

# Perspectives

**SUMMER 2017**
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**Community College  
Leadership for the  
21st Century**

*Dramatically increasing the number of apprentices in the United States will require boosting public awareness, expanding into nontraditional occupations, mitigating the costs to sponsors, enhancing research and certification standards, and improving coordination with education systems.*

- Ben Olinsky and Sarah Ayres

*Promoting more apprenticeship training and apprenticeship-community college collaboration will not only expand the effectiveness of education and training and enhance productivity, but it will also integrate many workers who prefer learning-by-doing and the earning-when-learning aspects of apprenticeship training.*

- Robert I. Lerman

## Doctorate in Community College Leadership

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## Apprenticeships and the Community College: Closing the Skills Gap

### Sue Ellspermann, PhD

President

Ivy Tech Community College  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Apprenticeship is a tried and true, earn and learn system, that began in the latter part of the Middle Ages as a method to train highly skilled craftsman. It has always been linked to the trades, but has evolved to a model that is used to train the most highly-skilled, knowledge-critical positions. On-the-job training is, for many, the most effective way to learn in the environment where the actual work is done, using real equipment in real time to address real situations. The result is a skilled professional with real work experience, demonstrated competency, and a fully developed work ethic – every employer’s dream.

The term, apprenticeship, traditionally refers to a program utilized by an employer combining quality on-the-job training with related classroom instruction preparing employees for jobs deemed most critical. Not just a training program, it is defined by an agreement between employer and employees that provides a progressive wage to the employees as they demonstrate more knowledge and skills becoming more valuable to the employer. This definition applies to programs that are “registered,” with the Department of Labor (DOL) through the Office of Apprenticeship. Aligned with the DOL standard, registered apprentices successfully completing their apprenticeships attain an internationally recognized credential, journey person card, distinguishing them as masters or experts in their field or position.

While some companies and organizations use apprenticeship colloquially, referring to any training program that has some form of workplace learning, we tend to use the term at Ivy Tech Community College to reference registered programs where the students are actually employees of the company, with the college providing training related to their positions as determined by the company. “Non-registered” apprenticeships may use an apprenticeship model that is work and learn, but with no registered standards.

In the United States over 250,000 employers utilize registered programs to train approximately 505,000 apprentices. This diverse employee pool includes minorities, women, dislocated workers, and now youth. Youth apprenticeships are growing rapidly across the country as various industries see it as a way to attract talent at the high school level to the high-wage, high-demand jobs in their sectors. Community college programs like early college and dual credit provide pathways for students into companies with a portion of their related classroom training complete. Industry sectors who currently participate in registered programs include

construction, manufacturing, telecommunications, information technology, service and retail, healthcare, the military, and the public sector.

Given Indiana’s current skills gap and low unemployment rate, we are laser focused on workforce. It was recently reported that half of Indiana’s employers are struggling to fill middle skills positions, leaving them open. Because of this, our mission to align with the needs of the workforce is more critical than ever before. In conjunction with Indiana’s Department of Workforce Development and Commission for Higher Education, we have aligned our workforce programs, both credit and non-credit, to industry needs using demand-driven data. We have organized our schools into sectors and we are focusing on expanding and creating apprenticeship programs in those key sectors. New programs in other sectors across the country are starting every week. The newest sectors are white collar positions in banking and insurance. In Europe white and blue collar apprenticeships have been around nearly as long as the model has been in place. Sectors and companies in the US are just beginning to adopt the model in non-traditional sectors, recognizing what other countries have always known – all jobs require skills that are best learned in an applied method. In Indiana, we see apprenticeship as a key strategy to close the skills gap.

***On-the-job training is, for many, the most effective way to learn in the environment where the actual work is done, using real equipment in real time to address real situations.***

Our current administration recognizes the value of registered apprenticeships to the national economy. In mid-June President Trump announced his support, asking for \$200 million to be used to create new appren-

ticeship programs for millions of US citizens. His challenge is to have 5 million new apprenticeships. Attainment of this goal would align the US with Germany and Switzerland, countries highly recognized and regarded for their apprenticeship programs, with low unemployment levels. Both countries are economically strong despite paying their workers high wages. In the US today, there are approximately 6 million jobs unfilled and yet 6.9 million Americans are still unemployed. Closing that gap with 5 million apprenticeships is one very viable solution.

Many states have embraced apprenticeship as a strategy. Ten states offer tax credits to employers who have apprentices and many, including Indiana, offer tuition support for registered apprentices. Indiana has ranked number one in the number of apprentices and apprenticeship completions for many years. Other states have begun to focus on apprenticeship expansion as site selectors are using the numbers to recommend locations for companies to grow and expand. President Trump’s announcement about reforming and repealing many of the regulations standing in the way of apprenticeship growth has solidified the work of some state’s lawmakers and inspired others.

Connecticut’s state legislature approved a bill to repeal the  
*(continued on page 4)*

## EMERGING LEADER PERSPECTIVE: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK

At the federal level today, bipartisan support for career and technical education is building, as the funding discussion continues and debate surrounds higher education's continuing role in apprenticeships and career training. While some may consider apprenticeship programs an alternative to the college degree, in fact, most good jobs require at least two years of education beyond high school. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders. Their answers appear below.

### Community College's Changing Role in Apprenticeships

**Mark Dunneback, MSM**

Professor, School of Design and Manufacturing  
College of Engineering Technology  
Ferris State University  
Big Rapids, Michigan

The resurgent apprenticeship movement provides community colleges a unique chance to reaffirm the workforce mission and prove its inherent value to constituents: to help create and grow economic opportunity for employers, students, and communities. Today's college leaders should embrace this movement as an occasion to develop sustainable workforce and career training programs with community partners, not as a threat to traditional program enrollments, student success, or the multiple other measures challenging the college today. Bipartisan support of any educational initiative is rare enough – one with potential advantages for society and the economy deserves our full attention.

Unfortunately, soliciting proper or sufficient federal support for the workforce mission of the college is not a new consideration in higher education. That the community college plays a role in workforce development seems universally expected; however, the methods to succeed in that role are not always understood. Most equate a good career with at least some level of higher education. Knowing how to balance the right amount of traditional education with relevant work experience has long proven a challenge of vocational education.

The vocational education legislated by the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 established many of the separations between training one for work and teaching one a traditional education. Higher learning and workforce training began to branch into two distinctly different pathways, needing distinctly different approaches in education. In the past hundred years since its inception, while the buzzwords and terminology might change, many of the challenges facing colleges balancing vocational and traditional education remain the same. For example, in 2000–2001, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and "New Vocationalism" were the contemporary catchwords of the era, as the uncertain future of workforce programs in community colleges was once again under public debate. Today, colleges are beginning to reexamine career pathways and workforce programs under requirements of the WIA's replacement, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and some practices of "old" vocationalism are resurfacing.

Regardless of the label, several still-familiar educational difficulties continue to challenge community college leaders charged with fulfilling the workforce mission: a push for increased technical skills training, (synonymous with STEM efforts today) and a focus on non-credit training for lower-income and displaced workers, while simultaneously increasing the number of students capable of transferring into technical baccalaureate degrees. The challenge for college strategic planning remains uncertainty about the economy and regional employment. Community colleges struggle with identifying where to best allocate workforce resources when the best gauge of workforce performance – the economy and employment – is a lagging indicator.

Vocational training and education need not be separated – one can learn technical skills while working. There is a viable, time-proven alternative in existence, one that bridges the differences between old and new vocationalism, one better aligned with the current needs of the economy and employers: apprenticeships. Today's apprenticeship model is no longer strictly a

#### QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

**What role can and should community colleges play today in this new apprenticeship movement?**

Department of Labor (DOL) registered program in machining or plumbing. Rather, employers and colleges are recognizing the inherent value of the apprenticeship learning model and adapting it to other fields, such as accounting, information technology, and culinary arts. It could be argued that any skillset obtained by knowledge and experience could benefit from an apprenticeship structure.

Apprenticeships are a unique subset of the workforce mission, a subset that has proven quietly

resilient to many of the challenges facing today's college leaders:

- ▲ Prospective apprenticeship students often arrive at the college with a job or goal in hand – greatly facilitating job placement, gainful employment and student success.
- ▲ Student success is further enhanced by the unique employer-employee and student-college symbiotic relationships integral to apprenticeships, which guides everyone toward the common goal on a pre-defined pathway, while sharing a common passion.
- ▲ Apprenticeship programs often have a defined curriculum approved by the employer – the end customer is known, and is part of the development process. Pedagogy is scrutinized for relevance in real time, as students apply learning at work now, not two or four years later.
- ▲ Tuition and other expenses are often paid for by the employer, freeing up state aid and tax base for other college needs. In addition, several employers provide apprenticeship programs in-kind donations, possibly even adjunct faculty, to help support the cause.
- ▲ In the past, many apprenticeship classes were considered non-credit; today, colleges realize the value to the student of offering these courses for credit, allowing apprenticeships to later convert into a degree-seeking pathway, and transfer into a technical baccalaureate degree.

**When developed collaboratively between employers and educators, apprenticeships are a feasible and flexible means of vocational education.**

When developed collaboratively between employers and educators, apprenticeships are a feasible and flexible means of vocational education. The rapid pace of today's technology and global economy requires graduates with both education and experience – apprenticeships bridge that gap, and open doors for the college community, promoting shared resources, shared vision, and shared success. Today's college leaders must be proactive in helping legislatures design the next vocational movement since it is clear that apprenticeships provide a framework of proven success.

#### Reference:

Special Issue: The New Vocationalism in Community Colleges. (2001, Fall). *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2001 (115).

**Mark Dunneback** is a professor in the School of Design and Manufacturing, within the College of Engineering Technology at Ferris State University. His main areas of instruction are manufacturing process planning, quality management systems, design of experiments, and statistical quality control. He holds several certifications through the American Society of Quality (ASQ), is a senior member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME), and serves as faculty adviser for the SME Registered Student Organization at Ferris State University. Mark completed a journeyman toolmakers apprenticeship, earned his MSM Management from Cornerstone University, and is currently pursuing his doctorate in the DCCL program at Ferris State University.



## NATIONAL LEADER PERSPECTIVE

At the federal level today, bipartisan support for career and technical education is building, as the funding discussion continues and debate surrounds higher education's continuing role in apprenticeships and career training. While some may consider apprenticeship programs an alternative to the college degree, in fact, most good jobs require at least two years of education beyond high school. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders. Their answers appear below.

### Community Colleges and Registered Apprenticeships: A Win, Win, Win Scenario

**Rebecca S. Lake, EdD**

Dean of Workforce and Economic Development  
Harper College  
Palatine, Illinois

Emerging over the last 3 years is a renewed and broader focus on the use of Registered Apprenticeships (RA) to fill the skills gap faced by employers. This focus was a workforce development strategy strongly emphasized by the Obama Whitehouse. Unprecedented collaborative work among the US Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce resulted in a variety of grant funding opportunities to advance registered apprenticeship (RA) programs. The Trump administration continues to tout RA programs as another tool for employers to hire and train personnel to meet their specific needs. With all of this focus on apprenticeship, the questions for community and/or technical college leaders are, "What is our space in this arena and is it feasible for us to become involved?"

This article shares experiences by William Rainey Harper College leaders as they assessed whether to invest time and resources for this type of endeavor. Harper College in Palatine, Illinois close to Chicago in 2015 was awarded an American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) grant. Harper is the RA sponsor for four programs and also provides the related training instruction (RTI) for employers that have their own RA programs. The definition of an RA program is one that ensures a quality education by combining on-the-job training provided by a company plus related classroom instruction to prepare the student-apprentice for a high-demand career. At Harper College, the Earn and Learn Model of education serves as the basic foundation for these RA programs where apprentices are hired and **Earn** a salary while attending Harper to **Learn** a specific career.

*One of the more prominent questions to answer and better understand is what the benefits for all parties are.*

Before undertaking this new initiative, a logical systematic assessment was completed. One of the more prominent questions to answer and better understand is what the benefits for all parties are. This can often be described as the Win Scenario and in this case it turned out to be the Win-Win-Win Scenario. To invest in apprenticeships, the initial Harper assessment uncovered three primary actors.

**For the employers**, benefits or "Wins" to hiring an apprentice include: fill specific company skills gap; "Grow your own" with mentor led On-the-Job-Training program; increase employee loyalty and reduce turnover; diversify their workforce and reduce recruiting costs; ensure "seasoned" experts pass on knowledge before they retire; and put entry-level employees on career paths that not only help them, but which are an asset as the company grows and changes.

#### QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

**What role can and should community colleges play today in this new apprenticeship movement?**

**For the potential apprentices** (students), benefits or "Wins" include: guaranteed employment; earn a sustaining salary while attending college courses; graduate with Zero debt; graduate with a Harper College AAS degree and National Portable Credentials in a specific field of study; receive a national RA credential from the Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship; and graduate with 2-3 year experience.

**For Harper**, "Wins" or benefits in providing RTI for any company's RA program or for those programs that the college is the RA program sponsor include: fulfill College mission; meet needs of employers and job seekers; improve college enrollment growth, completion rates and fiscal strength; and continue to build crucial relationships with employers.

While a great majority of the 1,108 community colleges across the county do not offer RTI for RA programs and/or are not RA program sponsors offering their own apprenticeships, some have begun to question if offering these programs is a feasible and viable initiative. To assist with focusing their assessment plan, four main questions need to be answered:

- ▲ Is there overall institutional buy-in?
- ▲ Can integral college departments work creatively together to develop or modify required processes and systems?
- ▲ Are companies aware of RA programs and committed to fully participate with the College?
- ▲ Do enough individuals reside in the area to serve as an adequate potential apprentice pool?

**Providing the related training instruction (RTI) component of any company's RA program or becoming a community college RA program sponsor is doable and sustainable.**

These are the four primary questions community college leaders must answer prior to investing time and resources in offering RA programs or becoming a RA program sponsor. This should not be a haphazard activity, but requires a logical systematic assessment plan. Due diligence up front can prevent future problems. Providing the related training instruction (RTI) component of any company's RA program or becoming a community college RA program sponsor is doable and sustainable. Now is the time for community college leaders to investigate this educational alternative.

**Rebecca S. Lake, EdD** is Dean of Workforce and Economic Development at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. She is an ApprenticeshipUSA Leader and is director of Harper College's strategic apprenticeship activities. Before coming to Harper, Rebecca created the Community College Leadership (CCL) doctoral program at National Louis University, serving as program director for 10 years. She spent the first half of her professional life involved in health planning, hospital and health care administration, and nursing, with the second half in community college teaching and administration. Dr. Lake has held community college positions of faculty, assistant dean, career and technology (CTE) dean, and academic vice-president.





**QUICK TAKES**  
**Highlights**  
**from the Field**

**Training Tomorrow's Workforce: Community College and Apprenticeship as Collaborative Routes to Rewarding Careers**

by Robert I. Lerman

The author suggests that expanding apprenticeship training will diversify the nation's portfolio of training strategies and incorporate a "wider variety of strategies that succeed in raising skills and earnings," noting that the most important strategy for expanding apprenticeship-community college collaborations is to increase the employer demand for apprenticeships. In this work, Lerman offers policies that might expand collaborations and provides recommendations that can be implemented in the short run.

Access this work here:  
<http://urbn.is/2vXoEK5>

**Training for Success: A Policy to Expand Apprenticeships in the United States**

by Ben Olinsky and Sarah Ayres

Today, apprenticeships enhance productivity and boost workers' earnings in many countries around the world. The authors stress that expanding the U.S. apprenticeship system would help strengthen our economy, since research shows that the United States is not producing enough skilled workers to meet future economic needs. A set of policy recommendations are offered to address challenges and set the stage for a large-scale expansion of apprenticeships in the United States.

Access this work here:  
<http://ampr.gs/2wRfeMK>



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**Apprenticeships and the Community College: Closing the Skills Gap** (continued from page 1)

state rules on the ratio of apprentices to a journey person. The bill cited the rule as limiting the number of apprentices a company could employ. Washington State has set a goal of 100,000 high school apprentices over the next five years, addressing the alarming youth unemployment rate in the US which is now at double digits while student loan debt has surpassed credit card debt. Apprentices attend college and employers, even sometimes unions, pay their tuition. Upon graduation they are employed at high-skill, high-wage positions, dually credentialed, and student loan debt free.

Some companies have the impression that program registration is difficult and record keeping is time consuming. According to the DOL, the actual process takes about an hour. The DOL currently has thousands of standards on the books and most positions and occupations already have a standard. Community colleges are poised to take on this function for companies becoming program sponsors. Further, community colleges can educate legislators about making registration easier.

**Because apprenticeships have their origins in, and a tradition of, being a strategy only for the trades, companies struggle to apply the model to non-traditional programs.**

Because apprenticeships have their origins in, and a tradition of, being a strategy only for the trades, companies struggle to apply the model to non-traditional programs. In the health care industry, apprenticeships are beginning in nursing with RN's, CNA's, and LPN's. The information technology giant, Salesforce, recently announced its plans to add 500 apprentices. We are targeting high-demand, high-wage sectors for our apprenticeship expansion which will cross all of the top sectors in Indiana. All but those in manufacturing and applied sciences are considered non-traditional.

The benefits of apprenticeship programs reach well beyond just the employer. Ivy Tech has provided related training for company partners for over 30 years. Annually we have approximately 5,000 construction trades apprentices and about 2,000 students in other sector programs. Our mission provides the opportunity to support the growth and economic development of our state through the success of our students and our business and industry partners. Benefits of apprenticeship to all stakeholders and to our state include the following:

**Employer benefits.**

- ▲ Highly skilled incumbent employees trained to employer specifications
- ▲ Employer focused talent development strategy
- ▲ Retention of talented workforce
- ▲ Increased talent pipeline
- ▲ Recruit more diverse workforce
- ▲ Raised reputation for certain industries and industry jobs
- ▲ Increased productivity

**Employee benefits.**

- ▲ Higher paying jobs
- ▲ No or minimal student debt
- ▲ College credit and degree outcomes
- ▲ Global, portable credentials
- ▲ Increased standard of living/quality of life

**State benefits.**

- ▲ Highly skilled workforce
- ▲ More degree credit outcomes
- ▲ Sustainable economic growth

- ▲ Globally competitive
- ▲ Increased standard of living/quality of life

**Community College benefits.**

- ▲ Mission driven – workforce alignment
- ▲ Employer focused, talent development strategy
- ▲ Increased student success – degree, certificate and certification outcomes
- ▲ Increased student enrollment
- ▲ Increased grant opportunities
- ▲ Sector growth strategy

Ivy Tech is focused on driving the growth of apprenticeships and thus lessen the skills gap in the state. We are building the strategy around sector needs identified using demand-driven data. Apprenticeship growth and expansion will be a part of our overall plan but certainly not the only solution. Our employer partners will need to ensure their workforce is the best in the country. The solution must be driven by the employers in each state and in the nation. At Ivy Tech we are aligning our curriculum and resources with the needs of our employers. We have developed a new workforce degree with outcomes at the career certificate – 15 credit hour point in the program and at the technical or 30 credit hour point in the program which are industry developed. In other words, companies design their programs from a list of electives and we add the necessary pre-requisites. The approach gives employers the capacity to design apprenticeship programs around the company or DOL standard and their employees receive certifications and certificates as they successfully complete the stackable credentials in their pathway to an Associate of Applied Science degree. The current degree is in our manufacturing sector but the model will expand to the other sectors and schools as needed.

Ivy Tech has also developed a credit crosswalk for journey persons who did not receive a degree with their related training and want to continue their education at Ivy Tech pursuing a degree. Based upon the standard that all registered programs have, we were able to map standards to our courses and provide college credit for matching competencies.

A strong apprenticeship program is a win/win for all stakeholders. It provides the opportunity to support the growth and economic development through the success of our students, and our business and industry partners. On-the-job training is the most effective way to learn in the environment where the actual work is done. The result is an educated, diverse, and skilled workforce, aligned with the needs of employers closing the gaps we see in America.



**Dr. Sue Ellspermann** has more than 30 years of experience in higher education, economic and workforce development, and public service. In May 2016, she was selected to serve as the ninth President of Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana and is the first female president for the college. Ellspermann most recently served as Indiana's 50th Lieutenant Governor from

2013, serving as President of the Senate and Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and also oversaw six agencies including Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Indiana Office of Tourism, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, Office of Community and Rural Affairs, and Office of Defense Development. From 2006 to 2012, she served as the founding Director of the Center of Applied Research and Economic Development at the University of Southern Indiana (USI). She earned her PhD from the University of Louisville and also has classroom experience teaching at USI, University of Evansville and University of Louisville.