

**Delaware College Access Network
(DECAN)
Meeting Notes for May 5, 2009
Delaware Room, DE Archives Building**

Welcome/Introductions

Dr. Joseph Pika, Chair of DECAN, welcomed committee members and asked for a round of introductions for the benefit of our two guests. Chad Robinson, Assistant to Lt. Governor Matt Denn, and Ed Simon, DEDO, joined the committee members for this meeting.

The highlights of the February 17, 2009 meeting sent via e-mail in advance of the meeting. No edits or corrections were received.

Updates

Dr. Pika provided updates on several meetings that have taken place since our last full committee meeting in February. The first was a meeting with all of the higher education Provosts, the Chairs of the P-20 subcommittees, and Dr. Lowery. The purpose of this meeting was to review the history, progress and current status of the P-20 Council and its subcommittees and to address any questions or concerns of the Secretary.

The second meeting was held with the provosts, Dr. Pika and three cabinet secretaries: Dr. Lowery, the Secretary of Education, John McMahon the Secretary of Labor and Alan Levin, the Secretary of the Economic Development Office. The purpose of this meeting was to explain the mission and goal of the DECAN subcommittee of the P-20 Council and to offer a proposal to the Secretaries regarding collaboration across their respective departments on future efforts to promote both the Governor's education blueprint and economic development plan. Dr. Pika proposed that college attendance and postsecondary education in general needs to be a top priority for our state. This is both an economic strategy as well as an education strategy. A white paper/briefing paper was presented by Dr. Pika that demonstrated the alignment of the DECAN proposal with both President Obama's and Governor Markell's education plans. The secretaries were receptive and supportive in general; however, they were consumed with the urgency of the current budget crisis. The current focus is on short term solutions to the immediate crisis, not necessarily what we need to do five to ten years down the road. Dr. Pika expressed concern that the timing of the proposal was not ideal, but stated he believes the message will resonate with the secretaries and the Governor.

Chad Robinson shared with committee members that at the current time the Governor's Office has a huge hurdle in solving the budget crisis and how we resolve it by June 30th. They also recognize a need to look beyond the current struggle to the future of our state. The future of Delaware lies in our being sure we can be active participants in the 21st Century workforce. The Governor's Office sees opportunities in "Green Jobs," a green economy and a more efficient society. We need to ensure through the education reform

agenda that schools produce the best students we possibly can. All of us need to continue to have conversations to continue to refine the work.

Dr. Pika also shared with the group that the Provosts of the higher education institutions have met regarding the **Higher Education Subcommittee's** report and recommendations. There was some concern expressed about the number and nature of the recommendations. Through the joint effort of the Provosts, the number of recommendations has been pared down from more than two dozen to about eleven. They are working collectively to address the issue and provide viable solutions. It has been requested that DECAN not move forward with this report until the Provosts have at least one more meeting to refine the document before public dissemination.

The P-20 Council will meet at Buena Vista on May 12, 2009.

Presentation

Mr. Ed Simon, DEDO, provided an overview of workforce challenges for the state. He shared recent trends in Delaware's labor market, the potential impact of population trends and occupational projections for Delaware. The current recession is resulting in a very difficult labor market and the growth of the labor force is expected to slow. Demographics show an increase in workers aged 55 or older which will create some opportunity for job openings due to replacing retirees, and other vacancies. Delaware is currently experiencing the highest number of unemployed ever at 33,600 (Mar 09). It is anticipated with fewer job openings, competition for those positions will be greater. In addition, the jobs with the fastest rate of growth and the highest compensation will require more training/education and will require advanced skills and knowledge. Mr. Simon stated that we need to advise students to stay in school and obtain as much education as possible. He also stated that employers are looking for employees with soft skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, interpersonal skills as well as skills in problem solving, presentation, analysis and computer literacy.

The data from the Census Bureau (American FactFinder 2007) show that educational attainment in Delaware is below that of other states in the region for Bachelor's degrees and Graduate/professional degrees, but that we lead the region in attainment of Associate's degrees. The data also indicate that Delaware leads the region with the highest percent of the population who have some college, but hold no degree. Delaware leads the region in the percentage of residents whose educational attainment is high school graduate or higher.

The group posed very thought provoking questions such as: What does Delaware aspire to be as a state? Does Delaware have a leading industry on the horizon? Do we need to develop a strategic plan for higher education tied to a strategic plan for economic development? Do we need a more varied and educated economic base? Should we focus on green industries and occupations, most of which come from existing careers but require more training and different processes? Are we in the midst of the "perfect storm"...a crisis that will force us to reinvent ourselves and position Delaware's

population to be globally competitive? All agreed that we need to plan ahead and develop a strategy so that we have the ability to act quickly.

The group expressed the need for direction, unity and engagement. It was suggested that the DECAN group reach out to several key businesses: financial services, health care, DuPont, trade associations, Astra-Zeneca, Genesis, Society of Human Resource Management, Diversity Taskforce, DE River and Bay Authority, and potentially others. It was suggested that we consider the outreach, services and technical assistance that DECAN proposes to provide in terms of the proposed Regional Service Centers.

Subcommittee Reports

Dr. Susan Haberstroh, Chair of the **Communications Subcommittee** of DECAN, provided an update on the work plan submitted by Janet Hughes and Associates regarding the progress being made on the CACG (College Access Challenge Grant) grant. The YES YOU CAN website created initially through money from the NGA Phase I Honor States Grant is being updated. The new website infrastructure is in the process of being built. All links are being verified and additional links as provided by the DECAN committee have been added. In addition, the programmers are working on optimizing the search capabilities on the site.

The MySpace webpage is receiving ongoing support and oversight by the staff at Janet Hughes and Associates. A “video of the week” blog feature has been added utilizing SchoolTube. A video promotion is also being planned to attract and engage students. The marketing for this project is currently being developed.

Alan Phillips, Chair of the **Data Subcommittee** of P-20 Council, provided an update on the status of his committee’s work. He reminded the group that the P-20 Data System links the PK-12 public education data system to that of higher education. It is a collaborative effort across the education pipeline in our state to ensure smooth transitions from one level to the next and to inform decision making about policy, programs, and practices. Alan provided an update regarding the data currently available through the National Clearinghouse. We currently have data on Delaware students who have enrolled in postsecondary education in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Maureen Whalen, Director of Adult Education, has sought information for a project following graduates of the Groves Program into higher education utilizing the P-20 Data System.

Items to be added to the next meeting agenda-

- Updates:
 - DHEC Automated Scholarship Program (Alan Phillips)
 - Communications Efforts and website (Janet Hughes and Associates)
 - SREB Counselor Modules (Dennis Rozumalski)

NEXT DECAN MEETING:
June 9, 2009, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Location: DSEA Board Room, Dover