PNWER Working Group Session Report

**Working Group:** Workforce Development

**Meeting Date / Time:** Tuesday, July 23rd, 2019 from 2:30pm - 4:45pm

**Co-chairs:**
- Senator Lisa Wellman, Washington State Legislature
- Shawna Argue, Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan (APEGS)

**Speakers:**
- Dr. Larry Rosia, President and CEO, Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Janet Uchacz-Hart, Saskatoon Industry Education Council, RoboX Program
- Lisa Shingoose, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)
- Maddy Thompson, Senior Policy Advisor on Education, Office of Governor Inslee
- Andrew Schrumm, Senior Manager, Research Office of the CEO, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
- Chad Vickers, Ministry of Immigration and Career Training, Government of Saskatchewan

The agenda, speaker bios, and presentations from this meeting can be found at [https://sched.co/MWc5](https://sched.co/MWc5)

**Co-Chair Introduction:**

Mrs. Wellman said that we are at a time where skills are changing rapidly. We will be under-skilled in the future due to a lack of skilled labour. There has been a gradual shift to now that there is an environment where we are unable to keep up with development. Population upheavals in other parts of the world are shifting business patterns. Agriculture is an area that is particularly affected by technological advancements. With environmental issues, careers are moving to renewable energy projects, including nuclear. We are analyzing what the existing skills we have. We don’t even know the future skills that will need to be taught to the workers of the future. There are still uncertainties with respect to future skilled labours. There are changes in medicine, for example digital imaging. Equity is an issue about who will thrive tomorrow, in our new economies. Another major thing is our investment in adult education. The resources for adult education has been scarce. Small to medium businesses may not be able to afford re-skilling the workforce. We need to motivate continuous learning. There is a lack of this culture in the realm of re-learning.

**Summary of Meeting : Presenters, Presentations, and Summaries**
Dr. Larry Rosia: Presentation Titled - “Saskatchewan Polytechnic”

Mr. Rosia said that workforce development is a timely topic with all that has happened recently. The goal of workforce is to place workers in areas where there are rich opportunities for development. At Sask poly it is our mission to make this a reality. At sask poly, we supply our students with the skills necessary for current jobs and future challenges. The employer satisfaction rate is 97% for our students. We offer a wide range of programming and build a curriculum around knowledge and specific skill sets. We offer practical and in depth experiences for our students. Combining both college and university elements into one experience. There are three differentiators for sask poly. 1 – applied research – this allows us to collaborate with employers to solve problems and access resources designed to connect them to viable solutions. This allows for experimentation of many different technologies. This is a value added experience for students. 2 – emphasis on work integrated learning – gives students the opportunity to have practical application of skills learned. 3 – deep connections with Saskatchewan’s business and industry. Working through program advisory committees, we are able to better address reforms to programming. We are informed of the skills, demand, and resources required for students to join the workforce.

Janet Uchacz-Hart: Presentation titled - “School-To-Work Transitions: Connecting Youth to the Labour Market”

Mrs. Uchacz-Hart said that her council wants to prepare youth for entry into the workforce. In Saskatoon, she works with three separate school divisions and post-secondary institutions. We worked with 28,000 youth in 2018. We have a youth engagement model to engage a variety of actors. We are the supply chain for the industry. Our staff spends time in parent council meetings to ensure that parents are aware of us and know what is going on in terms of workforce learning and engagement. There are a number of programming options that introduce students to workforce specific topics. We have a program related to new immigrants to teach them essential skills and language skills to help integrate. We are also engaging elementary youth because a lot of career decisions originate in Grades 6, 7, or 8. We also provide programs for paid internships which provide competitive wages. This usually happens over the summer. Our programming with robotics is new and is in line with changing workforce demands.

Lisa Shingoose: Presentation titled - “Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)”

Mrs. Shingoose said that with SIIT, we are an indigenous institute in the province. Diversity and inclusion are important. We are able to recognize and close the gap of Indigenous skills in the workforce. By 2036 about 20% of SK’s pop will be Indigenous. It costs 1.1 billion in lost economic value due to Indigenous non-involvement in the workforce. We are leaders in retention rates. We have many programs that progress through all levels of skill development. In Saskatchewan, We are engaged in the Iset program which is federally backed. We take a province-wide approach. The network takes 5 actors and brings them together. The career centres at SIIT provide support and education for people looking to join the workforce. We also have a childcare initiative for those individuals who are looking for employment and/or education while raising a family. We have distance learning for those individuals in remote communities. We need to increase the pool of people in vocational and skills development pathways. Our job series programs are a first point of entry for many people. This helps with on reserve communities. This will help mitigate certain barriers. We offer career workshops and other opportunities. We hope to mobilize activity where it needs to be mobilized. Under Isets, there is a youth task force that helps to find ways to engage vulnerable youth throughout the province. Job Quest will be available in 2020 and will focus on engaging vulnerable youth in programs designed for their specific schools. We take a look also
at on reserve communities to find what the needs are. We take a case-management approach to every student. It starts right with admission. We provide direct financial support to youth that are in crisis. The career centres have job coaching which helps link the supply of workforce vacancies. This is important.

- In tracking outcomes, how long do you look? Do you get any help from government?
  - Mr. Rosia said that we track them 6 months out and then after 2 years. After that it gets hard to keep contact. He works for a balanced score card organization.

**Maddy Thompson: Presentation titled - “Meeting Current and Future Workforce Needs in Washington State”**

Mrs. Thompson said that her education and training system does exist in a vacuum. At a time of recession, we see flush of students coming back to school. We have a high gap in higher education. We have had state action on this issue. There are advancements that we need to keep up with. We passed 2158 which was an omnibus education bill that dealt a little bit with technological advancements. One big thing is cost. Our businesses supported a surcharge on certain service industries. This will fund most of the initiatives in the bill. Focusing on career pathways will hopefully lead to completion. The vision in Washington is that each individual will have multiple pathways. We provide paid internships and credit hours for secondary school education. We define in statute various levels of career launch. We ensure that schools have infrastructure required for these programs. One concern is race/ethnicity with these programs. Opportunity should not be defined by zip code.

**Senator Lisa Wellman: Presentation Titled - “Overview of Career Connect Washington, an innovative government program in Washington State focused on workforce development.”**

Mrs. Wellman said that she is trying to address this rapidly changing environment. Washington was incorrectly utilizing test software in addressing career connections. One piece of legislation was the multiple pathways to education to make sure that different avenues were viable for graduation. This system needed to be developed. Every high school needed to offer programs in computer science so that individuals could be trained in technological advancements. We wanted to ensure that women and minorities were in the classroom taking those programs. We have career connect programming but we had no ways of selling it to individuals and institutions in the state. We need to think about locating students in areas that have access to internship and job shadowing opportunities. This applies to children in rural areas specifically. Our master workgroup works to develop skills that are built on other skills. The chances of you working in the same location may not work to get other opportunities. This means that negotiations and consultations with other jurisdiction to make sure that there are pathways to re-locating. Our course work is all moving online, so every kid is using online software instead of books. In our high school beyond plans, these are sheets or booklets that do not do much. We need to transition to beyond pathways that allows students and parents to explore opportunities that are right for the individual. Another problem is tracking of skills throughout various programs. We have started to work with blockchain technology to allow the transfer of skills data.

“Canada has a problem workforce engagement and technology gaps. Future launch helps invest 500 million over 10 years. This will provide students with skills, resources, and networks. RBC is involved because it sees the beneficial nature of skills development. RBC has a foothold in almost every area of the country. RBC is facing these challenges as well. Future launch is based on pillars. The first pillar is
donations. We want to build skills, work experience, networking, and mental well-being. We have active staff to identify challenges that top executives do not see. Youth is at the centre of everything we do at Future Launch. There are a variety of programs meant to foster support for youth and identify skills that can be expanded. We help about 3000 students a year. We have a business/higher education roundtable that allows access to the broader business community and education environment. It set a goal to have 100% of students with full skill development and work experience.” – RBC rep

Andrew Schrumm: Presentation titled - “RBC Future Launch”

Notes were not captured for this presentation.

Chad Vickers: Presentation titled - “Workforce and Mobility Challenges”

Mr. Vickers said that there are demographics that are working against us. We have aging populations. Lack of immigration, and low birth rates. With low unemployment rates, we have job vacancy rates that are climbing. These factor into standard of living and signify economic conditions. We fill gaps through immigration and career training. We have immigration programs that are federally funded and are controlled by the province. The system Saskatchewan has allows people to move where they need to go in order to fill vacancies. Our immigration system is quite unrestrictive. Only 2% of immigrants are U.S. Foreign Qualification Recognition is a process to make sure that international trained workers have the right credentials and are comparable to Canadian standards. We have changed requirements and vetting standards to streamline acceptance rates. There are a variety of programs and initiatives that help solve immigrant to job problems.

Proposed Action Items
1. Cross border credential transfer between Canada and the U.S.
2. Compile and share best practices learned in the PNWER region.