



NEW ORLEANS ROUNDTABLE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN CTE

On November 20, 2015, Opportunity America and the Industry Workforce Needs Coalition coordinated a panel at the 2015 ACTE CareerTech VISION conference in New Orleans to discuss employer engagement in career and technical education. Most of the participants were IWNC and Opportunity America members or partners, and they represented a range of sectors with a stake in CTE. The audience consisted of some 60 CTE educators.



Tamar Jacoby president, Opportunity America

"Everyone at this conference agrees. It's a consensus in the field. The secret sauce of successful career and technical education is employer engagement. The problem, as we all know – it can be maddeningly hard to pull off. And overall, there are more failures than successes. This panel will highlight some success stories."

Jerry Ellner national director of high school development, Universal Technical Institute

"The secret ingredient of a successful employer-educator relationship is training to their specifications – the employer's. We work with them on what subjects to teach, how to teach, the curriculum. We do what they want. And you can't be thin-skinned when they criticize you."



Scott Christman manager of student services, The Apprenticeship School

"The key to our success at the Apprentice School is getting young people into the career first. It's the opposite of what happens at college. The idea behind the college model is Prepare, then place. Apprenticeship programs do the opposite: We place, then prepare – and we find students are a lot more interested in learning."

Steve Greene vice president, NCCER

"Everything we do at our organization is about filling jobs for business and industry by building collaborative relationships. There are many ways you can do that. We accredit training programs. We write curriculum. We issue certifications. We work to enhance the image of the construction industry."



Timm Boettcher president, Realityworks

"Your local workforce investment board can help you as an educator to build relationships with employers in your area. At our WIB in western Wisconsin, we organize career fairs where employers connect with graduates. We work with local businesses to create internship programs. . . . If you want to build a relationship with an employer but don't know where to start, call the business people on your local WIB – by definition, they're interested."

For more information about the IWNC, please visit <http://www.iwnc.org/>. For more information about Opportunity America, please visit <http://opportunityamericaonline.org/>

If you're interested in learning more or joining either coalition, please contact Tamar Jacoby at tjacoby@opportunityamericaonline.org.

The Opportunity America Jobs and Careers Coalition is a Washington-based business coalition focused on job training and workforce development. Members include employers and employer associations from a broad range of industries experiencing skills mismatches and worker shortages – IT, manufacturing, construction and hospitality, among others.

The Industry Workforce Needs Coalition is a group of employers and employer associations devoted to strengthening career and technical education. The coalition works with educational organizations to raise awareness of CTE and its benefits – for high school students, postsecondary students and the U.S. economy. The coalition's principal goals: to redefine the image of CTE, build support for it at all levels of government and foster collaboration between employers and educators.