



COLORADO COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SYSTEM

Colorado Community College System

Lessons Learned: Business & Industry Partnerships

August 2010

Part II of II

The Waterfall/Attribute Tree Framework was developed in consultation with Customer Value Management, Inc, a consulting firm with many years of experience using data to improve results for businesses and educational institutions.

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Background

"Colorado's success in a competitive global market is based on the state's ability to meet the needs of employers with well-educated and trained employees. Investing time and resources into developing a highly skilled workforce will give Colorado an edge when attracting businesses, and growing and sustaining existing businesses already located in our state."

-Governor Ritter, August, 2009

In 2008, Governor Ritter convened the Jobs Cabinet, which worked over a period of 16 months to evaluate the climate for supporting jobs growth in Colorado. The Jobs Cabinet concluded that to improve workforce quality and better meet the needs of businesses currently and into the future, Colorado needs a proactive strategy that includes, "a combination of existing workforce investment boards (WIBs), a more focused outreach to business, enhanced electronic systems and continued emphasis on Colorado's P-20 educational system, especially our community colleges." A recommendation of the Jobs Cabinet report was for the State Board for Colorado Community Colleges and Occupational Education to review and evaluate the continued collaborative relationships between community colleges and industry to ensure a prepared high-skilled, high-demand Colorado workforce with an emphasis on:

- Continuing to identify promising practices in creating, developing and administering programs directed to businesses short-term training needs;
- Continuing to identify training delivery methods to better meet the needs of businesses and workers.

This project, Lessons Learned: Business & Industry Partnerships, was to conduct a series of focus groups to determine how well partnerships are working between local business and industry and the colleges. Specifically, the project was to explore areas such as:

- Partnerships developed with the colleges
- Components of the partnerships that worked well
- Roadblocks to successful fruition of the partnerships
- Benefits of the partnerships for college, business/industry and community.
- Strategies for continuing additional partnerships.

A series of seven focus groups was conducted during the Winter of 2009-2010 and a report on findings from those focus groups was presented to the State Board of Community Colleges and

Occupational Education (SBCCOE) in April of 2010. The report highlighted the benefits of partnership with community colleges for business and industry in Colorado as well as some best practices and shortcomings of existing partnerships. The report also presented recommendations for changes that might increase the quality of such relationships in the future.

This summer, an additional seven focus groups were conducted at the remaining colleges so that a focus group has been completed at each of Colorado's 13 community colleges (there were separate focus groups conducted on two campuses of one college). This report serves to communicate the findings of the additional seven focus groups and to build upon the recommendations presented in the previous report.

Focus Group Methodology

Several different methodologies were considered when the study was originally designed in 2009. Focus groups were selected because they produce high quality data from qualitative interviews with a small number of carefully selected participants. In the absence of an existing comprehensive understanding of how partnerships with business and industry function across the Community College system, vivid and rich descriptions were needed to build a foundational concept of the status quo. Qualitative data from focus groups had the ability to present such descriptions.

Project Elements

The Lessons Learned: Business & Industry Partnerships project had the following elements:

- **Focus Groups.** Focus groups were conducted at a select sample of community colleges in the state including both rural and urban schools. Using a random generation program, CCCS determined the participating colleges for the first iteration of focus groups last winter, and the remaining 6 colleges participated in the current iteration this August. Group members were recruited randomly or intentionally by the individual college.

Focus groups were held on the college campus or other off-site location selected and sponsored by the college. Groups were conducted with one facilitator and one videographer (facilitator asked the questions and managed the group while the videographer recorded the actual conversations.)

- **Debrief Session.** A debrief and feedback session with college representatives was held after focus groups, as appropriate.
- **College Survey.** A survey on Business & Industry Partnerships was distributed to each participating community college. Responses from the limited returned surveys informed the findings of the focus groups.
- **Final Report.** This final report on the project was prepared and submitted to the State Board for Colorado Community Colleges and Occupational Education.

Calendar of Focus Groups

Focus groups for this iteration were conducted during August 2010 with seven focus groups being completed. These data complimented data collected from the seven focus groups held in the first iteration, which took place from November 2009 through January 2010. In all, 14 focus groups were completed, representing one at each community college with two separate focus groups held at Front Range Community College's Westminster and Larimer campuses. The following schedule represents details of the focus groups held in this iteration (details of focus groups from the previous iteration are available in the April, 2010 report).

Northeastern Junior College (NJC)*	Monday, August 2, 2010	13 Participants

Community College of Denver (CCD)	Thursday, August 5, 2010	3 Participants

Arapahoe Community College (ACC)	Friday, August 13, 2010	12 Participants

Front Range Community College – Westminster Campus (FRCC-W)	Thursday, August 19, 2010	13 Participants

Front Range Community College – Larimer Campus (FRCC-L)*	Thursday, August 19, 2010	15 Participants

Otero Junior College (OJC)*	Monday, August 23, 2010	13 Participants

Community College of Aurors (CCA)	Tuesday, August 24, 2010	5 Participants

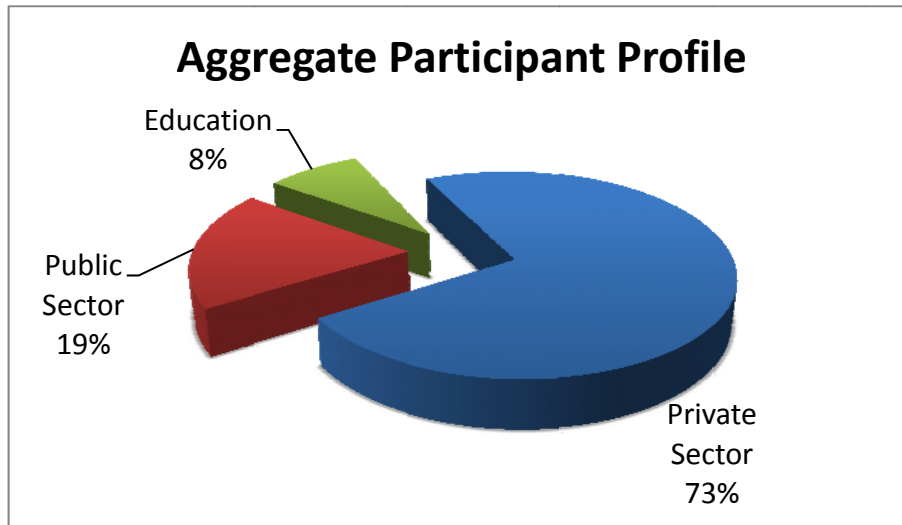
*Post-focus group debrief sessions were held at these colleges with presidential staff.

Focus Group Participant Profile

The seven focus groups had a total of 74 participants, ranging in group size from the smallest at three to the largest with 15 participants. The participants from all 14 focus groups were categorized into three broad areas.

- **Private Sector.** These were focus group participants that owned or were employed by a private concern. They varied from agricultural concerns to service organizations to large manufacturing companies.
- **Public Sector.** These were focus group participants that were associated with a non-profit organization such as SCORE, a chamber of commerce or economic development agency. They could also be an employee of a local jurisdiction's planning department or workforce center.
- **Education Sector.** These were focus group participants who were in the educational arena. They included superintendents of school districts, as well as community college presidents, administrators, and faculty.

The three sectors provide a balanced, comprehensive perspective on the roles, responsibilities and effectiveness of community colleges in community development, workforce education, economic development and business & industry training. Appendix A is a complete listing, by community college, of the focus group participants and their organizational affiliation. The following pie chart is a depiction of the percentage breakdown of the three sectors. 73% were from the private sector; 19% represented the public sector and 8% comprised the education sector.



The following table is a breakdown of the focus groups at each community college according to their sector affiliation. The private sector represented from 38% to 100% of individual focus groups; the public sector ranged from 0% to 33% of the groups; and education counted for as much as 31%, with four groups having 0%.

	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Public Sector</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Total</u>
NJC	5 38%	4 31%	4 31%	13
CCD	2 67%	1 33%	0 0%	3
ACC	9 75%	2 17%	1 8%	12
FRCC-W	11 85%	2 15%	0 0%	13
FRCC-L	9 60%	5 33%	1 7%	15
OJC	13 100%	0 0%	0 0%	13
CCA	5 100%	0 0%	0 0%	5
Totals	54 73%	14 19%	6 8%	74

Focus Group Findings

The protocol developed for use in conducting the focus groups in 2009/2010 was slightly modified and used to conduct the second round of focus groups (see Appendix B: Focus Group Procedure and Script). This protocol acted as general guidelines for the conduct of the group discussions. A preliminary analysis of the focus groups suggested that the participant comments from the second round of focus groups could be grouped into three general categories (NOTE: In addition to the focus group comments, responses from the college survey were included as appropriate, See Appendix C: Community College Survey.) Three categories of focus group comments are:

- **Attributes of Business and Industry Partnership.** These comments addressed the nature of the relationships that currently exist between community colleges and businesses in the communities they serve. They included descriptions of the nature of the relationships, including how they originated and have developed over time, as well as the benefits that the relationships furnish for the partnering businesses. This report segment also includes a two-part framework that was developed using the focus group responses to describe the important attributes existing relationships and the alternative sources that are available to meet business's needs.
- **Issues and Concerns.** These comments presented particular challenges facing the current business and industry relationships and shortcomings of the colleges' ability to provide valuable resources for community businesses. They served as a primary factor in developing the recommendations produced by this report.
- **Best Practices.** These comments represent particular programs, procedures, and practices that focus group participants observed as outstanding examples of colleges' success in building strong partnerships with business and industry.

Across all three categories of participant responses, there emerged a broad trend of significant differences in the perceived role of community colleges. There is an uneven distribution in the level of community involvement and recognition perceived at various colleges. Participant

responses at focus groups held at particular colleges suggest that they play an integral role in community development and are well recognized as staples of the social and economic strength of their communities. Responses from focus groups conducted at other colleges indicate that they are not well known or are unknown to community members and industry leaders, as are the services they have to offer local employers. Focus group data suggest that each college belongs either to one or the other category in this respect, and that no colleges are *sort of* well known and respected as active community participants. The following pages will more specifically describe the responses of focus group participants within each category.

Attributes of Business and Industry Partnerships

The focus group attendees focused clearly on the partnerships that exist between business and industry in the communities served by each community college. While the focus group participants expressed concern with a number of shortcomings in the ability to locate and engage in partnerships with the colleges, there was wide consensus that the colleges offer resources of exceptional quality and value to meet the training needs of businesses across Colorado. When engaged with employers in their community, the colleges provide educational resources that allow current and future workers to obtain the training they need to meet the demands of business in their field. This is especially the case for highly specialized professions, such as nursing and welding, which require a particularly high level of faculty expertise and attention.

An important finding of the focus group data analysis is that, while training resources may often be scarce for particular industries, there are alternatives to community colleges and businesses often do choose other providers to meet their training, retraining, and workforce development needs. Such alternatives include private educational institutions (including online learning offered by private institutions), 4-year colleges in Colorado, and on-the-job/in-house training. Equally clear, however, is that community colleges have a unique ability to offer superior value to employers on multiple fronts, including quality, accessibility, flexibility, approachability, and affordability. Considering that employers face a choice in selecting a provider of training resources, Colorado's community colleges must understand and advertise these strengths in order to build and maintain fruitful partnerships with business and industry in their

communities. Below are more specific descriptions of the focus group findings with respect to each strongpoint of the current business and industry partnerships.

Quality. Every single focus group comment related to the quality of training and faculty at the community colleges was positive and praising. Emphasis was placed on the special characteristics of community college faculty members, who participants described as being close with their field and understanding the practical realities of the industry. The focus group comments expressed experiences with community college faculty that reflected a genuine and palpable passion for their particular field, which participating employers noted is transferred to students (employees) in the form of clear understanding of required knowledge and a strong work ethic upon completion of training programs. As one focus group participant described, “[Graduates of 4-year institutions] come in on day one wanting to own the business but they don’t even know how to start the mower. At this point, there are too many owners. We need people who can carry out the duties of the job and [this community college] is carrying out that need much more than anyone else.” In addition to their passion and level of involvement, faculty were described as being adaptive to the changing needs of industries and the colleges were seen as providing a highly customizable training curriculum for current and future members of the workforce.

Accessibility & Flexibility. Focus group participants consistently communicated the value of the community colleges’ proximity to workers, effective scheduling, and overall flexibility. The basic reality that community colleges are rooted within the communities they serve is a critical characteristic with respect to providing workforce resources to business and industry. Students generally do not have to travel long distances, or spend long periods of time away from home and work, to gain the training that they and their employers require. In addition, the use of college space for business and community functions makes the college a highly accessible resource for development of business and industry. Additionally, many college resources can be delivered on-site at a community business, effectively reducing travel time and cost to zero. Multiple focus group participants emphasized the value of such an option where it is available for the particular field in which training is needed. None of the alternative resources cited by focus group participants have the ability to meet training needs with such little, or zero, cost in travel and personnel.

In addition to the proximity of community college campuses, focus group discussions revealed that their particular scheduling capabilities offer a highly valuable level of flexibility for businesses and workers. Colleges' offerings of training during non-traditional hours or specific hours requested by a particular employer allow workforce members to continue regular production with their employer and/or meet other personal obligations that are frequently of concern to those in partnership with the community colleges.

Approachability. A consistent trend among focus group participants who had the strongest relationships with the community college is the presence of a particular liaison at the college who is reachable, friendly, and effective at meeting their needs. Often, the role of liaison to the industry is outside of the regular duties of the individual described by focus group participants. They included part-time faculty members, executive leadership, and professional staff. The value of having a single contact person to those who discussed them is extremely large and many participants credited the same person in such a role with the origination, formal development, and long-term growth of the partnership. An additional finding in this area is that, even for those participants that did not discuss a particular contact person, the community college personnel were consistently described as approachable, friendly, and receptive. None of the participants described a single encounter with the community colleges that was unresponsive or expressed disinterest with a business and industry partnership. That is not to say, however, that all colleges were seen as a widely known resource or that contact information for employers interested in new partnerships was seen as easily available. The *Issues and Concerns* findings will describe this shortcoming in greater detail.

Affordability. Across focus group discussions, the community colleges were consistently described as offering a greater degree of affordability than most or all other training resources. This description generally held true even when compared to in-house, employer-conducted training, an option that often requires a large commitment of time from one or more experienced employees and which might require the business to solely bear the financial burden of expensive equipment and supplies needed for training. Community colleges were described as highly affordable, in both relative and absolute terms, with respect to the quality of training they provide.

Framework for the Anatomy of Partnership with Business and Industry

The focus group findings rendered important descriptions both of the ways in which business and industry agents interact with the community colleges and of the factors that influence a business's decision and ability to maintain such a partnership. In order to allow for clear evaluation of strengths, shortcomings, and opportunities for the greatest improvement, these findings have been organized into two separate frameworks for understanding the existing partnerships with business and industry. This section will outline the frameworks as they are populated with findings from the focus group data.

The B & I Partnership Waterfall (shown on page 15) illustrates each of the interactions that focus group participants described as consistent elements of the partnership with the community college. Beginning with discovery of the college and/or program and progressing through the development of the relationship, this framework illustrates each of the points at which the college might excel or find opportunity for improvement in their ability to offer and communicate valuable partnership opportunities. The waterfall also identifies critical elements, or descriptors, of each point of interaction in the partnership. The waterfall, created using the focus group data, includes eight points of contact and an additional overarching point of contact that may arise at any point during the course of the relationship. The major points of contact are as follow:

1. Program/College Discovery
2. Course Choice or Curriculum Design
3. Funding
4. Enrollment
5. Payment of Tuition and Fees
6. Course Attendance
7. Training Outcome
8. Scheduling Future Courses/Training

And the overarching contact point,

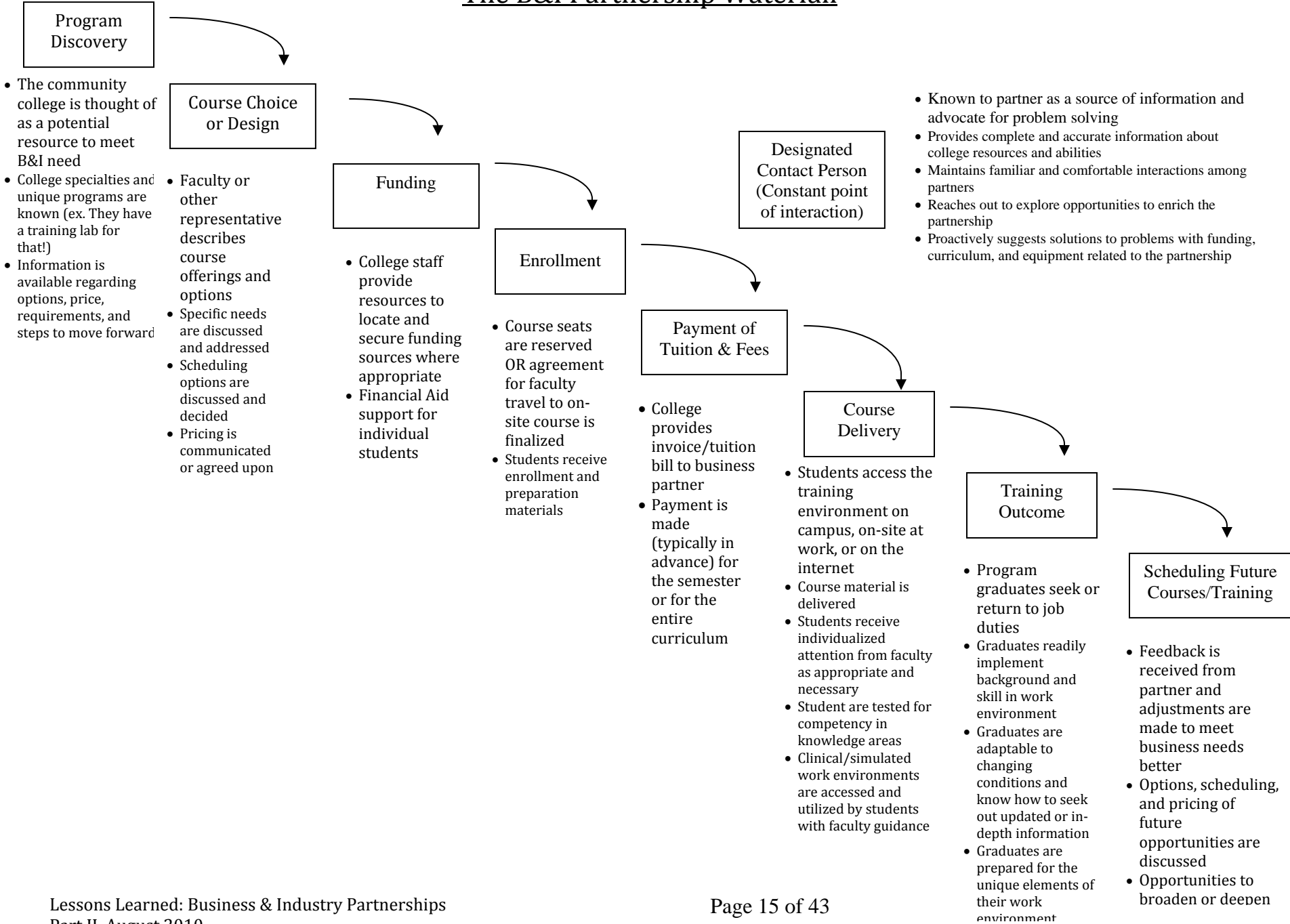
- Designated Contact Person

This waterfall was constructed strictly using commentary collected during focus group meetings and represents as completely as possible the major steps of a college partnership that the focus group participants perceive. College administrators and faculty might add or change steps

according to their own knowledge and experience; however, the representation of elements on this waterfall depict how the relationship is perceived by the participants who primarily represent private business and industry.

Evaluation of the partnerships within the framework of the B&I Partnership Waterfall provides an organized understanding of the ways in which colleges are succeeding with development of business and industry partnerships as well as which areas have the most room for improvement. This progression should be kept in hand when evaluating the Issues, Concerns, and Best Practices described by the focus group findings. Broadly, the data suggest that colleges are performing exceptionally well with respect to the fourth and the final three steps of the waterfall, and that there is most opportunity for improvement with respect to the first three steps of the waterfall. An important realization is that, without successfully completing the first steps on the waterfall, partnerships will never have the opportunity for success in the final stages – this is a critical element of the challenges facing community college partnerships with business and industry.

The B&I Partnership Waterfall



The Partnership Attribute Tree describes the factors, from the perspective of community business and industry agents, which make-up the value of partnership with the community college. The attributes have been derived from the qualitative data collected during the focus groups, according to the description that participants gave of the factors that influence their decision-making. A quantitative analysis of the data was also completed which allows the attributes to be described in terms of their importance relative to each other. Understanding the inputs to business and industry participant decisions will allow a more complete perception of what drives successful partnerships in this area as well as which particular attributes will likely produce the greatest impact when improvement efforts are made.

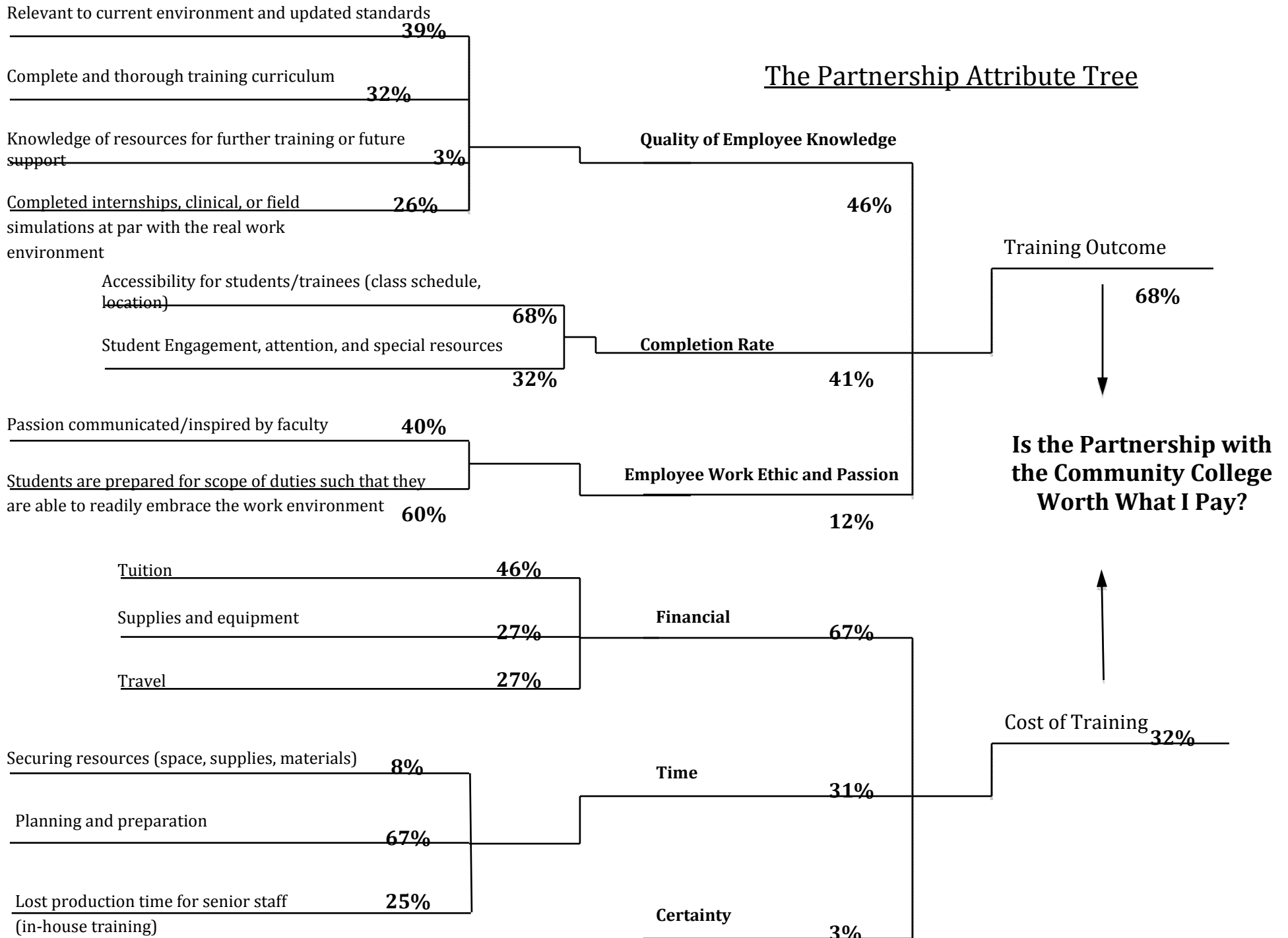
Analysis of the focus group comment data revealed that there are many more inputs to the value of business and industry partnerships than simply “cost” and “quality.” The Partnership Attribute Tree illustrates three elements of training quality and three elements of cost that were described by focus group participants. Additionally, there are sub-attributes that form the basis of each of these six elements. In all, there are 14 third-level attributes contributing to the six second-level attributes that define cost and quality. Ultimately, each of these factors plays a significant role when business and industry decision-makers evaluate the question, “Is this partnership valuable for our organization?” Or, in other words, “Is this partnership worth what we pay?” Understanding the inputs to decision-making for business and industry will allow colleges to better meet their needs in a way that offers higher quality than any alternative for training or re-training the workforce.

The attribute tree was developed strictly by identifying commentary specific to each attribute or sub-attribute in the focus group data. In addition to this qualitative analysis of focus group commentary, a brief quantitative review of the comments was performed to better understand the most talked about elements attributes. By capturing and categorizing each comment related to value of the partnership, weights have been assigned to all attributes on the tree. The analyst has tallied the total number of comments that focuses on each attribute and has expressed it as a percentage of the total comments for that part of the tree. For example, when considering the inputs to financial cost, there might have been six comments made about tuition, two about supplies and equipment, and two about travel, making a total of 10 comments about financial

cost altogether. This means that, of the commentary related to financial cost, 60% would be related to tuition, 20% to supplies, and 20% to travel. Similarly, comments about financial cost might have composed just 45% of the total commentary about cost (these figures are for illustrations of the framework only – actual relative weights are shown on the Partnership Attribute Tree on the following page).

This type of analysis allows an understanding of which attributes of value are the “biggest” issues. The “big issues” are likely most talked about because they are either very important or because they are very problematic. Because focus group research does not allow a high level of environmental control, there is no way to tell whether any “big issue” is showing a large percentage because it is very important, very problematic, or both important and problematic. In order to accurately obtain such information, more targeted surveying would be required. This report will discuss such surveying in the recommendations section.

The Partnership Attribute Tree



Issues and Concerns

In addition to the many strengths of Colorado's community colleges with respect to building partnerships with business and industry, analysis of the focus group data also revealed a series of trends in concerns raised during focus group discussions. Sorting these comments revealed four major categories that pose challenges and opportunities for improvement: Community Presence, Program Consistency, Funding, and Response to Demand. Focus group participants certainly expressed concerns in addition to these four areas, especially with respect to unique challenges facing each individual college. However, the comments in the four areas highlighted in this report represent issues and concerns that are visible in commentary across many or all of the focus groups.

Community Presence. Across focus groups at many colleges, participants expressed concerns about low visibility of the community colleges within the business and industry communities they serve. It warrants emphasis that this category was not uniformly vocalized across all focus groups, but rather that the data show strong inconsistencies among the community colleges across the State in their visibility to employers and members of the community workforce. This low visibility was expressed in terms of various instances of perceived disconnect between the college and the community workforce decision-makers. The most consistent incidences are described here.

One way in which participants expressed concern with community presence is in the overall reputation of colleges as community members that are both available to provide training services and able to maintain strong, individualized relationships with employers and other workforce-related organizations. When asked how their partnership with the community college began, a majority of participants in multiple groups described a sense of surprise upon originally finding out that the college was able to build such partnerships. The idea of a partnership to meet their business needs was generally by a particular individual or coincidence in these cases, and participants did not have any prior knowledge of the college's resource. One particular comment made during a focus group illustrates this shortcoming: "If you asked me what [this community college] is renowned for, I could not answer. What are they hiding? What is their identity? I can pick out [other nearby institutions] but not this college."

Another expression of the poor presence of some colleges within business and industry was a lack of easily accessible information from an obvious source. A broad trend in comments suggests that decision-makers within business and industry cannot access information regarding training partnerships on college websites or by contacting an obvious college representative. In many cases, business professionals considering a partnership with the college would resort to contacting the college via advising centers or correspondence directly to the college president, a type of communication that some business leaders may not consider when attempting to begin a partnership.

A final trend across select colleges where focus groups expressed low community presence was that executive-level college staff – presidents, vice presidents, and deans – are not visible in the surrounding communities. In all focus groups where this observation was widely expressed, less than 10% of the participants were able to name the college president. In three focus groups, fewer than two participants knew the college president's name. This contrasted with comments in other focus groups that expressed consistent contact with college leadership at community events, such as Chamber of Commerce meetings, workforce conferences and events, and other economic development activities. Participants in these focus groups discussed the high level of college community presence that was perceived to largely result from the visibility of college leadership within the community. In fact, many of the participants in these focus groups described their partnership as originating through an unplanned conversation with a college leader and still others expressed that there was no single point when they learned about potential partnership with the college but rather that it was a point of common knowledge among community businesses. In focus groups characterized by this tone, greater than 75% of participants could name the college president when asked. In three focus groups, all members said they knew the college president by name.

Participant comments illustrated the importance of low community visibility by describing that many employers use on-site training or seminars in situations when they might prefer to send employees to training at the college or to have a college faculty member conduct on-site training, but they are unable to do so because there is no easily accessible information about such services. Indeed, as the B & I Partnership Waterfall illustrates, discovery of college resources for training is the earliest element of each partnership with business and industry.

While that point may seem obvious to any observer, it is critical to emphasize this implication, as failure to become and remain very well known to business decision-makers nullifies all other steps in the waterfall and renders the development of any further strengths useless for the creation of new partnerships.

Program Consistency. The issue of inconsistent program and course offerings was less widespread across the focus groups as a whole than the issue of community presence. However, focus group participants that expressed this concern consistently emphasized the large impact that it has on their ability to maintain partnerships with the college. In a particular instance where the issue ultimately led to the termination of a partnership with the college, the idea was expressed by a focus group participant who was familiar with the college program through duties in a separate community role. There were two types of inconsistency, and multiple factors that were perceived as leading to each of them.

The first type of inconsistency is in the particular programs and trainings that are available from a college. Focus group participants impacted by this issue expressed having successful partnerships with the community college that needed significant adjustment, or were terminated, because the ability of the college to meet their training needs changed from one semester to the next. Business leaders were pleased with the outcome of a training program for their employees but were informed that the particular course had been eliminated when trying to schedule again for new employees. Another employer partnered with the college to secure highly specialized training for a class of new employees but soon found out that the program had been cancelled due to low enrollment and the costly training equipment sold or stored. Later, this participant was informed that the program had once again been implemented and shortly after was told the program was cancelled a second time for the same reason, low enrollment. This participant expressed that their business was unable to cope with the uncertainty of whether there would be training resources available for new employees and began seeking other partnerships to meet the training need.

Among focus group participants that were familiar with the colleges and programs described by these experiences, concern was expressed that such uncertainty may arise from competition among colleges to offer the same curriculum in Colorado when the total level of demand is only

sufficient to support a single program. In other words, the college discussed in the previous example had begun to offer a program already in effect at a separate community college. When the local community was unable to support the enrollment needed to fund the program, it was closed to new students. Upon observing a re-emerging local demand, the program was restarted but was soon cancelled again upon realization that the enrollment would not support the program's costs. If this dynamic exists across current and future programs within the Community College System, program inconsistency will remain a detriment to the reputation of colleges and the longevity of their relationships with business and industry.

The second type of inconsistency raised during multiple focus groups is that of changing or overall diminished quality as a result of cross-college competition in the same area. Especially in fields for which training equipment is very expensive and instructor involvement must be high, it appears difficult for colleges to maintain consistently high quality programs in the face of low or changing demand. When one college, which is well developed in offering such a curriculum, is able to deliver training remotely either through distance learning or transporting faculty and equipment offsite, it may often make much more sense for a single college to maintain the program than for two colleges to each invest in the development and maintenance of similar programs. A few focus group participants expressed the concern that multiple colleges are offering programs for their industry when there is really only the level of training demand to support a single program. They anticipated both cost-saving and quality improvement if a single college would specialize in training for their field.

As stated earlier, the data analysis showed program consistency as an issue raised less commonly than other concerns during the focus groups, but which carried a very high impact in cases where there was a clear shortcoming. As illustrated by the Partnership Attribute Tree, consistency is a factor into the cost of partnership from the perspective of business and industry. An inability to rely on the college to meet needs as they arise is seen as a high cost for the business, causing it to change production and hiring plans, or to avoid some opportunities altogether when it is unclear whether the necessary training will allow them to meet new obligations.

Funding. The third major concern raised consistently across multiple focus groups is that of the funding available to assist with expensive employee training, and of coping with rules for managing funds that might be used to offset training costs. Some participants described having successful partnerships with community colleges in the past that were made possible by grant funding, scholarship assistance, training subsidies, or other funding resources. When the funding expired or was exhausted, the partnership ended as a result. Some focus group participants familiar with the colleges expressed the likelihood that there were other funding sources, such as new grants or public subsidies, available but that were not pursued upon exhaustion of the initial funding source. Business leaders described that the complexity and workload associated with pursuing many funding sources, especially grants requiring extensive application paperwork, was too great for the business to realistically obtain funding. Multiple focus group participants remarked that community colleges, who often have greater experience and resources for grant writing, might be able to provide better assistance to business and industry to procure funding that might allow further development of partnerships.

A second source of concern with respect to funding partnerships is that businesses' existing mechanisms for making payment for employee training and re-training are often not compatible with the community colleges' required payment schedule. That is, businesses often cannot easily execute the traditional practice of paying for training on a per-credit-hour-basis and at the start of each semester. Rather, businesses might need to pay for an entire curriculum in full, prior to the start of the first course, in order to meet a cash flow or budget requirement. Focus group participants who also have current or previous relationships with workforce centers to help future workers fund training described a similar practice at workforce centers, which typically require that trainees make full payment for the curriculum at the beginning of training and do not make additional payments for credit hours or fees after that time. The community college method of billing for services is not compatible with the needs of local business and industry in these cases and there is no mechanism in place for dealing with this shortfall. The response of focus group participants when asked the result of this shortfall was clear and consistent: they find a partner who can accept payment in a way that works for them, and it is not the community college in their area.

Response to Demand. A final major area of concern that was produced by the focus group data is the colleges' ability to respond to changes in training demand very quickly, and to offer training on a schedule that meets businesses' needs. To be clear, this shortcoming was not widely seen as a factor that characterized relationships or that was a roadblock to relationships altogether (on the contrary, many participants explained that they chose to partner with the community college because of its flexibility to meet their needs and schedule). Rather, the colleges' inability to quickly respond to dramatic demand was seen as a significant hindrance to the size and strength of particular relationships. Many programs are seen as doing a great job meeting employers' demands for quality, price, and consistency but are simply not able to meet the overall demand for the volume of training and the time required to complete training. As one focus group participant described, "We need people trained yesterday. We don't have the ability to wait full semesters for new employees to be trained, nor do we have the time and resources to administer on-the-job training." For many industries that are currently overwhelmed with need for new professionals, there simply cannot be enough classrooms or a fast enough curriculum to fully meet their needs. However, there is opportunity in such fields to develop the existing partnerships in terms of size, customization, and ultimately longevity and scope. Focus group participants who described the college as having exceeded their expectation for meeting special needs and adding additional open seats expressed higher levels of willingness to pursue relationships to meet new needs and appeared more likely to maintain the partnership in the face of other shortcomings.

The problem of dramatically increased demand is difficult to approach because of the limitations on use of certain resources such as staff and space. Additionally, the issue has grown very much since the onset of the current economic slowdown, which has caused a change in staffing needs across many professions and has also catalyzed many workers' decisions to return to school for re-training in new fields. Despite the difficulty of addressing this concern, and the risk of over-commitment to fields that may see an equally decreased demand in future years, this issue is seen as critical by business and industry participants and as a great opportunity by participants familiar with the colleges.

A final aspect of concern that was expressed with respect to meeting industry demand is that of the traditional semester-based course schedule. While the focus group data clearly show that community colleges have established a reputation as *the* resource for training at non-traditional hours, they also suggest an opportunity for improvement by considering the impact of semester-based scheduling on such partnerships. Many participants described difficulty coping with the 15-week semester schedule because it simply presents too long of a waiting period for employees to become available for certain job duties. Additionally, it limits employers' ability to hire new staff at any time in response to changing business needs. If employees must complete a traditional course prior to starting work or changing duties, they must do so in May, August, or December according to this schedule because those are the times when community college courses will end. Focus group discussions revealed that this structure is sometimes difficult for employers to cope with and it places community colleges at a disadvantage when local business and industry agents consider new partnerships for workforce development and re-training.

Best Practices

Throughout the focus groups, participants were asked to describe elements of partnerships with business and industry that worked especially well. From these comments emerged particular structures and procedures in place at individual colleges that have greatly enhanced their ability to begin and build relationships. These “best practices” provide excellent examples of strategies that might be replicated or imitated by other colleges, especially because the fact that they are currently in use by at least one institution means that they are practical and sustainable practices for a community college. The following four practices emerged as particularly well-developed and effective tools that might be implemented on a system-level basis.

Designated Liaison. The practice of designating a single liaison to act as coordinator for partnerships with business and industry was described in multiple focus groups from the first iteration last winter, but was discussed in only one focus group from the current iteration. Discussion revealed that the presence of a person who is responsible for this role, either as the full scope of their duties or in combination with other job responsibilities, greatly enhances perception of the college’s presence and accessibility for business and industry. In the instance discussed during the focus group this iteration, the college’s contact representative acted as liaison to business and industry as a part of her overall job duties of community outreach and representation. The person represented the college in attendance at Chamber of Commerce meetings, Career and Hiring Fairs, and other economic development events in the community. Multiple participants cited interactions with this person as the catalyst for their current partnerships with the college and emphasized the role that she played in helping them explore and ultimately develop the best means of partnership to meet their needs. Members of this focus group expressed little concern about the college’s low presence in the community, as was expressed as a large concern in other focus groups.

Community Destination. Participants of multiple focus groups discussed the value of their college’s effort to provide resources to the community, even outside of business and industry concerns. As one participant described the practice, “Before they begin seeking training for themselves or their employees, the college should be a regular destination for individuals in the community.” Elaboration on this point revealed that community members who have spent time in and around the college at non-business-related activities, such as health fairs or community

banquets, begin to perceive the college as valuable resource. They might also become naturally familiar with a limited number of its resources for business and industry simply by the time spent in and around the campus. Participants concurred that decision-makers in business and industry, who are themselves regular members of the same community, are extraordinarily more likely to consider partnerships with the college when they have already had personal experiences outside of their role in business. Additionally, participants explained that young people who will eventually require preparation for job duties, as well as adults who may seek re-training in new fields, are much more likely to choose the community college as a training resource if they have had personal experience on the campus in the past. Attracting and retaining students, even independent of an established business partnership, allows the college to better meet the needs of local businesses by providing highly qualified workers and encourages the development of more complex relationships over time.

Grant Writing Partnerships. Discussed in a small number of focus groups, the active engagement of business and industry through partnerships for grant writing has allowed community employers to continue partnerships with the colleges while also bolstering the college's reputation as an available and capable resource for local business. In the instances discussed during focus groups, participants described the college's use of resident grant writing experts (either full-time grant writers for the college or those who contribute to grant writing in addition to other responsibilities) to partner with businesses who were interested in seeking funding through grants. The college experts, who were familiar with the process and requirements of grant writing, assisted the business in planning for the application and collection of materials. The college experts primarily completed the actual grant writing and business representatives partnered by offering expertise and guidance to document the need and planned use of funds. The partnerships allowed businesses to obtain funding that would have otherwise been beyond their means to seek, and which could then be used as a contribution to the cost of training or re-training employees in partnership with the college.

Student Showcasing. A particularly unique practice was highlighted by members of one focus group as extremely valuable for both businesses and student at the community college. Participants described an annual event in which the college presents a showcase of graduates from a particular program by producing a Power Point presentation that describes each

graduate's credentials and unique characteristics. This presentation is given to local businesses with an interest in hiring trained program graduates and it helps them match the needs of open positions to the particular attributes of the program graduates. For graduates, it provides them with employers who are already convinced that they are qualified job candidates, and who believe that they will make a good fit for open positions. Participants who discussed this practice emphasized its effectiveness in placing students into the workforce, assisting local business and industry to meet staffing needs, and firmly establishing the college as a premier resource of businesses in the community.

Involvement of the President. A final best practice that was expressed unevenly across focus groups is that of a high level of involvement of the college president in community economic development activities. As previously described, the focus group data indicate two distinct categories of perceived college presence in the community: those that are and those that are not. Participant responses within focus groups were consistent in showing that colleges either have an obvious reputation as a community and business resource or they are very hidden from the eyes of business and industry agents. The focus group data point towards the involvement of the college president in economic development activities as a critical factor in determining the college's reputation as a resource for business. In focus groups where the president is described as well-known to community members and highly visible throughout events at the chamber of commerce, industry gatherings, and similar events, participants also described the college as a sought after partner by business. These data suggest that the success of a president in achieving personal relationships as an ambassador for the college is instrumental for putting the college in a good position to locate and build new partnerships with business and industry.

Recommendations

The focus group data suggest many opportunities for improvement in Colorado's community colleges' approach to building relationships with business and industry and also suggest a number of ways in which the colleges might approach improvement efforts. Having organized focus group observations using the Waterfall and Attribute Tree methodologies, many opportunities for improvements in college processes become clear targets for strengthening the colleges' ability to seek and build new relationships. These process improvements are critical changes to the current status of partnerships with business and industry because they represent recognition of the most important elements of business and industry's perceived value of the partnerships. Additional improvements in particular practices present opportunities to strengthen the overall culture and resources of community colleges for fulfilling their role as a partner to community business and industry. Analysis of the focus group data produced the following recommendations.

Process-level Recommendations

Reflection on the Partnership Waterfall produced by the focus groups reveal three key steps that are consistently not meeting the needs of business and industry. They are the first three Waterfall steps: Program Discovery, Course Selection/Curriculum Design, and Funding. There are a handful of important observations to make with respect to this finding. First, the earliest steps of the waterfall define the ability of partnerships to mature – if businesses cannot locate, schedule, or fund programs, there is no benefit to the high quality course delivery and outcomes that have been achieved by colleges. Second, the identification of significant deficiencies in these steps indicates an absence of processes and process owners for delivering high quality interactions at these stages in a partnership. Considering the focus group data, colleges can understand the needs of business and industry with respect to each of the three stages and should implement specific processes to manage, measure, and improve delivery of resources in each of them individually. Finally, while the focus group data confirm colleges' unmatched ability to adapt curriculum and training materials to meet business' needs, the data have strongly suggested an inability of colleges to meet the needs of business and industry in other, equally important phases of the partnership. The message is clear, just because colleges "don't do it that way" does not mean that business's will adjust their needs to better fit the college

system; on the contrary, businesses who have not been able to locate, schedule, and fund programs through community colleges have located alternative resources to meet their training needs. The following segments offer recommendations for continued improvement specifically within these three partnership phases.

Program Discovery. As the most widely expressed concern in focus group discussions, this element requires close attention. It is recommended that each community college designate a particular individual who is responsible for serving as a liaison to business and industry in the college community. College leadership should also consider designating such an individual to fulfill this role at each site where there is more than one campus in a single college. This person will be responsible for taking ownership of the processes in place at the college for reaching out to business and industry and providing information regarding the college's available resources for training and re-training. In many colleges, this will mean developing new processes to be implemented in this area. The designated liaison might fill this role as a full-time position or fulfill the role alongside other job responsibilities but should be able to devote the necessary time to development and monitoring processes that specifically target the college's level of community presence and outreach to business and industry. The liaison will also be responsible for representing the college to the business and industry community by attending chamber of commerce events, industry gatherings, and other economic development activities.

In addition to the designation of a liaison to business and industry, colleges should address the issue of visibility to business and industry by developing a website area dedicated to such partnerships. The webpage for business and industry should be obvious and easily accessible from the college's homepage and should provide information about resources available to business and industry, college abilities to adapt training or courses to meet business needs, and contact information for further information.

Course Selection and Scheduling. Process-level changes for this portion of business and industry partnership are also needed. The designation of a process owner specific to this area, either at each college or at the system-level, will allow closer evaluation of opportunities in this area as well as measurement of improvement over time.

Specifically, focus group data described a strong need for greater flexibility in the scheduling of courses in a way that meets business needs. This idea was often approached cautiously by those involved in education, perhaps because of an observable notion that “the traditional school schedule is simply how educators and colleges work.” However, private sector participant comments illustrate that no matter how college processes function, the demands on business remain and decision-makers will seek training partners that are able to deliver resources on a schedule that meets their needs. Many businesses expressed a need for training programs that are less than 15 weeks and that start and end at times outside of the traditional school schedule. Especially in this time of economic reorganization and major shifts in labor and goods markets, employers need training options that offer them a high degree of flexibility. It is recommended that a pilot program be implemented at one or more of the system colleges for the delivery of professionally targeted courses on a non-traditional schedule. Steps should be taken to designate an owner of this process implementation who will be responsible for documenting its practicality and its impact on the course section component of business and industry partnerships. Additional improvements or processes may also be evaluated by the process owner for course selection and flexibility, either in conjunction with the flexible scheduling pilot program or independently.

Funding. Securing funding sources for partnerships between community colleges and business and industry was discussed in the focus groups as an area in which there is great opportunity for improvement. Again, it is recommended that a process owner be designated for evaluating and improving processes related to securing funding for partnerships with business and industry, either within each college or at the system-level. In situations where funding may be available outside of the financial contribution from a particular business or trainee, the colleges should have specific processes in place to assist in locating and procuring funding. At a few colleges in the system, grant writers for the college formally serve as partners with community businesses to write grants seeking funding for employee training and workforce development. This process should be evaluated for practicality at each college in CCCS and it should be implemented and monitored for effectiveness at improving partnerships with business and industry.

In addition to difficulty obtaining funding for partnerships, focus group participants expressed difficulty that is created by the payment process at community colleges. Businesses often prefer

to purchase the entire training curriculum for employees by making a single payment, or the contrary, by making a series of small payments. Community Workforce Development Centers that maintain partnerships with occupational training institutions also often require that workers make full payment for training as a lump-sum at the beginning of the program. These types of preferences are complicated by the payment schedule traditionally required by community colleges – tuition and fee payment charged per credit hour at the beginning of each semester. It is recommended that a pilot program be established at one or more colleges which allows the college to receive full payment in advance for coursework within a program that stretches over multiple semesters. Funds should be held in escrow or another easily accessible account until they are received as payment for credit hours enrolled each semester as the student progresses through the program. The program should be evaluated for practicality and its impact on the value of partnership perceived by business and industry decision-makers.

Further Evaluation. Finally, it is recommended that the Colorado Community College System implement structured processes for continued evaluation of the partnerships between community colleges and business and industry. The structure should include a designated process owner for ongoing evaluation of the partnerships. Processes should include internal and external surveys that provide quantitative data that describe the partnerships' strengths, weaknesses, and progress over time. Surveys should also seek similar information about business and industry experiences with alternatives to community college partnerships so that the value of college partnerships can be understood relative to competing resources.

Additionally, further surveying, especially quantitative surveys designed according to the parameters of the B&I Partnership Waterfall and Partnership Attribute Tree will allow more complete understanding of the relative impact of each waterfall step and attribute for business and industry's perception of value from the partnerships. For example, targeted surveying will allow the colleges to understand how important the cost of tuition and materials is relative to the quality of training received, or similarly whether decision makers are more concerned with the level of individual attention or the accessibility of classes for employees. Finally, comparing results of internal surveys (of college staff and faculty) to results of external surveys (of business and industry decision makers) might reveal important disconnects between some perceptions of college agents and those of the business agents they serve. All of this information will be

instrumental in allowing the community colleges to accurately evaluate and improve partnerships with business and industry going forward.

Practice-level Recommendations

In addition to the major process-level recommendations, two specific practices are recommended as suggested by focus group participants and supported by focus group data.

Outreach as a Formal Duty of the College President. Focus group commentary about college presence in the business and industry community was closely related to commentary about recognition of the college president in economic development activities. This supports the recommendation that duties related to outreach to business and industry are made a formal part of the job description for college presidents. Especially because partnership with local business and industry is a critical element of the colleges' role of community-based educational institutions, it is critical to college success that presidents regularly represent them at industry gatherings and economic development events. College presidents should be both ambassadors of the college's expert training capabilities and well-known resources for information related to the strengths that colleges can bring to business partnerships. Fulfillment of this job duty will reinforce the efforts of the designated liaison to business and industry to maintain a reputation as a premier resource for local business and industry. The addition of this role to the presidents' job description will allow regular evaluation of performance in this area and make clear the expectation that college presidents will effectively represent colleges in the surrounding community.

Mobile Training Equipment Programs. A particular best practice discussed in the first iteration focus groups last winter was the use of mobile labs for hands-on training in programs that require relatively costly equipment. Commentary from focus groups in the current iteration, related to the high cost of some training equipment as well as the potential for competing programs to result in diluted quality, reinforce the potentially high value of this practice. In instances where training equipment is prohibitively expensive relative to the projected course enrollment at individual colleges, it makes sense to pool system-wide resources into the procurement of equipment that is then optimized for transportation to various college

campuses. Examples of such programs might include training for certain health professions, specialized construction such as welding, and other industries which have very specific training equipment needs. In addition to mobile equipment, faculty with expertise in highly specialized fields might be able to travel, either in coordination with or independent of special equipment, to campuses where demand is too low to support an ongoing training program. It is recommended that the community college system research the practicality and cost of implementing one or more pilot programs for mobile training laboratories for well suited programs.

Pooling system resources to cope with unfavorable distribution of program demand (i.e. too few students in each area but a large number of students across the system as a whole) also supports the recommendation of designating particular colleges as centers of excellence for a highly specialized study. In cases where a particular college has established a successful program for training in a cost-prohibitive field, the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education should consider designating that campus a center of excellence for the field, so that other colleges will work in partnership with that college to deliver program courses as a remote site rather than invest further resources in developing their own program from scratch. Such partnerships would serve to maximize the use of colleges' resources when equipment purchases and faculty preparation are especially high.

Additional Conclusion. As part of the focus group process, business and industry and professional organization representatives submitted an additional recommendation to the Community College System. In order to better merge job training efforts, business and industry representatives have recommended merging WIA Title II, adult basic education including GED certification, and state workforce boards into the Community College System. This would increase opportunities for collaboration, communication and shared resources to prepare a qualified Colorado workforce under the leadership of community colleges.

Given the uncertain economic climate and the significant resources required to merge these areas, the Community College System cannot support the recommendation at this time. However, the system has implement activities to improve collaboration across organizations, including the following initiatives:

- College presidents serve on Workforce Investment Boards (WIB)
- Implementation of a pilot program to place community college case managers in workforce centers across Colorado
- Meeting with the Colorado Department of Education for collaboration in development of the adult basic education curriculum

Appendix A: Focus Group Participants

Northeastern Junior College

August 2, 2010

John Chapedeline- Sterling Correctional Facility
Calvin Lee, Sodexo
Darci Garretson, Haxtun High School
Darlene Carpio, Yuma Chamber of Commerce
Gary Koch, Northeast Colorado Board of Cooperative Education Services
Pam Steib, Sterling Regional Medical Center
Rob Nichols, Nichola Tillage Tools
Tammy Hort, Northeast Colorado Health Department
Rich O'Connell, Logan County Economic Development Corporation
Louis Toenjes, Wind Advisory Council and GE Wind Energy
Loretta Davidson, Well Fargo Bank in Sterling
Karla Rosas, Centennial Mental Health
Joe Kiolbasa, City of Sterling

Community College of Denver

August 5, 2010

Mary Riebe, Kaiser Permanente
Kerrie Urban, Colorado Acute Hospital
Rosa Mirafior, CRJ

Arapahoe Community College

August 13, 2010

Troy Williams, AKBD Kitchen Distributors, Inc
Mark Cheeks, Ware Malcomb
Ned White, Intergroup Architects
Mary Reibe, Kaiser Permanente
Kathy Peeters, Exempla Healthcare
Evelyn Sickel, Cherry Creek School District
Dianna Lyons, Western Union and Paralegal Program
Shawna Kovak, Cenveo
Tami Admas, Foothills Park and Recreation District
Gregory Romer, American Honda Motor Co.
Emelene, Emelene Russell Advertising and Design
Tony Spurlock, Douglas County Sherriff's Office

Front Range Community College- Westminster

August 19, 2010

Lyle Fair, All Phase Landscape
Matt Donberg, Terracare Associates ALCL
Kevin Ewerks, City and County of Broomfield Parks and Operations

Pat Salazar, Frasier Meadows Manor HCC
Becky Garber, Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado
Mary Riebe, Kaiser Permanente
Matthew (Quint) Redmond, The TSR Group Inc.
Tom Dietrich, North Suburban Hospital
Angela Rothermel, Early Childhood Partnerships of Adams County
Rodney Shull, Kaiser Permanente
Sharon R. Harris, Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Association
Dan Gerace, Welby Gardens
Joanne Spethman, Platte Valley Medical Center

Front Range Community College- Larimer

August 19, 2010

Yvonne Myers, Columbine Health Systems and Nursing Advisory Board
Doug Strom, Custom Fabrication
Kathy Dotson, Larimer County Workforce Development
Betsey Hale, Loveland Business Assistance Network, City of Loveland
Adam Krueger, Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation
Julie Zinn Patti, Spirae
Mara Hartley, Tolmar, Inc
Robyn Vilkaitis, Tomar, Inc
Ashley Higgins, Tomar, Inc
Michelle Webb, Webb Impact Solutions
Troy Becker, Pipefitters #208 and HEAC Advisory Board
Wendi Natfziger, Longmont ED
Terry Brunk, Markley Motors Inc.
Laurie Hamit, Banner Student Center for Excellence
Kelly Peters, Larimer Bioscience Cluster

Otero Junior College

August 23, 2010

Brad Rose, State Bank of La Junta
Janet Hill, Colorado Bank and Trust
Shane Pritchard, Oliver Manufacturing and Mechanical Graphic Design
Jamie Swartz, Child Development Services
Marvin Schlegel, First National Bank of Las Animas, La Junta
Toni Madrid, Edward Jones Investments
John Knapp, Natural Resource Conservation Service
Jeannie Larsen, Southeast Mental Health Services
Bob Blair, Colorado East Bank and Trust
Bob Nelson, Holler Seed
JR Thompson, Rocky Ford Daily Gazette
Dick Berg, First National Bank
Janet Berg, DeBourgh Manufacturing

Community College of Aurora

August 24, 2010

David Patterson, Rural Metro Ambulance
Marcus Thompson, The Children's Hospital
Kevin Hougan, Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Robert Grossaint- Bonfils
Dennis Kramer-Wine, Namaste Solar



**Business & Industry Partnerships
Focus Group Procedure and Script**

Hello. My name is Geri Anderson and I'm the moderator for today's 90 minute group discussion. Lauren Kordupleski will be videotaping this session. Our purpose today is three-fold:

1. Gather your feedback on the role and function of the community college in workforce training and economic development.
2. Identify the ways that the college has been effective in workforce training and economic development
3. Discuss recommendations for ways the community colleges can be a more effective partner.

Before we get started, here are some ground rules and points of information:

DISCLOSURES:

1. *CONFIDENTIALITY*. Everything that you say here will be kept strictly confidential. Nothing said in this group will ever be associated with any individual by name. We would also ask that you similarly maintain the confidentiality of what is said in the group.
2. *VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION*. Your participation in this group is entirely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw from the group at anytime with no consequences. The consent forms provide more detailed information regarding confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation. If you haven't already done so, please sign the consent form and pass it to me.
3. *VIDEO-TAPING*. This session is being taped so that we can write an accurate report—not of who said what.
4. *THANKS*. Thank you for arranging your schedule today to be here for this session. We really appreciate you giving us your time and opinions.

GROUND RULES:

1. Please talk one at a time in a voice as loud as mine.
2. Avoid side conversations with your neighbors.
3. We need to hear from everyone in the course of the discussion, but you don't have to answer every question.

4. Feel free to respond directly to someone who has made a point. You don't have to address your comments to me to get them on the table. Part of this process is to create conversation.
5. There are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of this discussion is to hear your opinions and ideas.

Introduction

We are here today to talk about what events, persons or other factors that may have influenced your decision to partner with (NAME OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE). And what worked or didn't work in that partnership.

Feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel. Your perceptions are what matter. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. This is also a conversation. In fact, conversation is encouraged.

Discuss procedure

Lauren Kordupleski will be video- taping the discussion so that we do not miss anything you have to say. As you know everything is confidential. No one will know who said what. This is to be a group discussion, so feel free to respond to me and to other members in the group without waiting to be called on. However, for this to be effective it would appreciate it if only one person did talk at a time. The discussion will last approximately ninety minutes. There is a lot to discuss, so at times we may move the conversation along a bit. Questions?

Participant introduction

Now, let's start by everyone sharing your name, your occupation and the kind of work that your company or organization does.

Rapport building

Please share with us the best things about living in (NAME OF COMMUNITY).

Interview

1. Please describe the nature of the partnership that you and your company/organization had with the college.
2. Have you maintained that partnership or has the partnership evolved?

3. How did you initially hear about the community college as an educational option for workforce training?
4. What other training options did you seriously consider? What is similar, and different, about your options?
5. What were some of the key factors in making your educational choice?
6. Who or what was most influential in your decision?
7. Were there any events, interactions, programs, or other incident that may have affected your decision to use the college?
8. What has worked well in your partner with the college?
9. What has been difficult?
10. How active would you describe the college in local community affairs? What community efforts and organizations do you know the college participates in?
11. If you were writing new information about the college for a prospective partner, what would you want to include?
12. What advice would you give the college president about the college's involvement in workforce training?
13. Additional Comments

Closure

*Though there were many different opinions which is exactly what a focus group attempts to uncover and explore.. It appears unanimous that **(List those subjects and topics.)***

Does anyone see it differently? It seems most of you agree. ,

*But some think that **(List differences)**. Does anyone want to add or clarify an opinion on this?*

*Is there any other information regarding your decision to partner with **(NAME OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE)** that you think would be useful for us to know?*

Thank you very much for coming this afternoon. Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.



Business & Industry Partnerships Community College Survey

Over the next two weeks, the Colorado Community College System is conducting a study on the involvement of community colleges in economic development and workforce training. This study will be conducted in two parts. Focus groups with local community leaders and business people are one part. The other part is a survey of the community colleges and their perception of their roles, responsibilities and effectiveness.

Please complete and return this survey via email by August 20, 2010 to:

Geri Anderson
Geri.anderson@cccs.edu
720-858-2759

All surveys are confidential. Only aggregate information will be publically shared.

- 1. How is the college organized to meet community-driven educational and workforce training needs? Does the college have an individual or department that focuses on economic development and/or workforce/customized training?***
- 2. In the past year, what economic development and/or workforce training partnership are you particularly proud of? Why? (Please provide any summary material on this project.)***
- 3. How did this partnership come to be?***
- 4. Do you expect that this partnership will continue or evolve? How?***
- 5. What other partnerships did the college have during this period?***
- 6. In what ways does the college promote its role in economic development and workforce training?***
- 7. What has worked well in college partnerships?***
- 8. What has been difficult?***
- 9. Who are the key competitors in workforce training for the college?***

10. How active would you describe the college in local community affairs? What community efforts and organizations does the college participate in?

11. How does the college calculate return on investment?

12. What additional comments about economic development and workforce training would the college like to share?