



NOVAworks Workforce Board
September 27, 2023 Retreat Minutes

PRESENT: T. Baity, C. Berdiansky, R. Brunson, J. Cohen, R. Foust, P. Guevara, N. Leonor, S. Levy, J. Lind, A. Manwani, M. Nemits, S. Porter, K. Vartan, M. Vittal, and T. Woo

ABSENT: G. Biggs, D. Bini, J. Morrill, B. Murphy, A. Switky, and N. Williams

ALSO PRESENT: M. Sessions and E. Stanly of NOVAworks staff

GUESTS: Facilitator Dennis Cima and Chancellor Lee Lambert of Foothill-De Anza Community College District

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson R. Foust called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., welcomed participants and introduced Facilitator Dennis Cima.

2. FRAMING THE MORNING AND EXPECTATIONS

Facilitator Cima reviewed the goals and agenda for the retreat. Board members will be discussing the accomplishments over the past year and expectations for the coming year, the current and future environment, and strategies for meeting opportunities and challenges ahead. It will be important to "skate where the puck is going, not where the puck is."

3. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

K. Vartan announced the grand opening of the Agrihood Project, a mixed-use, mixed income intergenerational project. Members were encouraged to learn more about this.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by J. Cohen, seconded by N. Leonor, and carried by voice vote to approve the consent agenda as submitted. For this meeting, agenda items included the meeting agenda and August 9, 2023, special meeting minutes.

5. OUR BOARD IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES: EXPLORING AND CELEBRATING OUR UNIQUE INGREDIENTS

R. Foust introduced an icebreaker exercise where members were asked to identify their favorite candy and answer a select question from a ball. Examples included most difficult decision, extracurricular activities in high school, and impact of sibling order, among others.

6. NOVAWORKS DIRECTOR MARLENA SESSIONS' PRESENTATION: A YEAR IN REVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS FOR 2024

Director M. Sessions presented on the past year's accomplishments and expectations for 2024 in "Year in Review and a Look Ahead..." To review the slide presentation, please click here: https://novaworks.org/documents/Ongoing/NOVAworks_Landscape_202309.pdf.

7. ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE IN CALIFORNIA, BOARD MEMBER STEVE LEVY

Board member S. Levy presented on the economic landscape in "Short-Term and Long-Term Outlook Amidst Uncertainty, Implications for NOVA." Due to time constraints, the presentation was abbreviated. To review the entire slide presentation, please click here:

https://novaworks.org/documents/Ongoing/NOVAworks_Board_Retreat_9_2023.pdf.

Affordable housing is an important concern in Silicon Valley that impacts the workforce. The Board's role may be limited in addressing this issue which will be discussed in the future.

8. CUSTOMER PANEL AND DISCUSSION

Several NOVAworks customers, Ayten, Michelle and Shuba, shared their background, job search experience, how they learned about NOVAworks, and what services they used. Customers were asked if they had a magic wand, what would they like to see at NOVAworks. Responses included but were not limited to more internships and work experience; utilize the older work experience in current job search strategies for mature workers; extend computer lab two-hour limit; and don't replace staff doing the work with computers and Artificial Intelligence, as they are what makes NOVAworks effective. Board member comments included, but were not limited to:

- Identify those who need NOVAworks services, including immigrants, earlier in the process.
- Develop internships for the Mature Worker Program and in partnership with the local labor councils.
- For the education (degree) program, focus on learning on-the-job.
- Conversation should shift to skills rather than a wage to define a worker's value.
- Host a wine and cheese recruiter event for the Mature Worker Program.
- What can we do outside of our framework that supports our framework?

9. BOARD MEMBER CONNECTIONS

S. Porter facilitated the board member connections exercise. A values chart was distributed, and members were asked to circle values that are important to them. Members then worked in groups to identify one behavior that underscores the leadership for the Board going forward. Highlights of the discussion included, but were not limited to:

- Respond with a "yes." Resource Collaborative Strategy Action.
- Expand who we partner with, serve more customers through outreach, advocate for other things that are important.
- Move beyond strategy to action and execution, and measure how we're doing.
- Collaborative advocacy at the federal and local level.
- Create a better world.

10. LUNCH AND INFORMAL CHAT WITH GUEST LEE LAMBERT

Lee Lambert, Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District provided remarks about the future of higher education. Higher education has struggled to embrace the digital roadmap. The validation of degrees and certificates doesn't always capture the individual's contributions. It will be important to shift to skills and competencies. Several resources were cited that included the *New York Times Magazine* article, "Americans are Losing Faith in the Value of College. Whose Fault is That?" and "The 4 Lenses of Innovation" by Rowan Gibson. Innovation is being driven in Silicon Valley. It will be important to change from "students" to "learners", with a focus on innovation. Lumina Foundation is convening a group to fix the broken system.

11. WRAP-UP AND EVALUATION

Members were thanked for their participation. The information collected will be used to build on future conversations at Board meetings and guide the Board's work going forward.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.