Business Engagement Leads to Workforce Success

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Setting the Context

• Processes developed under the Regional Center for Convergence Technology

• A National Science Foundation Center based in Frisco, TX at Collin College

• Created in 2004 to revitalize IT education in the North Texas region

• Applies to creating/maintaining/reinvigorating any technology program
CTC Partners
Our Goals

• Create convergence degree and certificates driven by business need
• Provide professional development for faculty
• Recruit and retain underserved students
• Disseminate products and services
Business Demand and Engagement

The MOST important element to the future success of our students
The Typical Business Advisory Council

- Meets 1 or 2 times per year, sometimes the only time the reps are on campus
- Mixed level of knowledge in membership
- Advises regarding a program, sometimes just reviewing rather than leading
The Typical Business Advisory Council

• BAC members often find their time split between regional colleges because each college has its own council

• And, sometimes the members on the roster have moved to other cities or are, in fact, deceased!
The Typical Business Advisory Council

Even if the Business Advisory Council appears active, the group can likely be more effective if consciously asked to lead and take responsibility for ensuring students are right-skilled for job needs.
Suggested Framework for BILT

• Regional Council (or even national with regional sub-councils) advising multiple colleges

• Meets quarterly, not 1-2 times per year

• Right people on the council
  • High-level technical executives
  • First line managers
  • Technicians
  • HR representatives as long as they are not the sole reps for a company
More than an Advisory Council

• Businesses LEAD the work and are part of the leadership team

• Appropriate name is

Business & Industry Leadership Team (BILT)
Roles of Engaged BILT

- Identify trends before need for skills to support the trend (allows time to develop curricula)
- Identify Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities needed from graduates through a modified DACUM that takes 4-6 hours initially and 2-3 hours for annual update (faculty determine how to address KSAs)
- Forecast need for future employees
- Participate in recruitment events
- Contribute to professional development for faculty
Roles of Engaged BILT

• Provide internships for students
• Provide externships/job shadowing for faculty
• Act as guest speakers
• Co-author whitepapers
• Evaluate student capstone presentations
• Participate in panels at conferences
Engaged BILT Results in

JOBS for students!!

Graduates have been hired for:

• Applications Integration Specialist
• Helpdesk Support
• IT Support
• Mobile Support
• Network Analyst
• Network Engineer
• Support Engineer
• VoIP Technician/ Specialist
Quite simply ... An Engaged BILT Owns your technical program
If your program already exists but is not owned by the businesses

It’s likely already institutionalized

• Faculty are already educated to teach
• Courses are already scheduled
• Certificate and degree patterns already approved
But, if your business members were really part of a LEADERSHIP team, could your programs be better?
If your program is new, you can start from scratch

Start with the business need

If there is no validated need, then there is no need for your proposed program
Regional Businesses Need to Own the Program

• CTC process for forming and continuing to engage an active Business and Industry Leadership Team (BILT)
• Quarterly BILT meetings
• Trends are the first item of discussion
• All curriculum driven by and approved by the BILT
Building or Reinvigorating an Engaged BILT

• Education is a business, and there are consumers for our product, our graduates.
  • Businesses
  • Industries
  • Governments agencies
  • Non-profits
  • Universities
Target Membership

• Determine which businesses, industries, agencies, non-profits, and universities should be represented by virtue of their knowledge of the industry AND their ability to consume (employ) our students
Target Membership

• Business representation

• Distribution of size and type

• Do not limit to just large companies; medium and small companies provide perspective and are likely to hire as well
Determine Your Expectations

• What do you want to get from the BILT?

• Develop “sales” script for recruitment

• Establish expected time commitment per quarter (typically 2-hr call plus optional other events)
Establish expectations of involvement activities

• Job skills validation – overview the process
• Course and curriculum validation/modification
• Job forecasting- anecdotally and through surveys
• Internships
• Job shadowing/externships (face-to-face and virtual)
• Providing expertise in set-up and operation of labs
Expectations (continued)

• Donating equipment or other resources

• Helping with recruitment

Bob Wright with Mary Patton, the CTC’s first graduate. Mary, a Sr Support Engineer, is now a member of the Case Study Business Panel, critiquing capstone presentations.
Expectations (continued)

- Providing instructors for professional development events
- Providing speakers at student, public and education events
- Teaching Case Study courses
- Consulting with students
Engaged Business Requires High-Touch

• Requires personal contact, not mass mailings or mass emails.

• Target businesses and industries, universities and agencies that hire people with the job descriptions representing your curriculum
Getting the Right People

Contact the President of the company or university

• Share your vision of what the program can mean to the region

• Explain the importance of the company’s having a subject matter expert, usually first-line manager, involved in the BAC (SME required; HR representative optional)
Emphasize Win-Win for the Business

Not just expected to contribute

Opportunities to

• Share trends in a non-proprietary environment

• Build pipeline of “right-skilled” future employees that saves dollars
Characteristics of an Engaged BILT Meeting

- Invite all faculty to attend the meetings as observers to gain their buy-in to what the BILT wants
- Publicity – invite reporters/writers
- Refreshments – not elaborate, but important to have, especially early in the morning
- Time – early morning typically works better, before BILT members go to the office
Other aspects of the BILT meeting

• Explain how important they are to the program and what their companies will get from their involvement

• Clarify roles and responsibilities between BILT and educators (educators are there to listen, not to present or run the show)

• Explain need for quarterly meetings and establish dates for the year
Engaged Business Council Requires High-Touch

• Other aspects of the BILT meeting

• Ask for Trends – what’s “hot”, where hiring is expected, etc.

• Review opportunities for helping from your “sales script”

• Stick to the agenda and keep discussion rolling, limiting those who might want to dominate
Other aspects of the BILT meeting

• Acknowledge the importance of their time by starting and stopping on time regardless of whether or not your agenda is finished.

• End early if you have what you need. You can always complete your work on email.

• Take minutes; publish them; have next BILT approve them.
BILT recognition

• News releases/articles
• Photos and bios on your web site
• Thank your emails (personal, not mass emails)
• Thank you letters to the President and their bosses
• Certificates & Plaques
Keeping the BILT fresh

• Aim to have at least one new member each quarter and introduce them

• Talk with each member individually at least yearly to ask them what they think you could do differently to obtain more from them or the entire BILT
Benefits from following this approach

• Business ownership of your curriculum and your program in general

• High interest in hiring your students above other applicants because they know what your students know

• Faculty recognize and understand business requirements first-hand
BILT Curriculum Process Overview

- CTC uses a modified DACUM process
- Begins with a proforma list of potential skills that faculty and staff believe are appropriate
- Gives business the opportunity to add, subtract, and modify skills in a 4-6 hour period initially (2-3 hours annually thereafter)
- Helps to give ownership of the program to regional business
- Updated yearly for emerging technologies
BILT Provides Labor Market Demand

• BILT and other businesses are surveyed every 2 years to determine demand for determining demand for graduates with the new skills

• Partner with regional non-profit, Interlink, that works with businesses and educational entities in the region
Faculty Use KSAs Determined by Business

- Matrix of skills down the left side and courses across the top
- Faculty SME’s determine which courses cover each skill and depth of coverage
- Rows without entries indicate gaps
- Gaps may be addressed by modules added to existing courses or entirely new courses (generally already developed by CTC and available to mentored colleges)
Degrees and/or Certificates Formed

• Degrees and certificates vary by college and state
• Must address all the skills identified by the Business & Industry Leadership Team
• Reviewed and approved by the BILT
BILT Supports Professional Development

- Businesses often provide tracks for week-long professional development through CTC

- Example: Working Connections Institute each summer
  - July 12-16, 2011, Frisco TX
  - Travel stipends
  - Tracks included: Programming Mobile Devices, EMC Information and Storage Management, Citrix Certification, Vsphere (VmWare track), Creating Effective Online Technical Education, Ethical Hacking
BILT Members Help with Student Recruitment

• Requires gentle pressure, relentlessly applied, especially if new program is arising from a discipline that has been depressed (such as IT in the early 2000s)

• Having businesses present and presenting strengthens the “ask”
19 Mentored Colleges

- Orange Coast College
- Santa Ana College
- Guilford Technical College
- City College of San Francisco
- Ohlone College
- Fox Valley Technical College
- Clark State Comm. College
- Lansing Community College
- Tarrant County College
- Northwest Vista College
- Porterville College
- Louisiana Technical College
- San Jacinto College
- Diablo Valley Community College
- John A. Logan College
- Florida State College, Jacksonville
- Seminole State College
- Anne Arundel College
- Wiregrass Georgia Technical College
What the CTC provides

- Job Skill List that has been regionally validated
- Process and help for validating skills in mentored college region
- Degree and Certificate Patterns
- Curriculum in a box for new courses
- Detailed syllabi with learning outcomes
- Learning/Lab Activities
- Assessments
- Case Studies
What the CTC provides

- A lead faculty member to assist
- PI or grant staff as an administrative contact
- Training for faculty through summer institute
- Equipment list (some virtual lab access)
- Recruitment plans and event details
Mentored College Commitments

- Equipment and support for a lab
- Lead faculty member
- Other faculty interested in being trained and in implementing the program
- Faculty and administrative time available to work with mentor college representatives
- Active and involved Business and Industry Leadership Team
Mentored College Commitments

- Validate job skills with Business & Industry Leadership Team
- Develop and implement a degree and/or certificate plan based on validated skills
- Develop and implement a student recruitment plan
- Provide brief, quarterly reporting to mentor college
The future...looks Mobile, Green, and in the Cloud

Applications available by:

• Visiting us at the NSF Booth #102 in the Exhibit Hall

• Visiting the CTC Booth in the Innovations Pavilion

• Giving us your card
For more information:

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Join the CTC email list:

Click on the “Sign up for our Email Newsletter” link at www.greenitcenter.org

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