



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
HOMELAND SECURITY-EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
www.COE-HSEM.com

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Employer Engagement Brief

Employer engagement is critical to building successful pathways. Engaging employers produces benefits at every stage of the educational process and requires close cooperation with industry as well as public workforce agencies to ensure that pathways and supporting curriculum and instruction align with the labor market. Successful employer engagement and activities supporting it are part of a continuum and each step is important in deepening the relationship with an employer. The Center has been active in:

1. *Engagement - Solicit information from employers using a variety of methods, including one-on-one interviews, focus group surveys and presentations.*

- The Center utilizes all of these methods and has initiated an **Employer Engagement Pilot** in June using Homeland Security-Emergency Management pathway employers (Criminal Justice, Security, Cybersecurity/Technology, Fire Services; HSEM and Occupational Safety and Health, Emergency Medical and Health Services). The Center is directly engaging hiring managers with a focus in the private sector in emergency management, security-cybersecurity, and business continuity departments within a variety of organizations and employers statewide. These one-on-one meetings will gather information about industry demands and trends, skills and competency gaps, and how to enhance industry participation with college programs including the development of work-based training (internships) opportunities for students.

The Center is partnering with colleges' program faculty and staff during these engagements and will provide summaries of findings to CTC system colleges from the Pilot interviews related to hiring trends, skill sets and worker training needs. The HSEM staff are meeting with faculty and staff of cluster programs to discuss data, lessons learned and determine next steps for both changes in programs and/or curriculum and engagement that will strengthen student employability. The Center will continue the face-to-face employer engagement with any modifications learned expanding the engagement to additional career clusters.

- The Center utilizes the opportunity at conferences and other events to engage employers in gathering trends, skills and needs/gaps information. The Center is a sponsor of the Partners in Preparedness Annual Conference which occurs in April in Tacoma and draws over 1000 participants including practitioners, educators and the industries that support the sector cluster. This year the Center completed one-on-one interviews with 128 employers including government, healthcare, higher education, K-12, Military, NGO's, and private sector businesses (business services, commercial real-estate, manufacturing-Boeing, Starbucks). The survey gathered information on hiring practices, education levels and work experience required, and education gaps and needs. Technology advancements and soft skills continued to be top on the list of needs. The information was used to establish workshop sessions for the **Center's Educators/Practitioners Conference in June**. Seven (7) tracks were identified: Building Community, Resilience, Disaster Management, HSEM Education, Public Health Emergency Management, Cybersecurity and Emerging Technology and Security and Safety, Education Delivery and Natural Disasters and Climate Change. The second day of the event focused on Safety and Security training/education specifically and included a technology and business continuity track and a panel presentation on the impacts of globalization. Presentations from these activities are available on the Center's website and in video to be

utilized by faculty to access information for program and curriculum modifications and development. The survey information was provided to program coordinators, faculty and staff for use in developing certificates and degrees.

This same approach was used at the joint Oregon and Washington State Emergency Management Association meeting in September where Center staff interviewed 15 employers from around the state. This information will be compiled as part of our Pilot initiative.

2. Building Education Capacity – Expand capacity of colleges’ career and placement services.

- Through the one-on-one meetings of the Employer Engagement Pilot the Center is working with employers to identify and develop work-based learning opportunities (e.g. internships, on-the-job training, and paid/un-paid volunteers’ position) that will enhance industry participation with college programs around the CTC system. We are providing information and assistance to employers on how to host interns and discussing the benefits of providing a paid internships and hiring students who have successfully completed a certificate or degree programs. To date the Pilot has been able to establish five (5) permanent internships with companies including some paid internships. The Center has a new **“Work Experience Market Place”** section on the its website which brings students, employers, colleges and their faculty together in one centralized location to find volunteer, internships and job opportunities which will help them gain that much needed work experience to compliment the degree.

3. Credibility and Trust Built - Employer engagement in developing/modifying curriculum.

- Members of the Center’s Advisory Board in collaboration with the Center for Global Trade/Supply Chain Management, Highline’s Security, Safety and Emergency Management Institute, Pierce College HSEM Degree Program and security, maritime, port and transportation industry representatives completed a **DACUM in July** and they identified competency areas and current or needed new courses to be generated for the new **Maritime, Port and Transportation Security Certificate** which will be offered at Highline College. This new certificate program will utilize existing curriculum from the HSEM, Occupational Safety and Health and Supply Chain Management programs and the new Private Security Academy established at Highline to address a growing demand for trained private security professionals.

This new Certificate is expected to be available at Highline College winter quarter 2016 along with the Homeland Security-Emergency Management Certificate and AA degree. With the addition of Highline there are now eight colleges around the state offering the HSEM online degree. This innovative approach **allows colleges to collaborate** and offer specialized programs that they may not always have enough students to meet enrollment requirements for a full program. Students in the program also take general education and electives that **add to each participating colleges’ actual FTE count** generated by HSEM students.