Actively Engaging Employers Boosts Recruitment and Gives Students the Skills That Get Them Hired

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96 percent of college and university chief academic officers said they are extremely or somewhat confident in their institution’s ability to prepare students for success in the workforce.

11 percent of business leaders strongly agree today’s college graduates have the skills and competencies that their business needs.

John M. Eger, “Business and Education Executives Just Don’t See Eye to Eye,” Huffington Post, 04/12/2014; originally presented by John Colburn, Director, Skills for America’s Future, Aspen Institute, 01/20/15
Major Goal for All College Programs

- STUDENTS complete certificates and degrees and are well-qualified for ready employment or transfer
- EMPLOYERS are highly engaged and want to hire students

Implementing the Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT) Model helps to meet both goals, and it’s proven effective.
Origins of the Business and Industry Leadership Team Model

• Hired as Dean at Collin College to grow Information Technology (IT) and Engineering Technology (ET) enrollments just after 9/11 in 2001

• Then, the “Dot Com” BUST caused 70-100K workers to be laid off in these industries in North Texas, similar to the nation

• Enrollment declined and continued to decline precipitously

• Dilemma – how to grow enrollments
Other Contributing Factors

• Collin College had a small NSF project grant and had a good reputation with the NSF program officers

• At least half of the Community and Technical Colleges in the nation were facing similar issues and needed transformative steps

• My previous experience indicated
  – When IT and ET employment goes down, the industries have always come back, but they come back with requirements for different skills
  – In education, we have had to scramble to respond to changing curricular needs
Our Opportunity - NSF Regional Center

• Work with regional business & industry to predict technical skills that would be needed when the downturn reversed and hiring began again

• Work with colleges regionally (and eventually nationally) to address
  – Employer predictions of technical skills required
  – Creation of curriculum to meet those needs
Our Results as an Example

- National CTC BILT now leads almost 70 colleges nationally

- Colleges have their own local or regional BILTs leading their programs

- ALL program work depends on foundational knowledge from the businesses

Note:
- Name for the employer team really should be different from “Advisory” to distinguish that employers co-lead!
BILT Benefits Students

• Sought after by BILT members because of their ownership of courses, certificates, and degrees

• First considered for opportunities (internships) before they graduate- because BILT members engaged with your program

• Mentoring from BILT members

• Participation from BILT members in workshops, capstone classes, job fairs
BILT Benefits Faculty

- Assurance they are teaching what industry wants
- Get assistance from BILT members to be guest speakers and help with recruitment events
- Alerted of future industry workplace trends in time for curriculum adjustment
- Receive free or reduced-cost professional development for faculty from BILT members
- Serve on externships with BILT member companies
BILT Members Benefit

• Strengthen pipeline of “workforce ready” job candidates
• Develop professional relationships with other BILT members
• Give back to the community in a way that makes a real difference
• Know their time and their feedback is valued
Bare-bones, Essential Elements of Business Engagement Without Regard for Exact BILT Process

• Businesses must
  – Co-lead programs
  – **Prioritize Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)** they want graduates to have 12-36 months into the future
  – Predict **labor market demand**
  – Predict **trends**

• Faculty must
  – **Cross reference** KSAs to existing curriculum
  – **Update** curriculum to address KSAs needed by businesses
  – Provide businesses with **feedback** regarding implementation

• Works for any Technical Program at any size college in any location (urban, suburban, rural)

• Has been implemented nationally for all sorts of disciplines
Setup of the BILT

How is your BILT set up and how does it co-lead the work of the program?
Who should be on the BILT?

Types of positions, types of employers?
How Do You Invite Members to Join Your BILT

Printed Letters?

Phone Calls?

Other?

Do you “fire” current members of your BAC?
BILT Meetings

How often does your BILT meet (or plan to meet)?

Face-to-Face or virtual meetings?

What is the purpose of each meeting?
What about the KSA analysis?

How were the original KSAs developed?

How do you as employers use the KSA list?

What does the college do with your KSA work, and how do they report back to you on what they did?
What Do BILT Members Do Outside of Meetings?

Do they help with
- Recruitment of students?
- Speaking in classes, events, or conferences?
- Hire students?
- What else?
Benefits of Having a BILT

What difference does it make?
Questions from the audience?
Resources

• BILT resources from the National Convergence Technology Center
  http://connectedtech.org

• Webinars on employer engagement/related topics - Centers Collaborative for Technical Assistance:
  http://www.atecenters.org/ccta
  – BILT Toolkit – http://advancingcredentials.org/toolkit
  – BILT webinar: bit.ly/BILTBasic
  – Interviews with BILT Members: bit.ly/BILTMembers

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Take a Moment to Consider Your Current Business Advisory Team

• Are your employers
  – Highly-engaged?
  – Co-leading your program?
  – Prioritizing Knowledge, Skills and Abilities they want graduates to have 12-36 months into the future?
  – Predicting Labor Market Demand?
  – Predicting trends?

• Do your faculty
  – Cross reference KSAs to existing curriculum?
  – Update curriculum to address KSAs needed by business?
  – Provide feedback to businesses regarding implementation?

• Can these activities/relationships be improved?