



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

UNC Wilmington Education Center | Webinar

1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Wilmington, N.C.

Minutes

Present:

Chair Tom Rabon, Chris Arabia, Brock Ashburn, Daniel Briggs, Shawn Brown, Sherry Carpenter, Rodney Carson, Robert Doreauk, Chris Egan (*Secretary Kody Kinsley*), Jeffrey Frederick, Byron Hicks (Peter Hans), Stephen Hunt, Suzanne Johnson, Himanshu Karvir, Paul Lawler, Candace Lowry (Secretary Pamela Cashwell), Marti Martin Matthews, Darla McGlamery, Nikki Nissen, Olalah Njenga, Sharene Pierce, Tammy Simmons, Cynthia Speight, Sandra Thompson, Kim Toler, Pam Townsend, Kristie Van Auken (*Superintendent Catherine Truitt*), Hope Williams, Christopher Gergen, Dayson Paison, Kim Toler, Wesley Davis, and Annie Izod

Absent:

Cheryl Richards, Dan Segovia, Gregory Thompson, Ronnie Smith, D. Jordan Whichard IV (Secretary Mabelle Baker Sanders)

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chair Tom Rabon welcomed the Commission members and guests to the second quarterly business session of the year. He thanked the faculty and staff of UNC Wilmington, especially the Education Center for hosting the meeting, and the Center for Marine Sciences for the excellent tour of their facilities. Chair Rabon also recognized the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board Director, board members, and staff for their work with local businesses and individuals. Additionally, Chair Rabon thanked Dr. Yousry Sayed for the very informative tour of Quality Chemical Laboratories the day before. Chair Rabon then introduced Dr. James J. Winebrake, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UNCW. Dr. Winebrake works with the university's faculty, staff, and students to advance education and scholarship across a broad portfolio of degree programs, research centers, international education, and community engagement activities.

Dr. James J. Winebrake

Dr. Winebrake provided a presentation on the evolution of UNCW regarding student growth and program expansion. Dr. Winebrake shared that UNCW currently has 18,000 students, which is an increase from about 12,000 students 15 years ago. Dr. Winebrake remarked that the University continues to expand their course offerings and attract more students.

Chairman Tom Rabon Workforce Updates

Chair Rabon thanked Dr. Winebrake for his excellent opening comments and presentation.

Chair Rabon noted several new developments related to our workforce, since we last met on February 14th. This week marks the very first “Youth Apprenticeship Week.” Building off the success of National Apprenticeship Week, Youth Apprenticeship Week is a nationwide celebration that highlights the benefits and value of Registered Apprenticeship program opportunities for youth, ages 16–24. Employers, educators, labor unions, workforce professionals, and their partners across the country are launching Registered Apprenticeship programs that allow youth to earn competitive wages while obtaining the relevant training and experience to start their careers, often including the opportunity to earn college credit.

Chair Rabon shared that there have been at least 10 announcements by companies, with nine planning to invest a total of more than \$800 million in North Carolina, plus FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies’ planned expansion of its facility in Wake County, which represents an investment of \$1.2 billion. These companies will create a total of more than 2,200 jobs. We welcome Siemens Energy, Inc., Kyowa Kirin, Drylock Technologies, Steel Warehouse Company, SCHOTT Parma, Duotech Services, LMFakro, Radél, Inc., and Innovative Construction Group.

Chair Rabon shared recent employment figures and noted that North Carolina’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March was 3.5%. The national rate decreased to 3.8%. The number of North Carolinians employed increased by 39,323 over the year. The number of people who are unemployed increased by 11,489 over the year.

In February, Secretary Sanders announced the new Rural Downtown Economic Development Grants program, supporting revitalization improvements that will help retain business and attract customers to rural business districts. Also in February, the NC Rural Infrastructure Authority approved eight grant requests to local governments totaling \$1,465,000, which will create 120 new jobs and attract \$365.6 million in private investment.

In April, the Rural Infrastructure Authority approved 31 grants, which will create 430 new jobs and attract over \$211 million in private investment -- including the first 18 of those Rural Downtown Economic Development Grants I just mentioned. Also in April, our Department of Commerce awarded \$750,000 in grants to three local workforce development boards to support the creation of local reentry councils which will support justice-involved people in transitioning successfully to employment. Each workforce board will receive \$250,000. Congratulations to Eastern Carolina, Kerr-Tar and Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Boards.

Chair Rabon noted that Governor Cooper proclaimed April as “Second Chance Month.” In March, Chair Rabon noted that he had the opportunity to attend our commission’s webinar on reentry for justice-involved individuals, where he learned from a panel of workforce experts about their programs and services to help prepare individuals for successful employment reentry. Justice-involved individuals are an underutilized talent pool, and many employers attest that some of their best and most dedicated workers have come from this group. Our committees produced a very informative and useful webinar.

Additionally, Chair Rabon stated that Governor Cooper hosted a veteran’s roundtable discussion on supporting veterans’ transition or reentry to civilian life in February at our NCWorks Career Center in Jacksonville. North Carolina is home to almost 800,000 veterans and aids about 20,000 military service members a year transitioning from active duty to veteran status.

Moreover, Governor Cooper and Secretary Sanders recently encouraged employers to hire veterans and to apply for the U.S. Department of Labor *HIRE Vets Medallion Award*, which is the only federal-level veterans' employment award that recognizes an organization's commitment to veteran hiring, retention, and professional development. In 2023, 31 North Carolina companies received a HIRE Vets Medallion Award. Chair Rabon also noted that the Governor recognized seven companies that were bestowed the *2023 Governor's Export Awards* for their success in exporting more than \$40 billion in goods and services to 206 countries, which is a sizable contribution to our state's economy.

In other news, Secretary Sanders named Samantha Cole as the first Child Care Business Liaison at the North Carolina Department of Commerce. In this capacity, Cole will work with businesses, local communities, and philanthropic organizations to develop strategies and resources to help employers provide childcare support to their employees.

Finally, Chair Rabon recognized the NCWorks Mobile Career Center on the completion of its first year of service. He reminded everyone, this time last year, the commission was able to view and tour the mobile unit that was parked in front of the McKimmon Center. The mobile unit supports more than 80 NCWorks Career Centers, delivering accessible workforce development services to job seekers and employers throughout the state. In its first year, it was dispatched to 30 counties and 37 communities, covering more than 14,000 miles across the state.

Welcome New Members

Chair Rabon recognized two new members to the NCWorks Commission. Christopher C. Arabia of Raleigh was appointed as a business representative. Mr. Arabia is the newly appointed Regional Vice President for TD Bank in North Carolina. Christopher replaces Hugh Allen. He also welcomed Darla D. McGlamery of Wilmington as a workforce representative for labor training, CBO veterans, or individuals with disabilities. McGlamery is a Business Agent for IATSE Local 491 and IATSE Local 600, as well as a Senior Political Strategist. Darla replaces Mike Okun. Chair Rabon also thanked Hugh Allen and Mike Okun for their many years of service to the NCWorks Commission.

Chair Rabon congratulated Dr. Andrea DeSantis, who has been appointed to the position of the NC Department of Commerce Assistant Secretary for the Division of Workforce Solutions. A former member of the NCWorks Commission staff, Andrea most recently served as a policy advisor for Governor Cooper. In her new role, she has succeeded Assistant Secretary Chet Mottershead, who retired after 30 years of service to our great state.

May Minutes Approval

Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 8th quarterly business session. Sandra Thompson made the motion to approve, and Shawn Brown seconded the motion. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Annual Workforce System Performance and Local Workforce Board Service Delivery Reports

Dr. Annie Izod introduced Dr. Oleksandr Movchan, the Director of Data Analytics and Research for the Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) of the NC Department of Commerce. Dr. Movchan presented findings from the Annual Workforce System Performance Report, which is our annual report on the employment and wages of participants in our workforce system over time and a report on the local workforce board services that are provided at the local level.

Presentation: N.C. Workforce Development System Report and Local Workforce Boards Service Delivery Report

Dr. Movchan provided a comprehensive overview of the [N.C. Workforce Development System Annual Performance Report](#). The Workforce Development System Annual Performance Report is submitted to the NC General Assembly each January for review. It is a coordination of efforts between the NCWorks Commission and LEAD, which provides a multi-year cohort analysis of former program participants from across the gamut of North Carolina's Workforce Development programs. Specifically, this helps to show an annual report on the employment and wages of participants in workforce programs over time.

Dr. Movchan presented that the [Workforce Boards Service Delivery Report](#) is a summary of North Carolina's 20 Local Workforce Development Boards' (WDB) Service Delivery from Program Years 2016 - 2022 and the current total for Program Year 2023. Services identified in the report are divided into three broad categories: Basic Services, Career Services, and Education/Training Services. Information provided in the report charts is derived from the North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards - NC Workforce Service Delivery Outcome Dashboard (see <https://www.ncawdb.org/resources-page/>) and from data supplied by the Division of Workforce Solutions to the North Carolina Common Follow-up System (CFS). North Carolina's NCWorks Career Centers provide a variety of workforce services to customers throughout the state; these services range from registration and career assessment and guidance to customized training.

Chair Rabon thanked Dr. Movchan for the informative presentations, and the wonderful work he and his colleagues at the Labor and Economic Analysis Division do for our workforce system to keep us abreast of all the latest trends in our workforce and economic development systems.

Committee Updates

Skills and Educational Attainment Committee

Chair Carpenter recognized committee member Candace Lowry, Deputy Director, for the NC Commission of Indian Affairs, for being named to the 2024 Class of Native American 40 Under 40 Award Winners.

Chair Carpenter welcomed new committee members Sharene Pierce, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Vice President of Talent Acquisition for Duke Energy and Darla D. McGlamery, Business Agent for The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 491 and IATSE Local 600. The committee also recognized Mike Okun, Cameron McDonald, and Leslie Walden for their service on the committee. The committee heard a presentation on NC Community Colleges System new initiative [PropelNC](#) by committee/commission member Sandra Thompson. PropelNC is intended to redefine the alignment of the state's 58 community colleges with employer and economic demands. This will improve the funding model to prioritize labor-market outcomes and high-demand sectors. Chair Carpenter shared that there was a NCWorks Commission Webinar on Reentry for the Justice-Involved on March 19, where we had 80 participants, with good feedback and outcomes. The webinar is available on [YouTube](#). Chair Carpenter also shared the NextGen Governor's Page Program will be on Aug 26-29; the committee participated in an information session with WDB directors and the governor's office to discuss the program. The plan is to increase participation from NextGen programs and help to enhance the program for a greater experience.

Chair Carpenter ended her update by commenting on the [NC Career Pathways evaluation](#) study as commission members heard about in February from the researchers (Dr.'s James and Michelle Barlett).

The result of that report is available on Commerce's site. A few of the recommendations resulting from the report are a comprehensive strategy for our career pathways, standardizing data collection, alignment of career pathways to address evolving market changes and increasing awareness. The committee will use that valuable feedback and talk about what we do to support those efforts going forward.

Employer Leadership

Chair Frederick shared that the committee has discussed Wake STEM Early High School College preparing tomorrow's workforce as a potential workforce tour in August. Josh Levy from the LEAD mentioned the Employer Needs Survey collection ended in February, with one part of the survey receiving 1,919 responses and the other receiving 381 responses. LEAD has begun analyzing the data and building a Tableau dashboard to display results. Work is underway to write a draft report in early May with a final report target by mid-June. Preliminary findings indicate that *Hiring Difficulties* were lower than in the 2022 survey and appear closer to pre-pandemic levels. Other preliminary findings included top reasons for difficulty and results from the childcare policy question. Chair Frederick stated that for the Reentry Pre-release Initiative, Tammy Simmons and Dr. Andrea DeSantis are working with our Reentry subcommittee on a new initiative which involves proposing prerelease of justice involved individuals for paid apprenticeships. The committee is partnering with the Department of Adult Correction (DAC) and the North Carolina Community College System Office. A pilot program is planned to start in 2024 in one or two facilities. The next meeting is May 23rd, in Greensboro. The committee reviewed a Work-Based Learning policy and a Rapid Response policy for discussion. The Work-Based Learning policy supports the NCWorks Commission's Employer Leadership committee's strategic goal to increase the number of employers participating in work-based learning experiences. The Rapid Response policy supports two of the committee's strategic goals to create a workforce development system that is value driven for employers, aligns education with industry demands, prepares North Carolinians for the future, and drives economic development and to enhance programs to enable employers to provide training for new and existing employees. As a result, both policies will help the committee with another goal, to leverage employer data on workforce projections and training needs using tools and measures for business engagement. Both policies were recommended to the Governance and System Alignment Committee for Commission approval. The next committee meeting is scheduled for May 15th 10:00am-11:00am.

Local Innovation Committee

Chair Speight reported the Local Innovation Committee last met on March 13, 2024. The committee collaborated with Skills and Educational Attainment Committee and the Employer Leadership committee on planning, panelist outreach, and meeting logistics. Coming up on May 15, 2024, from 10:00am-11:00am the committee will host a webinar on the topic: *The Local Workforce Boards' Innovative Best Practices - Using Innovative tools and Resources to reach Individuals and Businesses*. The participating boards include Northeastern, which will highlight virtual reality tools, and Rivers East will discuss text request tools. Finally, Centralina will demonstrate their workforce app. For August, the committee will be working on an Artificial Intelligence informational Webinar. Chair Speight stated that the committee will also be reviewing an upcoming draft of a Mobile Career Center Local Innovation Spotlight Publication. The committee is happy to announce a [NCWorks Local Innovation Fund Reentry grant](#) funding allocation of \$150,000 (\$25,000 of that will used for a third-party evaluator).

In addition, the committee continues to provide technical assistance as needed to Local Innovation grantees who are scheduled to present updates on outcomes at future quarterly business meetings. Participants will highlight the grants' progress and timeline. As a reminder the grantees are Building Hope- Preparing Gender Minorities for Careers in Construction with Capital Area Workforce Development Board, and OPT-IN and J.E.T.: Creating Opportunities for Youth. with Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board. The committee is monitoring innovation across the state and has discussed the NCETA and SETA conferences and workshops that have taken place since we last met. Chair Speight ended her update with the announcement of the new name of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities.

Governance and System Alignment Committee

Chair Chris Egan stated the Governance and System Alignment Committee last met on April 24th. During the meeting, the committee reviewed and voted to accept 4 new Commission Policy Statements. The first policy statement approved by the committee was CPS 04-2022, Change 1 Requirement to Use Competitive Selection Processes to Procure Training Providers and One-Stop Operators. This policy is an update to a previous commission policy statement-- it has been updated with language to include clarification regarding the services to be competitively procured for a WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and/or Youth and it also includes a revised waiver request submission process. The second new policy statement is CPS 02-2024 - Program Year 2024 NCWorks Local Innovation Fund Reentry Grant. This policy statement announces a new Local Innovation Fund special grant in the amount of \$125,000 which will finance communities to support an innovative program or adapt and replicate a successful program model to address local and/or regional workforce issues which center around the reentry population. The third new policy statement is CPS 03-2024 - Work-Based Learning Training Programs and Grants. This policy statement was developed to adopt a standardized definition of the various Work-Based Learning categories as identified in the WIOA Desk Reference (policy attachment 1). This policy furthers the NCWorks Commission's commitment to all categories of Work-Based Learning. The fourth new policy statement is CPS 04-2024 - Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion. This policy statement establishes a policy that ensures consistency and clarity for Rapid Response employer engagement programs and grants, including the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and Layoff Aversion.

Additionally, Dr. Annie Izod provided the committee with background for the request letter to join AdvanceNC as an affiliate member. AdvanceNC represents an incredible collaboration among community colleges, universities, and workforce boards that serves to meet the needs of regional employers. The committee voted to approve this action as well. Lastly, Wendy Johnson provided an overview of the Workforce Development Board--Performance Dashboard and Workforce System Performance Report.

Approval of the Commission Policy Statements

The Commission voted to unanimously approve CPS 04-2022, Change 1 Requirement to Use Competitive Selection Processes to Procure Training Providers and One-Stop Operators; CPS 02-2024 - Program Year 2024 NCWorks Local Innovation Fund Reentry Grant; CPS 03-2024 - Work-Based Learning Training Programs and Grants; CPS 04-2024 - Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion.

AdvanceNC Letter

Dr. Annie Izod provided a brief overview of AdvanceNC and the NCWorks Commission request letter to join AdvanceNC as an affiliate member. AdvanceNC is a new workforce development ecosystem developing the critical talent pipeline to support our great economic growth in central North Carolina. This collaboration helps to use our strengths from community colleges, universities, and workforce boards—addressing the needs of thriving regional employers and positioning North Carolina as a global leader in advanced manufacturing. The NCWorks Commission has the capacity and the resources to support the mission of AdvanceNC, by facilitating knowledge-sharing among state and local partners and convening workforce and economic development partners to develop demand-driven strategies connected to regional economies and labor markets. In addition, the NCWorks Commission can support AdvanceNC by identifying barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among programs and activities and the development of strategies to provide effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from NC’s workforce development system.

Approval of the AdvanceNC Affiliate Request Letter

Chair Rabon asked, before the vote to accept the NCWorks Commission - AdvanceNC Affiliate Request Letter. Jeff Frederick made the first motion to accept the letter. Suzanne Johnson made the second motion. The Commission voted to unanimously approve the letter.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Annie Izod reminded the members the August 14th, 2024, meeting will be back at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh, and finally the November 13th, 2024, meeting will occur in Hickory N.C., at Catawba Valley Community College.

Chair Rabon asked the group if any additional new business or additional discussion on the reports need to be heard today from the floor. No new or additional discussion was presented.

Chair Rabon thanked UNCW again for their hospitality and wished everyone safe travels on their return trips.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Annie Izod

Approved on August 14, 2024