



P20 Council Meeting Minutes

Date: February 23, 2024

Time: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Location: A-B Technical Community College

In Attendance

Amy Barry, Ivry Cheeks, Samantha Cole, Karen Eilers, Joseph Fox (contractor), Kevan Frazier, Josh Kersey, Gene Loflin, Vicki McGillivray, Emily Nicholson (staff), Donna Parsons (alternate for Tracy Parkinson), Avril Pinder (alternate for Rachael Sawyer), Nathan Ramsey, Jennifer Reed, Melissa Zenz (staff)

Welcome

Attendees engaged in networking while partaking of the catered lunch from 11:30-noon. Mrs. Nicholson welcomed attendees.

Agenda

Mrs. Nicholson gave a brief presentation that began with item II on the agenda (an explanation of the different communication modes in use by P20 staff, for both internal and external communications). Because a quorum was not present, she skipped item III on the agenda and moved to item IV. She updated attendees on the recent release of updated data from myFutureNC, and she shared a refresher on the various stakeholders groups that are impacted by the work of the P20 Council. Mrs. Nicholson next highlighted an initiative of the Accessibility & Persistence through Community Engagement Action Team: the continuation of the successful Student Ambassadors program, which is currently recruiting for the Spring 2024 cohort.

Dr. Fox presented on his special projects (item V on the agenda) and connected each to the work of the three P20 action teams. He reiterated the end goal of the P20 Council's work is for students to graduate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to get sustaining/thriving wages and stay in their communities. He said he has heard from many employers that they struggle to recruit for this area due to the high cost of housing. Dr. Fox summarized the P20 Council's focus on readiness, access, completion, and alignment. Mr. Ramsey said it's helpful to be given direction on what Council members can do to support these efforts, and Dr. Fox replied that they can start by becoming informed about current initiatives.

Dr. Fox segued into an overview of his first special project. Mrs. Nicholson suggested it would be powerful to have letters of support at the ready rather than having to solicit them as part of a grant application process. Dr. Reed left the meeting early. Dr. Fox introduced Special Project Two and said he had just completed the drafts yesterday. In addition to updating previous guides on K-12 and higher education, he added a new guide for Student Support that includes information on financial aid, after school programs, and other wraparound services. Dr. Fox next explained Special Project Three and stressed the need to overcome stigma from the history of steering underrepresented groups to vocational education rather than to college. Dr. Cheeks voiced her support and remarked that she encounters this stigma regularly in her work. Dr. Fox tasked P20 Council members with homework (see his slide titled "P20 Council Members' Involvement").

Mrs. Nicholson advocated for increasing employer representation on the Council, up to 50% of membership.

Workgroups

Attendees broke off into small groups to discuss the three guiding questions (item VI on the agenda) for fifteen minutes. The small groups then began to share with the entire body what they had discussed. Ms. McGillivray began the discussion from the perspective of employers, whom she said are looking to make connections and to learn about pathways to find skilled employees. Success from her perspective would be invoking connections and increasing skills in the workforce, which would present at better alignment between jobs and students. Dr. Fox suggested creating TikTok videos to connect to high school students as one means of considering the audience's needs and reaching them where they are. Ms. Eilers asked what credentials Ms. McGillivray was having the hardest time filling, and Ms. McGillivray listed several including echo, radiology techs, pharmacy techs, and surgical techs. Dr. Fox suggested Ms. McGillivray leverage the P20 Council by sharing her job postings with members, who could then share them with their networks. Dr. Cheeks said Asheville City Schools had held off on offering a pharmacy tech program in their CTE department but would now revisit that decision knowing that it's in need by local employers. Ms. Eilers said her group is looking forward to seeing the updated guides that Dr. Fox is creating in Special Project Two, and she said they will be especially helpful for newer residents in our region who are not already familiar with the educational landscape. Ms. Cole noted the educational attainment percentage for "less than high school" on the new myFutureNC county profile for Buncombe and asked how the Council could work to decrease that percentage since a high school diploma or equivalency is such a valuable minimum requirement in the workforce. Dr. Cheeks replied that there is still a push to go to a four-year college, and that the students who often end up becoming part of that group that doesn't complete high school are those for whom college is not a good fit. Because they don't see themselves in the next step of that pathway (college), they struggle to complete the prior step (high school). Mr. Ramsey commented that the state of NC is bringing in more people with higher levels of education than we are generating internally.

Closing Comments and Adjourn

Mrs. Nicholson thanked everyone for attending and informed attendees that she would be calling a special, short, virtual meeting in early March to vote (item III on the agenda). She adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting

May 10, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Henderson County (specific location TBD)