

# CAREER ACADEMY CONVERSATION

National Career Academy Coalition Conference  
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Phoenix, AZ  
Friday, October 25, 2013

This Conversation was held in association with the NCAC conference in Phoenix, AZ. Twenty-eight people attended, representing 19 organizations. The agenda focused on how best to follow up the September 30<sup>th</sup> Conversation meeting in Washington, D.C.

Susan Katzman, past President of NCAC, who was co-host of the D.C. meeting, provided a synopsis of that meeting, including its purpose, attendees, and agenda. While a series of possible next steps were touched on there, no decisions were reached, pending this Conversation. After this Conversation, the various task forces identified will be shared with the federal and organizational persons at the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting with an invitation to join one or more.

A central issue discussed in D.C. was the need for better communication regarding career academies. This took two directions: a) communicating with the field; and b) with national and state leaders. In the former instance, there is such a plethora of information and materials now available on the websites of support organizations that it can be overwhelming for those from the field to know where to go for information or help. Thus one suggestion was to have a Clearinghouse of Career Academies materials. The American Institutes for Research (AIR), which provided the space for the D.C. meeting, offered to play this role. However, Brad Stam noted that his discussions with the Director of the CCRC Center there indicated they were unwilling to be advocates for any approach, probably eliminating this option.

Charlie Dayton suggested that since there are now so many support organizations with so many materials, perhaps rather than trying to house them all at one place, a better approach might be to provide a navigation system that would let those from the field go to a central location and be directed to whatever website most sensibly fit their needs. Dave Yanofsky of ConnectEd CA offered to lead a task force to explore this possibility, and was joined by Erin Fender (CCASN), Steve Casa (NAF), and Lyn Velle (NCAC and Campbell Co. Schools, Wyoming).

With respect to the need to better communicate with state and national leaders, the discussion covered several points:

- One need is simply to widen the circle of such organizations involved with academies. Among those suggested were the National Governor's Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, P-21, and Achieve.
- Another thought was to communicate with foundations that might have an interest in academies. Among those mentioned were the Hewlett Foundation (and its Deeper Learning initiative); the Carnegie Foundation (replacing seat-time with competency measures); and the Ford Foundation.

- A third point was the need to reach out to states with an interest in academies, where more is happening than at the federal level. Among states mentioned in this regard were Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Wyoming, and those associated with the Pathways to Prosperity initiative based at Harvard University and Jobs for the Future.

- Another idea raised was the need for a common set of talking points. This was discussed in particular with respect to implementing the Common Core State Standards, for which Career Academies and Linked Learning could be a useful support, as they connect learning in the classroom with real-world applications outside of school. Brad Stam of ConnectEd CA and Ellie Rustique of the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) have developed a useful piece on this topic (attached).

Following this discussion Brad agreed to host a conference call on the link between the Common Core State Standards and CTE. Others who agreed to participate on this topic were Kim Green (NASDCTEc), Svetlana Darche (WestEd), Katherine Blasik (NAF), Steve Casa (NAF), someone from CSSR as indicated by Billie Donegan, Scott Warren (SREB), and Jay Steele (Nashville Public Schools). A second task force will be on common talking points for discussions with federal and state officials, school boards, and foundations. Susan Katzman (NCAC) volunteered to host this call. Others who volunteered to participate here were Wendy Gonzales (SREB), Connie Scotchel-Gross (CSG Group, Inc.), Connie Majka (Philadelphia Academies, Inc.), Steve DeWitt (ACTE), Rick Painter (Omaha Schools), and Mary Visher (MDRC).

The discussion then moved to the need for stronger employer involvement in academies. It was noted there were no business representatives at the meeting, and few if any workshops designed for them at the conference. It was agreed to form a task force to explore how to better involve business representatives in academy conferences, the Conversation, and academies themselves. Steve Casa (NAF) agreed to chair this; other volunteers were Susan Katzman, Lynn Velle, Susan Tidyman (CCASN), and Connie Majka, with the intent to invite others not present also (e.g., Cheryl Carrier—Ford-PAS).

## **Next Career Academy Conversations**

Educating for Careers Conference, March 2-4, 2014, Sacramento, CA  
National Academy Foundation Conference, July 8-12, Washington, DC  
National Career Academy Coalition Conference, October 23-26, Washington, DC