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WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Emerging Trends Task Force
May 6, 2019 Meeting Summary
Abbreviated Version

Task Force members participating: Andy Switky (chair), Julian Chu, Ladan Dalla Betta, Van Dang, Hilary Goodkind, Steve Levy and Judy Sugiyama

NOVA staff: Kris Stadelman, Luther Jackson and Eileen Stanly

I.   Welcome and Review Agenda

The task force chair Andy Switky called the meeting to order and provided an overview of the agenda to set the stage for the meeting's discussion.

II.   Review of Last Meeting Discussion

The NOVA Director Kris Stadelman provided highlights of the task force's work to date. The task force was charged with tackling the "big issues." Some of the topics discussed have encompassed the skills versus credentials dilemma captured in a hub and spoke model with the core skills (hub) considered key skills for everyone to possess to succeed the hub (e.g. "The Five Truths of Career Success") and the domain-specific skills the spokes; this model can also be applied to sectors (e.g. healthcare, construction, etc.) The task force has also discussed the future of work and future skill requirements that include the contingent workforce. While education was discussed, the consensus was that many groups are already working on K-12 reform and this topic is beyond the control of the local workforce board and will likely not be the focus of the task force's work.

Since the last task force meeting, NOVA staff has been out in the community learning more about and engaging with community groups who are working on a variety of interesting ventures that would be of interest to the task force. At this meeting, the task force will be updated on these community activities with an eye toward identifying how the task force can operationalize this work that may entail creating an environment where employers can provide feedback regarding the validity of the information learned from others. The first steps in identifying potential prototypes for the task force's future work may involve developing a hypothesis and collecting information and feedback before the project design begins.

III.   Landscape Analysis of Emerging Trends Community Activities and Prototyping Ideas for Next Steps

NOVA manager Luther Jackson provided a summary of the different initiatives that are taking place in the community that are relevant to the task force's work. A fact sheet about each of these ventures was distributed.

- Digital Promise: The federal government chartered this venture that seeks, in part, to answer the question, "If a college degree is not the sole proxy for success then what is?" One focus of the initiative is on adult workforce training and micro-credentials that may include a micro-

credential in career navigation in the future. NOVA and Digital Promise have applied for a highly competitive national grant through the Kapor Center for Social Impact that will target diversity and inclusion in the tech sector and design sprints in micro-credentials that will include apprenticeships. Digital Promise is also hosting a Design Challenge Institute in Monterey, July 8-10, 2019, that will be attended by Board Co-chair Jen Morrill, Board member Lionel de Maine and NOVA staff Lisa Wepfer and paid for by Digital Promise. Building Skills Partnership, a SEIU-supported program providing skill development for unionized janitorial workers, which NOVA has partnered with in the past, will also be attending.

- Intelligent Lives: NOVA learned of this initiative from the "Opening Doors for Differing Abilities" conference that was sponsored by Agilent. The focus of the conference was building a business case for hiring individuals with disabilities for advancement within a company and not just for remedial work. The approach is that individuals with disabilities are an invaluable, untapped pool of talent for employers, particularly important in a climate of low unemployment with businesses experiencing challenges filling positions with qualified workers. This strategy could also address the trend discussed in previous task force meetings about the impending talent gap from retirements. A concern was expressed about whether employers are really approaching hiring individuals with disabilities from a business case with a recommendation made to talk to parents of individuals with disabilities about their experiences. Also, it will be important not to just focus on the tech industry, as there are many growing jobs in other industries. Intelligent Lives has produced a video and the task force could prototype hosting a conversation series with employers, discussed at the last task force meeting, by showing the video for discussion at the first session to attract interest, and then host additional conversation sessions on other topics in the future.

  Task force members confirmed that companies are challenged to find the right talent to fill positions. Companies have used staffing agencies in the past and are searching for workers with degrees and at least two years of experience in the field, not necessarily entry-level workers that are recent graduates. In addition, there is some bias toward degrees from specific universities. From past employer surveys, the opportunities for entry-level workers may be with smaller companies that are more flexible and are looking for the "Swiss army knife" worker that can do multiple tasks. Another group of employers to talk to are those from the healthcare and construction sectors that offer apprenticeship programs that could provide entrée to entry-level workers. One example of an apprenticeship program is the training initiative that work2future is collaborating with Kaiser Permanente on to address the changing requirements for the medical assistant occupation. There is a nexus between two massive trends: growing jobs in specific sectors and the talent gap caused by retirements.

- Apprenticeship Networks: This is based on the Switzerland model where future workers are engaged at an early age in apprenticeships that will lead to future careers. SAP is leading an apprenticeship coalition. IBM has launched a registered apprenticeship model perhaps in response to the fierce competition it is experiencing for college graduates. Some of the IBM apprentices are career changers. And, Applied Materials is another company exploring apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are being perceived as a solution to the talent gap that may disrupt the traditional education model. Currently most students obtain degrees and then acquire skills in their chosen occupation after they graduate, instead of earning a degree and developing skills concurrently. NOVA is partnering with nine Bay Area counties on a Slingshot initiative, with the San Francisco Workforce Board taking the lead, that is seeking to address the talent gap by establishing apprenticeship standards, specifically, identifying baseline skills and what an apprenticeship should look like. A request was made to send the task force information about the

IBM model. (A video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WTKJbbv5N8) about IBM's "New Collar" apprenticeship model was distributed to task force members after the meeting,)

IV. Employer Conversation Series

The task force members discussed several proposed topics for the future employer conversation series:

- Flexibility for Employers: tailoring positions to the needs of employers and the needs of employees (taking into consideration limitations) to address the impending talent gap caused by retirements, so that historical knowledge stays with company. Create a semi-work option for future retiring workers.

- Entry-level, mid-level and end of career (career capstone): Important for employers to address different needs; have to start thinking in segments.

- Staffing agencies: Utilizing staffing agencies is on the rise. More employers want to hire contractors/gig workers instead of regular employees. What is the impact of this trend? (NOVA staff will compile data on the trend in this area.)

V. Wrap-up and Next Steps

Task force members discussed next steps:

- In advance of any programming decisions, it will be important to survey employers in a series of ethnographic interviews to obtain information about their talent needs, hiring strategies, etc. Individuals interviewed will need to represent different groups that may include human resource professionals from small, mid-size, large companies and micro-enterprises, different industry sectors, etc. Each group represented may have a different interview protocol. In addition, parents of individuals with disabilities will need to be interviewed for the Intelligent Lives conversation. The recommended individuals/groups, format and proposed questions for this interview will be compiled and discussed at the next task force meeting for feedback. Task force members were encouraged to forward to NOVA staff contacts that would be good candidates for the interview process. After the interviews are completed, a colleague of the task force chair may be able to synthesize the data in preparation for future prototyping.