

CONNECTICUT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION
Legislative Office Building – Room 1D, Hartford
September 23, 2014

Minutes

Present: Donald Shubert (Chair); Roderick Bremby (and Astread Ferron-Poole); Thomas Burns; Elliot Ginsberg; John Harrity; James Ieronimo; Zdzislaw Kremens; Kathleen Marioni; Sharon Palmer; Amy Porter; Stuart Rosenberg; JoAnn Ryan; Dennis Murphy; Tracy Ariel (for G. Gray); Tracy Babbidge (for R. Klee); Michael Michaud (for P. Rehmer); Judith Resnick (for J. Rathgeber).

Presentation: Connecticut's Advanced Manufacturing Centers

CETC Chair Donald Shubert introduced Tracy Ariel, Director of Advanced Manufacturing Centers, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. Ms. Ariel provided an overview and update of the Connecticut Advanced Technology Centers located at Asnuntuck, Housatonic, Naugatuck Valley and Quinebaug Valley Community Colleges, respectively. She noted that the mission of the Centers is to offer a variety of credit and non-credit certificate courses in advanced manufacturing for incumbent workers, displaced workers, returning veterans, current community college students, adult education students and technical/comprehensive high school students. Ms. Ariel described the recently adopted one-year/two-semester Advanced Manufacturing Certificate. She noted students can earn 576 hours of related instruction toward a manufacturing Apprenticeship, plus the OSHA 10 Certificate. Starting this September, graduates of all four Centers can gain at least 4 National Institute of Metal Skills (NIMS) credentials towards the (11-credential) Machine Level I certificate. She reported that 323 students (Level I and Level II) were enrolled across the four centers in fall 2013; 213 had graduated by June 2014; 86 students enrolled in internships with employers; 192 students were employed in summer 2014; and 331 students were enrolled in fall 2014.

Ms. Ariel noted the strong role played by manufacturing companies in helping to advise, guide and actively support the Centers' efforts, both at the state-level through the State Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Committee (SA-MAC) and via the employer advisory boards associated with each of the individual Centers. Manufacturing companies employing the most program graduates represent the tool and die, aerospace, stamping, automotive, medical device, plating, molding, construction, commercial lighting, and general manufacturing sectors. Ms. Ariel reported that graduates had a 90% job placement rate.

The ensuing discussion addressed several topics, including:

- The importance of the pre-manufacturing program and new NSF-funded associate's degree program in manufacturing at Northwestern CT Community College for manufacturers in the northwest region.
- The need to encourage and ensure strong employer engagement with the ongoing operations of the Centers at the regional and state-levels.
- Strategies to coordinate efforts between the Manufacturing Cluster programs of the Connecticut Technical High Schools and the Advanced Manufacturing Centers, on curriculum design, dual instruction/enrollment opportunities, career pathways, etc.

Ms. Ariel noted that she would continue to keep the CETC Manufacturing Committee apprised on the status of the Advanced Manufacturing Centers efforts going forward.

Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Harrity, seconded by Mr. Ginsberg, the June 5, 2014 CETC meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Correspondence

CETC Chair Shubert reported that no significant items of correspondence had been sent or received since the CETC meeting of June 5, 2014.

State Agency Updates

Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Bremby described a \$200 million US Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded competitive grant initiative for innovative employment and training programs intended to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants find jobs and increase earnings. Up to 10 state-level pilots will be funded nationally. DSS is coordinating an application/proposal from Connecticut, due in late November. Members endorsed Chairman Shubert's proposal to submit a letter on CETC's behalf supporting the Con-

necticut grant application. Mr. Shubert indicated he would also encourage CETC members and their respective organizations to support the DSS proposal.

Tracy Babbidge (Energy Bureau Chief, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) reported on behalf of DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee. Ms. Babbidge described DEEP's efforts to proceed with implementation of the state energy strategic plan, with increasing emphasis on workforce impacts and appropriate worker education and training. Ms. Babbidge noted that DEEP intends to coordinate energy-related workforce efforts with the CT Energy Workforce Development Consortium and CETC.

CT Workforce Development Council Update

On behalf of Connecticut's regional workforce investment boards, William Villano (Workforce Alliance) reported that the WIBs are struggling to implement the well-regarded STEP-UP program absent funding for essential program staff positions. He noted that CTDOL has done what they can to adjust available funding to address the challenge. Mr. Shubert indicated his intention to follow-up on the matter with Commissioner Palmer to explore possible options.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Shubert noted that the 2015 CETC Annual Plan/Report must be submitted in January 2015, a single document as a result of 2014 legislation consolidating the CETC annual plan and annual report. Staff will prepare a draft, to be shared with members for comment, and a final draft will be presented for action at the December 11 CETC meeting. The plan will focus on recent noteworthy Connecticut workforce-related initiatives and accomplishments demonstrating collaboration among key stakeholders, and will begin to lay the foundation for the unified state plan to be developed in 2015 under the new Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Mr. Shubert invited Judy Resnick (CBIA) and Tracy Babbidge (DEEP) to give an update on energy sector workforce strategy. Ms. Resnick noted positive discussions with Ms. Babbidge and Diane Duva (DEEP) and Bryan Garcia (CEFIA) concerning the anticipated impact of State energy-related investments/incentives on stimulating the energy market in Connecticut and likely workforce implications, in terms of job creation, related skills, qualifications, training needed, etc. An ad hoc energy employer's work group met August 28, addressing steps to be taken to get useful workforce information directly from energy-sector employers. She reported that the CT Energy Workforce Development Consortium met September 18, with participants deciding to reach out directly to energy-sector employers via a short survey on current/projected vacancies and anticipated training needs, collaborating with business associations to encourage responsiveness. Staff will check-in with the CTDOL Office of Research on survey responses, to help define Connecticut's "energy sector" for planning purposes. The ad hoc employers work group will meet to review survey data and the Consortium will meet in November, dates to be determined.

Mr. Shubert provided a brief overview of the legislative charge to CETC requiring production of a statewide plan addressing education, training and job placement in emerging industries, focusing on contextualized learning, early college and career certificate program strategies. He described the efforts and schedule of the CETC Statewide Plan Work Group that he Co-Chairs with Lyle Wray, calling attention to the draft outline emailed to CETC members in advance of today's meeting. Mr. Shubert noted that the statewide plan document is due to the General Assembly's Higher Education and Career Advancement Committee by January 1, 2015 and that he expects a final draft for action at the December 11 CETC meeting. Mr. Shubert noted that stakeholders had been encouraged to attend today's meeting, and invited public comment on the planning effort. Several individuals provided remarks, noted below.

Public Comment

Several individuals in attendance offered brief comments on the statewide planning effort.

- Robin Golden, Early College Steering Committee/Connecticut Board of Regents: Reported that CETC staff had done a good job of coordinating efforts with the Early College Steering Committee, to build on useful work already done and avoid duplication. Ongoing collaboration is anticipated.
- Andrew Tyskiewicz, Capital Region Education Council: Noted that CREC had been involved in implementing contextualized learning/I-BEST programs with adult education students for the past 4 years, and that several contextualized learning programs in the north central region serve WIA adults and JFES participants. Challenges that he noted emerging from those efforts include high levels of homelessness among program participants and a variety of behavioral health concerns. He called attention to the importance of transitional housing options and mandatory linkages to critical behavioral health-related support services in future program design.

- Richard Tariff, EASTCONN and Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE): Reported that contextualized learning/I-BEST efforts in the eastern region had been a true success. Noted that many participants face a range of life complications that interfere with their progress. Stated that many individuals who would benefit from these programs are ineligible because they do not qualify for public assistance. Spoke to the need for alternative funding source(s) to be able to include/blend those individuals into current programs. Addressed the importance of making these services more readily available at the neighborhood level.
- Lori Pelletier, Connecticut AFL-CIO: Addressed the lack of affordable/accessible transportation to/from training and work as a barrier to many prospective training participants. Advocated additional investment in virtual learning strategies to expand access. Promoted a focus on apprenticeship as a valuable strategy that should be expanded. Spoke about the need to produce an accurate inventory of relevant programs providing practical usable information to prospective participants.

Mr. Shubert noted that the draft plan will be posted on the CETC website to afford opportunity for additional public comment. Stakeholders will be notified. The individuals who offered comments at today's meeting will be encouraged to provide written commentary as well.

OWC Report

OWC Executive Director Kathleen Marioni reported that USDOL is reaching out to seek input from stakeholders on the impending planning process for implementation of the new Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). As the State Workforce Investment Board, CETC will play a major role in coordinating development of a unified state plan for Connecticut, with particular emphasis on the strategic planning dimension. Ms. Marioni noted that USDOL will publish interim planning guidance (notice of proposed rulemaking) in January 2015. OWC and CTDOL will closely monitor the process. A link to USDOL's WIOA Resource Page will be included on the CETC website.

Ms. Marioni introduced Catherine Awwad, Executive Director of the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) for an update on several noteworthy workforce-related initiatives in the northwest region. Ms. Awwad provided an overview of the strong collaboration between NRWIB and the Waterbury Career Academy to promote exposure to and preparation for career opportunities in key industries and with local employers. She described the role of the Northwest Construction Careers Initiative as a regional effort to promote construction apprenticeships and careers, and how it operates as the first source referral agency for the City of Waterbury's efforts to employ at least 30% of local residents in government financed construction projects. Ms. Awwad reported on the \$14.4 million TIGER VI (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant awarded to the City of Waterbury by the US Department of Transportation. The initiative will redevelop 60 downtown acres surrounding Waterbury's train station. Job opportunities are anticipated for Waterbury residents both during the construction phase and in newly created jobs that will result from completion of the redevelopment effort. NRWIB will play a key role in helping to coordinate local workforce-related efforts. She concluded by noting that USDOL Region 1 Office had expressed interest in working with NRWIB to provide technical assistance on developing a sectorial workforce strategy, focusing on manufacturing in the northwest region.

Ms. Marioni introduced Andrew Condon, Director of CTDOL's Office of Research. Mr. Condon described efforts nearing completion to produce the Connecticut Occupational Survey vacancy study, based on a survey sample of 10,000 Connecticut employers. The objective is to produce more accurate employer-generated information about current and projected vacancies to inform workforce development strategy. Mr. Condon indicated that the study should be completed by October and would be shared with CETC. He briefly described the strengthened version of the new Legislative Report Card being developed by the Office of Research that will include workforce outcomes by program of study across an array of State-supported education, employment and training programs. Mr. Condon concluded by describing the P20-WIN data system being developed collaboratively by CTDOL, BOR and OPM, intended to provide longitudinal information on program participants 1, 3 and 8 quarters following completion.

Committee Reports

Allied Health Workforce Policy Board

Co-Chair Stuart Rosenberg reported that the Board met September 11 for updates on key issues raised in the 2014 AHWPB legislative report. The meeting included a presentation on the Task Force on Alzheimer's disease and Dementia, its report, and resulting 2014 legislation requiring related training for many healthcare workers. Efforts are underway with the CT Department of Labor to provide incumbent worker training to hospitals and community/long-term care providers to meet the new mandate. Mr. Rosenberg noted a presentation on behavioral health resources available through the Office of the Health Care Advocate, including a behavioral health information clearinghouse to provide online and live resources. The Board is considering improvements to its annual inventory of

allied health programs and services, currently a self-reporting document with useful, but not standardized, program information. A new template will be used to capture more service level and outcomes information. The next Board meeting is November 20, 2:00 pm at CERC in Rocky Hill.

Youth Employment Committee

Co-Chair Jim Ieronimo reported that the Committee met twice since the June CETC meeting. On June 12 the Committee had presentations from representatives of Travelers Insurance, including Co-Chair Norma Ortega, about the company's youth programs, and also about efforts of the Early College Steering Committee, operating under the aegis of the Board of Regents and Department of Education. On September 18 the Committee had a presentation about the Opportunity Youth Initiative in the North Central region involving a partnership of Capital Workforce Partners, Blue Hills Civic Association, Our Piece of the Pie and Capitol Region Education Council. In addition, the Workforce Investment Boards shared preliminary information about the 2014 summer youth employment program. More summer program information will follow in the near future about numbers served, employment opportunities provided, and unmet need. Approximately 5,000 youth were engaged this summer across the five regions. Funding was provided through a combination of State general fund dollars, DCF support and philanthropic and private sector donors. Mr. Ieronimo noted that the WIBs will work with legislators interested in identifying resources to expand this important program. The Committee meets November 5, 2:00 pm at CERC in Rocky Hill.

Manufacturing Committee

Co-Chairs John Harrity and Elliot Ginsberg reported that staff met with leaders of manufacturing associations for help in reaching out to manufacturers for information on current/projected vacancies, training needs, etc. Direct interviews occurred with selected companies from the Northwest Connecticut Manufacturers Coalition. Employer interviews yielded useful information, a mix of anecdotes and hard facts, highlighted at the September 19 Committee meeting. A summary of key observations will be prepared. More efficient methods to get employer-generated workforce data will be explored. The Co-Chairs reported Committee support for strengthening several initiatives, including Connecticut/Dream It. Do It., the Connecticut Technical High School System Manufacturing Cluster programs, the community college Advanced Manufacturing Centers, and Apprenticeship opportunities in manufacturing. They noted growing consensus on the importance of focusing available training resources to help incumbent manufacturing workers bridge the "experience gap" identified by numerous manufacturers. Working through the manufacturing associations, efforts will be pursued to identify workforce-related policy priorities for 2015. The November committee meeting (date TBD) will focus on priority options for CETC's consideration.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.