Building Bridges: Creating Higher Education-Employer Partnerships that Work for Students

July 11, 2022

www.californiacompetes.org
To submit a question, click on the Q & A icon on the control panel.

Slides and recording will be posted on californiacompetes.org and will be sent out to all registrants following the event.
Poll Question

What group do you represent in California’s higher education and workforce ecosystem?

• Student
• Higher Education Faculty & Staff
• Employer
• Policy & Legislative Staff
• Research
• Philanthropy
• Other
Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Why are Higher Education-Employer Partnerships Important?

Barriers & Opportunities

Q & A Panel Discussion
Panelists

Sandra Sanchez
Interim Vice Chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development at California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office

James DeKloe
Professor of Biological Sciences and Biotechnology at Solano Community College

Coleton Matics
Sacramento State Nursing Alum and Former Director of Health and Human Services at Associated Students, Inc.

Christopher Esch
Senior Manager, Security Operations at Cue Health
Higher education is both a vaccine and an antidote against economic stagnation and social stratification—for individual Californians, our communities, and the state’s economy.

California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy
Policy Priorities

- Higher Education Alignment with Workforce Needs
- Postsecondary Access & Success for Adults
- Effective and Accessible Online Education
- Coordinated Policy Setting Across Segments
Why are partnerships between higher education and employers important?

For Students
Increasing clarity about career pathways and improving their employment outcomes

For Higher Education
Communicating the value of higher education and strengthening enrollment pipeline

For Employers
Improving access to diverse and well-prepared talent

For the Local and State Economies
Meeting workforce needs and creating thriving communities
New Research Brief Released Today!

Read the brief here: https://californiacompetes.org/publications/highered-employer-partnerships
Main Challenges

- Culture
- Structures
- Values
Opportunities to Create Alignment

Identifying and building off shared interests and goals

Creating multiple roles across campus, particularly for faculty, that include cross-sector engagement responsibilities

Building spaces—particularly at the regional level and by sector—that spark and nurture engagement between higher education personnel and employers
Learn More About the Details

Read the brief here: https://californiacompetes.org/publications/highered-employer-partnerships
Barriers & Opportunities for Building Higher Education-Employer Partnerships

Key Takeaways:

- Higher education and employers encounter multiple challenges in establishing meaningful connections despite the increasing recognition of their importance and significant investments in fostering alignment and coordination between the education and workforce systems.
- The main barriers that impede meaningful engagement stem from misalignments in cultures, structures, and values, which are cross-cutting.
- Interviewees noted that motivated individuals navigate these challenges in many ways, including by:
  - Identifying and building off shared interests and goals.
  - Creating multiple roles across campus, particularly for faculty, that include cross-sector engagement responsibilities.
  - Building spaces—particularly at the regional level and by sector—that spark and nurture engagement between higher education personnel and employers, and
  - Identifying and tailoring messaging to showcase the value proposition of engagement.

Today’s students state that their main reason for attending college is to get a good job. This is particularly true for first-generation college students and students of color. For Californians without a college degree, the motivating factor to enroll in college is knowing that it would lead to better job opportunities.

Educational leaders, policymakers, and employers increasingly recognize the need to improve higher education–workforce alignment. This alignment is achieved when postsecondary institutions and workforce stakeholders adapt to changing economic and social demands and create unique pathways to bring working jobs with good working conditions. This can be accomplished through advisory groups, work-based learning, employer advised competencies, education, and career pathways that lead to jobs with family-supporting wages, advancement potential, and benefits. In turn, these partnerships provide avenues for California to address the macroeconomic and social issues of labor market shortages and workforce policy priorities—such as innovation to address climate change—and propel communities towards strong economic growth and improved quality of life for its residents.