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Southwest Workforce Development Council (WDC) Cluster Academy, Red Lion at the Quay, Vancouver, WA.

The Southwest WDC District covers the counties of Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum.

Lisa Nisenfeld, Southwest WDC Director, introduced the state agencies represented, Columbia River EDC, and Clark College. Lisa noted that there is a need to have new resources brought into the region for economic development clusters. Lisa is advocating organizing their work around the clusters and advancing development around regional industry cluster strategies.

Pat Scruggs of Scruggs & Associates, and Scott Bailey, ESD - The Economic Context

Both Pat and Scott reviewed the regional data on clusters and keys to cluster strategy development. They said to look at region in three ways and add Portland area as part of the concentration analysis (see PP).

The current clusters are:

- Industry:
 - High and Clean Tech.: Products and Services
 - Devices: Intersection of electronic systems, material sciences, and computing
 - Transportation and Logistics
- Occupational:
 - IT, Software, Computational Analysis
 - Construction and Green Building

Bryan Wilson – Workforce Board - Promoting What Works in the Region: State Framework in Development

The Cluster Academies are designed to gain feedback and input from people around the state. We are asking them to formulate initial answers from their regional workforce and economic development plans.

Jack Mills, NNSP & Lindsey Woolsey, CSW – Existing Capacities Matrix - Activities Focused on Targeted Clusters

This was a facilitated discussion by Jack Mills and Lindsey Woolsey. Mills and Woolsey facilitated a discussion on the proposed state framework that was introduced to the academy. (see word document). This document presented a list of operational areas/resources in the community that add value for a given industry. The audience liked this document but thought it could be enhanced with more data in other areas.

Jack Mills, NNSP; Lindsey Woolsey, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce; and Pat Scruggs, Scruggs & Associates – Reflections on Strategies/Potentials/Collaborations/State Frameworks

A continuation of the Existing Capacities Matrix. The audience suggested adding these three additional columns to the matrix.

Matrix 1:

Include WSU

- Think through all levels of jobs that drive cluster
- Continuing ED – advancement support
- Matching training dollars with industry skill requirements
- High demand, occupational credentials
- 2-4 yr degrees?

Matrix 2:

Public sector support for innovation

WSU for tech. transfer? Etc.

Sort cross-cutting services for value to particular industries (what's the value to industry?)

Differentiate services based on industry need + stage of industry in growth cycle

Matrix 3:

Add e-learning

Add private sector training investments/capacity

Add glossary

Add CTE secondary level education/training + CTE at 2-4 yr

Add land/infrastructure

Flow up existing employees

Jack Mills asked a set of guiding questions for the audience to discuss in their small group round tables. The questions were:

- *How does the information that has been presented relate to your region?*
 - *What do you like?*
 - *What don't you like?*
 - *What ideas does it give you for developing a coordinated regional strategy?*
- *What aspects of the State Frameworks would support that strategy?*
 - *Are there legislative or administrative proposals that would help?*

Some general questions/comments that came back were:

- Hard to define the dollar at the moment.
- What have you done that would be a proof of concept? We need something to build upon and gain the support to move forward.
- What is the process?
- What can the state do to support it?
- What did you hear that will help the state move forward?
- Bi state clusters are industry led instead of state led.
- Who can get dollars spent on them?
- Can get in community colleges at in state tuition level.
- Probably don't want to duplicate things across borders.
- The Columbia River Gorge is a 5 region state area. Some wanted more specifics.

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Reports:

Table 1:

Regional plan:

- Whose baby is it?
- Strategizing group - WDC, EDC, and the community colleges to evaluate if we are aligned.
- How do we institutional the bi-state relationship? Better than before but changing, one sour relationship can make things come all undone.
- Clark County is on short end of stick in regards to funding from the state. Getting better, but behind.
- Gets money but goals are not coordinated.
- Looking at private members who are on committees to consolidate and coordinate to get the best use out of the private sector.
- State can do “best practices” across the state. Benefits of peer to peer sharing and pressure to be on the best practice list.

Summary:

- Regional plan needs WDC, EDC, and community colleges together, along with others.
- Need to institutionalize bi-state relationship. What does this mean?
- More education slots – post secondary.
- Alignment of state dollar streams.
- Map private sector friends and coordinate for best use of time.

Table 2:

Regional plan:

- More and more timely data.
- More regional reports where OR and WA are working together.
- Do study around metro area instead of just Portland.
- What are the types of data seen today?
- Expand the matrix presented today to include Portland and the WIRED project.
- Could we lower the cost to benefit students at Portland State University and Washington State University? Strong in manufacturing instead of innovation although this is improving.
- People are for the prototype manufacturing; focus regional on innovation and prototype manufacturing.
- Green clean energy issue. Should be another column on matrix. Needs to be defined clearly and need data collected in that area.
- Look at cross industry issues.
- Soft skills for promotion and growing own.
- Multi-generation shift. Increasing retirement and new workforce coming expecting a different workplace.
- Lean and green operation, across many industries. People want to operate leaner and greener.
- Can't lose sight of P-12 education. If we fail there, would be difficult to correct later.

- Help future initial role and responsibilities, need to be clearly defined and shared across partners.
- What about an MOU.

Summary:

- Promising practices identified by state.
- More and more timely data.
- Use students at universities to gather/process data.
- Focus regionally on prototype manufacturing.
- Define green/clean.
- Address soft skill development.
- Supervisory training plus generational issue training, plus workforce culture,
- Integrate green/clean, and
- Address P-12.

Table 3:

- State of Washington needs to “buy into” the local infrastructure so the local expense for business development is - low impact.
- Industry has no trust. Are we serving the employer or the industry?

Summary:

- Oregon industry cluster RFP's responsible for investment decision making; could be proof of concept if it works.
- What waivers, referencing public funding is needed?
- Not “employers” – they’re businesses - need to look holistically.

Table 4:

- Across state alignment. Cannot be an agency to agency across the bridge collaboration.
- People and the economy driving or an effective support strategy?
- Agency needs to listen better.
- State aligns dollars: performance measures.
- Need to be industry metric not region metrics.
- Private industries see themselves as self sufficient. Once involved they see the value. Can be competitive and self sufficient for a cluster strategy.

Summary:

- Institutionalization – make partnerships industry-led.
- Need to identify the strategy driven plus what supports strategy.
- Key – industry responsiveness.
- Metrics – important to industry, not agency based.
- Industry can be self sufficient and get value from cluster partnerships.

Jack Mills – Next Steps

This was a facilitated discussion with the following potential questions:

Potential questions:

- *Where do we want to be in 2 years?*

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- *What collaborations need to develop to get the region there?*
- *What ideas are there for a shared strategic framework that could guide all stakeholders toward getting there?*

Comments:

- Don't know industry at this time, don't know what this is, we know so little except that there is promise for who is here already.
- What are the steps to learn what the industry needs?
- If you know what the needs are then you can create a response.

Outcomes:

- Where in the country are they already doing this?
- Other steps. Local level looking at this?
- Identify goals and objective to measure progress.
- Agreement among partners to organize workload.

Summary:

- Steps on developing an industry cluster strategy:
- Identify private and public components of cluster.
- What are similar components across country – what do they need, what can we “steal.”
- Who here has capacity.
- What are industry clusters idea about our goals and what level of urgency is there?
- Determine roles, responsibilities, we need dollars to support the effort.
- Determine potential for new resources or reallocation of existing resources.
- Determine where investments can have an impact or potential impact and only pursue these.
- Have early/ongoing industry involvement in decision – making reference go/no go, what's the focus?
- Convene industry cluster partners.
- Determine method of how to share info about partner capacity.
- Check on Greenlight Portland – Pat Scruggs did a data analyses of PDX w/ Clark College.
- Who is fiscal agent if state WIRED is implemented?
- There is a distrust of government programs. Why? Where did it come from?

State policy needs:

What are the constraints on using state/public?

- Workforce Training dollars not flexible don't meet demand
 - Incumbent worker
 - Pre-employment
- State WIRED grant?
 - Too much focus on planning in DOL WIRED
 - Amount needs to be large
- Need dollars to support cluster focused planning

Plan defines regional ask from all partners and principles for investment decisions

- IPZ – needs to have regional priorities & the resources to carry it out

Support:

- COE,
- Research and Development,
- Semi-conductor, advanced training for operators,
- IPZ could be COE; COE's make sense in supporting cluster development but need more flexibility (state-wide or regional focus) (at 4 year or two year college).
- Have to make role to industry case.

Training dollars:

- More if industry-response – flexible + flexible. co-investment by industry.

Next steps:

- Finish matrix
- What about counterpart from across the river (Portland).
- Next 30 days Lisa will call a meeting with the work plan.
- Determine who the lead for each industry cluster is.

Feedback from academies:

Positive:

- Open dialogue – dialogue worked because it promoted idea generation

Negative:

- What next as a region?
- Build in some time just for the regional people to get together a second time during the meeting.
- Longer lead time need save the dates – 6 weeks.
- Extend steps - industry session to discuss strategic investment's need to define next steps for region
- Build in time for region to plan next steps
- Clarify shared interests, identify principles that reflect them + determine responsibilities