Briefing Report: National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship Announces Higher Education Task Force Results

Springfield, MA, August 29, 2019 --(PR.com)-- At the conclusion of a major higher education task force on Equity and Workforce Innovation held in Tallahassee, Florida, today, the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) reports the following results:

Pilot project ideas resulting from a design thinking activity*

· Guardian Angel - to provide allied health students with experienced mentors and advisors from the field who can guide them to student success and workforce readiness.

· K-Workforce - to build bridges from pre-school to college to meet the employment challenges of the tech industry.

· Telescope: A Vision for the Future - to engage students, parents, and faculty in designing education pathways leading to career opportunities.

· Power-Up Economic Development Councils – to convene an action committee that is comprised of students, educators, businesses, and government leaders to identify skills gaps and design innovative plans to fill them.

· Share the Wealth - to provide an industry-funded tuition waiver where students pursue education for high-demand jobs. Upon fulltime employment, graduates enter into income-sharing repayment agreements with their new employer.

· Student and Faculty-Led Career Meet-Ups with Industry - to advance better understanding and collaboration to fill the skills gaps and increase graduate employment.

· Cooking Up Career Connections – to humanize the HR process through hosted social gatherings with food and conversation.

· Fostering the Future – to get local public school districts to partner with their local community college to auto enroll students aging out of the foster care system.

*(Stakeholders were identified as students, employers, industry, small and large business, and allied health education.)

The Task Force’s Purpose
The task force, which was convened by NACCE and held at the TCC Center for Innovation in Tallahassee (part of Tallahassee Community College), and featuring faculty leadership teams from Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, drew a carefully selected group of leaders from higher education, private industry, philanthropy, and government sectors from throughout the country to review
key data and create a new model for transforming higher education. The topic for the summit was identified in NACCE’s new book, Community Colleges as Incubators of Innovation: Unleashing Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Communities and Students. The work from the task force will be initially implemented in Florida and lead the way for a national movement.

“American higher education has long been a doorway to prosperity to close the social and mobility gaps that are prevalent in our country,” said Rebecca Corbin, Ed.D., president and CEO of NACCE. “Now, a greater focus on entrepreneurship, equity, diversity, and inclusion to create new businesses and meet the growing number of unfilled tech and manufacturing jobs is needed. Leveraging existing resources and fostering collaboration among colleges, industry, government, and philanthropy offers a compelling opportunity and way forward.”

Observations from Today’s Task Force Attendees:

“To engage in such a collaborative environment was invaluable to moving the agenda forward to close the skills gap in America. It was inspiring to be with so many engaged thought leaders from the State of Florida and across the nation to ignite the transformation in higher education.”
- Devin Stephenson, president, Northwest Florida State College

“Today’s experience is the first step in transforming higher education. My hope is that the ideas generated in this gathering will start a national movement of innovation.”
- Beth Kerly, associate professor – Business & Entrepreneurship
Hillsborough Community College, Task Force Facilitator & NACCE Book Author

“Having attended many design thinking sessions with education leaders, I often notice a lot of ‘inside the box thinking,’ but at this NACCE gathering, I was blown away by the big ideas people were willing to share. I left with a desire to replicate this across the country as I work with schools.”
- Nico Valencia, strategic account manager, Intuit Education

“As a student at Tallahassee Community College, this experience was ground-breaking on progress made on issues related to higher education that I found in my journey as a non-traditional student. I think this is going to change a lot of things and give students job-related skills.”
- Ian Carter, TCC student

“As part of the design thinking process, this singular group of business leaders, educators, and policy makers identified key stakeholders in the transformation of the higher education system. It was clear that business plays a pivotal role in solving these national challenges. NACCE is acting as a catalyst for action and developing a common language and understanding between business and education around how to prepare our nation’s workforce for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.”
- Chris Mackey, general manager, Innovation Labs, The Myers-Briggs Company

About NACCE
NACCE is an organization of educators, administrators, presidents, and entrepreneurs focused on igniting
entrepreneurship in their community and on their campuses. Since its inception, it has become one of the largest entrepreneurial ecosystems in the United States. NACCE has two main goals: to empower the college to approach the business of running a community college with an entrepreneurial mindset; and to grow the community college’s role in supporting job creation and entrepreneurs in their local ecosystem. The association represents 300+ community and technical colleges and 2,000 faculty, staff, administrators and presidents who serve more than 3.3 million students. Visit: www.nacce.com.
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