Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College  
Business & Industry Leaders Forum Questionnaire Results  
September, 2008

WITC President Bob Meyer conducted Business and Industry Leader forums at WITC campuses in September 2008 to seek input into key questions that would help develop and prioritize the strategic goals and direction of WITC for 2009 and beyond. Leaders were given the opportunity to complete a Business & Industry Leader Questionnaire in written or online format.

A total of 19 leaders responded to the online survey or paper questionnaire. The Ashland campus was not represented by Business and Industry in this data collection. Leaders were asked for their responses to three questions. Each question is noted, with leader responses listed below and are sorted according to campus.

Question 1. What are you willing to share about your business’ or community’s plans for the future that might impact WITC’s planning?

1. **Renewable Energy**  

2. **Aging Workforce**  
a. Aging workforce/retirements and even more complex machining. (NR)

3. **Technology and/or Skills Needed**  
a. We have an increased need for TIG welders and possibly machine operators. (NR)  
b. Refrigeration Techs and Engineers. CNC. Maintenance. (RL)  
c. Our company is currently engaged as S.I.C. 3728 aircraft manufacturing/parts. We are growing at a rate of 20% annually and will see needs in management, design, and engineering (mechanical), as well as CNC operation within the existing base. (S)  
d. 1. Alternative graduation programs.  
2. Expansion of Youth Options.  
3. Expanded use of technology. (S)
e. NW CEP, Inc. is planning two additional welding boot camps in partnership with WITC’s Superior campus and one with WITC’s Ashland campus. In addition to supporting community members to continue their education in various fields to re-enter the workforce. (S)

4. Collaboration or Integration with Industry and Community
   a. We would be interested in better integrating our company in the community through educational and training facilities. (RL)
   b. The utilization and implementation of services offered through NWMOC at UW Stout, and how we can continue our partnership with WITC and manufacturers in WITC district. (RL)
   c. We have several collaborative initiatives with the Superior WITC and our relationship is very strong. It would be helpful to share how we can continue to meet the needs of the community as funding resources continue to shrink. (S)

5. Educational and Training Needs
   a. On-going training and educational needs that must be met every year to comply with State of Wisconsin standards. (S)
   b. Training needs and general business outlook. (S)
   c. Family Forum, Inc. provides Head Start services to the five northwest counties of Wisconsin. Our direction comes from the office of Head Start in Washington and the legislation comes directly from Congress. The Head Start program originally was created to serve children three to five years of age. In the 90’s the program was expanded to serve children prenatal to five. The latter is called Early Head Start. The trend in the future for Head Start is to serve the younger ages in a home-based setting. This is most likely influenced by the emphasis in the country for universal pre-school. Our agency will follow the national trend. At the present time there is a lot of competition for the pre-school children between public school, day care businesses and Head Start. The good news is that there will continue to be quality services available for young children. The vehicle that will provide the service is still being developed. (S)

6. Additional Expansion or Employee Needs
   a. Expansion for 5-7 new workers in 2009-2010. (S)
   b. Future development planning, future program services. (S)
   c. As the mining industry continues to grow in the Iron Range this will have a direct impact on our business. With that growth we will be looking at additional employees in the range area. Areas for potential hiring, delivery/route driver, warehouse personal, clerical. (S)
1. **New Trends**
   a. We need to be able to train workers to fill manufacturing needs to attract new businesses, and package and market to prospects. (NR)
   b. WITC must understand new trends in the economy and be prepared to implement and respond. (NR)

2. **Additional Expansion or Employee Needs**
   a. Not enough students in the pipeline. Upgrading skills of an already skilled workforce. (NR)

3. **Technology and/or Skills Needed**
   a. Management and Supervisory development. CNC and HVAC training. Retaining qualified candidates in Wisconsin. (RL)
   b. CNC training in our advanced manufacturing program is limited, as currently it comes with OJT and OEM on/offsite training and continuing education programs. The design/engineering and detail drafting is currently done on outside contract basis for two reasons: cyclical use, and high-end technical needs. Entry level drafting and detailing may serve in the future with continued support inside and out. As you are aware, our region is extremely short on this talent. (S)
   c. Work ethic. Skills related to MFB and steel fabrication. (S)
   d. As manufacturing equipment continues to get more complex, we need higher educated and trained employees. Focus on training is more important than ever. It is the key to success in a very competitive market place. (S)

4. **Educational and Training Needs**
   a. We are not seeing applicants with the required skill level for our positions. (NR)
   b. Patrol and Jail Officer in-service training is needed throughout the year. Specialty training would be of great interest to my department (Evidence Technician, Interview/Interrogation, etc.) (S)
   c. 1. Need for people who can sign.
       2. Use of technology.
       3. Alternative needs of students. (S)
   d. Staff training in budgeting, negotiations, and staff recruitment planning. (S)
   e. One of the biggest challenges we are faced with when recruiting people is whether they have both the educational background along with strong work ethic and teamwork attitude. Not sure how you can teach individuals the latter, however those are things we look for when hiring individuals in any position. (S)

Question 2. What educational, training, or recruitment issues do you face in accomplishing those plans?
f. We have faced issues with the graduating RN's ability to pass their NCLEX exam. (S)
g. The educational credentials required of our staff continues to rise due to congressional legislation, 'The Head Start Improvement Act of 2007' was signed by the President in December 2007. Teachers are now required to have a four year degree in early childhood and a State license while teacher assistants will be required to have a child development associate credential (CDA) and an AA degree is preferred. Teachers will need to work both with the child and with the parent to help the family meet their needs. Teachers will have to not only teach the children but will have to think like a social worker to help the family set goals and better their life. Staff need continuous training in health, safety, blood born pathogens, first aid, CPR, and other family life issues.

Recruitment to our positions is not too difficult at this time, mostly due to lack of jobs in the area (we have 130 staff on our payroll). Our wages in Head Start are in the middle between Child Care and the Public School System. We do have to give a lot of training to our staff in many areas only to see them move to public school if they have the opportunity. (S)

5. Collaboration or Integration with Industry and Community
   a. Just building a 'stronger' partnership between WITC and UW-Extension. (S)
e. Accommodate local training needs. Work with other educational agencies to provide skilled labor for business. Play active role in economic development. (S)

f. WITC is one of the greatest assets of our community. A strong administrator like Vertin, along with her campus colleagues should continue the great job and remain visible and connected to the community. (S)

g. The City of Duluth looks forward to fostering relationships amongst industry sectors, 2-year and 4-year educational institutions, workforce investment boards, and others in Minnesota, with the goal of leveraged resources across the state line. (S)

h. Continue to partner on projects with open conversations. Ann Charbonneau, Kelly Mulan, Mary Jo Anderson and Mr. Palmer have been phenomenal! We would really like to see the books and supplies needed for students available at the local campus. (S)

2. Student Needs
   a. Improve access for all students (distance learning, satellite facilities, video streaming). (NR)
   b. Student on-the-job placements, seminars to learn of new programs at WITC, informational exchanges of programs and services. (S)

3. Technology and/or Skills Needed
   a. We would like to have instructors from the welding program visit our plant and see the specific type of work we do. We would also be interested in partnering with instructors to provide the training needed for our positions. We are also interested in visiting the school to present our company and different jobs we hire for here. (NR)
   b. Continue to offer programs tailored to meet the needs of manufacturing companies. Explore ways to offer classes that meet the needs of people working full-time. (S)

   c. Educational and Training Needs
   d. Providing relevant training in close proximity to Rice Lake. Adult Education. CVTC is too far to travel to. (RL)
   e. Continue doing what has been done in previous years. WITC offers very good training for a very reasonable cost. (S)
   f. Educate to needs of community employers from ethics to job skills. (S)
   g. Continue to provide the business/community with the high quality of education that WITC is known for. (S)
   h. The expectation of our citizens and mandates from the state and federal level to have services provided, be accountable, and be prepared to handle any emergency that comes along require additional education and training at all levels. Local elected/appointed officials are in need of programs to better understand their responsibilities/liabilities and the significance of their role in providing both daily and emergency services. WITC already provides training to fire and EMS agencies in our area. The hours for emergency response
classes are ever increasing, making it more difficult to get people to take the required training. Classes that were held locally in the past now often require traveling some distance, removing responders from their service area and adding the cost of travel to the training expense. There is little training available for local government officials in how to conduct business, prepare budgets, and oversee the operations of a small township or village. Many small community officials do not understand the laws that govern them. If training hours could be more productive and based on competencies instead of hours, it would be beneficial. This is particularly true of required refresher classes when students are proficient in the required skills and have to spend hours in class to meet the timeline requirement. Anything to make the education process easier and more productive for the volunteers and local officials would be beneficial. I believe our local instructors are doing the best they can under the current requirements, but perhaps the requirements need to be looked at. (S)

i. We continue to need Child Care I (40 hours), Child Care II (80 hours), AA degree in Child Development, Child Development Associate credential (CDA) and a bachelors degree in Early Childhood. We need these courses to career develop people into our system. We would like to see the courses have the ability to transfer to college credits as the person moved through the system. (Many of our staff have left many, many credits by the side of the road as they tried to keep up with the ever increasing educational requirements).

We appreciate the coordination and continuing discussion of our needs. We have appreciated the willingness of WITC to permit us to use their conference centers in Superior and Ashland for our activities. It has helped us a lot. We benefit from the many WITC students who are assigned to Head Start centers to gain practical experiences with young children. (S)