale
DeBaere, Gregg	Lane, Davetta	Spinelli, Allison
Fugazzie, John	Leonard, Dan	Treml, Bernard
Gatling, Kerri	Levandowski, Andrea	Williams, Gregory
Gatling-Davila, Shamara	Lowery, Rhonda	
Grimmie, Bob	Mickens, Felix	

SETC STAFF

Altman, Gary
Hutchison, Sheryl
McClanahan, Beonica
O'Brien Murphy, Maureen
Robinson, Kyree
Sliwinski, Janet

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

New Jersey's economic future depends on a competitive, innovative and highly-skilled workforce. Businesses are increasingly requiring that employees have a post-secondary credential or degree. As a result, New Jersey, in resolutions passed by the State Employment and Training Commission and the Governor's Higher Education Council, has set a goal that 65 percent of the State's adult population will have earned an industry-valued credential or degree by 2025. The State will call this aspirational campaign "65 by 25: Many Paths, One Future."

In this rapidly changing labor market, all New Jersey residents need high quality information and assistance to guide their career decisions. To achieve the goal of 65 by 25, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), the Department of Education (DOE) and the State's 19 community colleges will commit to expanding access to employer-driven career information and expand and build programs that create pathways to economic opportunity.

In line with this effort, the State of New Jersey and New Jersey's 19 community colleges commit to the following:

- 1. Launch an expanded New Jersey Career Connections initiative to ensure that all New Jersey residents have access to unified, high-quality career guidance, planning resources, and job search assistance regardless of location.*
- 2. Identify, expand and build career pathways at community colleges that lead to economic opportunity and industry-valued credentials and degrees, and expand opportunities for internships and other work experience.*
- 3. Work closely with employers to ensure that investments in education and training programs are aligned with the needs of the business community.*



Chris Christie
Governor