



Rogue Advanced Manufacturing Partnership

Date: Friday, February 17th ♦ 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Location: Lithia Corporate Headquarters ♦ 4th Floor, Porsche-Mercedes Room

Meeting Summary

Introductory Discussion

- Mike Donnelly welcomed everyone and Jim Fong outlined the objectives for the meeting: (1) review the preliminary survey results; (2) discuss the draft Action Plan; and (3) organize for the meeting with the educational leaders.
- Audrey briefed RAMP members about conference calls and meetings she and Dana have been having with both RCC and leadership at the school districts. She sees a lot of energy and believes the timing of these conversations couldn't be more perfect. Both groups welcome the strong business voice in guiding the work.
- Several positive developments were highlighted:
 - RCC has an effective dual credit model in place, but to date it has not been applied to manufacturing. The college is interested and willing to explore that opportunity. What would help would be if all the high school partners had the same baseline of competencies, so the college could use that as prerequisites for credit programs. Using the MSSC Certified Production Technician (CPT) for that purpose held some interest.
 - RCC is in the process of developing a Mechatronics program (i.e., multi-skill) program that would operate out of its new facility and be accessible to students via a bus line.
 - Superintendents and their staffs have indicated a willingness to work together, and to work with the manufacturing leaders, to ensure the programs on their books are relevant and meeting employer needs. We need to explore how many of the current courses being offered are part of a true program of study, and how many are being offered simply as electives – with students not interested in pursuing manufacturing as a career.
- RAMP members discussed the issue of the need to build the demand side for industry certifications, so when students earned them they had value in the marketplace. Audrey pointed out that in some communities employers signed a pledge to agree to give students who earned industry certifications a preferential interview for open positions. In other places employers agree to put language into their job descriptions identifying a preference for certain industry certifications. The group agreed there needed to be more discussion on this issue, as well as how to build employer engagement beyond the RAMP members in the room.
- Audrey also talked about her conversations with RCC about Connecting Credentials, a Lumina-funded effort to rationalize the confusing marketplace of credentials for individuals and employers (see www.connectingcredentials.org). She is working on a “credential framework” which supports profiling credentials on 8 different levels and comparing them on levels of knowledge and skills. Such a process shows, for example, how courses and credentials can be “stacked” to maximize outcomes. Audrey now has the OK (through Lumina Foundation) to use the Rogue Valley as a beta test site for some of the industry certification work being done. Lumina Foundation is beginning to realize that putting effort into communities is where the action is.

- Jim added that everything Audrey mentioned links deeply to measure 98. Now that the Bill has passed, there needs to be smart thinking about how to create alignment. Part of the core work we have to do is to help create the articulation and give the employers the skills that are needed.
- Jim also working on a rough draft for the Ford Family Foundation \$50,000 each year for two years for CTE. We have to make sure that the soft funding we get from other sources continues since some of the federal funds for job training may be at risk.

Manufacturing Survey Data

The group reviewed the preliminary results of the skill/certification survey. Though the sample size is still relatively small, the results validated the conversations the RAMP members had been having over the past several months. Several key points were discussed:

- It is not enough to teach just the technical skills – students must develop problem solving/ critical thinking skills as well. Exposure to project-based learning and work-based learning is critical. Dana reported out on a pilot externship program launching in late February involving 40 secondary teachers, with a focus on building project-based learning opportunities in the classroom.
- While the production and technical jobs are critical, we can't forget the importance of management training. Another area of focused concern was the growing need for licensed Electricians, and the BOLI policies that impact the supply. The lack of process engineers was also cited.
- We need to have follow-up discussions with the staffing agencies who responded to the survey to get several clarifications. Dana volunteered.
- We need to follow up with Cathy Kemper-Pelle regarding data provided by the consulting group facilitating her strategic planning process. It shows manufacturing as flat-lined, which is in contrast to current data provided by OED (3,000+ openings over the next several years). The survey showed almost 1,000 vacancies **now** across 40+ companies. Jim volunteered to follow up.
- Regarding certifications, RAMP members had a lively discussion about the benefits of foundation certifications as helping to reduce initial onboarding costs, which is a real plus. MSSC has broad based recognition nationally, and is widely used at both high schools and community colleges.
- Audrey reported that some communities also use MSSC as a short-term training program for the unemployed/underemployed to provide entry level skills. Several colleges across the country use MSSC as a prerequisite for entering credit manufacturing programs and/or valuing it for credit. Some national policy discussions are considering advocating for individuals who earn substantive industry certifications to be considered "completers" at community colleges, which would be a game changer. Currently the only way a college gets to count a student as a completer is if they finish the seat time, but not if they get a job.
- The group requested additional information on MSSC and MT1 so it could formulate a recommendation. The initial leaning is to recommend MSSC (entry level) as the baseline for all high schools, with MT1 (technician level) as an additional option. The ideal would be if new workers could enter the job with both.
- The group also discussed next steps in getting additional survey responses. First, Audrey and Aurora will work to simplify the survey and eliminate redundant questions. Then Aurora will continue to work with SOREDI Business Recruitment and Retention Committee reaching out to manufacturing companies and complete survey, basically through an interview process. RAMP members also agreed to reach out to their colleagues and send them the link to the survey. Aurora will work with Kathy T. over the next few weeks then send out a master list of who survey was sent to and how to follow up.
- The group also agreed to set some goals for survey returns for the 451 total manufacturing companies: 100% of those with 50+ employees and enough companies to reach 50% of the total manufacturing employees. Set a 30 day push to reach out for more surveys, a 2-month window for BR&R committee, and the end of April to complete initial outreach.

Draft Action Plan

- RAMP members reviewed the first draft of an Action Plan, modeled after one produced by Worksystems in Portland. The intent was for the document to serve as a “call to action” for a broad cross-section of stakeholders...employers, educators, elected officials, parents, etc. and describe a three-year plan that would provide the regions’ manufacturers with a greater pipeline of skilled workers.
- Audrey asked for feedback on the document, specifically, were the goals as stated the right goals, based on the survey data just reviewed?
- The following comments/edits were suggested:
 - Get clear about who the customer is for the document. May need to create two documents... one targeted to more “external” partners and the other a more “internal” document targeted at the region’s manufacturers and how they can get involved.
 - Collapse/combine the skilled workers and employability skills sections, since they address the same challenge.
 - Use language that emphasizes connections/building bridges...between business and education, between kids and careers.
 - Use more graphics and visuals
 - Highlight current and projected job openings, and gap based on current pipeline
 - Emphasize that employment needs range from entry-level production to engineers to managers
 - Stress the importance of the sector to the regional economy (ripple effect, etc.)
 - Maybe use company names in the employer piece, but describe products in the more general piece
 - Identify metrics/measurements to show how we are moving the needle
 - Add some language about how this is going to benefit the community at large, employers, students, etc.
 - Make it more of a “good news” piece – here’s what this means for you, addressing the workforce shortages, want to let you know who we are and how you can join, etc.
 - Maybe include a few quotes
- Audrey and Dana will take all the input and produce some new drafts over the next two weeks.

Wrap-Up

- The group agreed to have a webinar next month in place of an in-person meeting. The agenda will include an update on the survey results and a discussion of the revised Action Plan(s).
- The balance of the meeting was spent organizing for the presentation/discussion with educational leaders. Mike agreed to present the OED data slides, Norm - the preliminary results of the survey, and Brian - strategies for marketing/communicating/Action Plans.
- Purpose of the session is to update the educational leaders on progress to date, and get them to buy-in and provide top level leadership in support.
- Also want to discuss an information session with a broader group of educators (including faculty) in April (ish) to bring everyone on board and organize for adoption of industry certifications. We need to begin to tee up for that session.