



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB E

February 18, 2022

Industry Advisory Council Report

In accordance with [statute](#) and as established by [the Board of Higher Education](#), the Industry Advisory Council met on October 12, 2021, to consider higher education and the current workforce and economic development pipeline, with particular attention to the [USHE Strategic Plan](#). The attached report summarizes the meeting, and industry perspectives discussed by the council have been provided to inform the Technical Education Committee, the Academic Education Committee, and the Utah State Board of Education.

Committee Discussion

The committee could consider the industry perspectives in light of the Board's strategic planning initiatives, the Talent Ready Utah discussion with the computer science industry in the January Board meeting, and other forthcoming industry discussions.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no action is required.

Attachment

Industry Advisory Council



Workforce & Economic Development Perspectives, Fall 2021

Role and Responsibilities

The purpose of the Industry Advisory Council is to review and provide industry perspectives regarding the workforce and economic development pipeline for current high-skill, in-demand, emerging, or other regionally important occupations in Utah, and gaps in available talent that could be filled by academic and technical education programs and to inform the Utah Board of Higher Education's technical and academic education committees and the State Board of Education of those perspectives. The council will consider collaboration and coordination of industry advisory groups across the state in its review.

Industry Advisory Council Meeting, October 12, 2021

The Industry Advisory Council held its first meeting October 12, 2021, 1:00-3:00 p.m., in virtual format. The following summarizes the meeting, discussion, and perspectives provided by the Council participants and, as provided in statute, is provided to inform the Utah Board of Higher Education's Technical Education and Academic Education Committees and the Utah State Board of Education.

Attendance

- **Industry Participants:** (Construction) Scott Parson; (Finance) Trina Eyring; (Information Technology) Joshua Aikens, John Sutherland; (Manufacturing) Karen Griffin; (Vehicle Repair) Craig Bickmore (excused); (Wholesale/Retail Trade) Dave Davis; (Health Services) Sri Koduri.
- **State Partners:** (Utah State Board of Education) Darin Nielsen; (Department of Workforce Services) Greg Paras; (Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity) Ben Hart; (Faculty) Dr. Doris Geide-Stevenson (Degree-Granting), Tiffany Vickers (Technical College).
- **USHE:** Jared Haines, Carrie Mayne, Kim Ziebarth, Julie Hartley, Melanie Heath.

Agenda/discussion outline

1. **Introduction:** Council purpose and role is essentially a sounding board or focus group to provide general industry perspectives and feedback for education policy-makers and practitioners regarding the workforce and economic development pipeline.
2. **Current industry needs and priorities – discussion:** What significant workforce issues keep you awake at night?
3. **USHE's current efforts in workforce, economy, education**
 - Focus on high-wage, high-demand jobs (Carrie Mayne, Chief Economist): USHE works with DWS to identify the jobs with the highest pay and demand, build them into programs, policies,

scholarships, incentives, Deep Technology grants, etc.

- Workforce relevance for higher education programs (Kim Ziebarth, Associate Commissioner for Technical Education; Julie Hartley, Associate Commissioner for Academic Education): Occupational advisory committees, accreditation benchmarks, academic education.
4. **USHE Strategic Plan overview** (Melanie Heath, Associate Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives and Access): [linked here](#)
 5. **Industry/education strategic engagement - discussion**
 - Which USHE strategies are most important and impactful for industry? Are any missing?
 - For tactics that involve industry, how is the best way to approach them with industry?
 - Other feedback or suggestions for USHE Strategic Plan implementation.
 6. **Industry Advisory Council workplan – discussion**
 - Council perspectives.
 - What are the most important workforce education issues for industry to engage with and weigh in on? What should the Council consider going forward?
 - What to inform Technical Education Committee, Academic Education Committee, and State Board of Education.

Perspectives

1. Workforce Scarcity

- Zions is currently trying to fill 720 positions – real challenge trying to get qualified people.
- Information technology still has shortages in the hundreds of thousands. Having to recruit engineering talent as far away as New Zealand.
- Manufacturing has lots of orders, and could have lots more sales if they had more workers.
- Retail has a challenge with availability of workers – being able to find people.
- Healthcare needs phlebotomists, medical assistants, social workers, and other technician positions. For physicians, there is a shortage of the deepest specialists.
- Quantity of graduates is not sufficient to meet workforce needs.
- Technical colleges are having growth, but fewer adult students – we need to find ways to get adults to return for education.
- Biggest challenge for education is getting enough students to meet industry demand.

2. Awareness

- Schools do not have wait lists for programs in some occupations particularly important to industry.
- Drawing young people into construction is a significant challenge.
- Manufacturing has good careers for people who have had a higher education. There are opportunities to get a higher education and still work in manufacturing.

- Retail has an image problem. Have a hard time getting people excited about working in retail, though there are good opportunities.
- How can we ensure financial services careers are included in advising students about education and career opportunities?
- We (education, industry, and the state) need to paint a full picture across the state of all the opportunities. How do we convince parents to raise awareness?
- Make sure the College Access Advisers are providing guidance on the full range of education – students and parents need to fully understand all the opportunities and conditions.
- Work with Pathways program in high schools that can feed students into building & construction.

3. Workforce Demand and Conditions

- COVID has taught that remote work is cool; retail has very limited remote ability – how to keep people engaged.
- Hospitals are working to the limit – creates bottleneck for clinical education.
- Complexity of the workforce is a challenge for faculty to keep up with.
- How are we going to house employees we are going to hire in Utah right now?
- We need to better understand what the 4-5 star jobs are.
- Sometimes the workforce data don't accurately reflect engineering.
- How do we innovate when we don't have enough people to do the work? University of Utah is working on understanding the problem.

4. Career and Education Pathways

- Some occupations cross industries. For example, banks employ large numbers of information technology workers.
- Healthcare entry & midlevel workforce positions are particularly challenging to fill – further along in education level.
- Would like to see us find ways to move people up from and between all industries, such as service occupations. Are there ways industries could partner?
- We need to work on skill development beyond degrees.
- Stackable credentials are good, but we have to be careful about what stacks and doesn't for a given field.
- Current efforts going on with the technical education institutions to structure programs that will support movement from one job into another.
- Some efforts going on at degree-granting institutions with micro-credentials.
- What are the ways for this group and their industries to talk to the technical education institutions about occupations and programs they would like to see started? Is there a clearinghouse of what programs are available or needed? USHE can help connect industries with the institutions and employer committees where programs are developed and provided.

5. Supporting Industry

- We need to find ways to help businesses understand what's there, what's available, and create partnerships with USHE.
- What industries will research benefit? How do we connect the dots – how do manufacturers (or other industries) know there is a pocket of new material or process coming out of research?
- How can faculty identify pockets of research needed and engage with various industries?

6. Challenges for Education

- USBE's vision is that ALL students are prepared to succeed and lead – “ALL” is a huge challenge; providing access for all to all the resources.
- We need individualized approaches to workforce education and engagement for the different parts of the state – each is unique.
- The status of the economy and the DWS customer base presents challenges and opportunities for connecting them with meaningful opportunities.
- The faculty representatives want to help translate Council and industry observations to the institution level – into faculty, classrooms.
- Faculty are challenged with how they keep up with change and disruption (COVID, etc.).
- Sometimes the performance funds don't go to the programs that have the 4-5 star jobs – sometimes because there's not enough performance funding available to do much.

7. Responsiveness/Innovation

- Industry needs to actively engage with education to create its future workforce. Zions has a recruiting program at all USHE campuses.
- The “cutting edge” for an industry is not what higher education institutions are going to be best at – it's the industry that is experiencing and responding to the need. We need to figure out how to have industry come to the table and help solve the problems, and not expect education to do it alone.
- When we need workforce, we need them right now. Sometimes employers should launch their own programs. It's not a strategy, but lag time is a problem area for industry leaders when workforce needs are immediate. The time it takes to launch, expand, and /get students through training is costly. How can we make this nimble?

8. Industry Advisory Council Role

- Some participants suggested USHE consider convening the Council more frequently than every six months. Today's discussion raised some important insights, and it may be helpful to have follow-up discussions while the thoughts and issues are fresh.