

RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING ONE: CREATING A MORE PROSPEROUS ECONOMY IN RHODE ISLAND

Thursday, August 26, 2021 | Rhode Island Nursing Education Center | Providence, Rhode Island

INTRODUCTION | RHODE ISLAND OPC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The OPC Advisory Committee Chairs will give brief opening remarks to articulate the purpose of this working group and its importance to the future of higher education policy in Rhode Island. Co-chairs will then ask all members to state their names and organizations before Commissioner Gilkey gives a presentation on the higher education policy landscape in Rhode Island.

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

WELCOME REMARKS AND MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

- **Robert A. Weygand**, Vice President of Administration and Finance, College Unbound; Former Lieutenant Governor and U.S. House member
- **Beverly Ledbetter**, Esq. Chair of the Board of Directors for the Rhode Island Urban League; Former Vice President and General Counsel, Brown University

9:30 AM - 9:45 AM

THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND

- **Dr. Shannon Gilkey**, Rhode Island Commissioner on Postsecondary Education

9:45 AM - 10:00 AM

BREAK

MEETING OVERVIEW | CREATING A MORE PROSPEROUS ECONOMY IN RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island prioritized postsecondary attainment as a strategy for cultivating a robust economy by setting an ambitious postsecondary attainment goal of 70% of all working age adults by 2025. Research shows that the knowledge and skills of workers available in a labor force affect business and economic growth. Additionally, those with higher education and workforce training see higher wages and lifetime earnings. Increasing access to postsecondary education and career training in ways that are more inclusive and equitable are essential to creating a more prosperous Rhode Island economy.

10:00 AM - 10:10 AM

FRAMING PRESENTATION ON ECONOMIC TRENDS AND WORKFORCE NEEDS

- **Dr. Anthony P. Carnevale**, Director and Research Professor, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce



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SESSION ONE | INCREASING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON STATE PRIORITY SECTORS

As the economy starts to recover from the downturn of the pandemic, postsecondary education is one way to help people recover, particularly those hit hardest by the pandemic. The issue brief for this topic provides a history of postsecondary education and workforce development before exploring some of the benefits and challenges currently seen in workforce development. The session will include discussion on making more workforce development opportunities available for students in both high school and postsecondary education, and the importance of various priority sectors to the Rhode Island economy, including life sciences, software and data analytics, maritime and shipbuilding, custom manufacturing, and travel and hospitality.

10:10 AM - 10:30 AM

FRAMING PRESENTATION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN RHODE ISLAND

- **Amy Grzybowski**, Executive Director, Rhode Island Higher Education & Industry Centers; Acting Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Board
- **Sarah Blusiewicz**, Assistant Director of Workforce Development Services at Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

OPC Advisory Committee members will break into small groups to discuss the importance of career training within the postsecondary education landscape and how to better support workforce training programs. At the end of the breakout session, each group should be prepared to identify two to three policy priorities and actionable items.

11:00 AM – 11:20 AM

REPORT OUT

One member of each group will report out their discussion, including the two to three policy priorities related to workforce development identified in their breakout sessions.

11:20 AM – 11:50 AM

FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

This conversation will review the common features of policy priorities and action items identified in the small groups and will give OPC Advisory Committee members an opportunity to provide additional feedback and context.

11:50 AM – 12:00 PM

SESSION ONE WRAP UP AND TRANSITION TO LUNCH

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SESSION TWO | CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS: PROVIDING BUILDING BLOCKS TO A MORE EDUCATED RHODE ISLAND

The second topic will dive deeper into credentialing pathways and their ability to provide stackable credentials and training that supports the Rhode Island economy. This issue brief provides background knowledge on the purpose of credential pathways and stackable credentials before exploring the current programs available in Rhode Island and best practices from other states. Discussion will then center around the current state of short-term credential pathways in Rhode Island, how to support their stackability, and best practices that Rhode Island can incorporate into their future education plans.

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM LUNCH

**12:45 PM – 1:15 PM PANEL ON CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS AND CURRENT WORK
IN RHODE ISLAND**

- **Dr. Tammy Vargas Warner**, Assistant Commissioner of Postsecondary Academic and Student Affairs
- **Tekla E. Moquin**, Executive Director, Division of Workforce Partnerships, CCRI
- **Jenifer R. Giroux**, Associate Vice President, Professional Studies and Continuing Education, Rhode Island College

1:15 PM – 1:30 PM BREAK

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

OPC Advisory Committee members will break into small groups to brainstorm specific strategies that can be used to expand access and strengthen short-term and stackable credentials. At the end of the breakout session, each group should be prepared to identify two to three policy priorities.

2:00 PM – 2:20 PM REPORT OUT

One member of each group will report out their discussion, including the two to three policy priorities related to short-term/stackable credentials that were identified in the breakout session.

2:20 PM – 2:50 PM FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

This conversation will include a discussion of the common features of policy priorities identified in the small groups and will give OPC Advisory Committee members an opportunity to provide additional feedback and context.

2:50 PM – 3:00 PM SESSION TWO WRAP UP AND CLOSING REMARKS