**Tech Talent Advisory Committee Meeting**

***Meeting Notes***

**Department of Economic and Community Development**

December 9, 2020

3:15 – 4:00 PM

**Microsoft TEAMS Meeting**

**Attendance**

* Advisory Committee Members Present: Glendowlyn Thames, Jessica Dodge, Sanguthevar Rajasekaran, Matt Mervis, Jeff Wihbey, Lisa Jacobi, Gary Scharf, Karen Wosczyna-Birch, and Jennifer Widness
* Quorum: Yes
* Absent: Monoswita Saha, Bill Moschella, Dan Viens,
* Presenters: Kelli Vallieres (Governor’s Workforce Council and Office of Workforce Strategy); Laura Baker (Office of Workforce Strategy); Sean Petersen (Tech Talent South), Al Bhatt (Holberton School)
* DECD Staff: Carmen Molina-Rios, Beth Trenchard

**Welcome & Introductions**

Glendowlyn Thames opened the meeting at 3:18 PM with roll call and an overview of the meeting agenda.

**Overview of Governor’s Workforce Council Workforce Strategic Plan**

Ms. Thames introduced Kelli Vallieres of the Governor’s Workforce Council (the Council) and DECD Office of Workforce Strategy and asked her to share the high points of the state’s Workforce Development Strategic Plan (the Plan).

Ms. Vallieres provided an overview of the Plan that was launched in November culminating over a year’s worth of work that included, approximately100 people volunteering their time. The purpose was to look at the issues facing workforce development in the state of CT and what needed to be done systematically to improve quality and impact as well as ensure that the best practices could be scaled at a statewide level. The work fell into four categories of: business leadership, career & education, data & accountability, and equity & access.

Ms. Vallieres stated these efforts were to ensure that industry was at the center of informing the Plan; making sure that students are not only college ready but career ready; providing credentials that students can earn to advance into meaningful careers; building out systems that support career education in a meaningful way; addressing sector training for adult population; enhancing adult education programs for those that don’t have a high school degree; and building out a comprehensive system that links secondary schools to community colleges or four-year institutions whether they are public or private.

Ms. Vallieres commented that she has spent a lot of time identifying where the work is being done and connecting while leveraging the work. She highlighted an example relative to technology where Stanley Black and Decker has worked with the Business Higher Education Forum and the New England Board of Higher Education to secure a grant. The purpose is to explore how best to implant knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA’s) around technology and digital knowledge into curriculum. Also, to provide badges to students identifying the skills that industries understand and abilities for use and implementation of technology.

Another area of cooperation highlighted by Ms. Vallieres is with the College of Technology at the community colleges led by Karen Wosczyna-Birch and her team. Ideas under consideration are how to best connect the work of the Council with the Tech Talent Fund and IT programs that were launched through the Cares Act programs and Workforce Investment Boards. This is an effort to leverage the work that people are engaged in and connecting that work so that all stakeholders are marching to the same end goal and not being duplicative but being cooperative in the work. Ms. Vallieres commented that there is a lot to be done but there is a lot of great momentum moving that work forward.

Another topic Kelli shared was that the workforce team is preparing to outreach to philanthropy. They have put together a list of initiatives that could be supported by Philanthropy, such as the computer science for a CT program that ReadyCT and Shannon Marion and her team have been working on. The purpose of the conversation will be to see how and if they can connect philanthropy work with key initiatives funded through the Cares Act Programs, such as in the medical sector. The focus and hope is to identify alignment of the work and help connect through funding or philanthropy involvement by sharing their knowledge in those initiatives.

Kelli also provided a report on the legislative work underway by the Council for a 21st Century Workforce legislative bill. They are beginning to meet with committees and individual legislators on the proposed bill. The proposed bill supports moving the strategic Plan forward with all stakeholders involved.

The cross over with the Council’s work to the Tech Talent Fund is around technology and implementation of technology focused skilled development investments i.e. Governor’s Workforce Council on Women and Girls who has a big initiative, ReadyCT, CS for CT, Girls for Technology, BHEF/NEBHE with the Community Colleges connecting curriculum and credentialing through Credential Engines and CSDE. Ms. Vallieres emphasized there is excitement to be part of this group and make the appropriate connections. She concluded by announcing that the next quarterly meeting of the Governor’s Workforce Council is January 28, 2021 at 2:30 to 5:00 pm which is open to the public.

**Update and Outcomes of the Covid Response Programming**

Laura Baker of DECD Office of Workforce Strategy provided an update on the CARES Act funding for training and supportive services. Ms. Baker reported that 85% of the projected slots for workforce development and training services are filled. In the area of supportive services and childcare, the program has outperformed at a rate of 111% which includes technology, hotspots, 1,500 childcare spots filled and 400 childcare licenses that help people to get to the training. The program is coming to an end within the next three weeks, and they are looking forward to address how these programs can be leveraged in the future.

**Remote-Learning and Workforce Training Initiatives**

Ms. Baker also provided an update on Metrix Learning and reported that the programs are doing very well. In the Soft Skills area, there have been 22,000 people that have requested logins and over 11,000 licenses have been given out with 6,140 training being completed. Laura shared a story of a student that wanted to attend more project management classes and reached out to the local workforce board inquiring about getting access to a certification in the content area. The local workforce board has supported that individual and is working with them to get the project management certification.

The 180 Skills Update is another area Laura emphasized there are 700+ courses in Career Readiness & Technical upskilling. CSCU has started to really rev up their participation. She has been working with the technical high school’s mechatronics which are getting uploaded and on board. ReadyCT Student 5.0 is doing all their classes and doing well. Over 5,000 logins have been provided. She can only see the numbers going up and really starting to utilize it as effective mechanism for remote learning. This is something that is raised by the college of technology individuals and the technical high schools have been asking for. Since they are remote, this program provides an alternate way to getting those skills and accessing the curriculum. The teachers are excited to leverage these programs to use for their remote learners.

**Update on Tech Talent Fund Programs: Tech Talent South**

Sean Petersen with Tech Talent South reported that programs run to date are focusing predominantly on Full Stack Development – imparting skills of front end and back end data science and analytics programs. Enrolled in Full Stack are 91 and 29 in Data Science and Analytics programs that are aligned with their cohorts.

Enrolled in graduate programs 60% toward goal of 200 students enrolled by end of year 2 and 50%+ are women/minorities/veterans. There has been a lot of interest from those working from home looking to take advantage of learning opportunities. There have been nearly 500 candidates screened in 2020 alone. 50% toward goal of graduating 180 students by end of year 2. 83% of reporting candidates are currently employed.

Sean spotlighted a student whose undergrad degree was in political science with work experience in social services and went through the program. She wanted to undertake technical training in computer science which she did not take advantage of in her undergrad or grad school education. She was trained in front end development and has now landed a job at Accenture.

**Districts Arts & Education (Holberton School New Haven)**

Al Bhatt provided an update and overview of the performance data to date. Applications for the first part of the year were lower than targeted. However, after adjusting a few things, they were able to achieve a significant jump for the January cohort with a 60% increase in applications. Demographics look good but are not up to their target. The program is seeing a lot more applicants that are straight out of high school, which is higher than earlier on in the program. Although the program continues to get good traction, it has experienced a negative impact on the conversion rate due to financial life issues getting in the way of fully enrolling into the program. Another impact has been due to those having to withdraw for personal, financial reasons, but they are working with these students to have a path forward that will allow them to come back when ready.

The program had its first graduating cohort for the full two-year period. All graduates have landed significant roles and employment with average salaries in the low $70,000 which is fulfilling the promise of the program to fast track into a meaningful career.

Mr. Bhatt highlighted a special graduate that encapsulated all aspects of the program and mission. Mia is a lifelong New Haven resident who was taught in New Haven but frustrated that there wasn’t access to computer science programming and decided to learn more about it herself. She successfully graduated with a specialization in machine learning (AI). Her skills can easily land her a high paying job in California, for example. However, she wants to remain in New Haven to do what she is passionate about with machine learning and contributing to teaching.

Another area that was reported on is the Project/Transformer programing that is addressing the lack of proper preparation in Computer Science precursor skills and interpersonal and personal effectiveness skills. An analysis performed in the summer showed that New Haven students, as well as those in other cities, are failing the entrance exam at 2x the rate of everyone else. When you look at it in more depth it may potentially be due to the lack of preparation in high school. Students do not have the precursor skills. The program received some funding from private and public funding to offer a year-round program. The timeline will be starting the first class in March of 2021 to focus on high school juniors and seniors in the New Haven and Stamford areas. The plan will be to grow it to Waterbury, Bridgeport, and the Valley Region for persons of disability and adult learners in transition by 2022.

Comments were made to emphasize the importance of the data and the diversity of talent in computer science with the teaching ability to impact students and community. The program is a testament to the work of the tech talent pilots and is generationally life changing.

**Financial Portfolio Review**

Glendowlyn Thames provided an overview of the current Tech Talent fund and highlighted the authorization and balance remaining in the fund.

**2021 Schedule of Meetings**

The 2021 quarterly meeting schedule was shared with the Advisory Committee.

**Meeting Closed**

Glendowlyn Thames closed the meeting at 4:02 PM.