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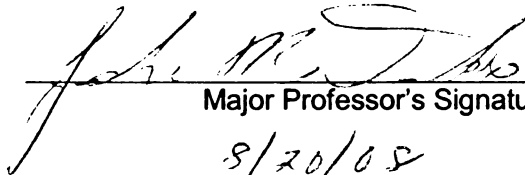
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**THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP:
COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTICIPATION
IN WORKFORCE BOARDS**

By

Shenita Brokenburr

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP: COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTICIPATION IN WORKFORCE BOARDS

By

Shenita Brokenburr

Community colleges have played an important role in education, training and workforce development since their founding in the early twentieth century. Over the past 10 years, the growing demand for highly skilled workers coinciding with increased outsourcing, globalization and welfare reform efforts has generated a renewed interest in community college participation in workforce development.

In 1996, federal welfare reform efforts targeting disadvantaged populations brought local employers together with community-based organizations, educational institutions (K-12 and postsecondary education), government agencies and labor unions to comprise state and local workforce boards that oversee state workforce development activities. Local workforce boards design workforce development systems, create job training policy and oversee implementation efforts, and distribute federal welfare funding while also ensuring that program accountability and performance standards are met. By virtue of their authority, workforce boards have significant influence and impact on statewide economic and workforce development efforts in each state.

Although welfare reform implementation efforts vary widely, the literature suggests that the majority of states design workforce systems and create policies that facilitate community colleges having a central role in workforce development. In states with more flexible policies, postsecondary education is permitted in lieu of work and combined strategies that facilitate self-sufficiency are utilized. Similarly, community

colleges have created successful programs and curricula geared toward moving the disadvantaged to sustained self-sufficiency through job training programs that articulate into vocational certifications and degree programs that encourage life-long learning. These programs are more holistic in helping to facilitate self-sufficiency because of their job placement, wage progression and career pathways components. In contrast, there is evidence to suggest that community college participation in the new framework is not being fully realized in states where workforce development efforts focus on immediate labor force attachment (work-first).

Community colleges are integral to workforce development systems because they have the support services infrastructure to create specialized programs that help mitigate a variety of personal issues and address barriers to employment for disadvantaged populations. As prescribed partners in state workforce development efforts under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), community colleges have the potential for an even greater role through their participation on workforce boards. This case study explored the effects of community college involvement in workforce boards and the ways in which they collaborate and partner with each other, local employers, government agencies, community-based organizations, K-12 educational entities, and labor unions in workforce development initiatives.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
 CHAPTER ONE Introduction	 1
Purpose of the Study	2
Background and Rationale	2
Statement of the Problem	11
Research Question	12
Significance of the Study	13
Summary	15
 CHAPTER TWO Review of Literature	 17
Overview	17
A History of Job Training Programs in the U.S.	19
Social Welfare Legislation (1930-1959).....	19
Anti-poverty (1960)	21
Manpower Development Training Act (1962)	23
Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1970s)	25
Job Training Partnership Act (1980s)	27
Welfare Reform (1996-Present)	30
A Closer Look at WIA	34
Does work-first work?	35
Governance and Policy Implementation	37
Economic Stratification	38
Access to Postsecondary Education	39
Summary	40
 CHAPTER THREE Methods and Procedures	 43
Research Design.....	43
Site Selection	44
Participant Selection	44
Data Collection	45
Phase I - Pilot Study	45
Pilot Site Visits	45
Benefits of the Pilot Study	45
Phase II -Dissertation Research	46
Access to the Site	46
Participant Selection	46
In-depth Interviews	49
Documentation	49
Instrumentation	50
Direct Observations	50

Confidentiality	50
Validity and credibility	51
Data Analysis	51
Role of the Researcher	52
Biases	54
Limitations and De-limitations	54
 CHAPTER FOUR Findings	56
Conceptual Framework	56
Context	57
The Higher Education Landscape	58
Antecedents of Partnership.....	60
The Champion: The Linger of Engler	64
The Public-Private Partnership	73
Stakeholder Perspectives	77
Community Colleges	77
K-12 Education	82
Business and Industry	82
Government	83
Labor Unions	84
Community College Roles.....	85
Advisor.....	86
Education Provider	89
Training Vendor	90
Subject Matter Expert	93
Advocate	98
Current Economic and Workforce Development Initiatives	100
Jobs Education and Training (JET)	100
No Worker Left Behind	102
Prisoner Re-entry	103
Key Findings	104
Summary of the Findings Chapter	107
 CHAPTER 5 Discussion, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion...	109
Discussion	110
S.W.O.T. Analysis.....	110
Strengths	110
Weaknesses.....	114
Opportunities	117
Threats	119
Implications.....	123
Recommendations by Stakeholder Group	127
Conclusion	131
 APPENDICES	135
Appendix A: Interview Questions.....	136

Appendix B: Statement/Letter of Informed Consent Form.....	137
Appendix C: Detailed Interview Protocol.....	139
Appendix D: Demographic Sheet.....	140
Appendix E: Summary of Data Sources and Participants by Sector	141
Appendix F: Profiles of Community Colleges Participating in this Study.....	142
REFERENCES	144

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: A Chronology of Federal Job Training Programs in the United States....	24
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Michigan Career Development System	64
--	----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Michigan Career Development System	64
--	----

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“[W]here community colleges and other providers of vocational and adult education have failed to participate in state discussions about workforce development, the cleavage between education and training has persisted to the detriment of all” (W. Norton Grubb, 2001).

Community colleges have played an important role in education, training, and workforce development since their founding in the early twentieth century. As the social and economic climate in the early twentieth century evolved from industrial to knowledge-based, the federal government continued to look to educational institutions for solutions to mitigate social issues such as desegregation, as well as distressed economic conditions resulting from a move toward more technologically advanced industries and shifting patterns of preparation for the workforce (Cohen and Brawer, 2002). As an access point for traditional and non-traditional students and a partner and service provider to business and community agencies, community colleges also play a critical role in economic and workforce development. The more than 1,200 publicly supported comprehensive state institutions (AACC, 2008) provide occupational programs, a variety of special interest courses, and basic skill development to 50% of the students beginning the first two years of baccalaureate studies (Townsend, 2001). Their open access mission contributes to their diverse student population, which includes adult and traditional college students, the academically under-prepared, incumbent workers, and the socio-economically disadvantaged.

Community colleges are central to workforce development efforts under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and have the potential for an even greater role through their involvement in workforce boards. Workforce boards can facilitate or impede

community college participation in workforce development through their policy decisions, and program design and development (Melendez, et al., 2004). The potential contributions of community colleges to economic and workforce development from a macro perspective are noted throughout the literature, but the effect of their involvement in local workforce boards is not known. This noticeable gap in the workforce development literature further confirms the need for additional research on community college involvement in workforce boards (Melendez, 2004; AACC, 1999).

Purpose of the Study

Workforce boards are the governing structures responsible for policy development and design of workforce development systems in local areas. This study explored the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan and the ways in which these educational institutions collaborate and partner with each other, local employers, government agencies, community-based organizations, K-12 educational entities, and labor unions in workforce development initiatives.

Background and Rationale

Since its founding, the United States (U.S.) has been dedicated to the belief that all individuals should have the opportunity to rise to their greatest potential and thus, all barriers to individual development should be broken down (Cowen and Brawer, 2002). As a society, Americans began looking to education and training as a means of facilitating equality, opportunity and upward mobility in the nineteenth century (AACC, 2008). Consistent with this thinking was the idea that increased attainment of education could address societal ills such as discrimination, unemployment, drug abuse, and the problem of racial integration. This notion greatly influenced public policy and elevated

the role of higher education in U.S. society (Thelin, 2004; LaFree, 1998; Cohen and Brawer, 2002).

Expanding Access to Education. Education as a cure for societal ills can be traced back to legislation passed during the Civil War era. With the passing of the Morrill Acts of 1860 and 1890, access to higher education expanded to include those populations to whom it had been previously denied, such as women and blacks. These two important pieces of legislation not only signaled the beginning of the federal government's strong influence on educational institutions, but are credited with changing the face of higher education in both literal and figurative senses (Thelin, 2004). The Morrill Acts placed greater demands on schools at every level, and the belief that increased educational attainment, as defined by more years of schooling, was the cure to societal ills can be specifically noted as the first of several societal shifts that would directly impact higher education. Those shifts were made amid the push for social equality, the need for a highly trained workforce in the wake of expanding industries, and the move to de-emphasize a liberal arts-centered curriculum in favor of more practical education and training.

As a wider range of the population began to seek education beyond high school, publicly supported universities and junior colleges, as they were originally called, were credited with contributing the most to expanding access to education to diverse students. Junior colleges first appeared on the scene in 1901 and immediately stood out as the educational entity that encouraged social equality through its open door admissions policy. Junior colleges were initially created as community extensions of secondary schools to facilitate transfer to four-year institutions. These colleges gradually expanded

their focus to meet the needs of business and industry, by offering customized vocational training and occupational preparation.

Customized Training. In the past, community colleges participated in workforce development by creating programs and curricula to address the continuing and emerging needs of specific occupation groups and career clusters. Customized training, also referred to as contract training, is a collaboration between the training vendor and the company or organization to develop and deliver client-specific training on a specified topic (Isbell, Truko and Barnow, 2000). As early as the 1960s, Bragg and Jacobs (1993) report that community colleges provided corporate training to companies in Southern states, as firms relocated to the South as a part of a common economic development strategy. During tough economic times, community colleges also provided customized training to new employees in their communities as a foundational tool for basic skill development for jobs and helped to retrain laid-off workers in firm-specific occupations.

Today, more than 93% of community colleges develop and deliver customized training programs and some include workforce and economic development in their stated missions (Bragg and Jacobs, 1993). In response to the rapid expansion of technology and the explosion of the knowledge economy, community colleges help to advance economic development and enhance workforce development through customized training that addresses these specific areas of growth. In addition to creating customized training programs that enhance business productivity, community colleges also provide practical and cost-effective solutions to mitigate unemployment and increase the supply of skilled workers through federal job training programs.

Federal Job Training. Job training programs in the U.S. originated with a job finding service in 1915, during World War I (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). Since that time job training efforts have sought to provide individuals with the necessary skills and basic education competencies needed for employment and success in the workplace (Grubb, 2001). Over time, federally funded job training programs focused increasingly on serving disadvantaged populations, often adding different sectors incrementally in response to the new legislation. As the federal government in the 21st century seeks to design programs and workforce development systems that serve disadvantaged populations, community colleges have the potential to play a more expanded and prominent role in economic and workforce development efforts in local communities, that of an integrated partner.

The literature indicates that job training alone is ineffective as the sole method of producing highly skilled workers in a technologically advanced economy (Harrison and Weiss, 1998). Harrison and Weiss (1998) make an important distinction between job training and workforce development by positing that job training is just one element of workforce development that includes “a constellation of activities from orientation to the work world...to follow-up counseling and crisis intervention”. They also argue that successful workforce development enhances the ability to learn, as well as integrates trainees into the social networks where jobs exist (Harrison and Weiss, 1998). And, although the 1996 welfare reform legislation reportedly reduced nationwide welfare rolls by 60% through its emphasis on short-term training and quick employment (Ewalt and Jennings, 2004), there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that these jobs promote self-sufficiency and/or prevent re-entry into the social services system.

As noted, WIA created an integrated system of employment, training and educational services that are accessible to every citizen, not just disadvantaged populations. With every citizen now able to access resources, employment and training systems that de-emphasize postsecondary education or impose strict time constraints on training programs may have a direct bearing on the skill level and preparation of job seekers.

Workforce boards as oversight entities have the latitude to determine whether or not vocational training or formal education is permissible in lieu of work. Each state through its workforce boards can steer participants in its workforce development system toward more stringent work-first solutions (McCormick, 2003) or toward a system that incorporates a more holistic design for job training that articulates into vocational certification within a career cluster. These solutions do not represent the only viable designs for workforce development systems, but are those most prevalent in the literature. The policies and programs implemented by workforce boards directly influence economic development, and workforce boards through their partnerships with community colleges and local employers have the potential to help low-wage workers advance into more highly skilled and better paying jobs with established career ladders and wage progression scales.

Economic Development. As public job training efforts evolved into workforce development systems, one of the most important developments in welfare reform efforts was bringing together the drivers of economic development: skilled workers and the employers who need them. As a result, many states view workforce development as a key component of economic development. This suggests that the education and skill levels of

workers are integral to the success of local economies. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005), employment for high-skill occupations (those requiring a bachelor's degree or higher) have risen significantly in the last two decades, and job openings in middle skill occupational categories (those requiring more than high-school, but less than a four year degree) will make up almost 50% of the jobs in demand over the next ten years (Holzer and Lerman, 2007). There is also data to suggest the potential for an even wider wage disparity between high skill and low skill workers (Grubb et al., 1999).

Community colleges can help bridge this gap with their open access mission and infrastructure of supportive services (Carnevale, 2000). With a history of involvement in job training programs and delivering contract training to local industries, community colleges are well positioned to play a central role as local and regional labor market intermediaries (Melendez et. al., 2004). Similarly, workforce boards across the country see community colleges as central to workforce development efforts because of their student services infrastructure, relationships with local businesses and their history of serving disadvantaged populations (Melendez et al., 2004). Their expansive networks and relationships in the community make them vital to increasing educational attainment and skill levels of the workforce and connecting employers with skilled workers.

The literature indicates that in states where community colleges serve at the periphery of workforce development efforts, work-first is strongly encouraged and longer term educational programs in lieu of work is de-emphasized, and in some states are discouraged (McCormick, 2003). In contrast, Greenberg, Strawn, and Plimpton (2000) advance that at least 34 states have workforce development system designs that either permit or encourage postsecondary education in lieu of the work requirement under WIA.

Programs that included a mix of job search with education and training reportedly led to a 13% increase in wages as opposed to those with a work-first focus (National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Strategies, 2000). These more expansive designs bode well for local economies because postsecondary education and training for low-income individuals have a high economic return. Notably, one of the most successful welfare to work programs ever studied operated in Portland, Oregon and boasts that over a two year period, Portland helped recipients raise educational attainment four-fold as indicated by an increase in high school diplomas, occupational licenses or certifications (Brock, Matus-Grossman, Hamilton, 2001; NEWWS, 2000). Individuals who earn an associate's degree also reportedly earned between 19-23% more than their peers; and those with bachelor's degree earned 28-33% more than their peers (Greenberg, Strawn, and Plimpton, 2000).

Partnerships and Collaboration. Welfare reform efforts instituted and endorsed partnership as an underlying theme of WIA, where partnership constitutes a complex network of service providers, bound together by ties of mutual referrals and informal consultations (Monsma, 2004). As active participants in local workforce boards, community colleges support current workforce development policy efforts by partnering with local businesses and community organizations and are becoming known as a preferred labor market intermediary that connects skilled individuals with available jobs (McCormick, 2003). There is also literature to support the premise that the extent to which community colleges respond to and are involved in new policy initiatives is determined primarily by internal factors such as the college leadership's commitment to a comprehensive mission, the existence of successful programs and prior experiences

serving the disadvantaged, faculty and staff attitudes toward non-degree programs and on-going relations and collaborations with local labor, businesses, and industries and social service agencies (Fitzgerald, 2004, Melendez 2004).

Collaborations between community colleges and other workforce sectors are imperative if the increasing demands of employers for a highly skilled workforce are to be met. Community colleges can also mitigate a variety of personal issues and address some barriers to employment because of their support services infrastructure. There is, however, evidence to suggest that community college participation in the new framework is not being fully realized. Without participating in key conversations and advocating for access to education and career pathways for low-income adults, there is little chance that a more holistic approach to education and training programs will prevail (Grubb, 1999). While much has been written about the potential contributions of community colleges to economic and workforce development from a macro perspective, the extent of their involvement in local workforce boards is not known. Moreover, the noticeable gap in the workforce development literature further confirms the need for additional research on community college participation on workforce boards (Melendez, 2004; AACC, 1999).

A New Concern

“The focus of welfare reform should be on moving people out of poverty, not just off welfare. State community colleges are essential to accomplishing this goal” (Gary Locke, 2004).

We are at yet another critical juncture in the U.S. economy and in our society, and Locke makes a good point as we consider employment and training models and formulate strategies for increasing self-sufficiency for disadvantaged populations. Job training programs operate within the context of existing labor markets (Bennici, Mangum and

Sum, 2000) and two important trends are worthy of consideration: Deindustrialization and globalization.

Economic shifts continue to cause declines in agricultural and goods-producing employment sectors, primarily manufacturing, mining and construction (Bennici, Mangum and Sum, 2000). Declines are projected to continue beyond 2010 (BLS, 2004), as the real dollar value of output expands more rapidly than employment gains, especially in the manufacturing industry, thus contributing to further deindustrialization of the American economy (Bennici, Mangum and Sum, 2000). At the same time, increased competition stemming from globalization, or the transfer of goods and services across countries, makes firms more vigilant about production costs, human capital and value creation—all of which are important aspects of the economic development. Wage rates for jobs requiring no education beyond high school are lower in underdeveloped countries, contributing to firms increased outsourcing of goods and services and decreased jobs in the United States (Bennici, Mangum and Sum, 2000). Job loss has displaced a significant number of workers (Duderstadt, 2005), making job training programs vital to workforce and economic development.

Research indicates that economic conditions will dictate that all Americans have educational attainment beyond high school to have a middle-class life-style and any semblance of a better quality of life (Holzer and Lerman, 2007). Numerous studies show that increased educational attainment results in higher personal income, advanced skills and a more adaptable workforce, improved health and personal finance, and fewer demands on social services (National Center on Public Policy in Higher Education, 2004; Baum and Payea, 2004). Moreover, an analysis of population data from the U.S. census

bureau from 1959-1997 found that more than two-thirds of workers in growing, well-paying occupations have at least some level of postsecondary education (Carneveale et al., 2001).

The new global economy stresses speed, performance, flexibility and collaboration (Atkinson and Court, 1998). If our nation is going to successfully compete in the global marketplace, policymakers must go beyond a limited view of job training and embrace a more holistic model of workforce development that feeds into economic development. Collaboration and partnership between public and private entities are at the center of those efforts. As noted, community colleges are central to efforts to educate and increase the skill level of all populations, not just the disadvantaged.

Statement of the Problem

WIA is the major legislation resulting from welfare reform efforts and provides the opportunity for community colleges and other educational institutions to play key roles in economic and workforce development through workforce boards. Workforce boards bring together business, government, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and labor unions to determine policy and design a mix of education, training, and placement strategies for job training programs in their locales. Though the federal legislation specifically names community colleges as workforce board members, there is no mandate for inclusion of community colleges if workforce boards were grandfathered in from previous legislation.

With globalization, outsourcing and advanced technology as the prominent features of the landscape of the current economy, there is a renewed emphasis on community college partnering with employers and other sectors of the economy to

develop programs and curricula that facilitate entry into the high-wage, highly-skilled labor market, especially for under-skilled and disadvantaged populations. As the knowledge-based economy continues to demand more advanced skills, partnerships and collaborations between public and private entities are critical to formulating comprehensive strategies that prepare welfare recipients, incumbent workers and other job seekers with the skills they need to be financially self-sufficient (Melendez, 2004). Strategies that integrate employer commitments for placement with education and vocational training within career pathways arguably will yield the most effective outcomes.

In some states, however, workforce boards have established policies that steer disadvantaged populations away from postsecondary educational opportunities, by imposing strict eligibility requirements for maintaining benefits and by disallowing long-term education programs in lieu of work (Katsinas, Banachowski, Bliss and Short, 1999; McCormick, 2004). Policies that restrict access to postsecondary education do little to prepare disadvantaged workers for jobs demanding advanced skills and potentially limit their ability to earn wages above the poverty level (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000; Melendez et al., 2000).

Research Question

The research question guiding this study is, “What is the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan?”

This research contributes to the workforce development literature by providing a better understanding of the collaborative partnerships community colleges develop with local workforce boards within the workforce development system in Michigan. Intended

audiences for this work include state government entities and community college administrators, scholars, workforce development professionals, and business and industry leaders engaged in economic and workforce development efforts. The study will provide a better understanding the role of partnership and collaboration in creating programs and curricula that prepare and match people to jobs in existing and emerging industries in local labor markets. This research also underscores the importance of cohesive relationships and active involvement of community colleges in policy and governance structures, such as workforce boards.

Significance of the Study

As the governing structures that oversee welfare reform implementation efforts, workforce boards have a strong influence on community college involvement in workforce development through state policy (Melendez et al., 2000). The literature on welfare reform indicates that welfare program designs and policies are based on one of several approaches: a work-first philosophy, sometimes referred to as a labor force attachment (LFA) approach, which emphasizes job search and quick employment; or what is known as a human capital development (HCD) approach, emphasizing longer term skill building activities and include adult basic education (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000). The terms work-first and LFA will be used interchangeably. The third approach is a hybrid model that mixes elements of the two (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000).

The work-first environments have reportedly been successful at reducing welfare rolls in the short term, but unsuccessful at creating financial independence over the long-term (Melendez et al., 2000; Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000). Similarly, there is

research to indicate that welfare models grounded in adult basic education programs do not produce significant employment gains (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000; NEWWS, 2000). Scholars and practitioners alike assert that work-first policy environments are shortsighted and do little to ensure wage progression and self sufficiency in the long-term because they limit access to postsecondary education (Grubb et al. 1999; Imel, S., 2000; Gueron, J., Pauly, E., and Lougy, C., 1991; McCormick, 2003, Fitzgerald, 2004).

Workforce boards that employ a work-first philosophy in employment and training program design have reportedly created policy environments that have “a chilling effect” on community college collaborations (McCormick, 2003; Melendez, 2004). In these environments, workforce boards implement policies which emphasize job search and quick employment with no long-term focus on financial self-sufficiency. Proponents of LFA programs argue that quick employment programs are more cost-effective to implement and have the added benefit of moving people off welfare into work within short time frames (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000; NEWWS, 2000). They also argue against programs with a longer term focus that includes postsecondary education and training, charging that doing so results in delayed entry into the labor market “without guaranteeing that foregone earnings would be made up by better jobs later” (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000). Thus, these environments limit community college involvement in federal workforce programs (McCormick, 2004).

Environments with more flexible policies, i.e. where workforce development programs combine postsecondary education, training, and job placement and may include a lifelong learning component, have championed community colleges as integral to

partnerships, programs, and collaborations that target the needs of disadvantaged workers to move them from public assistance and into higher paying jobs that promote financial independence. While general claims about workforce board policy designs and implementation exist in the literature, there is little to no specific information about the effect of community college involvement in local workforce boards. Community colleges can contribute to economic and workforce development by developing programs and curricula that serve academically under-prepared students, incumbent workers and socio-economically disadvantaged populations through their participation in state workforce development systems.

Summary

Community colleges contribute to economic and workforce development in three important ways: as an access point for traditional and non-traditional students seeking education and training, as partner and provider of customized training to business and industry, and as service provider in job training programs. Under WIA legislation, community colleges are prescribed as central to economic and workforce development policy efforts that incorporate education, training and job placement strategies.

The next chapter provides a chronological overview of earlier strands of job training programs in the U.S. Earlier iterations of workforce development efforts are noted in the literature as “job training,” “employment and training,” “social services,” and “economic development,” programs that target disadvantaged and dislocated populations (Melendez, 2004). The Review of Literature also explores the philosophies, ideologies, and salient features of major legislation preceding WIA, and describes

welfare reform efforts within the context of what is now known as a comprehensive system of workforce development.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Community colleges have influenced workforce development throughout U.S. history by providing education to adults and traditional-aged college students, by expanding access to education, by serving low-income populations, and by providing customized training to disadvantaged populations, and new and incumbent workers. This chapter provides a synthesis of postwar job training policies in the U.S. from social welfare legislation to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the community college role in repositioning job seekers in the knowledge-based economy.

Overview

Historically, the federal government engaged in public-private partnerships to help ameliorate social problems, to promote self-sufficiency and to stimulate the economy. As early as the Morrill Act legislation in 1862, the federal government influenced public policy and expanded educational opportunities to minorities and women through partnering. Thelin writes “the [Morrill Act] established a complex partnership in which the federal government provided incentives for each state to sell distant western lands, with the states being obliged to use the proceeds to fund advanced instructional programs”. Not only was this an innovation in federal support says Thelin (2004); it serves as a model of federal and state cooperation in domestic programs.

This model of cooperation for the greater good was continuously replicated as federal and state governments sought to alleviate poverty by expanding access to education, job skills and employment through public job training programs. Since their

beginning, job training legislation and resulting programs have coincided with tough economic times. Job training, as distinguished from general education, involves teaching someone the skills required to do a job competently (O’leary, Straits, and Wandner, 2004). A distinction is also drawn from general education because of its exclusive focus on preparation for employment and its shorter time frame (O’leary, Straits, and Wandner, 2004; Coven, n.d.).

Often advanced as a portion of economic stimulus packages, federal job training programs were created, in most instances, to “give people a hand” or “help them get back on their feet” during periods of high unemployment (Kremen, 1974, Brown, 2002). The programs often targeted some combination of disadvantaged populations, including low-income workers, welfare recipients, dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth, while experimenting with different types of job training delivery methods with different foci. As the needs of business and industry evolved, so did their need for workers with specific skill-sets. Job training programs also took the form of customized training contracts between businesses and educational institutions, to bolster the skills of the incumbent workforce and to provide occupational skills for prospective workers. Educational institutions, in particular community colleges, were looked upon to provide occupational skill training, or training for in-demand occupations tailored to the needs of a specific employer.

Over time community colleges grew to become the preferred provider of cost-effective high quality training programs for business and industry and local and state governments wishing to increase the skill levels of disadvantaged populations (Bragg and Jacobs, 1993). Firms continue to look to community colleges for contract training, and

local governments perceive them as a valued community partner in providing occupational training as well as a portal to higher education for disadvantaged populations. Such partnerships yield significant benefits for firms and local workforce development agencies by increasing the skill levels of workers, thereby adding value, while community colleges benefit from increased revenues, the potential pipeline of new students, and a favorable relationship with businesses. Similarly, local and state economies benefit from increased revenues to the tax base and less demand on social services resources (Baum and Payea, 2004). The next section provides an overview of major postwar efforts and details the different types of job training programs and corresponding targeted populations.

A History of Job Training Programs in the U.S.

Social Welfare Legislation (1930-1959). In the mid 1930s, workforce development efforts took the form of public welfare when job training programs such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps were implemented to improve the lives of the economically disadvantaged (Muhlhausen, 2002). At the outbreak of the Second World War, though unemployment dropped significantly, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs created an "Economic Bill of Rights", which ensured "the right of every individual to a useful and remunerative job in an atmosphere of economic security" (Kremen, 1974). The structure of these programs enabled workers to receive up to one year of skill training, either in the classroom or on the job. In addition, the creation of the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Employment Service was said to have "reaffirmed the nation's commitment to full utilization of its material and human resources" (Kremen, 1974). The Vocational

Rehabilitation Act of 1943 provided assistance to disabled veterans, thereby adding yet another population to those served by the federal public assistance programs. As economic hardships subsided and businesses began to prosper, the GI Bill of 1944 was introduced by the government to stimulate the economy.

At a cost of fifteen billion dollars, the GI Bill was arguably the federal government's most costly education and training program of that era (Mangum, 2000). The GI Bill accomplished several notable things. First, it is credited with expanding access to higher education for varied socio-economic groups, including women and minorities (Thelin, 2004). Second, the Bill increased the average educational attainment of adults twenty-five years and older from 6.0 years in 1940, to 6.8 years in 1950 and also shattered the idea that education was for the privileged elite (Mangum, 2000). Finally, the GI Bill increased the supply of educated and trained workers by bolstering the number of engineers and trained technicians available to meet the workforce needs in the local and national economies (Lee, 2002; Mangum, 2000).

In response to a rise in demand for education and training, a range of public sector training providers, also termed "intermediaries", subcontracted with the federal government to deliver classroom training. These providers were mostly public secondary schools and what were then known as junior colleges. With increased investments in workforce training, coupled with the growing demand for education beyond high school, the number of junior colleges more than doubled, going from 207 in 1922 to 436 community colleges in 1948 (Cohen and Brawer, 2006). The proliferation of community colleges can also be linked to the federal government's decision to confine job training activities to the public sector. Javar and Wandner (2004) note that after unsuccessfully

experimenting with the private sector as a service delivery alternative in Employment Service and Unemployment programs, the federal government ultimately turned to the public sector for delivery of job training services (Javar and Wandner, 2004, p. 136). Community-based organizations, secondary schools and community and technical colleges provided the majority of job training until the 1960s, when private sector training providers re-emerged as intermediaries (Javar and Wandner, 2004). The labor market continued to demand more technologically advanced skills and student enrollments in postsecondary education increased proportionately from 1.5 million in 1949-50 to 2.7 million in 1959-60 (Thelin, 2004).

Anti-Poverty (1960). The next wave of public job training efforts employed a mix of education and employment strategies to combat poverty during the postwar welfare efforts (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). In 1960-61, America entered the Vietnam War, and the federal government became involved in job training programs and employed community colleges to play a significant role in workforce training. During this time the number of community colleges in the U.S. exploded to 600, with more than half providing new worker training and re-training to dislocated workers from the railroad industry (Thelin, 2004; Cohen and Brawer, 2002). In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation declaring a "war on poverty", which was the first comprehensive program designed “to tackle poverty at its roots, to offer more opportunities to those starting out in life, to rehabilitate those who had fallen by the wayside, and to make dependent people self-supporting” (Sowell, 2004). Sowell (2004) contends that its intentions represented “the crowning triumph of the liberal vision of society—and of government programs as the solution to social problems”, as Johnson

promised “total victory over poverty for the millions who have not shared in the abundance which has been granted to most of us, and on whom the gates of opportunity have been closed.” The goal was “to give people a chance . . . to allow them to develop and use their capacities, as we have been allowed to develop and use ours...” (Brown, 2002).

The anti-poverty programs offered a combination of remedial education, vocational training, on-the-job training, subsidized work experience, basic life-skills training, and job search assistance (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004; Levitan, 1964). The thinking was that anti-poverty policies should promote employment and upward mobility, and that economic development was facilitated by an educated workforce (Sowell, 2004). These programs precipitated further expansion of welfare programs during the 1960s and the combination of education, training, and work experience was perceived as the most viable solution to end welfare (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004).

Job training programs were credited with helping increase the average years of education for adults over 25 to an average of 8.0 years during the 1960s (Mangum, 2000). Still, the deluge of social problems associated with poverty, including high unemployment, underemployment, crime, and poor health was of great concern as policymakers considered the next round of social programs (Kremen, 1974). There was also the reality that “those [workers] without education, skill training, or substantial work experience were increasingly disadvantaged in the job market” (Mangum, 2000), and as a result, a system of public assistance entitlements emerged. The Manpower Development

Training Act was the first of four post-war job training programs funded by the federal government (see Table 1).

Manpower Development Training Act (1962). The Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) of 1962 was originally intended to only re-train railroad workers dislocated by technological advances, but was instead converted into a job training program for economically disadvantaged persons (Friedlander and Greenberg, 1997, Kremen 1974). MDTA was passed as part of the “Great Society” explosion of social programs and provided formula grants to communities based on population size. The federal government managed MDTA through twelve regional offices of the U.S. Department of Labor and supervised activity in four to six states (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). MDTA employed a categorical and centralized approach to eradicating poverty by targeting low-income and welfare populations, as well as workers dislocated as a result of technological changes in business and industry. Community colleges took a more visible role in economic development by providing job training and counseling for unemployed workers and welfare recipients through MDTA (Dougherty, 1994).

Prior to the sunset of MDTA, the Economic Opportunity Act added programming targeted specifically at disadvantaged youth. Job Corps was established to provide remedial academic instruction, job training, and other support services. The literature refers to Job Corps as one of the most successful job training policy efforts in U.S. history and the program is still in existence today (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). Moreover, a major evaluation of the Job Corps program found that earnings gains, educational progress, and other positive changes were realized across most groups of participants and were expected to persist throughout adulthood (Burghardt et al., 2001).

Table 1: A Chronology of Federal Job Training Programs in the United States

Federal Job Training Program	Training Types	Target Population(s)	Higher Education Landscape
Manpower Development And Training Act (MDTA), 1962	Institutional and on-the-job training (OJT)	Low income, welfare recipients, unemployed and under-employed	Higher Education Act of 1965 expands access to higher education; provides grants for university community services programs and strengthens teach training programs. Public Community colleges total 719 in 1965
Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), 1973	On-the-job training, classroom skill training, work experience in public agencies, and Public Service Employment (PSE)	Low income persons, welfare recipients, and disadvantaged youth	Community colleges shift to focus on faculty development and instructional training; Adult learners represent a unique student body; mission of community colleges continues to evolve. Public Community colleges total 1,141 in 1973
Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), 1982	On-the-job training, classroom skill training, and work experience in public agencies	Low income, public assistance recipients, dislocated workers, and disadvantaged youth	Community colleges work closely with high schools to prepare students for vocational/technical 2 year programs. Public community colleges total 1,231 in 1981
Workforce Investment Act (WIA), 1998	On-the-job training, customized classroom training, classroom soft skills training, and work experience in public agencies	Access to core services like job search skills and job referral is unrestricted. Training is targeted to those with serious barriers to re-employment	Community college growth slows and public community colleges total 1,244 in 1999

Source(s): O'leary, Straits and Wandner (2004), Cohen and Brawer (2003), American Association of Community Colleges (2008), Thelin (2004)

During the manpower era, the federal government partnered with business and industry and state and local governments and committed “to [making] it possible for everyone to find a job who wants to work and support their families” (Levitan, 1964; Kremen, 1974). Community college involvement in economic and workforce development took the form of customized job training programs subsidized by MDTA, and these relationships laid the ground work for later training contracts with corporate businesses (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000). MDTA ended in 1969 amid several administrative problems, such as duplicative service delivery efforts and loosely accountable administrative structures.

Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1970s). Another severe recession in 1970-71 led President Nixon to sign the Emergency Employment Act of 1971, and in 1973 the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) was passed, which consolidated the Manpower programs. CETA provided customized training for public sector job opportunities, on-the-job training (OJT) and classroom training. The total of federal expenditures for employment and training programs in FY 1973 were in excess of \$5 billion (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). Greater concerns about cost-containment and program effectiveness in the federal job training system sparked reform efforts from policymakers at all levels. As the economic environment grew increasingly competitive, an ideological shift occurred, from an understanding of welfare as an entitlement to an idea that individuals should be willing to work in exchange for government benefits that provided the opportunity to earn a sustainable wage and improve self, family and living conditions.

A noteworthy feature of CETA was that it subsidized employers by paying program participants stipends equal to the minimum wage (Plimpton and Nightingale, 2000). In most states, CETA programs offered work to low-income and long-term unemployed persons, as well as summer jobs to low-income high school students. Full-time jobs were provided for a period of 12 to 24 four months in public agencies or private not-for-profit organizations. The intent was to impart a marketable skill that would allow participants to move to an unsubsidized job, an idea that originated with the Works Progress Administration program in the 1930s.

CETA was the first legislation to decentralize control of federally controlled job training programs, giving more power to state governments (O'Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). The federal government relinquished some control over job training programs by forming Private Industry Councils (PICs) as advisory and oversight boards (O'Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). In relinquishing control to state governments, there was also an attempt to increase accountability for public welfare programs by giving local administrative units authority to determine the types of training offered, the groups of individuals served, and the institutions offering training and other employment services (Grubb, 1996). PICs were responsible for administering programs, providing services and also awarding competitive job training grants. The PIC role was prescribed in the JTPA regulations and in some localities representation for education and labor organizations was guaranteed (O'Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). Under CETA, service providers were required to submit bids and compete for program funding, which in turn increased competition among training vendors and service providers. The number of training vendors and service providers increased by 70% as a result, with more than

90% of funds being awarded to public educational institutions, namely community and technical colleges (Javar and Wandner, 2004). Community colleges were successful in winning numerous CETA contracts but were required to move away from traditional classroom pedagogy and vary program content, class schedules, and delivery locations to accommodate the needs of outside contractors (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000). Gueron et al. (1986, 1990, 1991) indicate that job training programs promoting work experience were more effective than conventional classroom training when it came to transitioning disadvantaged populations to the labor market, but all programs were most effective when a variety of support mechanism were available to program participants.

Unfortunately, CETA was not successful at cost-containment nor did it bring about large-scale economic stability for U.S. workers. An experimental evaluation of CETA programs in the late 1970's found that there were little to no measurable employment earnings for men; impacts for women, however, were positive and significant (O'Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004; King, 2004). Corruption, mismanagement, and ineffective programming plagued CETA programs nationwide and eventually led Congress to introduce yet another series of job training initiatives (Gutierrez, 1997). Nine years after its inception, CETA was replaced by the Job Training Partnership Act in 1982.

Job Training Partnership Act (1980s). In the 1980s, problems linked to slow productivity growth, persistent poverty in inner cities, and a shortage of properly trained skilled workers prompted policymakers to revamp the education and job training system (Gutierrez, 1997). Callan and Finney (2003) assert that in order to participate fully in the society and economy, most Americans require not just education credentials, but the

specific knowledge and skill levels that the credentials imply. This idea was echoed when classroom training, versus on the job training, was identified as a major weakness of existing job training programs, because it was reportedly “not the kind of skill training desired by local employers” (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). JTPA expanded eligibility for program benefits to include disadvantaged youth, dislocated workers, and individuals facing other barriers to employment.

The Reagan administration provided grants to states to develop their own distinct programs. In addition to increasing labor force attachment, a major objective during Reagan-era programs was to create systems and programs that increased earnings and decreased welfare dependency (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). As part of the push to further decentralize welfare programs, JTPA established and defined local service delivery areas (SDAs), charged states with establishing job training priorities, and increased accountability by migrating to a performance-based funding system (O’Leary, Straights and Wandner, 2004). Carnevale, Gainer, and Villet (1990) advance that, although state programs varied, most models provided assistance to job seekers applying for short-term assignments or on-the-job training that counted as work experience. The legislation endeavored to move individuals without jobs into permanent, self-sustaining employment and attempted to facilitate wage progression through continuous vocational training.

The legislation also sought to remedy the deficiencies and criticisms of past models of job training programs by focusing on increased accountability and by matching training opportunities to jobs available within local labor markets. The devolution of federal control of job training programs to state governments that began with CETA

continued and further encouraged the development of a more comprehensive workforce development system. Employer-led PICs comprised of public organizations and businesses were charged with oversight of employment and training programs. The thinking was that since employers were intimately familiar with the skills needed and jobs available in a designated service delivery area, they were best suited to lead the policy development and program design efforts that determined which job training programs would most effectively produce qualified workers, and thus the expectation was that JTPA would improve overall program effectiveness. In addition to business leaders, PIC members represented community-based organizations, government agencies, labor unions, and educational institutions (Gutierrez, 1997), some of which also provided training. Community college leaders often served on PICs and also received a large proportion of funding to provide vocational skills training to new, incumbent, and dislocated workers (Carnevale, Gainier and Villet, 1990). Carnevale, Gainier and Villet (1990) advance that:

Although all the state programs varied, most relied heavily on job search (short-term assistance in applying for work but no other training or support services) and work experience or on-the-job training, both accomplished through short-term placements. As much as 84 percent of the programs offered vocational skills training and 72 percent provided post high school education. In practice, only 2.3% of the welfare recipients participating in these programs received any skill training, and only 1.6% enrolled in postsecondary education.

The fact that community colleges served on PICs and could vote on the very contracts they received is a notable conflict of interest and had implications for the next round of job training legislation.

The trend of establishing job training programs through the welfare system continued through the late 1980s with the Family Support Act of 1988, which created Job

Opportunities for Basic Skills (JOBS) (Gutierrez, 1997). Subsequent legislation also gave states the flexibility to provide a range of services from job search to work experience, adding family support services such as child care and counseling. By 1990, there were 163 distinct programs receiving targeted funding. Funding streams were small, but complexity of managing and monitoring made programs under JTPA an administrative burden to PICs (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004).

A major national evaluation of JTPA reported that training to economically disadvantaged adults resulted in 11 percent greater earnings for women and 6.7 percent greater earnings for men (Orr et al., 1996). For both genders, however, the earnings gains were not a result of higher wages, but mainly due to increases in the number of hours worked. In the final stages of JTPA, the proliferation of programs, service redundancies, and voluminous funding streams became an administrative debacle, rendering JTPA ineffective. As time went on, PICs are noted to have become “passive bureaucratic-administrative agents that were ineffective at bringing about large-scale success with job training programs” (Borges-Mendez and Melendez, 2004). Partly in response to such problems, the next round of legislation included a noticeable philosophical shift toward a work-first, or welfare-to-work, environment and incorporated strict mandates to establish it.

Welfare Reform (1996-present). By the late 1990s, economic conditions had improved to the point that full employment existed in most states (O’Leary, Straits and Wandner, 2004). Welfare Reform began when President Bill Clinton pledged to “end welfare as we know it.” WIA was passed in 1998 and implemented in 2000; it was the first of several sweeping overhauls to federal welfare programs. WIA marked the

beginning of an infrastructure change to a comprehensive workforce development system with a “one-stop model” of service delivery. D’Amico et al. (2001) and Grubb et al. (1999) advance that,

WIA builds on reforms of states and the federal government by improving system integration and service coordination, providing universal access while rationing services to promote efficiency, promoting customer choice and system accountability, and bringing business to the fore as a key customer of the workforce system.

Senator Tom Harkin also emphasized that, “the law was intended to ensure that Americans have access to the information they need to qualify for good jobs and to successfully manage their careers in the changing economy” (Neilson and Baird, 2003). WIA also changed the philosophical underpinnings of the purpose of welfare with the passing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). PRWORA emphasized personal responsibility for self sufficiency and required welfare recipients to seek employment in order to be eligible for continued benefits. This philosophy is termed “work first” and is used synonymously with “welfare to work,” and is based on immediate labor force attachment after short term training. Moreover, PRWORA placed a five-year time limit on all welfare benefits. After five years of receiving benefits, either consecutive or non-consecutive, eligibility is terminated, regardless of need or employment status (USGAO, 1995).

In addition to PRWORA, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Act was also passed to provide federal funding to states to consolidate cash assistance programs for welfare recipients. The relevant guidelines of TANF placed restrictions on the activities permitted in lieu of work for eligible recipients and also limited their participation in vocational and postsecondary education activities to a maximum of

twelve months (Sparks, 2001). Under the work-first approach, educational programs were a low priority, and states were directed to design programs that de-emphasized full-time education and postsecondary degree attainment. Further, any employment-readiness training had to be directly related to local employer requirements and jobs that utilized this training had to be attainable after brief preparation (Martin & Fisher, 1998).

The work-first model consolidates numerous employment services and houses them in a single “one-stop” service center. The one-stop concept was introduced nationally in 1994 by the U.S. Department of Labor, in partnership with state and local governments, to develop an integrated system of service delivery that facilitated ease of access to workforce development resources (Guitierrez, 1997). The federal government eventually mandated the one-stop service delivery approach, but introduced the idea by initially awarding one-stop grants to 25 states in 1994 and by 1996, the majority of states were in the planning stages of creating one-stop systems. The one-stop delivery system design is ideally a collaboration of workforce development stakeholder partners co-located in one facility, where the facility serves as a single point of access for individuals seeking employment and employers seeking qualified candidates (Russman, n.d.). The streamlined one-stop service structure enables disadvantaged youth and adults, dislocated workers and job seekers to access a variety of services. With welfare recipients, the work-first model has the goal of employment placement as rapidly as possible with the least intensive form of intervention (AACC, 1998).

Nationally, the one-stop delivery approach coupled with the new legislation, was reportedly effective in producing a sharp decline in dependence on federal support to adults since its implementation in 1996 (Martin & Fisher, 1999, Melendez et al., 2000,

Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000). From 1994 to January 2000, 5.7 million individuals left welfare rolls, amounting to a 60% reduction in benefits nationwide (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004). However, a report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Coven, 2003) confirms that, while job training programs under work-first dramatically improved case reductions in the short term, they did little to prepare participants adequately for long-term self-sufficiency in the competitive labor market of the 21st century (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004).

An additional feature embedded in the new workforce development framework is the requirement for states and local governments to increase collaboration between employers, educational institutions, community organizations and government agencies through workforce boards (USGAO, 1995). Workforce boards replaced PICs and have a primary role as policy and governance bodies that design programs under WIA (Borges-Mendez and Melendez, 2004). Workforce boards also oversee the workforce development infrastructure and make key decisions about the scope of one-stop center services, education and training programs, job readiness skills and placement services available to job seekers, disadvantaged populations and dislocated workers.

Workforce boards have notable distinctions from PICs. In contrast to PICs, workforce boards have a policy function that is distinct from the service delivery and operations function. While they oversee both, workforce boards are not permitted to provide training services and have much wider latitude in determining the program design of job training programs and service providers. The new policy environment is characterized by strong external networks with community partners and internal support among management and coworkers (National Association of Workforce Boards, 2005).

Both business and community stakeholders must be willing to engage in partnership if a more coherent use of resources will lead to mainstream employment for disadvantaged workers (Melendez, 2004).

A Closer Look at WIA

The sustainability of long term self-sufficiency (beyond twelve months) for disadvantaged populations, in particular welfare recipients, depends on workforce readiness and skill level, motivation, and finding jobs that meet the needs of the existing labor market with the opportunity for advancement and career growth. As noted, the push for immediate labor force attachment has provided limited financial relief to participants in the short term (Martin & Fisher, 1999, Melendez et al., 2000, Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000); as welfare leavers, or those who leave welfare, are often thrust into labor markets to reduce welfare rolls. Unfortunately, little attention is given to whether or not welfare leavers are earning sustainable wages or if insurance and benefits are available from the employer. Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton (2000) indicate that “while employment rates have increased, much of the employment is in jobs providing earnings below the poverty level, and most welfare leavers are not receiving employer benefits, such as health insurance”. Moreover, Imel (2000) and Sparks (2001) advance that welfare leavers lack the education and sufficient preparation for jobs with a sustainable wage will likely create a cycle of poverty (Imel, 2000; Sparks, 2001). As noted, some states have taken a more rigid stance in their interpretation of WIA legislation and created programs that restrict access to the types of education and training programs that prepare individuals for successful careers in high paying jobs (Greenberg, Strawn, and Plimpton, 2000). The literature also reflects that the legislation and resulting policies have no built

in contingencies for low-wage earners displaced due to supply and demand fluctuations in the local labor market, changes in the global economy, or the impact of advancements in information technology (McCormick, 2004, Mangum, 2000). Thus a revolving door for welfare benefits is created.

There is no reliable empirical data to support the work-first option as a viable way to produce long term self-sufficiency and permanent separation from the welfare system (NEWWS, 2001). A significant portion of the literature concerning welfare reform is devoted to discussion of the societal implications of a shift from a “supply-side approach”, promoting long-term investments in human capital, to a work-first environment, or “demand-side approach”, emphasizing immediate attachment to the workforce to reduce welfare rolls (McCormick, 2003). Community colleges are experienced providers education and training disadvantaged populations and many have an economic development mission (Bragg and Jacobs, 1993); they have the potential to address both supply and demand side issues (Fitzgerald, 2004). While few studies have indicated that inconsistencies with governmental policy implementation, administration and governance issues directly impact welfare participation levels, an even smaller amount of literature addresses the needs of special client populations with significant barriers to employment, such as the mentally ill, drug addicted and the learning disabled, and there is little to no reliable longitudinal data on the well-being of former welfare recipients (Ewalt and Jennings, 2004).

Does work-first work? The literature reflects that welfare recipients have low education levels. There is also research to indicate that almost 50% do not have a high school diploma or GED and more than one-third have extremely low academic skills

(Sparks, 2001). Educators and practitioners alike have recognized the inadequacy of welfare to work to offer sufficient means for the educational enhancement of unskilled workers as a critical omission (Nitri, 2000).

Despite compelling evidence suggesting that a combination of education and skills training are positively correlated with economic upward mobility (Baum and Payea, 2004), many states continue to emphasize the work-first model as the primary way to end the reliance on welfare (Bok, 2004, Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000). Shortly after the implementation of PRWORA, data from the U.S. Department of Labor provided evidence to conclude that the new laws had achieved the goal of reducing welfare rolls and that more welfare recipients were at work (NEWWS, 2000). Throughout the late 1990s the literature reflects historical accounts of welfare-to-work programs seeking to increase client self-sufficiency and have emphasized several strategies.

Work-first, while it emphasizes quickly moving participants to the labor market, it also reflects the belief that individuals can best build their employability, and eventually achieve self-sufficiency through actual work, even if their initial jobs are minimum wage and without fringe benefits (NEWWS, 2000). Another philosophical ideology behind work-first is that there would no longer be government hand-outs, such as welfare and cash assistance for able-bodied adults. WIA also provided a reward in the form of a financial incentive to states that achieved significant declines in welfare rolls and costs savings to the government as a result of effective work-first practices(USDOL, 1998). Conversely, scholars and practitioners were making an effective argument for increased educational attainment as a means to self sufficiency. According to NEWWS (2000),

Proponents of education and training argue that making initial investments in building people's skills might enable them—especially those without a

high school diploma or with other employment barriers—to get better and more stable jobs, increases their income, and [they are] less likely to return to welfare.

Still, critics dismiss this approach, charging that mandatory education programs for adults, many of whom left education institutions as teenagers, not only would be very costly and hard to implement on a large scale, but delays labor market entry (Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000). Several other reasons are cited as contributing to the failure of basic education programs to improve the employment, earnings and retention of disadvantage workers: (1) criticism of training programs by employers—the short duration of training programs, the lack of relevant skills training, and a disconnect between training programs and employers; (2) many programs were unwilling to hire program participants because they viewed these programs as poverty not training; (3) employers were skeptical of the skills and productivity of program graduates and therefore viewed them as irrelevant to their labor needs (Harrison and Weiss 1998; Blank 1997; Lalonde 1995; Manski and Garfinkel 1992).

Yet another strategy advances that a broader approach of incorporating a combination skill-building through education, job training, job placement and career planning is the best way to secure higher-wages and longer-lasting jobs with health insurance coverage (Martin & Fisher, 1999; Callan and Finney, 2003; Melendez et al., 2000; Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 2000; Grubb et al., 1999).

Governance and Policy Implementation. The limited scope of education and training opportunities permissible under WIA is indicative of a misinformed view by policy makers. The literature suggests that welfare reform mandates for employment and training were developed with little or no input by educational practitioners, yet

educational institutions receiving federal funds are the main provider of training services to welfare recipients (Sparks, 2001). At the local level, workforce boards have responsibility for designing and implementing employment and training programs. As policymakers, workforce boards wield significant influence in determining access to postsecondary education (Melendez, 2004). Ewalt and Jennings (2004) cite the leadership practices of these Boards, including communication, goals, attitudes, and beliefs of administrators as having a direct bearing on policy design and implementation. Similarly, as noted, the level of commitment of Board members and their institutions also plays out in which the programs and services are offered to service seekers (Fitzgerald, 2004).

Economic Stratification. Welfare to work will not decrease inequities in society (Lafer, 2002; Worthen, 2002). A significant portion of the literature is devoted to the notion that the push to end welfare dependency through work-first programs not only perpetuates economic stratification in our society, but also continues the cycle of poverty by relegating under-educated, under-skilled workers to low-wage jobs with little or no advancement opportunities (Coven, 2003; Martin and Fisher, 1998, Bok, 2004, Sparks, 2001). Numerous studies have shown the high correlation between educational attainment levels and earnings (Freedman, 1999, Baum and Payea, 2004). Freedman (2004) reports that the majority of low-income workers, both welfare recipients and others, are those who have not had access to post-secondary education. Low-income women with limited education and training may be employable, but they are likely to languish in unstable, low-paid, dead-end jobs with little job mobility and few, if any benefits (Bok, 2004, Sparks, 2001).

Economic shifts from goods-producing to service-oriented markets, in addition to advances in technology, can further marginalize low-wage workers and exacerbate an already tenuous financial situation. Research indicates work remuneration for welfare mothers with children is often insufficient to care for their families and actual earnings are significantly lower than the poverty line due to the lower number of hours worked by such mothers (Sheared, McCabe, Umeki, 2000; Hage, 2004, Jacobs, 2001). Catalfamo (1999) advances that what is being created, purposefully, or not, is a funneling system to channel human capital into a permanent economic underclass.

Access to Postsecondary Education. Education is essential to getting a high paying job (Holzer and Lerman, 2007). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that for all but 1 of the 50 highest paying jobs in the United States, a college degree or higher is the most significant source of education and training (BLS, 2004). BLS also reports that professional and related occupations are projected to grow faster and add more jobs than any other major occupational group. Among the 20 fastest growing occupations, a bachelor's or associate's degree is the most significant source of training for at least half of those jobs. Job training is reported to be the most significant source of education or training for 19 of the 20 jobs with the largest decreases in demand (Holzer and Lerman, 2007). Given this information, it is imperative for policy makers, employers, educators and workforce development boards to consider these factors when designing and implementing employment and training programs.

The TANF law providing cash assistance to welfare recipients also allows states limited discretion to provide funding to welfare recipients who enroll in post-secondary training programs (Grubb, 2001). The Federal government requires that no more than

20% of a state's total caseload be participating in vocational education at any given time (Freedman, 1999). The majority of states have opted to restrict enrollment in postsecondary education programs that exceed twelve months, citing transportation, child care and tuition fees as too costly, and failure to adhere to the caseload reduction requirement results in financial penalties from the federal government. Adult educators advocate for more structured programs that include continuing education to facilitate increased earnings capacity and promote self-sufficiency, which could decrease, or at best, eliminate welfare receipt (Freedman, 1999). Strawn (1998) contends that reliance on remedial education by itself has not been effective in moving people into better jobs, but rather a combination of academic skills and job related training is needed to accomplish the goal of long-term self-sufficiency. The literature further suggests that because of the positive correlation between income levels and education credentials (Baum and Payea, 2004; Lerman, 1997), education, job training and lifelong learning will be integral to moving people beyond low-skill and low-wage employment.

In advocating for broader access to postsecondary education, workforce boards and policy makers should make informed decisions based on needs in the local labor market and job growth projections by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A focus on creating education curricula that meet the specific needs of the workplace will generate wages above the poverty level, promote career advancement and are more likely to lead to long-term self-sufficiency.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this section provides an overview of the history of postwar job training efforts in the U.S., the federal government's role in workforce

development programs and implementation of WIA. Over the last 50 years, major changes have taken place with job training policy in the U.S. Programs administered by the Department of Labor. Programs evolved from a job finding service to job training and skill building, with each iteration stressing a different philosophical orientation and assigning responsibility for oversight to different levels of government. As different ideologies emerged, program models changed accordingly. From social welfare programs that established government assistance as a public entitlement to programs based on the premise of work in exchange for public assistance, ideologies formed the basis upon which many programs were designed. As programs were diversified and economic conditions warranted, community colleges gained prominence as providers of vocational/occupational and customized training in addition to adult basic education programs.

As the federal government's role in the delivery of public assistance programs has receded over the last 25 years, greater emphasis has been placed on partnerships. Through each iteration of job training policy, though sometimes implicit, there is evidence of a greater reliance on partnerships between public and private entities to facilitate economic and workforce development. WIA places an even greater emphasis on state control of employment and training programs, and also explicitly prescribes the formation of public-private partnerships through employer led workforce boards.

The majority of the literature on WIA implementation outlines the differences between work-first and investments in human capital models. While those who advocate for education as a better solution for those served by WIA, they do not deny that work first has been an effective measure in the short term. The literature also suggests the need

to look past the immediate savings of federal dollars to more long term measures designed to increase the skills and work capacity of low-income populations to meet the needs of local employers.

The factor contributing most to successful employment and training programs is successful partnerships between employers, government agencies, and other workforce entities such as workforce boards and educational institutions (Harrison, Bennett and Weiss, 1998; Giloth 1998; Melendez and Harrison, 1997; Mueller and Schwartz, 1998; Stokes, 1996; USGAO, 1996b). Melendez (2004) also indicates that the coming together of employers with government agencies and advocacy groups has resulted in a renewed effort toward a more holistic program model that extends beyond traditional job placement to job retention and worker support through the period of employment adjustment. And, as economic times continue to demand higher skill levels, these partnerships will be vital to the success of economic and workforce development activities.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Procedures

This study explored the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards and the ways in which they collaborate and partner with each other, local employers, government agencies, community-based organizations, K-12 educational entities, and labor unions in workforce development initiatives. There are 28 public community colleges throughout Michigan and 25 local workforce boards that each work collaboratively with one-stop centers and business and community sectors within a designated workforce development area.

The research question guiding this study is, “What is the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan?”

The research focused on the efforts and activities of a single local workforce board/community college partnership that includes four community colleges and other community sectors in the southern region of Michigan.

Research Design

A case study is both a process of inquiry and a product of that inquiry and can be defined as “the investigation of an individual group or phenomenon with the purpose of deriving holistic understanding of a particular, unique and bounded system” (Mulenga, 2001). In accomplishing this study, a qualitative research design was used and a case study approach was employed, because they facilitate “focus on one specific entity or thing that is an integrated system with working parts” (Stake, 2000).

In case studies, researchers seek out both what is common and what is particular about the case (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The site selected for this study is unique, in

that it features a single workforce board with member representatives from four community colleges. Since the majority of workforce boards in Michigan have representatives from a single community college, selection of a site with multiple community colleges maximized the potential for the most comprehensive learning.

Site Selection

The research site selected for this study is the Southern Region Workforce Board (SRWB). Data were collected through observation of workforce board meetings and one-on-one interviews with sixteen participants. SRWB is the policy making body of WIA and administers federally funded employment and training programs through one-stop service centers, or Michigan Works! Agencies. The SRWB has 30 primary members, each representing a sector of Michigan's regional economy: education, business and industry, labor, government, and community service organizations. The Educational Advisory Group (EAG), a sub-committee of the Board, consists of four community college representatives and, a K-12 regional educational service area representative, and several local employers. The SRWB has greater than 51% representation from the business sector and is chaired by a business representative. The board's vice chair also serves as the chair of the EAG. The SRWB has regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. In purposeful sampling, Creswell states, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites that are "information rich" (Patton, 2002). A preliminary determination of potential participants was made based on the research questions developed in the pilot study. Participants were purposefully selected based on their professional responsibilities relative to the topic,

their membership on the SRWB, and the sector they represent. Participants in this study represent community colleges, government, business, K-12 education, organized labor, and community-based organizations, and non-profit associations.

Data Collection

Phase I - Pilot Study

Data was collected in two phases. The first phase was conducted in January 2006 and a total of five participants representing a single workforce board/community college partnership were interviewed. The pilot study was conducted to clarify existing questions, identify additional questions and understand better the different facets of the workforce development system in Michigan. The five workforce board members represented internal and external stakeholders including business and industry leaders, community college personnel, and a Michigan Works! Agency representative.

Pilot Site Visits. The pilot site was selected based on its close physical proximity to my home address and the ease of access to participants. During the pilot phase, I visited workforce board administrative offices, the one-stop center, a Michigan Technology Education Center (M-TEC) in mid-Michigan and a community college where I observed several workforce board meetings, community college board of trustees meetings, and one-stop center operations.

Benefits of the Pilot Study. The pilot study provided several benefits to this research. First, it broadened my understanding of the different components of Michigan's workforce development system and provided several prospective participants for the dissertation research. Second, it led to key judgments about the suitability of questions, the types of questions and whether or not the questions would yield the data I needed to

address the research questions. Lastly, and most important, the pilot study helped me to understand the design of the workforce development system, its programs and services, and the unique interplay between community college representatives and other workforce board members in Michigan. The data collected during this phase was used strictly to inform the data collection instrument, refine the questions, and provide additional context. The data collected during the pilot study has been excluded from the dissertation research phase.

Phase II – Dissertation Research

Access to the site. When I first began to seek out participants for this study, I contacted the southern region one-stop service center and explained the purpose of my call and the nature of my research. I was given the contact information for the chair of the Educational Advisory Group (EAG) for the Southern Region Workforce Board. Ellen Quinn, an entrepreneur and founder of Peters and Associates Communications introduced me to the Board, the one-stop center director and provided contact information for other prospective participants.

Participant Selection. As noted above, some participants in this study represent different sectors of the southern region of Michigan as members of the SRWB. Business sector workforce board members are required to be in key management positions in their companies, to seek to understand the needs of other employers in their communities, and to have the authority to make hiring decisions. Workforce boards are led by business leaders, and chairpersons must work to “ensure that the Board establishes policies that integrate all workforce development programs and target them to support state and local economic development efforts” (SRWB Website, 2007).

The participants in this study also have expertise in workforce development and collaborated regularly with workforce boards and/or community colleges on workforce initiatives in Michigan. The average years of experience in their respective fields is 26, and all participants hold leadership positions in their agencies, educational institutions or companies. The summaries below are brief biographies of participants and identify the sector they represent.

- Mary Brown is a 58 year-old white female, who currently serves as the Career and Technical Education Regional Administrator in the Davis County education system and represents the K-12 secondary education sector as a member of the EAG.
- James Gideon is a 44 year-old male, who currently serves as the Dean of Industrial Technology at Midwest Community College; he represents the community college sector as a member of the EAG.
- Robert Farris is a 60 year-old white male, who currently serves as the Corporate Director of Workforce Planning at Barron Health System and represents the business sector.
- Alexander Anastasia is a 62 year-old white male, who currently serves as the Associate Vice Chancellor of Education Affairs for the Davis Community College District. He represents the interests of the community college as an alternate member of the EAG.
- William Copper is a 44 year-old white male, who currently serves as the Executive Director of the Midwest Association of Community Colleges, a non-profit association that represents the collective interests of community colleges in the state.

- Barbara Beasley is a 55 year-old white female, who currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Michigan Works! Association (MWA). Hector Mendosa is a 79 year-old Hispanic male, who is the Founder and President of Zuma Manufacturing and is the chairperson of the SRWB; he represents the business sector.
- Betty Lewis is a 62 year-old African American female, who currently serves as director of Workforce Programs for the state of Michigan, and thus represents the government sector.
- Ellen Quinn is a 59 year-old white female, who is the Founder and President of Quinn Communications, Inc. and is the workforce board vice chair and chairperson of the EAG. She represents the business sector in both capacities.
- Charles Sullivan is a 58 year-old white male, who currently serves as Executive Director of the Southern Region One-Stop Center and an ex-officio member of the SRWB.
- David Kessig is a 48 year-old white male, who is a union representative for the United Auto Workers (UAW) and represents organized labor sector.
- Thomas White is a 57 year-old white male, who currently serves as Executive Director of the Midwest Virtual Learning Collaborative and is employed through the Midwest Association of Community Colleges. MVLC is a non-profit entity.
- Judith Leahy is a 57 year-old white female who currently serves as the Senior Consultant for the Michigan Technical Education Center (M-TEC) at Regional Community College. She represents the community college sector as a member of the EAG.

- Donald Robinson is a 58 year-old African American male, who currently serves as the Associate Vice President for Workforce Development at Davis Community College and represents the community college sector as a member of the EAG. He is also a member of the Detroit Workforce Board.
- Carol Grayson is a 41 year-old white female, who currently serves as the Vice President for Learning at Midwest County Community College and represents the community college sector as a member of the EAG.
- Linda Ferrara is a 54 year-old white female, who currently serves as the Director of Contract Training for Southern Michigan College and represents the community college sector as a member of the EAG.

In-depth Interviews. The primary data collection method used was in-depth interviews consisting of open ended questions (Seidman, 1999). I conducted sixteen interviews using the protocol in Appendix A. Kvale (1996) describes the qualitative research interview as a conversation that has a structure and a purpose, that goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach... "[It] is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation" (Kvale, 1996). The topic of the interview was introduced and I followed up on the subject's answers to his or her questions. The questions were open-ended to allow the subjects to provide in-depth explanation and additional details as needed. The interviews were tape recorded and took place in mutually agreed upon by locations.

Documentation. In addition to one-one one interviews, documentary information deemed relevant to the case study were reviewed (Yin, 2003): letters, memoranda,

agendas, meeting minutes, scholarly reports, journal articles, administrative documents, websites, policy studies, government bulletins, proposals, progress reports, conference papers, conference presentation materials, supporting textbooks and any pertinent archival documents. The systematic search for relevant documents and information continued throughout the period of investigation. Board meeting minutes and agendas were examined to better understand the attendance patterns, decisions or issues that affect WIA implementation and policy or any issues that are determined to be relevant to this study. Initial questions for the pilot interviews were drafted and refined at the conclusion of the pilot study.

Instrumentation. A demographic questionnaire was used at the beginning of each in-depth interview. This questionnaire included questions on age, length of service, professional affiliation, occupation/title, education level, and affiliation with central subject. The demographic questionnaire is in Appendix B.

Direct Observations. I remained an unobtrusive observer as I attended workforce board and EAG meetings to evaluate this “phenomenon in its natural setting” (Mills, Cervero, Langone, and Wilson, 1995). Field notes were taken to record feelings, intuitive hunches, non-verbal communication or any information deemed relevant to the study (Mulenga, 2001). Observation of board meetings informed the study by providing the opportunity to observe the social context for the interactions and/or the power dynamics between board members.

Confidentiality. As the primary researcher, only I am able to associate responses and other data directly with individuals participating in this study. A signed consent form was obtained and the identities of those interviewed have been kept confidential. The

research findings do not associate the real names of participants with specific responses.

Pseudonyms were used and I transcribed all voice recorded data. Personal descriptive information did not intentionally identify anyone from either organization.

Validity and credibility. Data were validated using triangulation and member-checking to evaluate the accuracy of the findings. Triangulation uses information from different data sources to build a coherent justification for themes (Creswell, 2003); member checking takes specific descriptions or themes back to the participants for review to ensure accuracy (Creswell, p. 196). The legislation and complex system of mandates and policies were interpreted and discussed with participants. Both were useful in helping to cement understanding of Michigan's interpretation and implementation of several legislative mandates.

Participants were provided the opportunity to review the transcripts and clarify meaning to ensure their voices were communicated to their satisfaction. Several participants in the study expressed concern about what they perceived to be the "tone" of the transcripts. When probing them for further meaning, they expressed concern, that upon reading the transcripts, their words may be perceived as negative. Minor changes were made that did not affect the thematic analysis or coding.

Data Analysis

I transcribed, sorted and segmented data into sentences, paragraphs and categories. I assigned meaning and coded the data (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Coding, or organizing material into "chunks", was done; themes and findings were developed in consultation with the dissertation director (Rossman and Rallis, 1998). I

labeled categories and patterns with a term (Creswell, 2003) and key findings were gleaned and are reported in Chapter Four.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative design incorporates room for a description of the role of the researcher as well as a description of the researcher's own biases and ideological preference (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). My interest in the topic of workforce development began more than a decade ago when, in the mid 1990s, the Clinton Administration promised to "end welfare as we know it". Included in his re-election platform, Clinton positioned the welfare reform bill as groundbreaking legislation that would eventually include WIA. WIA was implemented in 2000 with the stated goal of increasing self sufficiency for disadvantaged populations.

This topic peaked my interest for several reasons. At that time I was employed in the state of Florida as an administrator in higher education in the field of human resources. I was especially interested in helping people find work and matching people with jobs on our campus because I knew that once they were on campus, they would make the connection that education opens many doors; and they would see that with education they could soar and without it they would be limited. I also understood that earnings were tied to education and upward mobility, and therefore education would have to be a central part of any plan for career and professional development.

In Florida, welfare reform was big news. As legislators continued to put a positive spin on the impending legislation, I wondered if policymakers had a true grasp of the implications of terminating welfare benefits without a plan to ensure that leavers could achieve financial self-sufficiency. How would the state prepare for an influx of people

who had varying levels of education and limited skills? Another concern I had early on was whether or not those families who moved from welfare to work could sustain themselves and their families on jobs that only required short term training. In the best case scenario, it could, but what if it didn't? I was not optimistic. Shifting responsibility for workforce development would be a monumental task, but ensuring welfare recipients were equipped with the tools they needed to be successful would not happen if the system only focused on reducing welfare rolls.

As a doctoral student at Michigan State University many years after WIA's implementation, I still had the same questions about welfare reform and was curious as to how it had all worked out. I also had the desire to help the disadvantaged to make the connection that education is in fact the great equalizer and that no matter what their present situation was, it did not have to determine their future. The questions I had about welfare recipients and the reform efforts were unanswered. In order to answer these questions, I sought an understanding of WIA, workforce development and how or if these policies worked together with educational institutions. Were people in fact better off with any job as opposed to not working at all? I also wanted to understand whether or not higher, adult and/or lifelong education had a role in this system. I wondered if education apart of the WIA prescription?

As I began to seriously consider workforce development as a topic for my dissertation, my personal connection to social program component also fueled my desire to understand it. As a child in an impoverished community, I saw firsthand how job training programs under CETA and JTPA gave people a sense of worth and increased their self esteem. Participating in the CETA summer youth programs was the starting

point for careers in administration and management for several members of my family; and even though I saw these things at a very young age, I was still able to connect living in poverty to the lack of knowledge, employability skills and education. Beyond having a firsthand experience with welfare and social programs, I wanted to understand more about workforce development and the different ways in which under-prepared learners and socio-economically disadvantaged people could elevate themselves out of poverty with the help of social programs.

Biases

As a researcher, I bring the following biases to this study:

1. I believe that community colleges are vital to expanding access to higher education.
2. I am a graduate of a community college.
3. I am a first-generation college student.
4. I am a proponent of programs that combine education and training opportunities as a means to higher wages and career progression.
5. I believe the purpose of education is to prepare one for a vocation or occupation.

Limitations and De-limitations

This study is confined to a single local workforce board/community college partnership in the southern region of Michigan. The study documents the experiences of members of the Southern Region Workforce Board (SRWB), including four community college representatives, K-12, business, community-based organizations, government and labor organizations. In addition to SRWB members, interviews were also conducted with leaders from the Michigan Department of Workforce Development; Michigan

Community College Association and Michigan Works! Association. The limits of the study are as follows:

1. The number of participants in this study is limited and the findings cannot be generalized to other WIA programs or any sector represented in the study.
2. Community based-organizations representatives were unavailable for interview.
3. Community College Trustees were unavailable for interview.
4. The number of non-business representatives interviewed exceeds the number of business representatives interviewed and therefore this may bias the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

This study explored the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan and the ways in which they collaborate and partner with each other, local employers, government agencies, community-based organizations, K-12 educational entities, and labor unions in workforce development initiatives. The research question guiding this study is, “What is the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan?”

Structure of the Findings Chapter

Chapter Four begins with the conceptual framework used for this study, followed by context, which includes a brief overview of the higher education landscape; the antecedents for the partnership-federal and state WIA legislation-are then discussed followed by the components of Michigan’s Workforce Development System. The perspectives of sector representatives are then provided, and the chapter concludes with a summary of key findings that answer the research question.

Conceptual Framework

The partnership development model (Amey et al., 2007) was used as a guide to examine several key components of the workforce board/community college partnership: impetus or reason for joining the partnership; context, champion, and roles. Amey et al. (2007) contend that using these key components to examine how partnerships function “is a way of evaluating their effectiveness and efficiency”, and that answering the

questions below provides a better understanding of the partnership because it allows stakeholders to think more fully about the process of collaboration (p.9).

1. What is the impetus for the partnership and reason(s) for joining?
2. What are the economic, political and socio-cultural circumstances surrounding the formation of the partnership?
3. How do [individual] partners come to understand their roles?
4. What are the benefits, costs and outcomes of the partnership?
5. What is required to sustain the partnership?

Context

Michigan's economy is struggling (Ivacko, 2007). Automobile makers and manufacturing plants are downsizing in record numbers across the nation, and the decrease in production has eroded the state's economic base (Ivacko, 2007). As the hub of activity for the automobile industry's "big three"—General Motors (GM), Ford and Chrysler, Michigan has been a dominant economic force in the industry. In recent years, a downturn in the economy exacerbated by a loss of market share to global competitors has some viewing the automobile industry as more of a liability than the asset it once was (Reynolds, 2007). In addition, several participants noted that motor vehicle parts manufacturers and suppliers are feeling pinched from the loss of major contracts, as they struggle to stay afloat. The number of displaced workers continues to rise and Michiganders scramble to find work while competing with under-skilled job seekers for the same jobs.

According to Duderstadt (2005), Michigan lost approximately 254,000 jobs from 2000-2003 (163,000 of which were manufacturing jobs), when low-skill, high-pay

factory jobs were eliminated to enhance productivity by lowering production costs. These figures represent an industry decline of 22%. This reality hits even harder as the unemployment rate in Michigan climbed to 6.6% in 2007, exceeding the national rate of 4.5 percent (Reynolds, 2007). Unfortunately, the media attention on Michigan's economic woes has eclipsed the potential opportunities that exist to strengthen the state's economic base and develop a new strategy for competing in the global marketplace. Among those opportunities is using the state's strong system of higher education as a resource to build the skills of its workforce and attracting high tech industries to transform the region of the country that has been long known as the rust belt.

The Higher Education Landscape

Though its current economic picture is dismal, Michigan's educational resources are a bright spot that is rich with possibilities. Michigan boasts one of the leading higher education systems in the United States, with 15 public four-year universities, which include two AAU research universities (University of Michigan and Michigan State University), 28 public two-year community colleges, the Michigan Virtual Learning Collaborative and the Michigan Virtual University; all of which operate autonomously and are governed only by their individual Boards of Trustees (Duderstadt, 2005, p. 22). Even though the system is estimated to produce more than 90,000 graduates annually, the continuous out-migration of 25-44 year-olds creates a serious brain drain on the state's intellectual resources (Duderstadt, 2005, Ivacko, 2007).

According to the Cherry Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth (2004), Michigan's higher education institutions have garnered several notable distinctions which bode well for the state: Michigan is fourth in the nation for total

research and development expenditures as a percentage of gross state product; seventh in the percentage of science and engineering degrees granted each year; and ninth in the number of patents issue. Similarly, the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy (2007) reports that Michigan ranked 2nd in the nation in terms of employment in high-tech industries, which is defined as those industries where the proportion of employees both in research and development and in all technology occupations is at least twice the average proportion for all industries.

Given the above, Michigan's higher education system is poised to address the knowledge deficit by increasing educational attainment of its citizens as the state transitions from "brawn work" to "brain work" (Cherry Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, 2004). The positive correlation that exists between educational attainment and economic prosperity, coupled with Michigan's expansive network of public and private colleges and universities leads to the conclusion that right now is the most opportune time to re-invest in the workforce and thereby reposition the state to successfully compete in the knowledge-based economy. With both positive and negative aspects considered, participants in this study agree on three undeniable facts where Michigan's economy is concerned: (1) Michigan's 20th century economic model is no longer viable and cannot sustain current labor market demands, (2) a large number of jobs in industries that once represented the hallmark of Michigan's booming economy have been either outsourced, eliminated or have been replaced with machines, resulting in a large number of displaced workers, and as noted, (3) a new high-tech day has dawned and Michigan's economic vitality depends on finding a new product or market niche, attracting high-tech firms and supplying skilled workers to meet those needs. Given these

circumstances, Michigan's employment and training system is at the fore of this economic and workforce development quandary and will be looked upon to help build the workforce capacity needed to return the state to economic stability. The success of economic revitalization efforts will also hinge upon effective public and private partnerships and collaborations throughout the state.

Antecedents of Partnership

Michigan's workforce development system is a mix of interrelated organizations and departments designed to align economic and workforce development. In order to better understand the partnership and its integration within the system, a review of the relevant points of WIA and how Michigan operationalized the legislation is provided.

Federal and State Workforce Policy Requirements

Federal Workforce Investment Act

WIA authorized a new workforce investment system giving state and local governments primary responsibility for federal employment and training dollars (Melendez, 2004). The system includes workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, training and service providers, youth councils, state and local workforce plans, and adult and dislocated worker services. WIA specifically requires state funding, programs and services to meet the needs of local labor markets.

One-stop service centers carry out the operational responsibilities of workforce investment boards under WIA guidelines (Russman, n.d.). WIA mandates one-stops to provide a three-tiered sequential system of workforce development options for job seekers. Services are divided into core, intensive and training (AACC, 1998). Core services are available to the general public and include eligibility determination, job

search and placement assistance, access to job vacancy and skill requirements, and information on training providers and supportive services. Second-tier (intensive) services are available to adults and dislocated workers who are either employed or unemployed, but must be accessed sequentially. Intensive services include basic education, basic computer literacy, career planning, resume preparation, career counseling and comprehensive assessments. Third-tier (training) services are available to unemployed individuals and dislocated workers who have accessed other services without success (AFL-CIO Workforce For America Institute, 2001).

Michigan's Workforce Development Model

State and Local Workforce Boards. WIA requires each state to have private-sector led state and local Workforce Investment Boards (AFL-CIO Working for America Institute, n.d.), which are synonymous with workforce development boards and referred to as workforce boards throughout the document. Michigan's workforce investment boards represent the policy arm of WIA and are non-profit entities with volunteer members from business, government, community-based organizations, education, and organized labor who oversee regional economic and workforce development initiatives. State workforce boards set criteria for local workforce board members, who are appointed by a Chief Elected Official (CEO) (National Association of Workforce Development Boards, 2005). In 2004, Michigan's state workforce board was replaced with the Council for Labor and Economic Growth (Michigan.gov web-site, 2008).

According to their web-site, CLEG is the primary agency responsible for bringing together a variety of organizations, including community colleges, to support improved workforce and economic development. The Council's members include leaders from

business and labor, community colleges, universities, local workforce boards, and other stakeholders. The Council is charged with working closely with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Board of Directors and the governor's Council of Economic Advisors to coordinate state activities, including the activities of community colleges around the state (Michigan.gov web-site, 2008).

Local workforce boards oversee workforce development agencies called One-stop service centers. Each center provides employment and training services as well as administrative support. The EAG is an official sub-group of the workforce board and is comprised of representatives from K-12, higher education and local employers (Michigan.gov web-site, 2007). EAG members serve in an advisory capacity to the Board and are subject matter experts on educational issues. In addition to the roles above, workforce boards are required by statute to do the following (National Association of Workforce Development Boards, 2005; AFL-CIO, n.d.):

1. Develop a budget and a workforce plan
2. Select one-stop operator/enter into an agreement
3. Partner with local elected official appointed by the Governor
4. Develop linkages to economic development
5. Promote participation of employers in the system
6. Appoint a youth council

Michigan Department of Career Development. The Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) comprises three inter-related systems: Career Preparation System, Worker Enhancement System, and Workforce Development System and in conjunction with Workforce Boards and Educational Advisory Groups, MDCD guides

employment, training and education efforts throughout the state (see Figure 1). Although this entity is still exists, it is now housed within the Department of Labor and Economic Growth, the agency that funds the workforce development system (MDLEG, web-site 2004).

Career Preparation System. The Career Preparation System assists individuals entering the labor force and facilitates entry into programs from K-12, postsecondary, career and technical education, community colleges, universities, and private technical schools.

Worker Enhancement System. The Worker Enhancement system provides incumbent workers with resources aimed at increasing skills and earnings through work-based learning, customized training, and other credentialing programs.

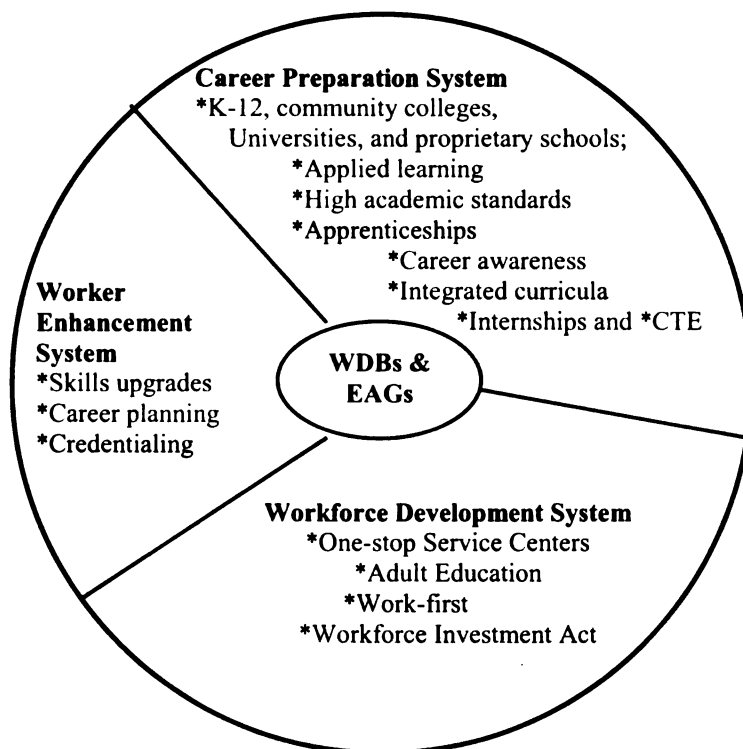
Workforce Development System. The Workforce Development System transitions workers from unemployment or dependent status to self-sufficiency. These individuals receive services from One-stop service centers within designated Michigan Works! regions.

Michigan Work! System. The Michigan Works! System is comprised of 25 Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) regions, with One-stop center branches designed to serve the needs of that community based on the vision and service delivery philosophy set by the workforce board. One-stop centers provide services at more than 100 locations throughout the state of Michigan, seven of which are governed by the workforce board in this study (Michigan Works! Association web-site, 2007). The Michigan Works! Association is non-profit advocacy agency that represents collective needs of the

workforce system through the legislative process and interacts with the Governor on behalf of MWAs (Michigan Works! Association web-site, 2007).

According to the Michigan Works! Association, there are co-located service provider partners at each MWA, such as community-based organizations, community colleges, government agencies and public and private-sector education and training entities. MWAs and their respective workforce boards receive and disseminate information, training and education through the Michigan Works! Association.

Figure 1: Michigan Career Development System



Source: Michigan Department of Career Development (2002).

The Champion: The Linger of Engler

"Governor John Engler has had more impact on the lives of [Michiganders] over the past decade than any other single person, and his deep imprint will be evident well into the new century" (Detroit Free Press, 2001).

The quote from the Detroit Free Press concisely captures the sentiments of some participants in this study. Though Governor Engler's policy efforts were broad and their effects extensive, for our purposes here, they are limited to those discussed by participants within the historical context of economic and workforce development policy. A number of participants credited Engler with being a champion of aligning economic development with workforce development, and the literature confirms that both of Engler's terms were marked by innovative and far-reaching reforms that put employer needs at the forefront of Michigan's workforce development system (Barnow and King, 2000).

John Engler, a Republican, was elected in 1990 as Michigan's 46th governor and served through 2003. During his administration, participants noted that Michigan's welfare system underwent an overhaul ahead of the federal mandate to reform the nation's welfare system. Several themes emerged as participants discussed Engler's contributions to Michigan's workforce development system: an employer focused workforce development system, the evolution of PICs into workforce development boards, mandating a work-first welfare policy environment, building M-TECs and the emergence of a "new strata of working poor". The themes are discussed next.

Employer-Focused Workforce Development System

Engler established Michigan as a leading edge state in workforce development when he aligned economic development with workforce development through a definitive decree that employment and training efforts would be employer-focused and geared toward providing customized solutions to workforce needs. Charles Sullivan, who has been a fixture in the workforce system for more than 20 years, described Engler as a

true ideologue and discussed the extent to which Engler's edict was felt throughout Michigan.

[Engler] emphatically stated that the needs of Michigan's employers are first and economic development is in the lead role. So workforce boards had to re-think how Michigan does business. In addition to the social services component, [One-stops] now had to focus on meeting business needs.

More than half the participants noted that Engler was very involved with both the operational and strategic aspects of economic and workforce development efforts in Michigan. In addition to Engler's genuine love for Michigan, Charles Sullivan describes him as an accessible and hands-on public servant who was knowledgeable about the issues:

Engler used to initiate meetings with our workforce development board chairs. He would host us for dinners in Lansing [Michigan] and he knew the issues; he understood our programs; he knew the acronyms; he really knew what we did and that was what was so refreshing. We'd go in and talk to him and didn't have to sell the staff because he could converse in detail about the programs and what they meant and stuff. I never endorsed him and never voted for him, but I respected the fact that he was so hands-on.

Private Industry Councils and Workforce Development Boards

PICs were created under JTPA legislation in 1981 and charged with developing job training plans, creating budgets, allocating funding, and some were also service providers. Participants noted that community colleges were voting members of PICs and were usually awarded training contracts, and provided the majority of vocational training to various populations. Workforce Development Boards under the Engler administration were grandfathered in from PICs at the sunset of JTPA. Workforce Development Boards are equivalent to Workforce Investment Boards in the WIA legislation.

Participants noted that while community colleges were members of PICs, they had little involvement in developing job training policy because of the prescriptive nature of the legislation. JTPA provided strict guidelines for state and local governments and gave PICs the latitude to conduct training and provide services. PICs had both operational and administrative roles in the workforce development system. The term “rubber stamp” surfaced several times as participants described how PICs functioned and noted a migration to a more strategic model as workforce development boards evolved.

Work-First (Welfare-to-Work)

At the forefront of Engler’s policy reforms was the requirement for welfare recipients to seek employment in order to maintain eligibility for cash assistance and payments. The literature denotes this as work-first and uses the terminology synonymously with welfare-to-work (McCormick, 2004). The premise of work-first was to unburden the social services system by reducing welfare caseloads and requiring recipients to look for and presumably find work. The mandate reduced Michigan’s welfare rolls from approximately 275,000 to 80,000, but according to several participants, did little to help those leaving the welfare system (often referred to as welfare leavers) achieve self-sufficiency. While some participants recounted the Engler era with pride and described him as forward-thinking, others spoke of him with colorful colloquialisms and criticized that he created a new strata of working poor. Hector Mendosa interpreted Engler’s push to reduce welfare rolls as positive, and lauded the policy as giving people hope and a sense of purpose:

[Michigan] cut the welfare rolls by 70% under Engler. That was done with a lot of naysayers and with grinding the teeth and so forth, but it was achieved. What it did was that it took a certain number of that population and made them feel more important...they were self reliant...they could

believe in themselves... it improved their self esteem...it made them feel that they were somebody in this world. Whether it's a single mom or a mom and a dad that can't really make the ends meet for their children, going to work gave them something to hold on to.

Though Hector Mendosa seemed to find a bright spot amid naysayers, not everyone agreed with the work-first design as a viable method for helping families leave welfare and sustain themselves financially. The two seemed mutually exclusive and at opposite ends of the spectrum. Though Engler's overall strategy was largely effective at reducing the number of recipients of government funds, some questioned whether the means justified the end given that little attention was paid to welfare leavers being able to sustain themselves on low wage jobs. Charles Sullivan was one of several participants who expressed dissatisfaction with the work-first design and believes it design fell short of providing self-sufficiency:

I disagreed with [Engler's] work-first design. I think the goal was simply reducing the caseload as opposed to moving people to a better position. That would be a philosophical difference. My thing is well...let's do this, but let's do this so that these people don't need it and because they've got the tools they need to get on with their life.

Michigan Works! Agencies as One-Stop Service Centers

Engler initially coined the phrase Michigan Works! as the moniker for the workforce development system under JTPA legislation. He later designated Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs) as One-Stop Service centers to serve job seekers, incumbent workers and disadvantaged populations under WIA. Engler's design abandoned the silo approach in favor of a coordinated and integrated model that provided employment and training services to dislocated and disadvantaged job seekers. The term one-stop service center is used synonymously with the acronym MWAs throughout the document and are operated by workforce boards as the service delivery arm under WIA. The seamless

service delivery concept would later be a federal mandate under WIA. Workforce boards became integral to the work-first design, as they were charged with overseeing funding, implementation and monitoring performance of service providers. Charles Sullivan recounts the evolution:

[Engler] did a couple of interesting things when he created [Michigan Works!]; he wanted to centralize everything into groups. He made Michigan Works! responsible for the job search function and they'd try to match unemployed people with jobs. The job search function facilitated that, and people were applying for jobs and [Michigan Works!] would get job orders from companies, but there was no real tracking and so on. It was disconnected and if people needed any assistance they couldn't get it, they just did job orders. After WIA was implemented, the employment service portion was given to workforce development boards.

Michigan Technical Education Centers (M-TECs)

One of the most notable examples of Engler's commitment to an employer-focused workforce development system was creating the Michigan Technical Education Centers (M-TECs). M-TECs are a leading edge innovation unique to Michigan and created as extensions of community colleges. M-TECs were born from the belief that the community colleges did not respond to the business community particularly well. According to participants, when Engler made \$11 million funding available for M-TECs, he envisioned M-TECs would be self-sustaining and generate revenue from contract and customized training for Michigan's manufacturing and automobile industries. The 19 M-TECs are financially separate profit centers located on campus or in close proximity to community colleges throughout the state. The strategy behind their location is to be close to community and the workforce and develop programming that reflects the needs of the local labor market.

According to participants, businesses, community colleges and workforce boards collaborated on business plan proposals for M-TECs and funding was awarded for innovation and creativity, and to those determined to have the best chance of advancing economic development and building capacity in Michigan's workforce. At the outset, one participant notes, "the goal was to support the manufacturing industry, not businesses" (conversation with Judith Leahy, 2007). The centers were originally created to train the incumbent workforce in the geographic area and M-TECs were envisioned at every community college. Donald Robinson provides some further insight into community college perceptions and business reactions:

Prior to the creation of M-TECs, some community colleges responded to business training needs, but most did not and wanted to force the employer to do the training on [community college] terms. When businesses need training, they need it now; just in time. There came a realization that community colleges needed to develop the capacity to serve businesses according to business needs or businesses would go elsewhere.

Upon granting the funds, it was understood that M-TEC programs had to be offered as open-entry and open-exit and tailored to the needs of businesses. M-TEC Advisory Boards exists to ensure that employment-related activities and training are market driven and based on the needs of the local business community. The Board advises, but does not govern and consists of local workforce board leaders, community college leadership, representatives of the one-stops, and business, labor and government agencies.

The New "Working Poor"

As noted, several participants opined that, while Engler's policies decreased the welfare rolls in Michigan, the downside was the creation of a new strata of working poor.

For the purposes of this study, the working poor is a term used by participants to indicate welfare leavers who secure jobs but earn wages below the poverty line. Alexander Anastasia and Charles Sullivan provided additional insight into the plight of workers who recently left welfare, but who could not earn a sustainable wage:

Alexander Anastasia: What did [Engler] create? Another strata of people who are at work but still cannot afford the amenities that everyone would like to have...like healthcare, good retirement benefits...you know, all these things that you would expect from decent employment and a decent wage. So, don't get me started on Engler because he's the one who dismantled the mental health program here and threw all these people who are in mental health institutions on the street...they ended up in jails or prison. So, I'm not a big fan of Engler; so don't get me started on Engler!

Charles Sullivan: Here we were creating this new program where people had to get a job first or had to seek getting a job first before they could collect welfare and then the economy sort of cooperated and we had jobs for almost everybody who was willing to work in some fashion. But we created a huge working poor, which is the downside, and that didn't always get recognized because these people weren't necessarily getting out of poverty.

The concept of the working poor is an important footnote in this story because of its implications on workforce board policy. Workforce boards determine the parameters for calculating the sustainable wage for their region. The literature bears out that programs with a strict mandate to work often do not consider the holistic needs or long-term effects of short-term training and low-wage jobs on the individual (Greenberg, Plimpton and Strawn, 2000). Greenberg, Plimpton and Strawn indicate that leavers often end up in jobs that pay below the poverty line and cannot sustain themselves financially. This creates a cycle that, in most cases, leads to re-entry into the welfare system.

Charles Sullivan supports this notion when he recounted a one-stop center pilot study conducted on self-sufficiency of welfare recipients receiving cash assistance.

According to Sullivan, the goal of the study was to determine whether or not a randomly sampled group of ten disadvantaged persons using one-stop center services and receiving benefits were better off financially if they left the system to work a low-wage job or remained in the system with cash benefits. Sullivan recounted the findings of the pilot study and notes that some welfare recipients are in a better position financially if they do not work:

[We] took a case study of ten people who came to us and [the results of our Study indicated] they were actually better off not working than working. The reason was because of child care and Medicaid [benefits] provided by social services, so when they passed that one year extension where after you got work and were no longer eligible for cash payments, we made it so that they could still keep childcare and Medicaid coverage.

As noted, to Engler's credit, welfare rolls in Michigan were reportedly reduced by some 70%, but it begs the question: Did the people of Michigan really benefit in the long-term from a policy that mandated work with little to no preparation or training? The general consensus among participants was that it did not. Engler's place in Michigan's history is significant because his administration laid the groundwork for many of the partnerships and collaborations described in the sections to come. Even in the midst of criticism of naysayers, he championed change and was a masterful architect with a vision of an integrated system of workforce development.

Though Michigan's economic picture was not as bleak during the Engler administration, the Governor was astute in recognizing that economic change was on the horizon and that new and incumbent workers would need higher level skills to meet the needs of what was then an emerging technologically advanced labor market and what is now the 21st century knowledge economy. As Engler made partnership the cornerstone of

Michigan's economic and workforce development system, he brought community colleges to the fore as a partner, collaborator and service provider in regional workforce development initiatives. Whether it is providing training to businesses through their M-TEC training centers or corporate training departments, or partnering to develop curriculum and certifications for in demand occupational programs within a career cluster, community colleges continue to play a key role in addressing the economic and workforce development in Michigan.

The Public-Private Partnership

A public-private partnership is defined as "cooperation between public and private actors with a durable character in which actors develop mutual products and/or services and in which risk, costs and benefits are shared" (Klijn and Teisman, 2004). Klijn and Teisman also advance that public-private partnerships are based on the idea that mutual added value that achieves a surplus value requires an active investment and linking of interactions between parties (p. 147). Gifford (1986) finds that programs devoted to economic development are among the most common endeavors of public-private partnerships. This study explored the effects of community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan and the ways in which they collaborate and partner with each other, local employers, government agencies, community-based organizations, K-12 educational entities, and labor unions in workforce development initiatives.

When Michigan implemented WIA in July 2000, basic oversight and delivery structures were already in place (Barnow and King, 2000), and as a result, community colleges became intimately bound up in economic and workforce development, and a network of complex relationships and mutually beneficial collaborations were formed.

Participants noted their involvement in numerous formal and informal types of partnerships, such as consortiums, alliances, user groups, standing and ad-hoc committees and professional associations that proliferated from their involvement in economic and workforce development. The next section describes the key components of the Southern Region Workforce Board, its structure and function and highlights key partnerships formed with different sectors of the Board. The role of community colleges, perceptions from other sectors and community college perspectives are then discussed.

Structure and Function

The Southern Region Workforce Board (SRWB) is a non-profit organization and one of two workforce boards in the region responsible for establishing the vision and mission for economic and workforce development activities. This study is confined to the Southern Region Workforce Board and the counties it serves, unless otherwise noted. The Board has approximately 30 members from local businesses, government agencies, community-based organizations, educational institutions and labor unions, as mandated by WIA. Community college Board of Trustee members, excluding institutional leadership, have a seat on the workforce board. There is no formal program to acquaint Board members with duties and responsibilities, however there seems to be a common understanding of the organization's mission and goals. The overarching mission and goals of the board can be subsumed under increasing educational attainment and skill levels of job seekers, providing a supply of skilled workers to businesses with available positions and promoting self-sufficiency of welfare leavers, dislocated workers and facilitating re-entry of ex-offenders into society.

Community college institutional leaders serve in an advisory capacity to the SRWB as members of the Educational Advisory Group (EAG). Participants indicated that the EAG advises the workforce board on educational issues, labor market information on in-demand occupations and workforce training needs. SRWB leadership consists of a Chair, a local manufacturer; Vice-Chair, who is also the Chair of the EAG and the CEO of a communications firm. Consistent with the provisions under WIA, the official responsibilities of the SRWB are to engage in workforce development regional planning, establish guidelines for training services, select training vendors, ensure accountability through performance measures and determine the type of one-stop center service at each level (core, intensive or training). Accordingly to the SRWB Chair, the EAG functions as a part of the workforce board, but its members do not vote nor does it have a role in selecting training vendors. Because some EAG member institutions are also service providers, they may not bid on service contracts. The mission, vision and administrative duties of the workforce board are supported by the staff of Southern Region Michigan Works! The stated mission of the SRWB is:

To provide leadership to create a life-long workforce development system that is responsive to market demand. Our vision for our region is a vital, competitive economy that is sustained by regional public-private partnerships that develop a productive workforce (SRWB Website, 2007).

Governance and Decision Making

Workforce Board meetings are open to the public and are generally well attended by board members. Participants view meetings as important forums for voicing concerns, sharing information and learning of employer needs. Participants also described the nature of the partnership between the board and its members as collaborative and

expressed confidence in the Board's leadership. The culture of the board indicates collegiality, collaboration and inclusion in decision making and interaction among the different sectors, and members appear to be knowledgeable of the issues and actively involved in finding solutions to mitigate economic conditions in the area.

The majority of participants indicated that they participated in the previous iteration of the workforce boards as PICs. In discussing the differences between workforce boards and PICs, participants noted a difference in the focus and how they function. Hector Mendoza describes the Board in its earlier iteration as a hands-on service provider and rubber stamp entity and states that the current Board employs a more strategic philosophy. Two participants recall their experiences as PIC members:

Sometimes the PIC meetings were a little embarrassing because I would just look at those faces and think "I bet [these people] are asking themselves why did go to the trouble to come and there are better things I could be doing.

[Workforce Boards] are not as rigid as what they were when they were PICs. Perhaps it's because of the relationships that we have established. Now we feel more like a partner than we do an outsider. And that I'm saying specifically about the [Southern Region] Workforce Board... because I know there are other Boards [where] the community colleges don't have that same relationship with. So, it's really specifically this Board.

As noted, workforce development is aligned with economic development. By virtue of their charge, workforce boards set mission and vision for the region and strategically direct collective resources to programs and activities that serve the needs of Michigan's workers. When asked about the role, culture and function of the board, Ellen Quinn, Vice Chair of the Workforce Board, shares her perception of how the board functions:

We're strategic, and our board has always been that way. We're not sitting there going over last month's reports and trying to micro-manage a system; we're asking "Where does this region need to be and how do we engage other partners to make sure we are moving in the right direction?"

Stakeholders Motives

Participants cited several reasons for participating in the workforce board: to bring the resources and expertise of the organization to the table to improve Michigan's economy; to achieve the mission of the organization, and to network with other workforce development professionals. Stakeholder partners also recognize that alliances yield economic benefits by sharing and leveraging resources and spreading risks.

Stakeholder Perspectives

Community Colleges. Community college representatives from four institutions are involved in the SRWB through the Board's EAG. Though college presidents are prescribed participants on the EAG, in all four instances senior managers other than college presidents were listed as designated representatives, with presidents having no direct involvement in board activities. According to the SRWB Board Chair, only community college Board of Trustee members may represent the educational sector on the workforce boards in Michigan, while senior leaders are relegated to the EAG.

Community colleges have long been involved in federal employment and training programs and most representatives report having participated as board members of PICs under previous workforce development legislation, such as JTPA. They also indicate having much less involvement in governance and job training policy issues under previous legislation. PICs, which would later become workforce boards, were instrumental in ensuring that employment and training programs operated successfully in

the communities. According to participants, representatives from postsecondary though they were involved, had limited roles as members of PICS and were perceived as ineffective due to the prescriptive nature of the legislation. In our conversation, Linda Ferrara from Southern Michigan Community College describes her experience with PICS:

Community colleges had much less involvement in the PICs because there was so little that you could do. We really weren't an active participant in the PICs because they were prescribed and it seemed like they didn't have any power to do anything. They were basically rubber stamps, but I don't want to insult them because they are great people, but I think even they would admit that their function was just basically to ratify what staff was doing and provide oversight.

Southern Michigan Community College. Community college representatives perceived their role as central to workforce development and report having a positive working relationship with the workforce board and other sectors in the southern region. In my conversation with Linda, it was clear that she perceived that the workforce board leadership functioned strategically and are democratic and inclusive in the way they handle matters coming before the board. Though she would not explicitly say so, I sensed through her body language and by the wording of her comments that the strategic operation of the board was somehow different than her previous experience with the private industry council. She expressed confidence in the current Board's leadership:

Anytime that we are talking workforce boards and are talking about the workforce or corporate training or contract training side of the house of the community colleges, we are absolutely in partnership the Workforce Board. It's no longer us and them. It's us.

Davis Community College. Review of documentary and interview data reveal that, as members of workforce boards, community colleges do not develop or participate in the development of actual workforce policy under WIA, rather they serve in an advisory capacity to workforce boards through their participation in EAGs. In further exploring the

community college role with regard to policy decisions, it was especially important for me to understand whether or not the voice of community colleges representatives were heard on postsecondary educational issues, and if so how. The data revealed the significant role of community colleges and Donald Robinson from Davis Community College provides clarity to this in his comments.

[The] idea is that [community colleges] bring to the [workforce board/EAG] table the resources of the Institution that assists in moving ahead whatever that workforce agenda is for this area. Far too often though it is not a clearly defined agenda and you're reacting to special federal or state funding programs, so really you just do what they say do. Your only option is to comply with the law, so you're not really determining it. The level of participation of the college really depends on how active the educational partners are and it really does depend on the partners that are at the table.

Midwest Community College. Carol Grayson, VP Learning, is the designated representative to EAG from Midwest Community College. Grayson affirms MCC's commitment to the community and the region by reiterating the institution's mission during our interview. While she is a designated institutional representative to the EAG, she admittedly does not attend the meetings but instead sends James Gideon, Dean of Industrial Technology, as her designee. When asked how she became the designated representative, she responds,

I get involved by virtue of my position at the college. It came with my job. Pretty much the tradition here at the college has been that the vice president is the official member [of the EAG], but I have a designee who usually ends up attending. It is hard for me to make those meetings because the day they meet I have [President's] Cabinet, so I send an alternate and he really does most of the work.

Grayson conveys that she finds it beneficial for the college to engage in partnerships that advance economic and workforce development, and specifically pointed to MCC's involvement in workforce boards and one-stop centers as yielding significant

benefits. In speaking with representatives from the four institutions, collectively they indicated those benefits to be: (1) a potential pipeline for new student markets by serving disadvantaged populations, incumbent workers or those seeking a new career through referrals from one-stop centers; (2) helping to increase the educational attainment and skill levels of Michigan's workforce by providing individual and contract training, which contributes to the economy; (3) leveraging funding and maximizing resources by working through the workforce board to facilitate relationships and partner on economic and workforce development initiatives with other community colleges and educational sectors, one-stop centers, employers and community-based agencies.

Regional Community College. Community college representatives described a dividing line and tension between administration and faculty that serve the more traditional college students, i.e. those enrolled in credit courses, and those teaching non-credit or continuing education courses. This was interpreted as a hierarchy where non-credit instructional faculty are on the lower rung. Judith Leahy also alluded to tension between her division, where the majority of services are for contract training, and what she termed as "the other side of the house". She perceived traditional faculty to be territorial and that contract training infringed on their relationships with local businesses:

[Faculty] from the other side don't understand that contract training is really a part of the mission of the college and that it is not hurting them, but indeed feeding their programs. And often times we will all run into some road blocks from the credit side of the house, because they don't understand what we are doing and why we are doing it. Probably the community understands what we're doing better than our own people inside on the credit side. (Laughing) And that's unfortunate.

Dr. Grayson from Midwest recounts the same issue in a different story. She describes a scenario where faculty from MCC's division of corporate community

services--an area that provides all non-credit courses with no ties to degree programs, is distinguished from faculty who teach credit courses. Grayson goes on to say that the division between the two factions is less of a territorial issue, but whether or not courses will be offered for credit. Still, she sees it as a barrier that prevents the College from responding quickly to business training needs. When probed a bit more for the source of the tension, she also stated very candidly,

It's coming from the faculty side. The main issue here is faculty are concerned about having control over the curriculum. You know, our faculty are unionized and non-credit programs are not covered under the contract. There is a philosophy here that non-credit is looked at as less legitimate. There is also a concern that non-credit programming isn't quality programming. The non-credit faculty are more flexible, responsive to employer needs, and willing to work outside of the traditional semester system to provide just-in-time training over five weeks instead of fifteen, and traditional faculty are less flexible and see themselves as existing separately from non-credit faculty.

Since Midwest CC does not have an M-TEC, Grayson lauds the efforts of her continuing education staff for finding creative ways to overcome the challenges presented by the tension between the two sides and being able to serve businesses just the same. She cited an example where MCC partnered with Michigan Works! to create a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Grayson posed the idea to both the credit and non-credit faculty.

The non-credit programs must go through a review process by a curriculum committee and the typical implementation time is one year after the review. On the non-credit side, the staff worked with a third party vendor to pilot the program to implement the program within less than six months and now it is offered as a certification within a healthcare career cluster. Grayson also reports that the "non-credit side is often used as a test bed to see what the demand is before we go through the formal process. It's all about what is cost effective and what the need is.

K-12 Education. Dr. Mary Brown represents the Regional Educational Service Area (RESA) on the EAG, and is the K-12 administrator for career and technical education. Dr. Brown expressed satisfaction with the Board leadership and described the relationships between the different sectors as collaborative. Dr. Brown noted several curricular concerns she believed may have a bearing on the role of education in workforce development: the need for K-12 to partner more closely with local businesses to identify and incorporate into the curriculum workplace readiness skills for emerging occupations, infusing academics into CTE programs to comply with No Child Left Behind legislation, a stronger emphasis on career planning and development in middle and high school, and formation of articulation agreements with community colleges that facilitate easy transfer from high school. Aside from curricular concerns, Dr. Brown seemed dismayed by the continuous funding constraints imposed on the educational sector and believed that the political environment had a negative effect on the ability to secure funding for secondary and postsecondary schools.

Business and Industry. Robert Farris, director of Corporate Workforce Planning for Barron Health Systems—a major employer in the southern region, represents the private sector and healthcare industry in several capacities in the workforce development system. Farris is a voting member of the SRWB and the Davis County Workforce Boards, a MiRSA, and several affiliate workforce development alliance groups. Farris was candid in expressing his belief that community colleges and one-stop centers need to work more closely with employers in the region to better understand their needs and supply the skilled workers they need to stay competitive. When asked to rate the workforce board in terms of performance and effectiveness, his response was,

Quite frankly, I find it very ineffective.

When probed, Farris recalled that although he had seen the positive side of participating in the workforce board and the MiRSAs in the new accelerated nursing programs, he believed the partnerships, and therefore the region are capable of much more in terms of economic and workforce development. Farris had two additional points about workforce development in the southern region:

Community colleges do not seem to have a sense of urgency when it comes to helping businesses, and one-stops do not yield a significant source of qualified candidates for positions requiring mid to high level skills.

He further noted that the one-stop centers still function like a welfare office, which is an image problem, and this diminishes their credibility as a viable resource for recruiting skilled workers. Farris points to the need for an increased number of skilled workers in the nursing and healthcare pipeline. He reports to have expressed this need in several public forums, including workforce board and subcommittees meetings, MiRSAs, and in economic development focus groups, to no avail. Farris commented that,

One-stop centers in Michigan have the potential to further advance economic and workforce development efforts by supplying employers with qualified candidates and leveraging funds to support customized training programs.

Government. Betty Lewis made several observations about community college participation in the workforce development system. Lewis, who is the director of Workforce Programs, oversees the entire system of workforce programs for the state of Michigan and Governor. First, she noted that community colleges are integral to the system as partners, training vendors, service providers and advisors to the EAG. Second, Lewis describes the internal conflict that is sometimes prevalent in community colleges.

There is internal conflict between the academic side that deals with the more traditional kinds of learning, curriculum development and delivery and the side that deals with fee-based programs that are more open-entry, open-exit programs.

She goes on to say that because the lines aren't completely delineated between the two factions, there is conflict regarding which will represent the college in providing services to the customer. Third, Lewis described her participation in regional economic and workforce development efforts throughout the state, making note of Governor Granholm's 21st Century Jobs Fund Initiative (hereafter "the Fund"). The Fund is a multi-faceted project intended to facilitate economic and workforce development by identifying declining and growth sectors of the economy and provide information and assistance to both. One outcome of the Fund has been a pilot project partnership between Michigan State University, a Michigan Works! Agency and government where workforce development professionals are taught how to develop and deliver pro-active business services to targeted companies. At this writing, the project is in the pilot stage, but the program is slated for statewide implementation.

Labor Unions. David Kessig is a representative for an automobile workers labor union in Michigan. Kessig is a voting member of the SRWB and also sits on the EAG. Kessig acknowledges that unions have less bargaining strength than in years past, but maintains that in spite of their decline,

Unions are still a viable force and effective advocate for the rights and needs of workers across the country.

Kessig offers a favorable opinion of the board and appreciates the diversity of sectors represented and their individual commitment to economic and workforce development. Along those same lines, he lauded community colleges for providing

quality services and training to new and incumbent workers and for their efforts to re-train displaced workers. Kessig expressed concerns about the number of displaced workers due to the decline in the automobile and manufacturing industries, but seemed equally concerned that in order for Michigan's economy to thrive again, a new market niche was needed. Kessig explains,

We've got to make something; we've got to take raw materials and turn them into an export! We haven't figured this out yet! Workforce boards and alliances across the state would do well to ensure that workers are trained for in-demand occupations and available jobs.

Community College Roles

The idea of forming strategic partnerships to achieve a mutually beneficial end is vital to the success of economic and workforce development in most states, but especially in Michigan. As Michigan's workforce development system took on employers as its main customer, community colleges gained prominence as the premier service provider and partner to local businesses. Policies under the Engler administration encouraged partnerships and strengthened collaborations between public and private entities and community colleges became integral to helping build capacity and skills of Michigan's workforce. Participants described community college participation in workforce boards as central to Michigan's economic and workforce development efforts. Moreover, many of the partnerships and collaborations formed during the Engler years are still in existence today, albeit they have evolved from their original inception.

Notably, there is variation among the community colleges leaders in terms of their designated representatives attending EAG meetings. And as noted, college presidents are prescribed participants, though none were available to participate in this study. Each institution actively participates in the EAG and alternate designees are submitted and

approved by the SRWB as follows: Davis Community College designates the associate vice president for Workforce Development and the vice chancellor of Education Affairs as an alternate, while the director of Corporate Training and the associate dean of continuing education services represent Central Michigan. Regional Community College is represented by vice president of Academic Affairs for Career and Technical Programs with the senior consultant for the M-TEC as the alternate; and Midwest Community College sends the dean of Industrial Technology as an alternate for the vice president for Learning. The data indicate that only two of the above participants report directly to the President of their respective institutions.

With variation in who attends board meetings comes variation in perspective. Undoubtedly, participants provide a unique perspective based on where they sit in the organization and the extent of their institution's commitment and involvement with economic and workforce development. As partners in workforce development efforts, community colleges assume various roles as they engage in strategic planning and contribute their expertise in curriculum development and training to program designs. Participants indicated that community colleges assume several roles within the context of workforce development: advisor, education provider, subject matter expert, training vendor and advocate. The next section provides an overview of each role and how each participant articulates the ways in which their institution participates in workforce development activities.

Advisor

Webster's dictionary (2002) defines the advisor as "recommending a course of action; which implies that the giver of the advice has the knowledge and experience".

Participants report that the EAG has an advisory role to the workforce board on specific issues, such as distribution of Federal Perkins Grant funds, education certification and credentialing, and vocational-occupational programs. The EAG is an official advisory committee of the workforce board and provides leadership in regional educational issues that affect K-12, postsecondary and the workforce. As members of the EAG, community college representatives are not able to vote on workforce board issues and contracts but are represented collectively through the vice chair of the workforce board. As an unobtrusive observer to an EAG meeting, I noted the presence of community college representatives from three of the four institutions participating in this study and one representative from K-12 education; two from labor; and several local employers from the healthcare, manufacturing and communications industries. Specific examples of how the institutions participate as an advisor are covered next.

Davis Community College. DCC is the largest of the four institutions and is located within the four county area that comprises the southern region. Participants noted that this area contains the most underserved population(s) in the state of Michigan. Donald Robinson and Alexander Anastasia described how Davis's role as advisor was manifested in pre-layoff activities with businesses and, in particular, during some of the early Ford buy-out and lay-off programs. Specifically, staff from Davis Community College partnered with the local one-stop center to provide information on the different services and programs available to those employees affected. Anastasia also commented that going on-site at the different companies provided the opportunity to create a relationship with the employees as prospective students and orient them to in-demand occupations and career programs available at the college. DCC also provides other advisory services

to students in the community at the Michigan Works! centers, including orientation seminars on college attendance; academic, career and financial aid counseling, as well as conducting prior learning assessments for college credit.

Southern Michigan Community College. Southern Michigan's director of Corporate Training describes their role as advisory when connecting K-12 programs with the college's career and occupational programs to create a seamless transition from secondary to post-secondary. Specifically, in addition to advising the EAG on post secondary educational matters, Southern Michigan is equally focused on participating in K-12 advisory committees and partnering with employers in the area. In addition, SMCC offers seminars and one-on-one consulting for entrepreneurs and consulting for firms seeking assistance with obtaining government contracts and/or grants and import/export products and services.

Midwest Community College. Midwest Community College describes their advisory role to be educating the workforce board on different issues specific to postsecondary education. Dr. Grayson speaks of building and investing in local economies and providing counsel to the SRWB and EAG on innovative ways to link education and occupational training as guided by labor market data in order to ensure economic stability within the region. Although she does not often attend the meetings, she reports that James Gideon, her designee, actively participates in the EAG and keeps her apprised of business concerning the board.

Regional Community College. Judith Leahy, senior consultant for the M-TEC at Regional Community College, describes her participation as serving in an advisory capacity on several workforce development initiatives with public and private entities

throughout the region. As a member of the Nursing Innovations advisory panel in the Michigan's Regional Skill Alliance for the southern region, Leahy consulted on the curricular and infrastructure requirements and the capacity of the M-TEC to meet the training needs for the nursing programs. Also, similar to DCC, Leahy is also heavily involved in advising employees at Ford Motor Company, which is its anchor client.

Education Provider

Community college participants in this study noted that community colleges are low-cost providers of traditional, career and technical programs and occupational certification. Participants also made linkages between educational attainment, income earnings and greater contributions to Michigan's tax base as well as the necessity of a college education in the 21st century economy. Community college representatives also distinguished their institutions from four-year schools by noting their flexibility and adaptability in designing education courses and career programs separate from or within a career or occupational cluster in shorter time frames than four-year institutions. Participants touted the success of existing alliances between community colleges and K-12 institutions and with other two and four-year institutions as a major strength.

Donald Robinson, Associate Vice President for Workforce Development at Davis Community College, cited the engineering career pathway as a specific example of how well community college programs can facilitate workforce development by moving students into the workforce more quickly and more economically than four-year institutions:

We can train [students] to become a technician and do that in a couple of months...then they can go on and get an associate's degree in applied engineering and transfer that into a four-year engineering program. We can enable a person to enter into that cycle in

occupational fields that could help them get employed in shorter period of time.

Within the framework of workforce development, community college representatives noted the importance of their open access mission and giving academically underprepared students a second chance for college success within a supportive infrastructure. The literature confirms that support at community colleges enable students to move beyond remedial courses to attain a certification, an associate's degree or prepare them for transfer to a large institution such as the University of Michigan or Michigan State University (Cohen and Brawer, 2003). In the following statement Donald Robinson notes that community colleges are especially valuable to the economy in Michigan because of the push to raise the educational attainment level throughout the state:

To me, community colleges right now are in the best position in the world ...if our goal is to raise the educational attainment level for this state, who but the community college? We're open admission. A person age 18 or over can be admitted without a high school diploma but with a GED. You can't do that anywhere else. You can do that here...and if you want to move people to get associate degrees, hey, here we are!

Training Vendor

Community college faculty and administrators partner with businesses to design and deliver training programs that facilitate continuous learning and professional development for new, incumbent, migrant and displaced workers in the community. As noted, Engler positioned the M-TEC centers within the framework of advancing economic and workforce development, which enables community colleges to serve a broader spectrum of needs. M-TECs offer the opportunity for community colleges to serve businesses by creating flexible company specific open-entry/open-exit courses and

contract training. Of the four community colleges participating in this study, only one had an M-TEC on campus.

Community colleges are also designated partners to the more than 100 MWAs in Michigan. There are seven MWAs located throughout the southern region. Each MWA has several designated partners that provide employment, training and career services to clients. MWA partners enter into a Memo of Understanding (MOU), an agreement that outlines the specifics of the partnership, including which services are provided and by whom, and a fee and cost structure for use of the facility. Community colleges are not co-located at Southern Region MWA service centers, but do provide a menu of services to job seekers, including occupational skills training, career assessments and contract training for incumbent workers.

Regional Community College. Judith Leahy, the Senior Consultant at the M-TEC at Regional Community College, noted that her institution created and facilitated successful workforce training programs through partnerships with MWAs and other government agencies serving the business community. Leahy recalls a time of financial uncertainty for the M-TEC as Michigan's economic situation worsened and businesses cut back on employee training. This gave rise to the need for a comprehensive business strategy that identified other markets and services to keep the center financially afloat. Leahy attributes the success of the M-TEC center to the ingenuity and business acumen of the college's President. She spoke of how he worked collaboratively with the M-TECs advisory board to develop the center's strategic plan, which included a marketing strategy and prospective areas for future business development.

Leahy also mentioned the tension between staff at the M-TEC and administrators and faculty at the college shortly after the M-TEC was built. She described the relationship as being “rocky at first”, but states that it evolved into what is now a more collegial association. Specifically, Leahy recalls receiving what she describes as “push back” from the other side of the house when faculty were called upon to plan curriculum, provide subject matter expertise or deliver a training program at the M-TEC. Leahy employs multiple strategies for overcoming this tension, including working around it by talking to the right administrator and in some cases seeking the assistance of her supervisor:

I’ve gotten reactions like “we don’t have faculty available; they’re off on Summer; or they’re maxed out on their [teaching] hours...let me see if I can get so and so to help you.” If it’s a really important project, I’ll go to my boss and say look we have the possibility of working long term with [the healthcare industry], this is important; then he makes a phone call and gets it resolved.

Southern Michigan Community College. Linda Ferrara, Southern Michigan’s director of Corporate Training, talks about training in the context of structuring training curricula to address the needs of the workforce. In her position as director of Corporate Training, she customizes training modules for local businesses and delivers the programs on-site or at the college’s Vista Technology Center. The Vista Technology Center is a recently built full service facility that houses the campus’ business development center and its highly regarded Culinary Arts Program. Ferrara further explains that,

We actually customize a class, take it to the location of the business. Sometimes the business training is undersigned by the state in a grant, or it could be paid for by the company. But we upgrade the job skills of employees.

Davis Community College. In addition to participating in the SRWB, serving on other boards in the local community is another way to develop an extended network of potential partners for training opportunities. Similar to Southern Michigan Community College's efforts to partner with businesses in writing grants for customized training, Alexander Anastasia from Davis noted that the college's training projects often arise from collaborations within the community businesses, non-profits or other public entities. In the case of the Hazardous Waste Materials training program offered by Davis, Anastasia notes that this work came as a result of his service to the Board of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce. Anastasia further explains:

These are people I see several times a month and so we keep the lines of communication open. When opportunities arise that we could help [them] with, such as grants, we become co-authors or we become the venue with training facilities and [the director] writes us into his grants.

Midwest Community College. Midwest Community College points to their collaboration with Michigan Works! to implement a CNA program. Midwest relies heavily on their advisory boards to keep the finger on the pulse of the demand for training in a particular field in the labor market. The advisory boards at MCC are comprised of local employers, college faculty, and a cross section of administrators who provide input into curriculum and program development.

Subject Matter Expert

Community college faculty were acknowledged as subject matter experts by the majority of participants. In various forums, including the workforce board and the EAG, participants considered the expertise of faculty a valuable asset, and a notable example is developing the curriculum and learning modules for Registered Nurse Programs and the Long Term Care career cluster. Participants noted community colleges were highly

involved in the Michigan Regional Skill Alliances (MiRSAs). MiRSAs are employer-led consortiums created by the Michigan Department of Economic Development to promote research and develop programs in emerging and/or in demand occupations, such as hospitality, tourism, advanced manufacturing, home health care and nursing fields. MiRSAs are one component of Governor Jennifer Granholm's 21st Century Workforce Initiative, which represents a broad regional approach to promoting economic and workforce development in high-wage, high-skill career occupations. Community colleges, unions, employers and economic development representatives are integrated partners in MiRSAs, and there are sixteen MiRSAs throughout the state.

MiRSA funding has facilitated several alliances between hospitals and community colleges seeking to reinstitute the LPN nursing program and create a new long-term care occupational certificate program. Both programs have a career cluster component that incorporates career and wage progression and employer placement upon completing the program. According to participants, the MiRSA funding came with several stipulations. First, Granholm stipulated that to receive MiRSA funding, multiple stakeholder sectors were required to partner; second, proposals submitted had to strategically target growth industries and in-demand occupations in one of Michigan's 13 defined regions; and third, the initiatives would not be funded perpetually. Across these initiatives, seven MiRSAs were funded in three counties in the southern region, with the majority of funds awarded for healthcare industry occupations. The majority of participants perceived the MiRSAs to be beneficial to improving Michigan's economy; and cited such advantages as a greater emphasis on partnering between stakeholders; a central role for community colleges as training provider and subject matter expert; having

the potential to expand workforce, training and infrastructure capacity through leveraging of funds and resources; and providing a forum for employers in similar markets to share information and needs.

Regional Community College. Judith Leahy noted that RCC and the M-TEC had partnered with the City of Detroit and Henry Ford Health System to help create an RN program for the southern region. Notably, Leahy mentioned her involvement with a recruitment initiative targeting existing employees within the health system who already held bachelor's degrees, but were interested in nursing as a second career. Leahy reports that the program generated a high level of interest and her sourcing efforts produced more than 50% of the applicant pool seeking enrollment in the program.

Robert Farris described the healthcare crisis in Michigan and throughout the nation and noted that his company, Barron Healthcare Systems, is also partnering with community colleges to address the issues in Michigan by: (1) creating an accelerated 13 month nursing program; (2) an on-line RN program for LPNs; and (3) a second degree program for anyone who has a baccalaureate degree and interested in pursuing a nursing degree, and (4) creating a long term health care program as a career ladder and bridge to the LPN and RN credentials.

Farris described other regional healthcare initiatives co-sponsored by the MiRSAs. He also cited the impetus creating the programs was a workforce study conducted by human resources firm Watson Wyatt, which estimated the healthcare system in the southern region would need an additional 10,000 nurses by the year 2012, a significant number of practitioners in the long-term care field, with an emphasis on License Practical Nurses (LPNs). Participants indicated that some years ago Michigan

community colleges as a collective decided they would no longer offer LPN training programs and certifications to place greater emphasis on the Registered Nursing (RN) credential.

Midwest Community College. Carol Grayson devoted a considerable amount of time to discussing the strides MCC has made to build a pipeline of qualified nurses. Though the AACC (2002) reports that there has not been a significant decline in the number of nurses in the Midwest region, Grayson counters that she and her counterparts at neighboring community colleges have made nursing programs a top priority as a result of the high demand. Grayson does also points out that, in addition to developing an RN program, she is also involved in helping to get the LPN programs reinstated, albiet much to the chagrin of community college faculty. She explains their position:

Our faculty don't like [the] LPN [certification] because, if you think of credentialing and the professions, the higher the credential, the higher the demand and the money goes up. So, they are protecting their profession and they're working in their students' interests so that they'll have higher paying jobs.

Reinstituting the LPN program also garnered support from board members from other sectors. There is some evidence that the high level of interest and activity surrounding the LPN program might stem from the fact that it represents a significant wage progression step up from the nursing assistant pay and fits nicely into healthcare career ladder, which can marketed to prospective students. And, as a result of the MiRSAs collaborations, several community colleges in the southern region are offering on ground, on-line and hybrid versions of LPN programs. Some participants indicated several disadvantages of the MiRSAs and expressed concern that their time, energy and efforts may be duplicated if they participated in MiRSAs and workforce boards.

Employers noted that the educational community “is slow to respond to their needs and didn’t seem to see urgency” of the present economic situation. Workforce board members commented on the potential for duplicative efforts through the MiRSAs and the lack of urgency with community colleges. Ellen Quinn, Quinn Communication Associates:

A lot of workforce boards got very concerned when [MiRSAs] came about because it was like ‘are you re-creating us...are you just asking more people who sit on our board to sit on those boards?’ And our determination was that these skills alliances move things to a regional level in an industry specific area, we want to be there to be a part of it and we didn’t look at it as a threat to us. We wanted to be there.

Another example was provided by Robert Farris from Barron Health Systems. Farris used the long-term care MiRSA as an example and noted his frustration with community colleges. Farris seems to justify his comment by surmising that their lack of interest may be due to the fact that they are not the institutional leaders actually responsible for making policy decisions. As a representative of one of the largest healthcare employers in the southern region, Farris accepts some of the responsibility on behalf of employers, saying that they haven’t pressed the issue like they should. He suggests that community college leaders and other sectors of the workforce board have more frequent conversations with employers and make it a priority to follow-up. Farris indicates that,

Both two and four year [colleges and universities] attend the meetings, they listen to the need and sometimes pledge help, and then there is no follow-up. They come and listen and there it ends.

Davis Community College. In addition to the concern about the potential for duplicative efforts, participants also expressed concern at the lack of funding to sustain the efforts of MiRSAs. For example, in the case of the Nursing MiRSA, where

accelerated nursing programs were started and students were recruited, stakeholder partners have the responsibility of ensuring program continuity with their own funds. All four community college leaders pointed to the funding issue as being problematic because of the high costs associated with nursing and healthcare training. They also stated that because the nursing field was so important not only in Michigan, but nationally, it forced them to come together with other partners and pool resources to ensure that training programs would continue. Donald Robinson, who participates on the SRWB, the Davis County Workforce Board and a MiRSA believes the one-time funding is a waste of dollars as recounted in the following statement.

The dollars were only there to create that MiRSA. There's nothing to sustain it; there's nothing there to train any workers once you define these occupational areas and training programs. You're on your own. And so to be honest with you, to me that was a waste of dollars to create the MiRSA because while it wasn't that much money, it's more than what we typically have out there right now. I think we've spent close to \$12 or \$15 million dollars in creating MiRSA. This past fiscal year, we only spent in this state roughly \$3 million dollars to train existing and incumbent workers in business and industry because the dollars weren't there. But we spent \$12 million on creating Regional Skills Alliances. What is wrong with that picture?

As noted, the demand for skilled nurses is high in Michigan and throughout the nation (AACC, 2002). In the nursing example, healthcare providers relied heavily on the nursing faculty at community colleges in the southern region to build curricula, craft clinical experiences and design programs for nursing students. As subject matter experts, community colleges bring the expertise of their faculty as well as their institutional resources to help facilitate economic and workforce development.

Advocate

Community College Presidents. According to participants, college presidents rarely attend workforce board meetings and have delegated that responsibility to other leaders within the college, yet as the most senior officers they have an important leadership role economic and workforce development in the state. A plausible explanation for delegating this responsibility might be the critical role college presidents play in leveraging external partnerships and mediating relationships with the political establishment within their communities (Melendez et al, 2004). During my interview with Dr. Carol Grayson, she confirmed that the president of MCC does not attend workforce board meetings, instead he actively participates in an alliance with other college presidents in Michigan. The advocacy role of the community college presidents also manifested as Grayson mentioned that college presidents also champion the collective needs of community colleges at the legislative level. This seems to indicate that community colleges presidents get together to become one voice and therefore are more powerful in the absence of a single governing board advocating on their behalf.

At the writing of this dissertation, college presidents from two of the four institutions represented in this study participated in a workgroup convened by the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA). Since there is no governing or coordinating board for postsecondary education institutions in Michigan, MCCA is the association of Michigan public community colleges whose mission is to provide leadership on issues and advocate on behalf of its 28 member colleges.

According to a report prepared by MCCA in 2007, the workgroup convened with the purpose of analyzing the factors that impede the ability of community colleges to expand their nursing programs and brainstorm about ways to address the issue. The

workgroup identified four critical factors limiting the ability of community colleges to increase the number of nursing graduates: 1) the availability of qualified nursing program faculty, or lack thereof; 2) the availability of appropriate clinical sites for clinical training, or lack thereof; 3) the high costs associated with offering a nursing program and the inability to achieve economies of scale make the programs cost prohibitive; 4) the attrition of nursing students due to stopping out. On behalf of the workgroup, MCCA brought forward several recommendations to address these barriers, all of which made the case for the urgent need for funding and additional infrastructure support from the legislature.

Current Economic and Workforce Development Initiatives

Participants indicated their involvement in several current economic and workforce development designed to increase capacity in the workforce and supply skilled workers to Michigan businesses. This section describes several programs and the goals of each: Jobs Education and Training (JET), No Worker Left Behind (NWLB), and the Prisoner Re-Entry Program.

Jobs Education and Training (JET)

Participants indicated that Michigan's welfare system was due for another round of reforms. They noted that welfare reform efforts originally initiated by Governor Engler had been successful at cutting the high welfare rolls by more than half, but were unsuccessful at helping former recipients achieve self-sufficiency. In addition, the system did not address some of the more significant barriers associated with unemployment, such as homelessness, low self-esteem, drug abuse, and mental illness. Charles Sullivan

recalls that the work-first design did not include enough up-front assessments, nor was it designed to detect or address the different types of barriers to employment clients had.

Clients with significant barriers were cycling through the welfare system and unable to secure stable employment. Barbara Beasley confirmed this and noted that she was on the leadership team charged with planning the new JET model. With the support of Governor Jennifer Granholm, the JET workgroups convened statewide to begin a dialogue about the current needs and develop a new model for self sufficiency. The workgroup proposed a revision to the existing work-first model, with more intensive diagnostic assessments guided by a case manager and development plan. Sullivan briefly describes the model.

JET is intended to be more personalized than [work-first] in that the individual plan would be done for each person and you would do diagnostic tests as appropriate to identify what would be the best opportunity for the client in terms of training. The first question is do they need remediation; the stand alone remediation would be tied to occupational remediation.

After conducting several pilots, the JET program has been implemented statewide. Sullivan reports that Southern Region Michigan Works! piloted a JET program and though the results were promising, he was not confident that the program would be funded to go statewide. Barbara Beasley confirmed Sullivan's concern and noted that JET had been piloted to more than 18 counties which comprised more than 50% of the state's welfare caseloads. She also emphasized that funding was more of an issue than originally thought because assessments, supervision and record-keeping requirements coupled with the fact that some clients might require as much as 4 years of case management activities drove the costs way up. When asked how or if the community

colleges would fit into the JET model, Beasley reiterated the funding concern but provides insight into why.

What we see is that [community colleges] are probably the most expensive system to provide basic education--with their overhead and faculty costs and everything. Whereas if we were to go say to a community adult education provider or get a community-based organization to provide adult education, we could get a lot more service for the same amount of money than we could if we were having the community college do it.

As it stands, local workforce boards, MWAs, the Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), the Michigan department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) offices are all working together on finding ways to combine funding streams and leverage dollars to implement the JET model throughout Michigan. A follow-up with participants regarding the status of the JET program reveals that administrators are refining the system, instituting data collection activities and working through the system glitches.

No Worker Left Behind

Community colleges have been made integral to yet another statewide effort to address the economic and workforce development needs in the state. Governor Jennifer Granholm introduced the *No Worker Left Behind* program in her 2007 State of the State address and will look to Michigan's community colleges to play a central role in educating and re-training dislocated workers. No Worker Left Behind (NWLB) is designed to address the re-training and education needs of workers who have been displaced by the economic downturn in manufacturing and automobile industries. According to the Governor's web-site, Granholm's plan is to,

Double the number of [Michiganders] trained for family-sustaining jobs in demand in the 21st Century knowledge economy. That is, to

train 100,000 people over the next three years. NWLB will provide up to two years free tuition at any Michigan community college or other approved training program while allowing displaced workers to receive needed training in high demand skills while receiving unemployment benefits (Michigan.gov Website, 2008).

Barbara Beasley added that the Governor's first year budget for NWLB was \$77 million and all funds would be funneled through local workforce boards to MWAs.

Workforce Boards are also central to NWLB because they are responsible for determining the labor market needs for their respective regions and community colleges would advise them on the different programs, certifications, and courses were available within those occupations. Displaced workers who wish to take advantage of NWLB are required to register with a MWA for eligibility determination and will then receive assistance in moving through the process. One of the issues that have come up is the question of community college capacity, says Beasley.

Let's say we double the number of people that come from our system and go to a community college [with NWLB], with their infrastructure do they have the faculty? Do they have the course offerings? Are the course offerings accelerated training? We are concerned about the impact on the community college system if we go in this direction.

Beasley indicated that local workforce boards, MWAs, community colleges were in discussions about the NWLB program and she was confident that the outcome would be positive. She also noted that community colleges had become an integral part of the Michigan Works! System and were an important part of Michigan's efforts to enhance the skills of the workforce.

Prisoner Re-entry

Several participants noted Michigan's Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative as a current policy focus of the workforce development system. The goals of the Re-entry initiative

are to promote public safety by reducing the threat of harm to persons and property by released offenders and improve offender prospects for successful return to and sufficiency in the community by providing on-going support and resources to support their continuous transition. As Michigan prepares for the re-entry of an average of 10,000 prisoners per year, workforce development professionals, one-stop center directors and staff, and community service agencies will again look to partnerships throughout the community to successfully roll-out the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP).

At the core of TAP is a pro-active case-management approach to working with offenders from nine months to one year prior to release to improve the chances of their successful re-introduction to society. Case managers from state and local agencies conduct in-depth screenings including psychological, physical, educational and vocational aptitude tests to use as a foundation for developing a post-release plan. The plan also includes educating and training prisoners for in-demand occupations in the local labor market. The first phase of TAP was implementing as a pilot program in 2005, and included two counties in the southern region. At the writing of this dissertation the program has been implemented statewide. The Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative places an additional burden on the employment and training resources in Michigan's workforce development system underscores the need for additional funding.

Key Findings

This study sought to understand the effect of community college involvement in workforce boards by studying a workforce board/community college partnership in the southern region. The research question guiding this study is, "What is the effect of

community college involvement in workforce boards in Michigan?” The key findings that answer this question are:

1. Community colleges are a strategic partner in Michigan’s workforce development system and therefore central to economic and workforce development. They have several important roles: advisor, subject matter expert, education provider, training vendor, and consultant.
2. Community college involvement in workforce boards yield several important benefits to economic and workforce development efforts: (a) A potential pipeline for new student markets through referrals from one-stop center staff; (b) a portal to higher education for socio-economically disadvantaged populations, (c) a community resource that facilitates maximizing resources through partnerships with other community-based organizations, government agencies, local businesses, other educational institutions and M-TECs.
3. Community college trustees are designated voting members of workforce boards and institutional leaders, such as deans and directors, serve in an advisory role to workforce boards as members of the Educational Advisory Group (EAG), a subcommittee of the workforce board. As members of the EAG, institutional leaders are not considered members of the workforce board, nor are they permitted to vote. There is no data to indicate that this structure impedes or adversely impacts community college involvement in workforce boards.
4. Community college involvement in workforce boards facilitates additional opportunities to partner with other community colleges and educational sectors, one-

stop centers, employers and community-based agencies on economic and workforce development initiatives.

5. The level of community college involvement in workforce boards is a reflection of the institution's commitment to serve their respective communities.
6. Community college involvement in workforce boards includes M-TECs. M-TECs are financially separate self-sustaining extensions of community colleges, created with the sole purpose of providing contract training to business and industry. In recent years, M-TEC centers have partnered with Michigan Works! and other community-based organizations for just-in-time and open entry/open exit training programs and also are used as classroom laboratories for skilled trades and other occupational programs.
7. Faculty within community colleges wield a significant amount of power in their roles as subject matter experts. Businesses and other sectors perceive community college instructional faculty who teach credit courses as rigid and sometimes reluctant to create curricula and deliver just-in-time and open-entry/open-exit training programs, especially if the need falls outside of the traditional semester schedule or off peak hours.
8. Faculty within community colleges are reluctant to teach non-credit courses, which may thwart efforts to collaborate and partner with business and other entities.
9. Several employers in the southern region perceive a lack of responsiveness from community colleges and conclude that there is no sense of urgency about the healthcare crisis and the shortage of skilled workers.

10. Community college collaborations with Michigan's Regional Skill Alliances

(MiRSAs) have produced career programs in growth industry occupations such as nursing, long term healthcare, and transportation.

11. Community colleges report a high level of involvement in three statewide workforce development initiatives geared toward increasing educational attainment and self-sufficiency of disadvantaged populations: Jobs Education and Training (JET), No Worker Left Behind (NWLB), and the Prisoner Re-Entry Program.

Summary of the Findings Chapter

The findings in this study suggest that the Southern Region Workforce Board is a strategic partner and facilitator of relationships between public and private entities with the goal of maximizing resources, leveraging dollars, and realizing economies of scale in education and training efforts that increase the skill levels of jobseekers and incumbent workers in the southern region. As members of EAGs and participants in the local workforce board, and by virtue of their involvement in numerous workforce partnerships and alliances, community colleges have a central role in workforce development activities in Michigan.

Community colleges and other workforce board members describe the multiple roles of community colleges as advisor, educator, training vendor, subject matter expert and advocate. As an advisor to workforce boards, community colleges consult on labor market needs and in-demand occupations as well as design certificate programs within an occupational career cluster. As a provider of greater than seventy percent of all contract and individual training services in Michigan's workforce development system, community colleges are instrumental in increasing the educational attainment and skill

level of Michigan's workforce. In their role as educator, the twenty-eight public community colleges in Michigan represent a cost effective option for students who wish to transfer to a four year institution; a second chance to reverse transfer students, and a portal to higher education for under-prepared learners or dislocated workers seeking a new career.

While community colleges lend their expertise to workforce boards, they also serve in an advisory capacity to businesses seeking grant funding, provide consulting to entrepreneurs and participate in workforce development programs and initiatives around the state. Community college presidents also champion the needs of their respective institutions by advocating with legislative and political establishments.

Community colleges can better serve employers and others who use their customized training services by taking active steps to mitigate and mediate internal conflict between faculty of credit curriculum and non-credit programming. There needs to be a concerted effort to bridge the gap between real and perceived differences from both sides and a shift in focus to finding creative solutions that meet employer needs, labor market demands and engaging in partnerships that facilitate access to higher education across sectors.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion

Michigan's workforce development system is a complex bureaucratic maze. Employers, job seekers and partnering institutional representatives cite a common criticism of public workforce development programs to be difficulty in understanding the myriad of choices and trouble accessing the resources in the system (USGAO, 1995). In spite of the complexity of navigating through the complexity and eventually making sense of Michigan's workforce development system design, the research was marked by insightful interviews, substantive conversation and meetings with participants from each facet of the system. I was struck, in a positive way, by the shared vision of the participants and how passionate each is about their particular role in helping to expand workforce capacity and align economic development with workforce development. They were very candid about the passion they have for the state and its citizens and were deeply concerned about the state of the economy. Throughout the interviews I found shared understanding, a high level of commitment, and most importantly, "hope" that Michigan would find its way to a better economy and re-emerge as the industrial giant it once was.

Participants expressed their concerns and acknowledged the high degree of interconnectedness among sectors, while multi-framing problems (Bolman and Deal, 2003) and discussing plausible solutions to many dilemmas facing Michigan. Participants seemed to understand on a deeper level how their individual work and that of their institution fit into the big picture, and there was more than a passing concern as participants pledged their own creativity and their institution's efforts and resources

toward initiatives, programs and services that would enhance Michigan's workforce. Most importantly, they recognized that without a high level of collective commitment and concerted effort Michigan could not move forward.

Discussion

S.W.O.T. Analysis

The remainder of this chapter discusses the findings using a SWOT analysis framework. SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a business or organization, and is typically used to help identify and make sense of internal and external factors in the environment (Chapman, 2005). Employing a SWOT framework to analyze the findings offers the opportunity to view the workforce board/community college partnership from a more holistic perspective, addressing both internal and external factors that impact the partnership. The implications and conclusions conclude the chapter.

Strengths

Leadership. Scott (2003) defines leadership as the influencing of behaviors to achieve an end. Participants attribute the overall success and effectiveness of the workforce board partnership to Board leadership. Effectiveness and success in this context appears to be based on the Board's ability to engage local businesses, encourage partnering and involvement within and between sectors, and the ability to leverage resources by combining WIA funding streams to create innovative solutions to common problems. Given that participation in SRWB is volunteered, Board leadership is critical to keeping board members motivated and focused on key objectives, while encouraging all sectors to bring the resources of their organizations to the table to achieve this end.

The workforce development literature indicates that strategic decisions of interest to most employers engaged in economic and workforce development activities are identification of labor market needs, strategic decisions that expand workforce capacity and enhancing employer engagement (Center for Workforce Success, n.d.). The workforce board effectively utilizes what Scott (2003) terms co-optation—incorporating representatives of external groups into the decision making or advisory structures of an organization by relying on input from local employers and community colleges on critical issues in the local labor market, such as in-demand occupations, regional labor market trends and career clusters and educational credentials. The Board uses this input to design programs and services at the one-stop centers. In addition to developing a market-based workforce plan for the region, the Board ensures system accountability by requiring service providers to track clients through the employment and training system. In addition, continuous quality improvement is achieved through feedback from customer surveys. Board leaders also ensure that workforce development activities are linked to economic development by aligning workforce goals with those of Michigan's department of labor and economic growth and state workforce boards, while building external networks by serving on multiple boards for other community organizations, such as M-TEC and substance abuse advisory boards.

Collegial relationships. The effectiveness of Board's leadership is reflected in the behavioral aspects of its membership. Houle (2006) advances that an effective group spirit emerges from a strong belief in the board's mission, a sense of progress toward accomplishing goals, and a conviction about the work and importance of the board itself, particularly in the eyes of the community. It is a rarity that any board has all

characteristics, says Houle (p.120). Similarly, participants indicated that Board members are committed to the mission and work of the Board, and report positive interactions and supportive relationships among sectors. There also seemed to be a high level of respect, professional kinship, and commitment to activities, programs and services that help address Michigan's economic situation. In addition to a deep sense of commitment to the work, Board members wield a significant amount of social capital, or personal influence, throughout the southern region. Individual social capital is powerful in that it facilitates and often sustains many of the alliances and networks that result from the core partnership.

Leveraging resources. Participants have their own reasons for engaging in partnerships (Amey et al, 2007). Nearly all sectors cited the ability to leverage resources by partnering with other institutions as a strong motivator for partnering and collaborating on workforce development. For community colleges, partnering with other community colleges facilitated the opportunity to exchange ideas and work together on initiatives such as curriculum and programming for developing and implementing a nursing career cluster. As noted, community colleges reportedly receive greater than 70% of training dollars under WIA and therefore are a majority provider of services in Michigan's employment and training system. Community colleges leverage funds for services through one-stop centers from several separate funding streams, such as Perkins Grants, Individual Training Accounts under WIA, Adult Basic Education, and Youth Program funding. Community college partnerships with businesses also yield cost-savings by training incumbent workers from multiple companies in similar industries and

using the M-TEC as a laboratory classroom and testing center for certifications, credit and non-credit courses and occupational training programs.

Champion. A powerful champion is an important pillar in a collaborative partnerships. The champion is a person or group who believes strongly in the mission of the partnership (Amey et al., 2007). In this case, the public-private partnership was implemented under the watchful eye of Michigan's notable champion Governor John Engler. As recounted by participants, Engler's innovative reforms aligned economic development with workforce development and placed employer needs at the forefront of the system. In Barnow and King's (2000) case study of Michigan's Workforce Development system, they attest to Engler's ingenuity and confirm that policies under Engler "foreshadowed the form and intent of WIA provisions". Engler wasn't the only champion in Michigan's history. His predecessor, Governor Blanchard, was also cited in the research as the mastermind charting the course for technological innovations, such as Michigan's Smart Card for the job training system. The Smart Card automated payments and reduced waiting time by allowing service seekers access to their benefits electronically. Barnow and King (2000) write "with its Smart Card and automated kiosks, the Michigan Opportunity System attempted to streamline service delivery, improve access to employment and training, and improve the breadth and quality of consumer choices". But where Blanchard and Engler left off, others in the workforce development arena have assumed the role of champion and continue to marshal the resources of its networked partners to create solutions and programs that meet the needs of employers and citizens in their respective regions. In each Michigan Works! region, workforce

board leaders must serve as champions and establish a vision, mission and direction for the employment and training system.

Weaknesses

Faculty resistance. The issue of faculty resistance surfaced several times during this study as community college institutional leaders described the tension between credit and non-credit sides of the house. Nunley (2007) advances that “the two sides may be neighbors who trade hellos now and then, but they usually aren’t a family that shares resources that could improve each aspect of the institution”. As noted, faculty are reluctant to teach non-credit courses or develop curriculum for customized training programs, which weakens the responsiveness of continuing education or contract training units at community colleges and adversely affects the potential source of revenue for M-TECs. This reluctance can be overcome by educating the faculty on the potential benefits of collaboration, clearly defining roles and expectations of the college and incorporating the requirements into union contracts.

Organizational image. The image associated with one-stop centers is noted by the business sector as a deterrent to employers seeking qualified candidates for job openings. There is a broad variation in the design, location, customer focus, and services provided across the state and though the main customer is local employers, Michigan Works! One-stop centers must also serve the general public. Employers specifically pointed out that the one-stop center continues to have a welfare office image and job seeker referrals are very often for only their low-wage entry level jobs.

As a visitor, my impression of the southern region one-stop center was that it is clean, organized and the staff were professional and courteous. Barbara Beasley notes

during our interview “what you see across the state is each area is so distinctly different because the board sets the vision; the board makes the policy”. While each region must follow WIA’s blueprint, there are as many as seven different models for delivery of employment and training services throughout the state. Service delivery models are designed around such factors as demographics, labor market needs, availability of workers, workforce capacity, and unemployment rates. The SRWB has opted to include substance abuse counseling and treatment as a part of its programs and a separate substance abuse board is a sub-committee of the workforce board. As a result, those individuals seeking substance abuse treatment are more likely to frequent the center. The question of competing objectives arises: can one-stop centers be everything to everybody? Meaning, can they serve professionals, businesses and welfare recipients at the same time?

Lackluster relationships between business and other sectors. Business sector participants indicated that more effort on the part of community colleges and one-stop centers is needed to engage employers. This implies that the relationship between healthcare and community colleges is not being fully realized, which is a noted contrast to their coming together to create the nursing programs within a healthcare career cluster. Participants criticized community colleges for being slow to respond to business needs. In one example, Robert Farris references a board meeting with at least four community colleges and several four-year institutions, where the goal was to discuss the needs of the labor market relative to the healthcare industry and the availability of qualified workers in the area. Farris’ employer, Barron Healthcare, is the largest healthcare system in the southern region. He referenced the part of the discussion dealing with the shortage of

nursing faculty and reports to have offered to help recruit faculty from existing hospital staff and secure a lab for student training. His idea was to create a pipeline of nursing faculty by recruiting nurses from hospitals within his healthcare system. Farris noted that he pursued follow-up conversations several times with the local community colleges to further explore this option, and the result was that “nothing ever happened”. A similar comment was made about the one-stop facility and their inability to fully understand the needs of employers.

In addition to the image problem, Farris thought one-stop centers could meet with employers to better understand the healthcare system’s recruitment needs and brainstorm on how those needs might be met with qualified candidates. Farris’s chief complaint was that his company continued to receive applications and referrals for low skill workers and stated that “those [low-skill] positions receive 300-400 applications”, he continues, “and very few for positions where they really have a need, i.e. those positions that require certification or a credential.”

From another perspective, Ellen Quinn pointed out that she thought businesses were not as involved with workforce efforts as they could be. She advances that business leaders in their capacity as workforce board members and the workforce system’s main customer could use their power to influence allocation of funding by helping to plead a stronger case to legislators. Quinn declares that “businesses drive economic development, and if they banded together to get in the face of legislators to let them know of their plight first-hand we would be better positioned [to receive additional funding]”. This implies that the level of influence employers have with legislators is not being fully realized.

No formal orientation to Board roles. Though workforce board members seemed to have a clear understanding of the mission and vision of the Board, none reported having a formal orientation program or reference material outlining their duties and responsibilities as workforce board members. When asked how they came to understand their roles, participants reported to have been provided an overview at an informal lunch meeting with the workforce board chair or another member of the board. Board leadership indicates that they periodically attend local professional development events held by the Michigan Works! Association, and national events sponsored by the National Association of Workforce Boards. There was no indication that workforce board members engaged in any additional professional development outside of their meetings to develop a workforce plan for the region.

Opportunities

Strengthen referral relationships (One-Stop Centers). Community colleges can strengthen referral relationships with one-stop centers and increase the number of prospective students for admission by co-locating staffing and programs at one-stop service center locations. According to participants, community colleges provide training, counseling and academic advising to prospective students as community partners and service providers, but service seekers must obtain a referral and then travel off-site to the college. Brock, Matus-Grossman and Hamilton (2001) underscore this idea when they write that “community colleges should seek to build strong referral relationships with workforce development agencies, community-based organizations and government agencies that serve disadvantaged populations and dislocated workers. Doing so provides the opportunity to further expand their student markets while expanding access to

postsecondary education.” According to AACC (2008), postsecondary educational institutions are specified in the WIA legislation as one of the local entities that are eligible to be selected as one-stop operators. Community colleges have the opportunity to further strengthen their presence in the community by becoming one stop center operators.

Develop alternative funding strategies. Participants repeatedly commented on the resource constraints at their respective institutions. Most community college representatives found it mutually beneficial to partner with other agencies and used this avenue as a means to leverage financial, structural and human resources. There exists an even greater opportunity to generate additional resources by developing alternative funding streams through foundations, venture capital, grants and private donations. Private philanthropies may be willing to support program development (Brock, Matus-Grossman and Hamilton, 2001) and community colleges can also work with employers on tuition reimbursement for graduates.

Strengthen alliances with organized labor. Several community college leaders cited the union contract with faculty as a barrier to recruiting faculty to teach in the nursing programs. According to participants, faculty could not teach because their contracts prescribed a certain number of course per term and adding an additional course or program to their teaching load would violate the union contract. There was also the suggestion that the union contracts did not permit the faculty to teach non-credit courses; which is yet another barrier that prevents community colleges from utilizing faculty expertise to build curricula and design customized training programs for local businesses and organizations.

Strengthen alliances between K-12 and community colleges. Community colleges can strengthen their involvement with K-12 by providing input and helping to further shape core academic curriculum and career pathway courses. Michigan implemented new high school graduation requirements in 2005, intended to hold students to consistent, high standards that prepare them for life in a global economy (Wayne RESA, 2005). According to the Michigan Department of Education (2008), every student must also complete an Educational Development Plan during their middle/junior high school years that must be maintained and periodically revised throughout their secondary educational experience. Failure to complete the requirements may result in a student not graduation with his or her class.

Strengthen alliances between two and four year institutions. Community colleges often engage in different types of strategic partnerships related to economic and workforce development. The opportunity exists for workforce boards to help facilitate and further strengthen partnerships between two and four year institutions. Where they do not exist, workforce boards can help develop partnerships by calling on institutional leaders to begin discussions at the state workforce board level. Where partnerships do exist between two and four year institutions, workforce boards make inroads with both by encouraging dialogue. Partnerships between two and four year institutions can be a win-win situation because it provides the opportunity to further increase educational attainment and economic development when two year colleges serve as feeder institutions to four year universities.

Threats

Resource constrained environments. No single organization or entity has the resources or infrastructure to meet the needs of entire community in a vacuum, thus collaborations and partnerships are essential and even more so in resource constrained environments. As noted, participants from each sector spoke of resource constraints, such as lack of infrastructure, support services, materials and finances, with cuts to educational institutions having the deepest impact and being the most pressing. Declining state budgets, stringent performance and productivity standards, and reduced human and/or structural resources are all threats to existing programs and can inhibit change and may be a significant barrier to creating new programs (Grubb et. al 1999).

Mission creep. While the idea of mission creep was not denoted as a pervasive theme in the findings, the phenomenon was of particular concern to one community college participating in this study. Mission creep, as defined in the education literature, is the term used to describe what happens when higher education institutions expand beyond their traditional missions in pursuit of prestige or revenue (Harris, 2006). Alexander Anastasia described this as a common occurrence among four year institutions in the southern region. Apparently, several of Michigan's regional universities have engaged in student services activities outside of their traditional recruiting areas and also offer courses on-site at community colleges, which has resulted in increased competition among two and four year institutions. Both mission creep and increased competition for students are exacerbated by the fact that there is no governing or coordinating board for higher education institutions to regulate such activity in Michigan.

Opportunity costs. Another threat to consider is that the opportunity costs of community college involvement in workforce boards. What do community colleges give

up or risk by participating in workforce boards? The answer to that question isn't easy and varies depending on the college president's decisions about the institution's core mission and activities. In one sense, community college involvement in workforce boards poses the risk of trying to be all things to all people, thereby losing sight of and resources for carrying out their core mission. Community colleges presidents establish a vision and core values to guide that vision; then they must choose the areas in which the college will specialize and encourage faculty and staff to embrace that vision (Fitzgerald, 2004). They must also ensure that future endeavors are aligned with that vision or risk mission creep. Mission creep was previously identified as educational institutions going outside their geographical areas to increase student enrollment. Mission creep in the context of opportunity costs can also constitute engaging in activities, programs, partnerships and collaboration that are outside of its core mission or established vision and divert institutional resources away from the main mission.

Faculty resistance. In addition to faculty resistance being a weakness in the community college system, it is also a threat to economic and workforce development efforts in the southern region. Without the expertise of faculty helping community colleges meet the needs of local businesses, whether it is training or designing program curricula, the workforce development system cannot realize its full potential in a cost-effective and efficient way. When faculty impede the process, businesses typically revert to private service providers to meet their needs (Ganzglass, 2000). If private sector/business collaboration infringes on the ability of community colleges to work with businesses, this may adversely affect future collaboration and economic development.

Community colleges, for the most part, have committed faculty members that support business and community partnerships and economic development initiatives (Servon, 2004). Where this is not the case, administrators have found effective ways to maneuver around the issue. Though the findings in this study indicate some instances of faculty resistance, there is also data to support that community colleges connect with businesses in spite of faculty resistance. In my interview with Carol Grayson, she recounts a scenario where she encountered and overcame faculty resistance. She reports that even though the full-time faculty were reluctant to lend their expertise to creating a certified nursing assistant (CNA) program, the continuing education department worked with a private vendor to offer the program on campus within a few weeks. Though doing so was very expensive, she reports that her staff came together to maneuver around faculty resistance, and eventually created the curriculum and offered it as a non-credit continuing education (CNA) program. As the demand for the course increased, the College eventually located it within a healthcare career cluster, where students can build a solid career with the benefit of wage progression, one credential at a time. The faculty soon came on board.

Another way to overcome faculty resistance is to change the culture of the organization. Strong executive leadership at community colleges can work collaboratively with the faculty and labor unions to communicate the potential benefits of working together and the pitfalls of not doing so. The lesson here is that faculty resistance can be costly; but can be overcome. Surely it is easier said than done.

Proprietary schools. It is no secret that for-profit postsecondary (including private technical institutes and other proprietary schools) are growing at an astounding rate and

their proliferation poses a serious threat to community colleges everywhere (Farnsworth, 2006). The focus of proprietary schools is to provide career-oriented educational programs that quickly transition students into the workforce. As such, they operate close to the labor market, continuously altering their course offerings with the changing employment patterns and skills shifting (Servon, 2004).

Businesses seek the most time and cost efficient ways to train their workers and turn to proprietary schools for just-in-time and open/exit new and incumbent worker training. Instead of countering the efforts of proprietary schools with more creative and innovative ways to capture the larger market share of on-site training for businesses, the literature indicates that in some cases community colleges have put in place more procedures that further impede their ability to modify curricula and serve their client (Nunley, 2007). Conversely, proprietary schools are reportedly demand driven, and tend to be delivered in a more flexible format and can compress their courses into shorter time frames (Nunley, 2007). Although these institutions appear to be effective sources of short-term, specialized training, they are also very costly for participants, which may be a serious deterrent to employers (Servon, 2004). Still, they provide a viable alternative to providing contract training for new and incumbent workers.

Implications

The implications of the weaknesses and threats to the public-private partnership are important and if not addressed, could potentially damage existing partnerships and thwart efforts to build new ones. Faculty resistance and complacency on the part of community college leaders threatens the relationship with employers and adversely affects economic and workforce development. Frustrations due to a lack of

responsiveness may lead private firms to develop their own solutions (Ganzglass et al., 2000). Ganzglass et al. (2000) point to Motorola as an example of how complacency from public sector education providers led to creation of their own exclusive education centers. As requests for training and education services were met with resistance, Motorola instituted a university, a technical college and even a high school to train its corporate employees in an attempt to establish a comprehensive knowledge supply chain (Ganzglass et al., 2000). Other companies have similarly dealt with public sector inertia by moving aggressively to establish their own certifications, in IT and other areas.

As noted, Michigan's one-stop centers still have a welfare image, which is a deterrent to employers seeking qualified candidates. The organizational image of the one-stop can and should be addressed because it adversely affects economic development by alienating employers. It is important to note that this welfare image problem is not a generalization applicable to the entire Michigan Works! system. The image problem is an issue that can be easily remedied, and should be addressed by the workforce board, as they are responsible for the operational design and can also influence the physical layout and work flow of the facility.

Establishing a policy manual and record-keeping system to maintain board policies, member responsibilities, and workforce plans should also be a priority of the workforce board. An orientation program and on-going professional development plan are sound governance practices and an effective way to ensure program and organizational continuity, and helps to document the organization's activities. Not doing so is a negative reflection on the board and may adversely affect member participation, motivation and may delay or even impede proper acculturation of new board members.

Within the context of workforce development on a larger scale, community college involvement in workforce boards is critical helping to build strong economies, locally and nationally.

In this study community colleges have a high level of involvement in workforce boards, are highly integrated into regional workforce development activities and receive an overwhelming majority of training contracts from workforce boards. Community college involvement in workforce development yields the opportunity to work with K-12 to implement skill standards and career planning initiatives for secondary students, which impacts their level of preparation for the world or work or continuing on to postsecondary education. Community college involvement in workforce boards facilitates opportunities to contribute expertise and institutional resources to broad and strategic economic and workforce development initiatives, such as Michigan's Regional Skill Alliances, No Worker Left Behind and the Prisoner Re-entry initiatives. Where community colleges serve at the periphery of workforce development, in the best case scenarios such as in New York, administrators and leaders have maneuvered around this to develop creative solutions to lift people out of poverty. In worst case scenarios, states that enforce work requirements in lieu of educational opportunities may face the reality of a social services system that is truly over-burdened by the revolving door of welfare recipients.

Future research

The literature abounds with research on early job training programs and of late, longitudinal studies on the impact of welfare to work. There was also a substantial amount of research on public-private partnerships between businesses and the community. The impetus for this study was the fact that, beyond the WIA mandate for

participation, there was almost no literature on community college participation in workforce boards. A few notable studies add to the workforce development literature, such as Lynn McCormick's *Innovator's Under Duress*, where she recounts notable strides and successes of community colleges in New York's CUNY system and how they creatively overcame the negative impact of the state's overly rigid workfare policy environment (McCormick, 2004); and several studies by scholars in postsecondary education, such as Grubb, Jacobs, and Bragg, that make a strong case for employment and training programs to be more holistic in transitioning recipients from welfare to the workforce by providing the skills and training they need to initially work, but also the life skills and desire for continuous learning that makes them self sufficient (Grubb et al., 2001). It is clear that education is the key that unlocks the doors of future opportunity and community college leaders must continue to advocate for the underserved.

In terms of future research, this study begins to fill an important gap at a crucial time, but much more is needed. There is a need for more research on practical approaches and solutions to workforce development dilemmas within state and local governments. There is also a need for more grounded research on how community colleges leaders and higher education in general might become more efficient within the shared governance model by tearing down the bureaucratic roadblocks that impede progress and contribute to inefficiencies. Given that each state has autonomy to create its own workforce development system, the imperative for scholars is to continue to investigate, document and tell stories about the ideas and strategies that work and the ones that don't and why, so that others have the benefit of that experience and can more effectively meet the needs of their stakeholders. The economic environment and funding constraints in Michigan

and across the nation make it urgent for leaders, scholars and practitioners alike to be creative and innovation in finding ways to work together and collaborate on projects and outcomes that are greater than the sum of the parts. As the simple adage goes “together, everyone achieves more” and this is certainly true of public-private partnerships in economic and workforce development initiatives.

Recommendations by Stakeholder Group

Workforce Boards

Leverage relationships. Workforce boards can influence increased alignment of K-12 and postsecondary educational programs and career pathways by bringing together advisory committees and employers to establish a uniform set of standards for certification of in-demand occupations. The literature indicates that, in addition to technical skills, employers are also seeking workplace skills such as teamwork, creativity, cultural competence and the ability to think critically about how their jobs fit into the organization’s mission and goals. Workforce Boards and their advisory committees can also work together to integrate these soft skills into career planning and life skills into the K-12 educational development plans required under No Child Left Behind. These recommendations would better prepare students by holistically equipping students and job seekers alike with the skills they need to be successful in the workforce.

Marketing and branding. Workforce boards should engage in efforts to change the image of one-stop centers from a welfare and unemployment service office to a workforce development center that serves local businesses by providing professional human resources development services. Employer representatives in this study noted that even though the focus of the workforce development system in Michigan was geared

toward serving businesses, one stop centers in the southern region continued to project the “welfare office” image, resulting in the perception that one-stop centers are not viable sources of highly qualified candidates.

One stop centers

Leverage relationships. Participants noted that one stop centers did not seem to understand employer workforce needs, and did a poor job of matching the employer needs with training opportunities for job seekers. One stop centers can address this by engaging in activities that strengthen relationships with employers in the southern region. By increasing communication and leveraging relationships with employers, one stop centers can gain a better understanding of employer needs and build workforce capacity by tailoring education and training programs to those needs.

Adopt a more strategic business model. In some respects one stop centers have the potential to be a major player in developing a pipeline of qualified workers. According to employers, one stop centers continue to operate as quasi social services agencies and often fall short of referring highly qualified individuals for available jobs. A good starting point in adopting a more strategic approach to supplying qualified workers to employers would be to first understand employer needs. Increased collaboration gives way to a better understanding of the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities employers are seeking and the level of demand in each job category (i.e. skilled trades, computer/technical, administrative/clerical). One stop centers then have a basis from which to begin to evaluate the skill and education levels of the clients they serve, identify gaps and then steer them toward programs that build the skills employers need. This strategy may

require some additional time and planning up front, but if employer needs drive the process and quantifiable results are positive, then everyone wins.

Community colleges leaders

As noted, community college participation in workforce development activities is a function of the level of the college's commitment to its community service mission. As chief executive officers, college presidents have a delicate balancing act in that they have very limited resources with which to work and must decide which programs and groups receive the most attention and financial support. Community colleges cannot be all things to all people (Melendez et al., 2004).

Establish support structures for adult learners returning to work. Community colleges should be proactive in preparing displaced adult learners to transition back into the classroom by increasing the availability of supportive services and helping them understand how to access them. Participants noted that with implementation of No Worker Left Behind legislation, adult learners may bring one or more unique issues such as (1) fear or intimidation of the classroom; (2) lack of knowledge and understanding of the support services available to them and/or how to access them; (3) lack of confidence in their own ability to be successful in the classroom, especially if they had bad experiences with previous attempts in the college classrooms. Community college administrators will need to ensure they have the necessary staff, structural facilities and services to ensure that adult learners properly transition to the educational environment and to re-enter the workforce.

Seek self-promotion. Participants in this study commented that community colleges did not tell their stories in a way that garnered them the respect and praise they

deserve. Community colleges are dynamic and flexible institutions that cost-effectively serve and support the needs of the entire community, from children to adult learners to local businesses. The problem is that the community colleges continue to be burdened with the stigma of less than and are still considered a buffer institution to cull the poorly prepared (Cowen and Brawer, 2003). Though organizations like the AACC and the Council for the Study of Community Colleges see community colleges as dynamic, viable and vital to expanding access to education for under-served populations, there is still much work to be done before the label changes.

Unless there continues to be a concerted effort to promote the strengths and positive stories in a way that overcomes this negative stigma, community colleges will be resigned to the label of less than. In addition, community colleges should not seek to compare themselves to four year institutions in terms of full-time equivalents; instead they should seek to highlight and market on their adaptability, flexibility and capability to serve businesses and every strata of the socioeconomic scale.

Change the culture and expectations of faculty. As noted, a major weakness and threat to economic and workforce development efforts is faculty resistance. Faculty resistance was noted by public and private stakeholders as impediments to creating market driven programs and curricula. If faculty resistance continues, it adversely affects collaborations with businesses, which in turn limits potential profits from future collaborations and ventures. College presidents must also keep this in mind when negotiating with unions on such issues as faculty pay and teaching load. The language in collective bargaining agreements reportedly prescribes the number and types of courses (i.e. credit or non-credit) faculty may teach, and thus legitimizes faculty resistance and

further impedes the process of collaboration. As the highest ranking leaders at community colleges, the president can initiate dialogue with faculty to address the issue of faculty resistance and work with union leaders to amend contract language so that these challenges are overcome.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that community college involvement in workforce boards yield many positive outcomes. As members of Educational Advisory Groups, community colleges support the decisions of local workforce boards by providing data and information on labor market trends, bringing to the partnership their knowledge and experience serving disadvantaged populations, as well as their subject matter expertise in various areas. As community partners in one-stop centers, community colleges deliver training and provide academic advising to service seekers and as efficient and cost-effective providers of contract training, community colleges advance economic and workforce development by working with employers to design curriculum for incumbent workers and newly hired employees.

Community college involvement with policy making bodies, such as workforce boards is important because these boards wield significant power through policy decisions and provider selection for educating and training disadvantaged populations. The flexible and adaptable nature of community colleges has enabled them to keep current with the changing skill demands of employers, resulting in more up-to-date content and pedagogy (Melendez, 2004). While the literature and the findings in this study indicate that faculty rigidity and contentious relationships within the community college can sometimes adversely affect relationships with employers and other workforce

development entities, the prevailing opinion is that community colleges more than any other institutions are the preferred cost-effective provider for a majority of workforce development services in their local communities.

Moreover, community colleges are uniquely qualified to address the education and training needs of all who desire to learn, but especially those of low income adults, under-skilled workers and incumbent workers because of their inclusive mission, existing infrastructure of support services, and their long history of open access and extensive experience in workforce development (McCormick, 2004). A hybrid of education, training and placement options advanced by the local workforce board and supported by community colleges can help low wage workers advance into better paying jobs.

Community colleges also provide disadvantaged populations the opportunity for skill building by employing a variety of learning methodologies to create learning activities grounded within the context of work (Dirkx, 1999). Some community colleges use creative strategies that integrate basic skills and skill training with community-based bridge programs and employer services to serve their job seekers. Others integrate work and learning opportunities that are linked to an array of pathways that connect to job sectors in the region and educational opportunities beyond certification (Fitzgerald, 2004).

Community colleges recognize that collaborations and partnerships with businesses and workforce entities are critical to both economic and workforce development. The potential benefits are many. Partnerships with employers represent the opportunity for placement of college students in internships programs and employment situations upon graduation. Employers can also influence curriculum design at

community colleges by bringing their technical expertise and first-hand knowledge of the skills and competencies needed to the classroom curriculum so that faculty who design programs can inculcate those skills (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000). As noted, community college contributions to business partnerships are many, including providing consulting services, crafting learning experiences, facilitating on-site contract training and in many cases are a portal to additional credentials and certification for employees.

Those states that have been adversely affected by a decline in the manufacturing and automobile industry resulting from the knowledge based global economy have to deal with the problem of displaced workers and the resultant high unemployment rates. Workforce board policy in these states is especially important if workers are going to be re-trained for the new technology; or re-tooled with the necessary skill levels to secure high wage employment in different occupations. In considering this dilemma it won't be enough to push these workers back into jobs that do not allow them to sustain their families. The cadre of issues that arise will have to be addressed if the regional economy is to get back on track.

For job seekers who were long term employees making a higher wages, recapturing the level of income will be difficult. In addition the literature points out that these workers also need additional support mechanisms, such as psychological and emotional support, to help them cope with the sudden loss of their employment. The situation could potentially become untenable when we consider these additional factors associated with worker displacement, such as the inability to maintain the same quality life and lower levels of pay. Community colleges have successfully adapted to changing environment, including the policy requirements imposed by WIA and their involvement

has helped change the system into one that is more responsive to the needs of the most disadvantaged job seekers, more regional in scope, and more open to integrating other workforce development partners.

APPENDICES

I. Participant

Tell me about your background and how you came into your current position.
(Prompt: How has your position evolved over the years?)

II. Workforce Board

- a. Tell me about your participation in workforce boards?
(Prompt: Were you involved in the workforce development system prior to WIA---when there were PICs?)
- b. How long have you been on the board?
- c. How did you come into your position as a board member?
- d. How did you come to understand your responsibilities as a workforce board member?
- e. What do you believe is the role of the workforce boards in the state's workforce development system?

III. Community Colleges

- a. What role does the community college have in the workforce development system?
- b. In what ways, if any, does your organization partner or collaborate with community colleges or other board member/organizations?
- c. In what ways, if any, do you think community colleges can better serve employers in the region?

IV. Regional Workforce Development Initiatives

- a. What are some of the strengths of the current workforce system?
- b. What are some of the current challenges of the workforce system?

V. Looking to the future

- What are your thoughts on how the workforce board members/organizations can optimize the state's workforce system and its resources to better prepare the workforce for the high wage economy?

Appendix B Statement/Letter of Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this research is to understand the effects of community college involvement in workforce boards. The study will gather information from community college personnel and workforce development professionals in mid-Michigan.

By signing this form, you agree to the following:

- You understand that your participation is voluntary.
- You agree to be interviewed twice. Initially you will be asked to participate in a one hour interview and a second interview, if necessary.
- You may ask questions at any time during the interview.
- Your identity will remain confidential.
- You may refuse to participate in the interview process at any time. You may also refuse to answer a question. Should you withdraw your participation in either, the audio tape will be destroyed immediately and will not be used.
- You understand that the interviews will be audio-taped. Audio tapes will be transcribed after the interview process is complete and destroyed after transcription. The researcher will ensure your anonymity and confidentiality by retaining the only copy of the transcripts and deleting any reference that could identify you as a participant in this study.
- Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of participants and their privacy will be protected to the maximum extent of the law.
- You understand that transcripts from this interview will be published, in part or full, and your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. Your identity will remain confidential whether the information is published or un-published.
- You understand that there are no obvious risks to participating in this study.
- You understand that there may be follow-up communication via e-mail or telephone seeking clarification of responses provided in the interview session.
- Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. The researcher conducting this study is Shenita Brokenburr, P.O. Box 1731, East Lansing, Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 482-4825. The supervisor for this study is John M. Dirkx, PhD, Telephone: (517) 353-8927.
- If at any time you have any questions about this study, you may contact directly Peter Vasilenko, PhD, Chair of the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: irbchair@ores.msu.edu or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Informed Consent for Individual Interviews (continued)

By signing this statement of consent, I understand that the researcher will seek to understand the experiences of workforce development professionals in mid-Michigan

- ☐ I have read the above information and I consent to participate in the study.
- ☐ I consent to have my interview tape recorded.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Greet the participant with a handshake and introduce myself.

1. Ask the participant to be seated and make him/herself comfortable.
2. Provide an overview of the study and then explain the format of the interview indicating:

“The purpose of this research is to understand the effects of community college involvement in workforce boards by conducting a case study of one particular workforce board/community college partnership. I will be interviewing several different categories of workforce development professionals in connection with this study; and the findings will be published in a dissertation.”

3. Explain further that:
 - a. The interview will be taped and that s/he has the right to refuse.
 - b. If at any time s/he wishes not to answer a question or terminate the interview, s/he may do so.
 - c. The demographic data form should be completed first.
 - d. The interview questions are open ended and they will follow.
 - e. The entire interview should take one hour and fifteen minutes or less.
 - f. The participant may ask for clarity at any time.
4. Turn on the tape recorder.
5. Commence the interviewing.
6. Ask if the participant has any additional questions.
7. Prior to conclusion, inform the participant that you will be in touch with them via e-mail or telephone if you have any additional questions.
8. Turn off the tape recorder.
9. Conclude the interview by thanking him/her for coming.

PERSONAL INFORMATION <i>(Note: Every attempt will be made to ensure that your privacy is protected. Your personal information will not be shared with anyone.)</i>		
Date of Interview:	Begin time:	End:
Name:		
Address:		
City, state, zip:		
Daytime phone #: ()		
E-mail:		
Date of Birth:		
Age:		
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		
PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION		
Current Position/Title:		
Employer:		
Length of time in current position (years, months):		
Length of time with employer (years, months):		
Total years of experience in your field:		
Education/Highest level attained:		
RESEARCHER CODING (Circle One)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Community College Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Board Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Advisory Group (EAG) <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Development Agent(cy) <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please provide affiliation:		

Appendix E

Summary of Data Sources and Participants by Sector

Workforce Board Leadership	
Chair	Interview
Vice Chair/Educational Advisory Group Chair	Interview
One Stop Center Executive Director	Interview
Educational Advisory Group	
College A*	Interview
College B*	Interview
College C	Interview
College D	Interview
Education: K-12	Interview
Workforce Board Members by Community Sector	
Business and Industry	
Healthcare	Interview
Manufacturing	Interview
Non-profits*	Interview
Union	Interview
Government	Interview
Other Data Sources	
Workforce Board Meetings**	Observation
Educational Advisory Group (EAG) Meetings (1)**	Observation
Website	Review/analysis
Documents, pictures, memoranda, strategic plans, press releases, e-mails, meeting notes, field notes,	Review/analysis

*Denotes instances where multiple representatives were interviewed.

**Denotes multiple site observations.

Davis Community College

The Davis Community College is a multi-campus multi-cultural institution with a mission is to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve their goals through accessible services, culturally diverse experiences and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.

The College's five campuses are located in industrial, rural and metropolitan areas where a major share of Michigan's technical and skilled occupations is located. DCC places a strong emphasis on occupational and career programs, and traditional college and university transfer programs, including those within the liberal arts discipline.

Statistics on Davis Community College:

Full-Time Undergraduate 2,912 students
Part-Time Undergraduate 8,772 students
Total Enrollment 11,684 students

Midwest Community College

Founded in 1964, Midwest Community College is a public, two-year institution located on Michigan's southern region. The Main Campus is centrally located with easy access to Detroit and Toledo.

Statistics on Midwest Community College

Full-Time Undergraduate 1,501 students
Part-Time Undergraduate 2,442 students
Total Enrollment 3,943 students

Southern Michigan Community College

Southern Michigan Community College is a comprehensive, open door, community-based College. The mission of the College is to provide a transformational learning experience designed to increase the capacity of individuals and groups to achieve intellectual, social, and economic goals.

The campus extends onto the Internet, where SMCC is a leader in providing online education. Southern Michigan Community College believes out-of-classroom activities are essential to the total collegiate educational experience. Students are encouraged to participate in one or more College Extracurricular activities for their intellectual, cultural, social, physical, organizational, spiritual, moral and emotional enrichment and growth.

Stats on Southern Michigan Community College

Full-Time Undergraduate 3,434 students

Part-Time Undergraduate 6,725 students
Total Enrollment 10,159 students

Regional Community College

Regional Community College is a comprehensive community college with a diverse student population that values teaching and learning. RCC has more than 50 years experience delivering specialized training to business and industry. It was the first community college in the nation to work with union and management leaderships to design and deliver joint training programs. The corporate training division of the college has served more than 68,000 employees, 575 different businesses and nearly 400 individuals in workplace training programs.

Statistics on Regional Community College

Full-Time Undergraduate 4,388 students
Part-Time Undergraduate 8,923 students
Total Enrollment 13,311 students

Michigan Technical Education Centers (MTEC) at Regional Community College

M-TEC at Regional Community College is more than a building with classrooms. It is a community resource intended to address challenges being presented by current and future changes in the workplace. It is a training resource for employers and employees of the business community and for members of the general public.

Overview

M-TECs began as a collaboration between business, labor, government, and education. It is dedicated to training, retraining, and updating job skills essential to high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations, specializing in manufacturing and information technology. It offers flexible learning opportunities designed to meet the needs of the learner. It draws upon expertise available in the community, both within the college and within industry and organized labor.

Employers in technical industries have long recognized that workplace education is essential for creating and maintaining a competitive advantage. As the pace of change continues to increase, jobs will become increasingly specialized making training and retraining even more important. The M-TEC system has been designed to offer your business a complete solution to your training needs. Although each center works independently, each offers the following features:

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