



NEXT STEPS FOR ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

From mid-2020 to mid-2021, Opportunity America curated a series of virtual convenings for the City University of New York Adult and Continuing Education Council. Members of the ACE Council include noncredit workforce deans from across the CUNY system who gather regularly to share best practices and strategize about common challenges. The goal of the Opportunity America sessions: to expose CUNY educators to innovative practices being pioneered at other colleges in other states. Members of the ACE Council received professional development credit for attending the sessions.

CUNY as engine of economic recovery

May 6, 2020

In New York City, as elsewhere across the US, the economy that emerges in the wake of the pandemic is likely to look very different than the one that shut down in early spring. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers will need new skills to keep their jobs or reenter the labor market. And few institutions are better positioned to provide the training that's needed – short, targeted programs offered in partnership with employers – than the City University of New York. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby laid out the opportunities and challenges ahead for CUNY colleges.

- Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

The essential ingredient: Collaborating with employers

[June 3, 2020](#)

Employers are from Mars, educators are from Venus. Do you struggle to recruit employers to host interns and collaborate on designing programs? Do you enter into employer partnerships with high hopes only to find the collaboration more perfunctory than meaningful? There can be no effective career education without employers. But building robust, enduring partnerships can be challenging. Northern Virginia Community College vice president for strategic partnerships and workforce innovation Steven Partridge has long experience recruiting employer partners and building regional employer collaboratives. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby joined Partridge for a conversation – tips, tricks and best practices for partnering with employers to develop career-focused college programs.

- Steven PARTRIDGE, vice president for strategic partnerships and workforce innovation, Northern Virginia Community College
- Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

Using labor market research to drive decisions about college programs

September 16, 2020

The secret ingredient of all outstanding workforce education is labor market alignment. Are you teaching skills in demand in the labor market? Do your graduates land well-paying jobs? Are you meeting the needs of local employers? Effective labor market alignment starts with data – granular, real-time information about labor market supply and demand to inform decisions about launching and sunseting college programs. Monroe Community College vice president Todd Oldham has built one of the college sector’s premier labor market information research centers. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby led a discussion of how CUNY might borrow and build on his approach.

- Colin CHELLMAN, dean for institutional and policy research, CUNY
- Todd OLDHAM, vice president, economic and workforce development and career technical education, Monroe Community College*
- Jaclyn KELLY, director, NYC Labor Market Information Service, CUNY Graduate Center
- Moderated by Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

Hidden college, hidden asset: Noncredit education

October 21, 2020

Some of the most exciting innovation in higher education is taking place on the noncredit side of two- and four-year colleges. What some have called the “hidden college” is nimble, responsive, solution-oriented and ideally positioned to keep up with local labor market demand. Yet all too often, the noncredit division is a realm apart, poorly integrated with the rest of the college, and both sides of the house – and learners – suffer as a result. What’s needed: better collaboration and cross pollination between credit and noncredit divisions and also better bridges for learners who want to make the leap from one kind of program to the other. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby led a discussion of what colleges can do to lift up and integrate their noncredit divisions.

- David JOHNSON, president, Johnston Community College
- Jane MACKILLOP, dean, School of Continuing & Professional Studies, Lehman College
- Moderated by Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

Beyond academic credentials: Competency-based industry certifications

November 18, 2020

Unlike traditional academic credentials, which signal that students have attended and completed a course of study, industry certifications signal what learners know and what job-related tasks they can perform – occupation-specific knowledge and skills measured on tests developed by industry groups. Certifications hold out great promise for students and employers, helping students identify skills in demand in the job market and taking the guesswork out of hiring. A growing number of community colleges are embedding certifications in credit and noncredit workforce programs, and several states offer incentives for colleges to prepare learners for certification assessments. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby led a discussion of how educators in Florida are using industry credentials to prepare students for the workforce.

- Mildred COYNE, senior vice president for workforce education, Broward College
- Russell MCCAFFREY, dean of transportation programs, Broward College
- Moderated by Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

Adapting ASAP and guided pathways for job-focused learners

December 16, 2020

Two of the most successful and widely replicated innovations pioneered at community colleges in recent decades address the same challenge: students who get lost on the way to completion and leave college with nothing to show for their time on campus. One strategy is CUNY ASAP. The other is guided pathways, developed at the Columbia University Community College Research Center and now being implemented at 300 institutions across the US. The two approaches are similar in some ways, different in others – but both have been pursued primarily in credit-eligible settings for students seeking academic credentials. To what extent has either approach been used with job-focused learners? What does and doesn't work in that context? And can either or both of these programs be adapted for students whose primary goal is a job or a better job? Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby led a discussion among experts familiar with both programs.

- Hana LAHR, senior research associate, Community College Research Center
- Ancy SKARIA, assistant director of ASAP program management, CUNY
- Moderated by Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

A spectrum of work-based learning opportunities

February 24, 2021

CUNY colleges have put considerable effort in recent years into developing industry contacts that can provide experiential learning. But much remains to be done. In 2019, just one-fifth of CUNY students had an opportunity for an internship, roughly half of them paid and half unpaid. Long-time leader in the field of experiential learning, Northeastern University has pioneered a strategy that could prove useful at CUNY: offering not just internships, but a spectrum of work-based learning opportunities. At Northeastern, the spectrum stretches from virtual internships, where teams of students work together in a classroom or online to solve problems provided by employer partners, to full-fledged cooperative education opportunities. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby joined Northeastern vice chancellor Kemi Jona for a conversation – tips, tricks and best practices for partnering with employers to provide work-based learning opportunities.

- Kemi JONA, assistant vice chancellor for digital innovation and enterprise learning, Northeastern University
- Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

Washington State centers of excellence

March 17, 2021

Washington State's 11 centers of excellence function as vital hubs connecting the state's 34 community and technical colleges to regional employers. Housed at community colleges and dispersed geographically across the big state, each hub focuses on a single sector – aerospace, agriculture, IT, health care and the like. Among each center's functions: compiling and disseminating labor market information, serving as a single statewide portal for employers, developing skills standards and curriculum for colleges and keeping legislators apprised of workforce development in their districts. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby joined Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges policy associate Peter Guzman for a conversation about what the centers do and the payoff for Washington colleges.

- Peter GUZMAN, policy associate, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

Out of many campuses, one institution

April 21, 2021

In spring 2020, the Dallas County Community College District consolidated what used to be seven stand-alone community colleges into a single institution. A vast, sprawling network serving some 165,000 students a year, the old system was plagued by inefficiencies, duplication of programs and services, and obstacles for students seeking to transfer credits from one college to another. The new, singly-accredited institution is working to eliminate overlapping services, fix gaps in educational offerings and present a single face to potential employer partners. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby joined Dallas Community College vice chancellor Justin Lonon for a conversation about the consolidation and how it's paying off for the college.

- Justin LONON, executive vice chancellor, Dallas Community College
- Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

The sinews of a system: A common course numbering system

May 19, 2021

It's a tool with many uses. Is the goal to create a more consistent experience for students? Boost completion rates? Facilitate transfer? Enhance quality control? Allocate funding? For many states – Colorado, Florida and Texas, among others – the tool of choice to achieve all these ends is a common course numbering system. Whether the class is English 101 or a noncredit EMT training, all lower division courses that receive funding from the state of Texas start from the same standardized core curriculum. It's not a straitjacket; instructors can still craft their own syllabuses – and some ignore the core curriculum. But those who do forfeit funding. The payoff for continuing education: programs based on standardized curriculum are eligible for state dollars. Opportunity America president Tamar Jacoby led a discussion of the Texas system – how it works, its costs and its benefits.

- Tina JACKSON, assistant commissioner, TX Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Stacey SILVERMAN, deputy assistant commissioner, TX Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Moderated by Tamar JACOBY, president, Opportunity America

** Title has changed since ACE Council session.*