

**Minutes of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
Nov. 19, 2020**

Members Present: Leia Moore, Mike Widell, John Claybon, Ron Combiano, Krystle Lane, Kelsey Martin, Samantha Lankford, Patricia Purdue, Rob Miles, Ryan Blanton, Laura Butler, Sheri Snyder, Jordyn Frazier, Michelle Campbell, Pete Seldon, Anne Brooks, Jillian Whitaker, Zackary Myles, Kenneth Sewell

Guests Present: Kimberly Poelman, JP Moran, Matt Eastwood, Joel Dean, Tony Hutchison

1. Introductions of all members and guests: John Claybon, Chair

Meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Coursera Presentation

Kimberly Poelman and JP Moran gave an overview of what Coursera is and how Oklahoma institutions can and do use. The PowerPoint presentation is attached and a link to the audio recording is provided. Coursera is a massive online course provider. They provide a platform in which over 75 million learners participate. They have three major institution users; business, government and campuses.

During the presentation, the following questions were asked:

Ron Cambiano pointed out that there was no acknowledgment of the Tribal employers when Coursera went over the top employers and job creators, he felt that nation building activities through the Tribal entities are often left out.

Poelman said that they actually have several ongoing programs with the tribal nations and first nations people in Oklahoma. The top employers they showed on the slide in question wasn't meant to be an exhaustive list.

Tony Hutchison said that one of the goals of higher education in Oklahoma has been to embed and invest in micro-credentialing. We are hoping to accelerate this, these are obviously useful to get hired at a new job or change fields. Building these platforms is a major effort of the regents, there is even a budget request to the governor tied to micro-credentialing. He said if Coursera was interested in helping us push that at the state level, it would be helpful.

Poelman said there is endless customization around the raw course data that they provide. She agreed with Tony that using these as accelerators or micro-credentialing is very helpful.

Moran explained that many schools use Coursera not to undermine any of their scholastic models, but have integrated some of their professional certificates and then give those students a distinguishment on their degrees. It is a non-credit, but it provides acknowledgment and a degree with distinguishment that helps with the hiring and career process.

Chair John Claybon asked what the percentage of participants have some college courses or a

college background versus those that don't. Coursera said they would get that specific information but in the Google IT certification program by itself over 60% of them did not have a 4-year degree. Moran did not look at the two year for that, but he will get that breakdown. Depending on the course type and demographics those numbers will be very different for each course.

Hutchison added that among micro-credentials 85% of those earned already had a Bachelor's degree. This was from an article published in Inside Higher Ed.

Poelman said she believes that is more accurate but the gateway programs they were discussing have a much lower rate of college completion. They are targeted to more entry point audiences.

3. Topic Discussion: Centers of Excellence

Hutchison explained that the Centers for Excellence grew out of a Governors Workforce Taskforce. Several members of higher ed manufacturing and CareerTech wanted to originally identify centers that already were or could be turned into specific industry centers, to attract specific businesses.

What happened with the idea is that now the Centers for Excellence has gravitated to a more mediocre center that meets the minimum. In most of the applications, Oklahoma higher education plays an ancillary role. They have approved about eight of them. Tony Hutchison has asked for some kind of benchmarks that asks these centers to achieve. There is no money associated with these centers at all, it is more of a marketing slogan more than anything. He does not want Oklahoma higher education to be left out, but he also doesn't want anyone to invest too much effort into them. Many of the chambers are not that excited about the idea, it seems like it isn't poised to take off.

It is a cost benefit decision every institution needs to make, is it worth it to invest time and money into getting a designation that is essentially just a marketing tool?

Mike Widdell asked if they would utilize these cites primarily to entice businesses to move to Oklahoma or is it going to be locally based?

Tony Hutchison said he thinks bringing outside businesses in is the goal, but there is some conflict and this hasn't been brought to the state level yet. If it became useful to promote, he believes the state would attempt to use it.

Kenneth Sewell asked if these are essentially just "Business Card-Centers" that are self-declared achievements or designations.

Tony Hutchison said he thinks they are very near that as a designation. The task force does not have any formal powers, it is difficult to even come up with hard criteria on what makes or doesn't make a Center for Excellence.

There is a worthwhile marketing designation, but it is up to the institution to see if it is worth the

investment.

Pete Selden agreed that the application process was a lot of work, but through the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce they had a conversation about the Centers For Excellence and that there is a need to fund this designation if you are going to have it at all.

Jordyn Frazier said that Murray State college is developing its application and it seems like a duplication of efforts. They are pulling people from programs to create a bigger Workforce Council to do the same thing. Most programs already have industry advisors.

Tony Hutchison stated he was aware of this, but he does not want to discourage anyone from applying or creating a Center for Excellence if they see value in it, but he does not want to encourage it for anyone who doesn't.

4. EDC Recommendation Report – Update from Council of President's meeting, John Claybon, Chair

The Council of President's meeting in October was presented last year's list of recommendations. They were well received.

Tony Hutchison said the Chancellor thought it was excellent and wanted us to move forward with the Communicators Council especially on the Rebranding effort. The recommendation that institutions are given more flexibility on OTAG and other scholarships will require some legislative changes and that is now on the legislative agenda for the Regents. Micro-Credentials are also part of the Regents' budget and legislative request.

Tony Hutchison and John Claybon added that the 100 critical occupations list needs to be pushed out and directly connected to Higher Education and that is something the EDC can be instrumental in doing.

5. Update on RBPEA

Matt Eastwood explained that the RBPEA event is at the moment going to be moved to May or June. We are beginning the planning stages saying that we will scale down the event to two-three attendees from each institution and partnership with the rest being virtual attendants. Nothing is set in stone yet, but the event will not be taking place in March and whatever the final format is it will be different.

The idea to produce videos for each institution and partner was shot down. It has been done in the past but it felt very disjointed because each institution had very different means of presenting their partnership and the production capability of each partner and institution varied so much that the video version of this event was untenable.

6. Approval of September 10, 2019 minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mike Widdell, Second by Kenneth Sewell. Motion was approved unanimously.

7. Campus Updates! Be prepared to share in two minutes what is happening at your institution.

These were emailed in for addition.

Jillian Whitaker, Langston University: Langston University had a successful virtual gala that premiered on November 12. We had 200 live viewers and the archived video has reached 5,000 people with 2,300+ views so far!

8. New Business

Tony Hutchison asked if it would be useful to bring in John Chaippe to come in and talk about the 100 Critical Occupations list. The Council agreed that would be helpful.

Ron Cambiano asked is the Communicators council and the EDC executive Council could set up a meeting and begin talking about rebranding efforts. Matt Eastwood and Tony Hutchison said they would set this up.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m.