

CAREER ACADEMY CONVERSATION

National Academy Conference
Marriott Marquis Hotel, San Francisco
Monday, July 18, 2011

The National Academy Foundation hosted this Conversation. Thirty-two people attended representing 18 organizations. The agenda was organized around the four topics for which task forces have been established, reported on below.

◆ ACADEMY NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

The task force for this topic is: David Stern (CASN), Charlie Dayton (CASN), Rob Ivry (MDRC), Kim Green (Natl. Assn. of State Directors of CTE), Gary Hoachlander (ConnectEd CA), Stephen DeWitt (ACTE), plus adjunct members JD Hoye (NAF), Susan Katzman (NCAC), and Betsy Brand (AYPF).

JD Hoye noted that the *Pathways to Prosperity* report was affecting thinking at the national level. She reported that OVAE is examining education and economic data by region, and when this is completed a summit is being planned for the fall in Washington, D.C. She is working to arrange a meeting with the Alliance for Excellent Education at that time. She offered to let Charlie Dayton know when this is scheduled so he can notify leaders from this group so they can attend if interested.

Tom Schultz with ACTE noted that Senator Casey is sponsoring a new Linked Learning bill in Congress, and is seeking a co-sponsor in the House. The Alliance for Excellent Education is supporting these efforts.

Jerry Winthrop, the new Lead Consultant for the majority of California Partnership Academies (CPAs), reported that hoped-for funding for new green academies has all but disappeared, and is now projected to support just 18 such academies as opposed to the 90 originally intended. On a more positive note, three new Lighthouse Academies will be added to the established five in place, in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego respectively.

Charlie Dayton shared data from CASN's examination of statewide 2009-10 CPA annual reports. There are now approximately 50,000 students in 510 academies. Fifty percent of those entering the CPAs as sophomores must meet at-risk criteria, most of which are based on low performance. Demographically, Academy students are more likely to be of color than statewide averages. Sophomores in the CPAs are passing the California Exit Exam at slightly higher rates than statewide averages, 95% of CPA seniors are graduating on time compared with 85% of students statewide, and 57% of CPA graduates are meeting UC/CSU a-g college entrance requirements compared with 35% statewide. Suggestions were made to examine these data related to academy age and quality.

◆ ACADEMY CURRICULA

The task force for this topic includes: Erin Fender (Co-Chair, CASN), Penni Hudis (Co-Chair, ConnectEd CA), Ilene Kantrov (EDC), David Ross (Buck Inst. for Ed.), Cheryl Carrier (FordPAS), and Andy Rothstein (NAF).

Penni Hudis shared a handout that summarized progress on this task. The goal is to compile curriculum abstracts and links on a searchable database for eight CTE industries by July 2012, including curriculum that is rigorous, project/ problem based, and interdisciplinary. Currently Energy & Utilities and Health & Medical Technology are all but finished and will be loaded onto the CASN website within a few weeks. Next are Finance & Business, Arts/ Media/ Entertainment, and Engineering & Design, which are expected to be complete by the end of 2011.

In a related effort, CASN is identifying course sequences/ Programs of Study for the California Department of Education for five CTE fields: Energy & Utilities; Engineering & Design; Finance & Business; Education, Child Development & Family Services; and Information Technology. This too should be completed by the end of 2011 and will be available on the CASN website (casn.berkeley.edu).

Penni explained the vetting system that's been developed for curriculum that is on the borderline between being included or rejected, and shared a handout explaining the process. This will be a voluntary system much like journals use to vet articles; attendees at the meeting were invited to participate if interested.

In California "Program Status" has been granted to the CPAs by the University of California Office of the President, meaning that any CTE course approved for college entrance credit (the "a-g" courses) in one academy is automatically approved in any other academy in the state, assuming the same curriculum and standards are followed. NAF is now working to receive the same approval for its courses. The number of CTE courses approved

for a-g credit in general has grown enormously in recent years, is now near 10,000, and the percent of CTE courses with such approval statewide is 42%, the same as for all high school courses.

◆ **ACADEMY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT**

The task force for this topic is: Mary Visser (Chair—MDRC), David Stern (CASN), Arlene LaPlante (ConnectEd), Charlie Dayton (CASN), Louis Simmons (Duval, FL Schools), Chris Force (Duval, FL Schools), and Angie Grasberger (NCAC).

Katherine Blasik from NAF led this discussion. The goals of this task force are: a) to collect and share information regarding current standards and related databases; b) to assess the degree of alignment among these systems; c) to explore ways to develop a better aligned and more cohesive system; and d) ensure the standards result in the desired outcomes. Katherine mentioned the regular conference calls being held with the nine Linked Learning districts in California on this topic, and plans for a face-to-face meeting of this task force just prior to the November NCAC conference. A key aspect of this work is defining “career readiness”.

Several of the organizations represented in these meetings are working on this topic, including MDRC, ConnectEd CA, NAF, WestEd, and CASN. It was suggested that Bridgespan needs to be linked to these efforts as well. A related topic is certification, where NCAC, Linked Learning, NAF, and CPAs have efforts underway.

◆ **WORKPLACE LEARNING**

The task force for this topic is: Rob Atterbury (Chair—ConnectEd CA), Deanna Hanson (NAF), Chris Force (Duval, FL Schools), Svetlana Darsche (WestEd), Wendy Sebranek (Philadelphia Academies), and Michelle Swanson (Swanson and Cosgrave).

Rob Atterbury led this discussion. He shared the latest version of the Linked Learning Alliance’s *Career Practicum: A work-Based Learning Strategy* (June 2011), which defines outcomes and criteria for such efforts. A diverse cross section of organizations has contributed to its development. Deanna Hansen of NAF explained that NAF is developing certifications for each of its courses, and that these will contribute to a national credential for students which will have written, project-related, and internship components.

April Treece of the Contra Costa Economic Partnership (CCEP) is chairing a broad alliance of organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area working on this topic, and is planning a meeting of these organizations on August 24th. Roman Stearns of ConnectEd CA commented that work-based learning is one of the four basic components of Linked Learning, and that it is the responsibility of the entire teaching team, not just the CTE instructors, a point reiterated by Kathy Harris of ConnectEd CA. The importance of knowing the common core standards was also discussed.

In a related update, Stephanie Safran, a consultant with MDRC, reported on their project to provide support to the work-based learning features of academies. They have added three new districts and 15 new high schools/academies that now have support from Bloom Associates, for a variety of work-based learning activities, in an attempt to determine whether this can be a way to expand on the positive findings of their national evaluation that showed significant employment benefits from academies.

Finally, Charlie Dayton noted that while he is technically retiring September 1, he will continue to work part-time, and along with CASN’s new Executive Director, Gil Conchas, plans to stay involved with the efforts of the Conversation.

NEXT CONVERSATIONS

- *November 4, 2011: National Career Academy Coalition Conference, Orange County, CA*
- *February 13-15, 2012: California Partnership Academies Conference, Sacramento, CA*