



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION

Snow College Strategic Plan White Paper

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Cynthia Avery, Jon Cox, Michael Medley

Background

Snow College has a long history improving economic development and workforce preparation in the six-county region, primarily through its career and technical education. By legislative mandate, this tradition must continue: Snow College is to provide open-entry, open-exit competency-based career and technical education programs. While these programs predominantly exist on the Richfield campus, Snow College must broaden its understanding of economic development on both campuses to integrate and improve economic development and workforce development initiatives throughout the six-county region.

Snow College receives guidance from the Snow College Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Advisory Committee, which is composed of 12 members from the region. These members include economic development professionals from each regional county as appointed by the county legislative body, four representatives from business and industry within the region, one school district superintendent, and one career and technical education director. This committee meets frequently to advise Snow College on economic development and workforce development planning.

Lessons Learned

Workforce Preparation. Snow College should be providing programs and coursework that answer the needs for workforce preparation for *primary industries* as opposed to *consumptive industries*. According to Fruth's report, primary industries drive economic development and consumptive industries will spring up as demand for their services grows.¹

Occupational Clusters. The report *America's Best Performing Cities* cites three occupational clusters that matter to a community's economic development: science and technology; management and business; and arts, culture, and media.²

Rural Sourcing. Instead of *off-shoring* jobs, rural sourcing is an industry trend that is looking to rural communities in the United States as a place for information technology and/or software development.³ This may be a potential opportunity Snow College.

Geographic Access. Access to quality educational opportunities at all levels, 2-year through 4-year, should be provided by Snow College, thereby removing rural residency as a roadblock to educational opportunities.

Employment. Snow College should provide as many part-time employment opportunities as possible. Snow should also help with economic development that will, in turn, grow the local economy sufficiently so that part-time jobs will be available for students as the College grows. This is especially important if the College continues to grow with a two-year hybrid model or into a full four-year college.

Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial educational activities could provide an increase in funding, a growth in business ventures, a growth in sales and employment, an increase in graduate income, and an increase in graduates involved in high-tech firms. Every student at Snow College should have an engaging entrepreneurial experience or take an entrepreneurship class. Entrepreneurial skills that engender innovation are especially important in rural areas for the creation of new companies which will employ

¹ W. Fruth. How to Build a Local Economy. POLICOM CORPORATION.

² R. Florida. 2012 April 29. America's Best Performing Cities. *The Atlantic Cities*: 3.

³ B. Soderlin. 2013 March 14. Rural Sourcing is Bringing High-Tech Jobs to Midwest.

the region's workforce. In rural areas, we cannot just wait for someone else to create places for us to work.⁴

Technology Integration. Technology used in modern businesses and industry continues to grow each year. Integration of technology in the workplace will continue to increase and exposure to technology in programs and courses should increase as well. Every student at Snow College should have experiences that require the use of technology to finish coursework and, where possible, have exposure to the technology they will interact with in the workplace. Additionally, many four-year colleges in the state have a computer literacy requirement. Snow College students should be able to transfer with a computer literacy skillset that fulfills this requirement.

Diversity. Many primary industry facilities are dominated by a homogenous group of employees that exclude, for the most part, minorities and females. This trend begins in education where the majority of students entering primary industry training programs are not inclusive of minority and female students. Snow College should have a diversity initiative in place to promote a more diverse student body and subsequently, a more diverse workforce.

Employer Desired Training. According to a recent business department survey, business and industry leaders desire graduates to have skills in the areas of communication, finance, selling, marketing, social media, and social skills.

Planning Assumptions Specific to Economic Development and Workforce Preparation

- Counties and cities not located on the Wasatch Front will continue to have a larger proportion of “blue-collar” occupations.
- Sanpete County has emerged as a center for advanced composites industries.
- Career paths in most organizations will demand technological competence from employees.
- Nationally, the fastest growing segment of the population seeking education will be adults searching for retraining or second careers.
- Technology opportunities exist for Snow College as strong regional broadband coverage can be found throughout the six-county area with most population centers offering 10Mb download speeds and some fiber networks providing speeds as high as 100Mb.

National, State, and Regional Trends/External Picture

Occupational Projections. A sampling of occupational projections was presented at the last Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Committee meeting. This sampling indicated growth in several key areas of the Snow College region for a 10-year period from 2010 through 2020:

⁴ Charney & Libecap. (n.d.) *Impact of Entrepreneurship Education*. Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership.

| Occupations related to the following areas: | State of Utah (%) | State of Utah Total Openings (Growth and Replacement) | United States (%) |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Business Management | 25 | 36,540 | 14.6 |
| Computer Science | 30 | 33,980 | 21.6 |
| Composites | 21 | 4,310 | 10.5 |
| Commercial Art | 22.4 | 3,320 | 11.9 |
| Nursing | | | |
| Registered Nurses | 33 | 6,530 | 26 |
| Licensed Practical Nurses | 28 | 1,400 | 22 |

Additionally, a report on long-term employment projections for Non-Wasatch Front regions for the same 10 years, 2010-2020, listed the top 10 industries for growth as follows:

| Central Utah Regional Industries | Actual Job Growth | Compound Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Management of Companies/Enterprises | 53 | 24 |
| Administration of Waste Services | 250 | 4.3 |
| Transportation/Warehousing | 506 | 3.4 |
| Health Care/Social Assistance | 775 | 2.9 |
| Arts/Entertainment/Recreation | 30 | 2.9 |
| Professional and Technical Services | 93 | 2.7 |
| Wholesale Trade | 119 | 2.4 |
| Mining | 178 | 2.3 |
| Accommodations/Food Services | 414 | 2.1 |
| Manufacturing | 259 | 2.0 |
| Natural Sciences Management | 80 | 2.0 |

It seems clear that Central Utah, the Snow College service region, has industries in place with good annual growth rates.

It should be noted that Agriculture and Farm/Ranch Management are not listed as regional industries with long-term employment projections; however, much of this activity extends into other areas, specifically production environments, manufacturing, transportation, retail sales (for agriculture supplies), etc. For example, in Sanpete County, Moroni Feed Company operates a large turkey farm operation that extends into a production line for turkey products. It is listed on their website as “a fully integrated turkey producing and processing cooperative.” All the activity of turkey farming is embedded under other regional classifications including Management of Companies, Transportation/Warehousing, and Manufacturing. The support of our regional farmers and ranchers and all agri-businesses should be viewed as a viable workforce preparation responsibility and an economic development pathway.

Per Capita Income. The per capita personal income for all six counties in the region has fallen far behind the U.S. and Salt Lake City per capita income level over the last two decades. The six-county region averages only \$25,000 per capita personal annual income as compared to the average 40,000 elsewhere.⁵ While the low annual income is cause for concern, economic development directors note that cost of labor is the number one consideration of companies looking to relocate or expand.

⁵ Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Advisory Committee. 2013. *Regional Industry Development Strategic Plan*. Richfield, UT.

Employment Distribution. Industry employment distribution for most of the six-county region is skewed compared to the distribution in Salt Lake County. Most jobs in the six-county region are tied to government, education/health/social services, and trade/transportation/utilities, which do not fall under the growth factors of economic development.⁶

STEM. Another major trend for Utah that is indicated as a hinge to the state's long-term future is the need for more *STEM*-related educational opportunities. The Utah Technology Council indicates that STEM education, learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math, should be a high priority for Utah. The State has many high tech companies that have more jobs available than the State has qualified people to fill them. This forces these companies to import workers from other states and countries. STEM occupations are currently outpacing job gains in all other occupations by a ratio of 27:1.⁷

Strategic Themes

As Snow College moves forward, attention must be paid to continuing a tradition of excellence in relation to economic development and workforce preparation. Snow College's commitment to excellence demands that education in relation to the workforce be regularly assessed and modified to meet workforce demands. Furthermore, Snow College is in a position to help a struggling economy by providing programs in projected areas of growth that will potentially aid economic development opportunities in the six-county region. Snow College should look for innovative ways to partner with the community in order to expand and refine offerings that best meet current and potential needs

Options

Support and Maintenance of Primary Industry Facing Programs. Snow College is already engaged in the activity of economic development and workforce preparation with regional business and industry related programs. With proper oversight and funding, these programs need to continue insofar as they support the changing needs of business and industry.

Creation and Expansion of New Programs Matching Primary Industry Workforce Preparation. Many of the industries outlined for growth over the next five to 10 years have programs in place at Snow College to support the workforce needs; however, there are a few that do not exist or exist in an incarnation that does not match the need. New programs that match the growth needs of the region and state should be investigated, created, modified, or expanded.

Creation and Expansion of New Programs that Prime the Region for Economic Development and STEM Industry Opportunities. Although the college is providing workforce preparation programs that match current industry needs, the college is not actively engaged in new-industry workforce development. In all cases, economic development is based on the availability of skilled labor. Where that labor exists, the opportunity for economic development exists. Snow College needs to provide programs that train students for careers in industries that do not have a presence in the Central Region, providing opportunities for these industries to move into the region as economic development partners.

Support and Maintenance of Regional Consumptive Industry Programs. This is of less importance than the primary industry support, but a needed piece for regional students that are not interested in working in primary industry jobs. Moreover, as the primary industries are supported and growth begins to materialize, the region's consumptive industries will grow and will need some skilled labor availability.

⁶ Utah Department of Workforce Services.

⁷ J. Lee. 2013, June 18. Utah Technology Council Touts STEM Education for Utah's Economic Future. *Deseret News*.

Short-Term Goals

- Maintain and support current programs that fit into either the economic development and/or workforce preparation arguments.
- Modify programs to more closely match industry needs or economic development opportunities.
- Ensure programs are rich with interdisciplinary skills, including finance, communication, entrepreneurship, salesmanship, marketing, social media, and social skills.
- Enrich program requirements with GE courses that provide interdisciplinary skills.

Long-Term Goals

- Create new programs that fit into either the economic development and/or workforce preparation arguments.
- Concentrate on program clusters that are defined by the Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Advisory Committee:
 - Arts, Culture and Media
 - Commercial Art
 - Science and Technology
 - Composites
 - Computer Science
 - Management and Business
 - Business Management
- Structure programming in order to maximize opportunities for students, create logical pathways, and provide the most prepared students to industry.
 - Students should be able to continue at Snow College to finish a four-year pathway, given that opportunity, or transfer to a four-year institution with highly integrated *articulation agreements* or with a minimum of course rework.
 - Programs should be designed with vertical integration in mind. The pathway should be clear at any stage and instructors should be involved at every level regardless of their primary teaching responsibilities.
 - Programs should have defined stackable pathways. Students should be able to leave the program at defined points to enter the workforce, and should be able to return to the college and continue their studies where they left off. The coursework should be stacked in a logical format.
 - Two-year workforce preparation programs should be aimed at required entry-level knowledge, skills, and abilities for existing business and industry and potential economic development partners.
 - Four-year degrees in the economic development and workforce preparation programs should be an extension of two-year programs for the *stackable credentials* argument and/or tied to the economic development piece for higher skilled employee requirements.

A Bachelor’s in Applied Technology or some other applied science based on a stackable pathway should meet both requirements.

- Use of the *Small Business Development Center (SBDC)*, *Custom Fit Training (CFT)*, and *Short-Term Intensive Training (STIT)* should be included in every discussion with business and industry and should have a close relationship with the economic development and workforce preparation administration.
- Delivery of programs and courses in a rural environment should be a combination of rigor and availability. Possible scenarios should depend on the viability of the coursework in the chosen format and availability of students given the format. Responses from a recent survey indicate that employees and employers prefer course options that include online, hybrid, and courses that begin after 5:00 pm.
- Retraining and stackable credentials necessitates removing the student from the workforce for a time or training them during off hours. Block semesters, or time periods less than the standard 16-week schedule, should be considered wherever possible, (perhaps eight-week, half-semester blocks).
- Where appropriate, programs should integrate industry certifications that are readily recognized and respected in industry.

Projected Costs

A commitment to workforce preparation and economic development will require some resources depending on the industry and infrastructure already in place. Attention should be paid to the costs as well as the benefits of pursuing the options detailed above.

| Low Cost Options | Medium Cost Options | Higher Cost Options |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that each program has a stackable pathway • Increase GE offerings to include interdisciplinary skills • Utilize existing partnerships with SBDC, STIT, and CFT for matches to industry needs • Review each program to ensure they are supporting primary industries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify programs that are obsolete or outdated • Update programs that are current for a better match to WFP and ED • Create hybrid or online offerings where appropriate for a greater reach into the six-county area • Develop new four-year programs that are an extension of existing two-year programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new programs that fit WFP and ED in the region. • Create new program clusters that generate economic growth that are not necessarily matched to current industry • Develop new four-year programs as suggested by the advisory committee |

Recommendations

Snow College has a long history of providing workforce preparation for the Central Utah region. Central Utah still requires this aspect of training from Snow College, and the College has the responsibility to maintain, upgrade, and create programs that match to business and industry in the region. In addition, the College is currently, and should continue, involving itself in the economic development processes that will grow the Central Utah region, by providing training to primary industry partners and potential partners, thereby growing the population of the regions' citizenry and secondary industry businesses. The College has a dual role of both workforce preparation and economic development; therefore, the institution should be actively engaged in economic development, workforce development, county governance, and individual contact with business and industry partners.