

Minutes: FAME Industry/Academia Roundtable Meeting @ Genesee Community College in Batavia; April 7th, 2011

Recorded by L. LaMattina, GCC

Jerry Kozlowski (GCC) – Welcomed the group

Ron Golumbeck – Introduced the History and Purpose of FAME to the group

FLCC in Victor hosted a meeting on April 6, 2011 with an employer panel for students to attend in an effort to promote Manufacturing careers. It was very successful and could serve as a model for other FAME groups. FAME has been conducting these roundtables to spur discussion and providing a meeting of the minds to see what's most important to work on with a small group of interested volunteers. Question remains: How to further build the worker pipeline with academic institutions? Grant (TAA) is available to facilitate training workers

Mike Mandina – Gave a history of Optimax and worker recruitment issues

Lack of “middle” level technician skills; between blue collar and engineer. He is trying to counter the poor image of manufacturing. High schools and community colleges are the most influential partners in feeding the worker pipeline and feeding talent to industry.

Bruce Peters – Facilitated introductions around the room:

- Karl Drasgow (Drasgow Inc.) – has worker needs
- Sam Samantha – FLCC faculty trying to help address pipeline issues
- Laura Lane – Wyoming County Chamber President
- Anthony Lewis, President of CCMI – networking and in need of workers
- Eileen Rucinski, co-chair of FAME's Pipeline Committee – she works for Kelly Services and is trying to assist with pipeline issues
- Mike Dobbertin, Kelly Services – with Eileen
- Bob Lasch, MCC faculty – wants to help increase recruitment for students entering vocational training
- Tom Fitch, MCC Workforce Development staff – here to listen and help create solutions to the issues raised in the meeting
- Todd Oldham, VP Workforce Development & Innovative Workforce Solutions, MCC – brand new to the college, but interested in hearing the issues
- Chuck Caples, MCC staff – reported that last year he was able to secure \$110,000 for training to FAME member companies
- Ron Golumbeck – helped start the FAME organization in an effort to secure grants and available fees, to build this alliance/network; This collaboration (FAME) is starting to pan out; ITT supports FAME and is growing as an organization to over 300 employees
- Tony Mancuso – his father established the first incubator in the country right here in Batavia; Felt we were missing the 4-year colleges in the conversation; North Carolina is doing that already, our region is very far behind
- Mike Mandina – FAME Chair, also on the Board of Rochester Tooling and Machining Association (RTMA); he is also looking to collaborate along with the creation of a regional Photonics Board; Felt they are making progress but it comes through “baby steps” starting with the community colleges but don't have the bandwidth to get to the 4-year colleges yet.

- Ray Chaya, Director, The BEST Center at GCC – introduced a new program “Advanced Manufacturing and Nano-Tech Certificate” training program developed by TBC in collaboration with the GCEDC and RIT. Scheduled to roll out this September, 2011.
- Karen Springmeier, FLWIB, FAME – came out of strategic planning efforts when they (FLWIB) determined the first cluster in the Finger Lakes they were going to work on was manufacturing, WIRED funds were accessed to help establish FAME and expand membership
- Rich Gizzi, HTR – they also have an incubator now; He works for an MEP, Manufacturing Extension Partnership – small-medium sized manufacturers can be served; Discussed project with American Red Cross where his group saved them millions of dollars
- Allen Davis, SVP at Liberty Pumps – said his company is in good shape for now but that might change; They do machining and hands-on assembly, he fears the company may become more technical; As manufacturers we are all competing for the same kids that the healthcare industry is recruiting
- Jeff Dillon, Monroe 1 BOCES – was created from the School2Work Act, not a mandated function, so it is hard for them to remain funded; He works with the BEAs in GLOW, also doing adult training funded by Rochester Works and VESID; ESL, GED; Frustrated trying to get cooperation.
- Jerry Kozlowski, VP of Workforce Development at GCC – introduced himself and talked about the creation of The BEST Center from a traditional community education department to a hub for workforce and economic development. It has brought in millions in grants and trained thousands of workers. Covers 4 counties, mostly small companies, feels everyone needs to stop thinking small and as “fiefdoms” protecting their own territory, we need to think regionally focusing on Ag and Manufacturing; Feels we need to sit with industry leaders to hear what they need; GCC has a new President coming on board later this year.
- Dave Guile, retired organized labor rep – made the comment there were only 4 manufacturers in the room. He worked for a big company that over the years became small through downsizing. He also commented that this region has gas and water so companies can grow here; felt we needed to promote the region.
- Mary Lou Hamm, Regional WIB Director – here to support the cause
- Lina LaMattina, The BEST Center – mentioned recent application for TAA funds through SUNY
- Bruce Peters, radio host – because he wants to shine a light on small/medium sized businesses, he interviews CEOs on the show; Hopes to get national resources they need; Highlights local non-profits;

Discussion:

Mike Mandina – Small business has not traditionally been responsible for the pipeline because big business did it; with big business waning, it’s up to us. FAME must “congeal all the fragments” within manufacturing. We do have a competitive advantage because we have world class knowledge developed in labs here in our region. This is a basis for instrumentation here but it’s not everywhere and it’s not coordinated.

Jerry – Hundreds were invited to this meeting yet only 5 manufacturers are here. Why? Because they run small businesses and can’t get away to attend.

Karl – Now we have internet and niche industries. We get orders and blueprints via the internet reducing the gas spent by companies and employees. His is a HUB zone company; they get preferential treatment on government contracts. Same issue, needs educated mid-level workers.

Anthony Lewis – Took over his dad’s business. It was losing, but now it’s stable, and no one’s heard of them. Therefore, he wants to grow his network. If we get all manufacturers in a room they could all grow their networks and their business.

Bruce – What would cause us to bring all manufacturers into one room? A personal invitation. Need to secure an “anchor” tenant in GLOW. So that others will say “if ___ goes I want to be there”. The personal invitation creates a tipping point.

Jeff – WIFM is to match students to the right company. We need young people here. He’s ok with technology, but wants the personal touch.

Laura – Parents don’t know the manufacturing that’s here, and what advanced manufacturing is. What jobs are available? We need to educate the parents.

Tony Mancuso – 10 years ago they conducted the Business Expansion Project with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the WIB. They interviewed 800 companies and it was very useful in growing Batavia and the local region. Had *Genesee 2000* to help the city to focus. We need to do that again because the info is outdated. Economic development group in the area had the original data collected through a grant through the Chamber of Commerce. Put people in front of each other, and companies expanded as a result of this work. Tony will contact Cornell for the past data.

Bruce – Should we re-do it? Data-mining is an organizational development concept.

Mary Lou – We can use technology this time and ask companies to project 5 years down the road.

Jerry – The BEST Center is preparing a business climate survey. Nancy Zimpher, new SUNY President is also forming SUNY regional economic councils to help workforce development efforts.

Karen – Suggests partnering with the Regional Economic Development Council; this could help the effort because it’s going to cover the same 9 counties we’re talking about.

Mike – People work in their self-interest and need “enlightened self-interest” so they know what they’ll get out of it. Action Item – get in front of the council with established model that was effective.

Ron – It’s great to see the council forming – it could create a nucleus for all businesses to come together. The new council is working toward a common cause

Jerry – Money should be coming available with the new councils. We can approach them for funding.

Laura – Regional competitive grant programs should be developed so the 9 counties don’t compete with each other but with others outside the region

Mary Lou – Do they need trained workers? Important question to ask them

Rich – Don’t go into a company with any preconceived ideas. They all have different issues. Instead ask the question “what keeps you up at night?”

➔ What they do, the skills they need, how do they want to grow.

Sam – Need a sense of urgency to draft something on a state level or the regional councils will fund the universities instead. Regional councils will get lots of requests from universities and they will focus on new technology and R&D, NOT workforce needs. Community colleges can make a big difference to hi-tech, referred to Karen's report in early March: gap was identified in skills. Let's bring together all regional groups statewide and map out a plan that addresses real need or we will get far less funding. Got with Advisory board of hi-tech and asked what they needed to build new curriculum for their (MCC's) new degree program. Repeat this process.

Bruce – We're looking at a global (Sam) approach versus a grass roots (Tony) approach.

Mary Lou – John Dwyer took data from business to business personally!

Mike – You need money to do these things. FAME has no money. We need to go viral – everybody does a little bit and it grows. It's hard to take just data anywhere. WIRED helped but no residual money is left. We need to come up with 1 small thing i.e. MCC's new program, get parents involved. MCC's event brought 300 people in (parents, students, etc.) but then they go home. FAME started a sign-up sheet offering tours to interested students and parents to visit facilities, a similar event was held at FLCC. A group of 60 families signed up to tour so we can reach extended families as they tell everyone about their experiences. This is grass roots; it's top down and bottom up - it doesn't get diffused. It's hard to get people in a room, but tours piggyback on what's already happening.

Karen – Do we need to better coordinate manufacturers in GLOW? Don't feel in FAME that we've connected enough so that when funding is here we have momentum.

Mary Lou – BEA's can help, so how do we tap into them?

Allen – It's that personal contact that's important, GAPA pulls manufacturers together. With a mission we can get communication out.

Bruce – That's one next step. Jerry should report back to FAME on that.

Bob – Shop teacher's board taking mandate out for tech prep in the schools. FAME should write a letter to stop that from happening

Jerry – NYS STEM project is looking for financing from Gates Foundation. FAME should be connected. Jerry sits on the board

Anthony – Is willing to go to companies and survey. Tony is willing to help him.

Helpful links:

"New York's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs" – Nat'l Skills Coalition, Mar 2011."

http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/assets/reports-/skills2compete_forgottenjobs_ny_2011.pdf

"Skills2Compete – New York" - Nat'l Skills Coalition, Mar 2011."

http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/assets/reports-/s2c-ny_platform_2011-03.pdf