Innovation in Apprenticeship

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The California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners and helps employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the Labor & Workforce Development Agency.

DIR’s Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) creates opportunities for Californians to gain employable lifetime skills and provides employers with a highly skilled and experienced workforce while strengthening California’s economy.
Innovative Collaboration Moves Apprenticeship into the Future

IR has the important opportunity in 2018 to establish new apprenticeship programs in industries beyond construction and traditional trades. We have been working diligently to move into information technology, advanced manufacturing and health care. This effort is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, awarded to extend apprenticeship programs to nontraditional, emerging and high-growth industries, as well as increase opportunities for women and low-income groups.

The apprenticeship model has served the building trades well in developing workers and helping them acquire necessary technical and professional skills. To expand programs to other industries, DIR and its parent agency, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, have developed a series of Workforce Excellence and Sustainability symposiums to connect with business leaders and experts in the information technology, advanced manufacturing and health care sectors. Last November, state officials and IT industry leaders met to discuss strategies on how to retain a skilled and diverse workforce. This month’s conference featured discussion with leaders in advanced manufacturing, and the next meeting in April will focus on the health care industry. The series of symposiums helps us learn what skillsets employers in these industries desire and address strategies to meet those needs. By forming working partnerships with industry leaders and representatives, we can ensure apprenticeship programs are in line with the recruitment needs of each industry.

One challenge moving forward will be to adapt apprenticeship programs to match the evolving needs of IT jobs. The IT sector has historically recruited mostly university graduates to supply its workforce. Recently to a growing degree, workers are able to gain valuable skills outside of universities or before they graduate. New hiring trends are seeing workers hired in these stages and then further trained internally. This change is born from the rapid advances in technology and the way technology shapes how we work and live. Apprenticeship is the perfect tool to create a flexible, high quality workforce in this and other industries.

The Governor’s budget expands statewide apprenticeship opportunities to nontraditional industries and state civil service, and increases access to approved apprenticeship programs for inmates, ex-offenders, veterans, women and other under-represented communities. The budget supports the California’s State Strategic Workforce Plan, which calls for creating a million middle-skilled, industry-valued and recognized postsecondary credentials between 2017 and 2027, and for doubling the number of people enrolled in apprenticeship in the same period.

We must continue to develop collaborative partnerships with education, government and industries to meet the needs of a skilled workforce in our state and to exceed DAS’ and the Department of Labor’s shared goal of 100,000 active apprentices in California by 2020.
Apprenticeship Can Play a Pivotal Role in Information Technology

After spending nearly 18 years with the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, I am honored to be serving in the role of Acting Chief for the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. Director Christine Baker is a great leader and I am fortunate yet humbled that she has the confidence in me to serve our citizens in this capacity. I would also like to acknowledge former Chief Diane Ravnik, who is a great inspiration and role model to me. Chief Ravnik’s shoes will be hard to fill; however, I am excited to bring my talent, skills and abilities to fulfill our mission to foster, promote and grow apprenticeship opportunities for all Californians with an emphasis on increasing apprenticeship for disadvantaged populations.

Today, over 67% of our registered apprentices are in the construction trades. Our vision is to continue strengthening our relationships with the building and construction trades, while at the same time grow apprenticeship opportunities in non-traditional industry sectors. We need to continue our work to provide skills to our workforce in information technology, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, civil service and other emerging industry sectors.

Information technology is moving at a breakneck speed and there is a need for an agile and trainable workforce. On November 13, 2017, our office partnered with HP to hold an information technology symposium with several industry leading companies to listen to market trends, workforce needs and how apprenticeship fits in this dichotomy. I was fortunate to hear from leaders at HP, SAP, Adobe Systems, Cisco Systems, and Workday leaders and participated in roundtables after hearing from government and industry leaders. There is a real hope that we forge new and prosperous private-public partnerships.

In listening to these industry giants, it was clear to me that there is a need for an agile and trainable workforce. A workforce that can learn, unlearn and relearn. These companies are looking for a workforce that has a strong foundation in reading, writing and mathematics. With so many jobs available, companies are not waiting for college students to graduate with a computer science or related degree. Many students are hired in their first two years of college instruction. We were surprised when one of the industry sector leaders stated that Silicon Valley executives consider you a loser if you actually graduated from Stanford. These tech companies are looking for talent and they are competing with one another to find and develop this talent. What better way to find and develop a talented workforce than apprenticeship?

There is a great need for a skilled workforce. Our commitment and passion at DAS is to be a conduit between private industry, educational institutions and government agency partners to provide opportunities to our workforce. Our population is diverse and untapped with great potential that can meet the needs of industries. Apprenticeship will play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of industry and our workforce.
California Must Continue to Innovate to Remain the Most Productive State

One of my favorite quotes from Senator Robert Kennedy during his 1968 campaign for the presidential nomination is: “Some men see things as they are and say, why; I dream things that never were and say, why not.” This was a theme of his campaign and it spoke of innovation, or change for the betterment of our society. Innovation has been the hallmark of America’s economic success for generations. It’s steeped in the spirit of rolling up our sleeves and getting to work solving problems, while creating opportunity for a higher standard of living.

When I look at some of the changes that have taken place in our apprenticeship community, there is little doubt that we have benefited by taking advantage of technology to better educate and train our apprentices. It’s a big change but it has been driven by other industries and it doesn’t fundamentally change how apprenticeship is utilized or viewed in California. We all realize that our training model works extremely well with traditional apprenticeships in the building trades and in a few other highly skilled professions. It is also a fact that we train a very small percentage of California’s workforce and we have struggled in years past to expand into non-traditional industries.

So what innovations are available to advance the apprenticeship training model? For existing programs, the establishment of pre-apprenticeship training programs have created career pathways for many disadvantaged communities. We have also increased awareness within workforce education circles of the tremendous benefits of our earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship training programs. Pre-apprenticeship has proven to be a success, but I challenge all programs to step it up and run classes with the goal of increasing the number of women entering apprenticeship. We can all do more and there is no better time than now to make this happen.

How do we move beyond the limited occupations and demographics that we currently occupy? That is a much harder question, because we know that true apprenticeship requires a financial commitment from employers to employ workers as apprentices with clear steps towards high productivity and competency, with wage increases to match. I believe there are many industries in California that are willing to use the apprenticeship model and invest the necessary resources, once they see the potential to solve their skilled worker shortage. To ensure that California remains the most competitive and productive state in the nation, leaders in the apprenticeship community must foster relationships with non-traditional industries and share our workforce training knowledge.

Letter from the Chairperson of the California Apprenticeship Council

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Creating a More Diverse California Fire Service

The California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee (Cal-JAC) continues to innovate its training, recruitment and apprenticeship. Their dedication to developing a modern workforce, reflective of the rich diversity of our state, has helped Cal-JAC solidify their role as a leader in California. The development of the Cal-JAC Academy, a fire service model that is truly the envy of the nation, is another example of their pioneering program design. Backed with California Apprenticeship Initiative grant funding, the Cal-JAC Academy pre-apprenticeship removes barriers to entry, and provides a direct path toward the fire service for qualified candidates who also demonstrate economic need.

Cal-JAC Academy provides candidates the opportunity to complete the fire service’s entry-level physical and written testing requirements, while earning their Emergency Medical Technician certification. The program provides opportunities to candidates who otherwise would not have had them. Tuition and all associated costs such as books, uniforms, travel and childcare are all covered, meaning candidates can attend completely free of charge. In addition, those who successfully complete the program are guaranteed a job interview with the Sacramento City Fire Department, as well as placement on the Firefighter Candidate Testing Center’s Statewide Eligibility List.

In order to reach a broad pool of applicants, Cal-JAC conducted an extensive outreach and recruitment campaign that employed numerous strategies and partners. Outreach to potential students was done through both traditional media and social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Representatives from Cal-JAC attended community events accompanied by fire department staff who brought their rigs. Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, a long-time career education champion, also got involved and hosted a press event. Key partners include Butte County Office of Education, the Sacramento Fire Department and Sacramento Area Firefighters, Local 522. “This was truly a team effort,” said Yvonne de la Peña, executive director of the Cal-JAC. “Without our partnering organizations, the success of this program would not have been possible.”

Cal-JAC’s tireless recruitment efforts were successful on all fronts. They netted 228 applicants from a wide range of backgrounds. Approximately 20% of the candidates are female, which is much stronger than the current workforce numbers, hovering somewhere below 5%. The cadet pool is also ethnically diverse, with 24% identifying as Hispanic, and another 22% identifying as African-American. Currently, African-American and Hispanic firefighters make up approximately 10 percent of the workforce. From these applicants a cohort of 50 cadets have been selected for the inaugural class.

The California Apprenticeship Initiative is administered by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office in collaboration with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. For more information, contact Nick Esquivel at Apprenticeship@cccco.edu.
How Youth Radio Is Tackling the Tech Industry’s Gender Gap

From exposés on workplace harassment to lawsuits, the challenges the tech industry faces with gender equity in the workforce are well-known. I’m proud to lead one program that’s working toward the solution, by on-ramping young women, particularly from historically marginalized communities, towards careers in tech. As the Managing Director for Youth Radio, an award-winning nonprofit media production company that trains diverse young people in news, arts and technology, I run our Digital Media & Technology Pathways Program.

Pathways is a nine-month paid workforce training program for out-of-school, low-income 18-24-year-olds that offers on-the-job training, digital media instruction and professional development. Through a partnership with Berkeley City College, we walk Pathways participants through college enrollment. Participants also get a behind-the-scenes look at different career pathways through field trips to tech company headquarters. There is no high school diploma or GED required, and the young people who participate in Pathways are often in foster care, on probation, or facing another hurdle that can make navigating traditional school enrollment particularly challenging.

Two years ago, our on-the-job program earned State recognition for the Media and Communication Worker occupation. Since then, 12 trainees have earned State trade certificates, which is a critical resume-building tool for individuals who don’t have high school diplomas. Over the course of nine months, State registered trainees complete 528 hours of on-the-job training. After six months in the classroom, students are placed in a three-month internship at 15-25 hours per week with an outside employer partner.

These highly-coveted unpaid internships tend to be held by young people who can afford to work for free. When a Pathways participant is placed in one of these unpaid positions, Youth Radio ensures the young person is compensated, thanks to funding from the Oakland Workforce Development Board, Y&H Soda Foundation and the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth.

Pathways has had particular success exposing young women to careers in technology. While women make up only 26% of the tech sector, Youth Radio is proud that 45% of our program participants have been young women. We’ve been intentional about having balanced gender representation. We recognize that it is often not a question of whether young women want to get on-the-job training; it’s that it can be difficult to navigate while also balancing other elements of their lives.

Individualized support plans through case management and referrals to other community-based organizations are vital to maintaining strong enrollment for young women. The success of Youth Radio’s Pathways program rests on the full suite of wraparound services Youth Radio provides to every student: all participants receive health support services that include both mental health and academic advising. We see it as our role to help support their needs, so outside barriers don’t impede their success. Our staff does a great job of hearing participants and meeting people where they are—that culture of listening and respect helps make our program successful, particularly in reaching and supporting women and other folks who may be underrepresented in the workforce in California.
Workforce Apprenticeship in the Running for a National Award

When the Division of Apprenticeship Standards registered a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship in 2015 then-Chief Diane Ravnik predicted a groundbreaking model that would expand apprenticeship from its blue collar roots to white collar jobs. The Workforce Development Professional Apprenticeship has not only demonstrated its premier standing in the industry, it’s a contender for a national award.

The apprenticeship, through the College of Continuing Education (CCE) at Sacramento State, won the 2017 Engagement Award from the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) West Region, which represents continuing education institutions in the western United States and Canada. CCE will represent the region for the UPCEA 2018 National Engagement Award, to be presented in Baltimore in March.

“Increasing educational attainment beyond high school is critical to our economy, and apprenticeships are a fantastic way to create a skilled workforce that includes, but is not limited to the trades,” says Dr. Jenni Murphy, CCE associate dean, who accepted the regional award at UPCEA’s conference in Seattle with Babette Jimenez, CCE senior program developer.

The apprenticeship broadens the skills of workforce professionals whose job is getting Californians back to work. “This award is recognition of our efforts to engage our community, which is an honor, but it’s also evidence of the value apprenticeships can have to the employee as well as the employer,” says Jimenez.

CCE collaborated with partners in workforce development, government, business, labor and education to get the program off the ground. The Workforce Development Professional is the first apprenticeship program offered by Sacramento State and the first non-trade apprenticeship registered in California. “The high-level training this program offers fills the skills gap employers are facing and continues to build a specialized workforce,” adds Jimenez.

The program includes 2,080 hours of on-the-job experience, like a traditional apprenticeship, but breaks the mold with a rigorous educational component: a total of 144 hours of coursework in workforce development, project management, career counseling and soft skills training in communication and leadership. Graduates earn a pay raise, promotion and the industry’s first certificate.

Megan Bailey started the apprenticeship as a job coach with no accredited workforce training but gained the capacity of a workforce development leader. As soon as the program ended, the California Workforce Association hired Bailey and two other graduates as program managers.

CCE has run two cycles of the apprenticeship. “For the first time, workforce development professionals have a program devoted to career pathway development,” says Kathy Kossick, SETA executive director. “This program has revolutionized and redefined the profession throughout California.”

The workforce apprenticeship serves as a model not only for the workforce industry but for other white collar professions. “Think about careers now or in the future that require some type of coursework,” says Murphy. “Apprenticeships for in-demand professions like cybersecurity, healthcare or auditing are just one of the many ways that extended education can bridge the needs of the workforce with the resources of a four-year university.”

For more information, please contact CCE’s Babette Jimenez at (916) 278-6108 or email jimenezb@csus.edu.

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Technical Upskill Necessary Beyond Apprenticeship

In the Fourth Quarter 2017 edition of this Apprenticeship Newsletter, Mr. Jim Hussey wrote that personal investments in continuing education “can … give [an] individual the skills and knowledge necessary to keep and maximize the rewards of their career, thereby assuring a bright future for themselves, their families and the generations to come.”

On behalf of the four California Investor-Owned Utilities (IOU)—Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Southern California Gas Company—Workforce Education and Training (WE&T) team, I’d like to thank Mr. Hussey for his article in last quarter’s Apprenticeship Newsletter, on the significance of continuing education often referred to as “journeyman upgrade training.” We refer to it as “technical upskill” and couldn’t agree more about the importance of remaining current or “ahead of the pack” on job and career-relevant topics; especially those skills related to reducing a building’s energy use given that we live in a state with ambitious energy efficiency goals.

Mr. Hussey cited a report by the World Economic Forum on Global Human Capital. It stated that a country’s ability to maintain mid-sector jobs is tied to three functions—the ability to pass on knowledge, share skills and continually update an individual’s knowledge and related skills. For the past 30 years through our energy efficiency training centers, we have been providing these three functions to the California energy workforce that designs, builds, maintains and operates buildings and building systems. More recently, over the past two years, the WE&T team has collaborated with sheet metal worker, carpenter and stationary engineer training directors to introduce, expand and enhance energy efficiency content into their apprentice and journeyman training programs.

These collaborations have included customizing existing IOU classes for delivery to a specific audience, training trainers on building envelope testing equipment and providing energy efficiency training materials for trainers to customize and integrate into their training programs.

We appreciate opportunities to collaborate, and are interested in learning how else we may be able to support your apprenticeship training and journeyman upgrade efforts on topics related to energy efficiency, demand response and distributed generation.

For more information or questions about collaborating with the IOUs, please contact Robert Marcial at (415) 972-5177 or robert.marcial@pge.com.

To view the classes we offer, visit these sites that correspond to your region’s utility.

SDG&E: seminars.sdge.com
SoCal Gas: seminars.socalgas.com
SCE: sce.com/workshops
PG&E: pge.com/energyclasses
JOHN SPAULDING  Executive Secretary, Building Construction Trades Council

Job-Creating Apprenticeships Getting More Attention

More than 300 Kern County students and their counselors attended two days of workshops in Bakersfield during National Apprenticeship Week in November. These workshops highlighted the need to prepare more workers for well-paying jobs in the skilled trades, and the opportunities that exist for young men and women, who are just beginning their careers. Apprenticeships are definitely helping close the nation’s critical “skills gap.” These tried-and-true worker training programs are also catching the attention of an increasing number of business owners and managers in nearly every industry.

The Women in Trades and Student Apprentice Workshop, was held at the NECA/IBEW Electrical Training Center in Bakersfield. Events included panel discussions and hands-on demonstrations. Demonstrations that were particularly popular with students involved the scissor lift, industry drone applications and welding. Organizers included local union building trade apprenticeship coordinators; as well as Jennifer Vargas, apprenticeship consultant for the state Division of Apprenticeship Standards; and David Teasdale, Economic and Workforce Development Programs director for the Kern Community College District. Trades who worked with students and answered their questions included electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, sheet metal workers, carpenters, teamsters, operating engineers and cement masons.

Apprenticeships are based on the idea that all good-paying jobs do not require a college degree and not everyone wants to go to college, and it has long enjoyed bipartisan support. In 2015, the Obama administration announced $175 million in apprenticeship grants to jump-start new programs. The Trump administration is now pledging to add between $105 million and $200 million to existing funds for apprenticeships.

In June, the president signed an executive order and created a task force to expand the concept of apprenticeships.

Privately funded local joint apprenticeship and training committees (JATCs) offer nation-ally-recognized and certified programs that use state-of-the-art curricula. The Building Trades and their signatory contractors invest more than $1 billion annually in apprenticeship and journey-level training. This does not include the tens of millions invested by the JATCs in training facilities and equipment.

While Kern County is not currently experiencing a significant shortage of skilled trades workers, the likelihood of a shortage is on the horizon. Several major construction projects are in the works partly thanks to SB1 road and bridge reconstruction funding, and Prop. 39 clean energy workforce funding. High-Speed Rail, Lake Isabella Dam Retrofit, upcoming solar projects, and large road and bridge projects are just a few of the developments expected to increase the demand for workers. Kern County is growing. Through local apprenticeships, Kern County’s workforce of skilled trades people will grow and help shape the future.
Lucas Persson
Hospitality Management Apprentice Program through Columbia College

“When I began the apprenticeship program, I had been out of the hospitality business for eight years. Like many people, I was living paycheck to paycheck. That didn’t bother me, but what did bother me was hating going to work. One day, I decided to go to the college and speak with a counselor. He presented me with details about this apprenticeship. All I needed to do was get hired at Black Oak Casino Resort and meet with Amanda and Tiffeny, the Program Specialists. They made it so easy from the beginning. Getting paid to go to school is an almost unbelievable thing. It’s challenging at times but fun. In eight months of being in the program, I really love going to work and school.

I have 17 years of restaurant experience. I started as a busser when I was 18 and traveled the country opening new restaurants in my twenties. Eventually I settled into a bartender job in San Francisco. I worked there until 2004, and I left the industry in 2008. I never thought about hotel management or being a chef. The first four months of class and work opened my eyes to how big the hospitality industry is.

At Black Oak Casino Resort we were split into three groups and put into five-week rotations. In the hotel we worked at the front desk, took reservations and worked housekeeping. In the front-of-house we learned the POS system, seated people, and bussed tables. In the back-of-house we learned knife skills, prep work, and line work. The second semester will be more in-depth and I am looking forward to the challenge ahead.

I can complete the program by the end of next year with a certificate in culinary arts and a certificate in hotel and restaurant management. If I take my general education classes, that certificate becomes an Associate’s degree. It would be awesome to get two degrees at this point in my life. I haven’t been near a classroom in 25 years and now I have a 4.0 G.P.A. and am doing something I love.

Although the program is in its infancy, the people running it truly care that it’s successful. They make adjustments when needed and meet with us regularly. The college has created new jobs, the casino has strengthened potential long-term employees and the apprentices have successful careers ahead. This is awesome so far, let’s keep going!”
Celebrating 60 Years
California Conference on Apprenticeship
In Association with the California Apprenticeship Council

Every two years, the California Conference on Apprenticeship brings together advocates from the apprenticeship community to improve the quality of apprenticeship programs statewide through a balance of policies, education and energized collaboration for the benefit of all labor. The event will take place at the Hilton San Diego Resort and Spa.

For more information about how to register, visit:
www.californiaapprenticeship.org