

North Dakota University System Workforce Training Forum

June 9, 2010

What questions would you like this Workforce Training Forum to answer?

- I am aware of some of the TrainND focus areas, but definitely not all.
- How does the strategic plan for TrainND fit in state government, regarding organization structure, budgetary support and long term goals? Are the results to-date viewed as a success by legislators and the governor's office, and what are the unmet needs from their point of view? How has the ND Workforce Congress supplemented the work of TrainND?
- How do we maintain the TrainND focus with less state funds?
- Will the legislature support the appropriate funding model for TrainND?
- Are we incorporating best practices at all times? If not why not? What recommendations do the Training Centers have to improve our program and our ability to respond in short order?
- I would like to hear from faculty, employers, etc. about problems, challenges, needs and opportunities, and then work to make recommendations to address the issues.
- 1. To once and for all, answer the question of whether or not there is a movement to move the legislative funding from CTE to NDUS. This would be a grave mistake. Keeping the funding in CTE makes sure it is used for the intention for which it was created. Moving it into the NDUS would allow colleges to direct the funding to other departments.
- 2. To give a direct response to the rumor that the committee is going to recommend that businesses, in addition to paying for the training they receive, will once again have to donate money to the workforce training system. The purpose of a government-created workforce training system should be to provide the best education for its working citizens--to create a world-class workforce for the State of North Dakota.
- Again there is some duplication in the Training System, all levels of North Dakota and National Training Resources should be reviewed to show the attendees what is available to the North Dakota employers. For example: Job Service ND, Local Regional Training Councils, Local Development Organizations, State Department of Commerce, NDUS Training Systems, Each College and University's Training Resources, Federal Training, SBA, SCORE, Chamber of Commerce, etc.....
- What will be the outlook for the next 5 years?
- How can we strengthen TrainND presence in the business industry? How can cost sharing be increased so training can be more affordable to the smaller businesses?
- What is needed to expand access to skills for more people both employed and unemployed? How can workforce training be the regional group leading and facilitating this process to strengthen our system?
- I am hoping that the Forum determines that we are meeting our measurements and goals, and we can put to rest the financial model as they are comfortable with the revenues and in-kind contributions by both the colleges/and businesses and agree this is a successful program for the State to continue to support.
- What would the legislature like to see TrainND do? There have been many accomplishments and milestones with this relatively new program. Look at the success in just 10 years. What a great story!

Are the four regions accomplishing the goal as stated in 1999 enacting legislation (House Bill No 1443)?

- I believe that the TrainND is accomplishing the goal state in HB 1443 because of the increased number of businesses and employees served. TrainND has been effective in responding to training needs of business due to changing skill demands in their workforce and increased demand for workers.
- My organization has worked closely with Bismarck State College to develop training and education programs that have been very valuable.
- Satisfaction results are extremely high. That said there appears to be "for profit" training occurring which would be an indication that TrainND is not meeting all needs.
- The satisfaction level of business and industry with training provided is very high.
- Employers show repeated use of TrainND, a strong indicator of value.
- They have met every need of our community and region as set forth by the bill. We use them for our business retention and expansion programs as well as offer their services in our business recruitment package.
- I believe we are as indicated in the reports and comments from business and industry..
- As I listen to testimony regarding the types of training being offered, and the numbers of persons being trained/re-trained, it appears to me that the existing system is delivering the right product to employers within our State. I now understand that the legislature created an "unintended consequence" with respect to the "50 percent requirement." That is unfortunate in that it will preclude the distribution of needed training to employers simply because the training-to-date does not meet the 50 percent test. That will need to be corrected in the next session with an emergency clause attached.
- The continuous flow of unduplicated businesses receiving training as well as the repeat customers show that the program has and continues to fulfill its stated goals. Companies would simply not participate at the level that they do if the goals were not being met.
- TrainND meets with business, industry, Job Service, EDC, education, healthcare, and other agencies' representatives to determine what training needs there are in the region and statewide. TrainND recruits qualified individuals to provide the training/learning sessions. The TrainND regions work collaboratively to assist each other—one region might be stronger in one area of expertise so the regional partnerships are a great resource to meet the needs of the businesses. Having the workforce training system housed in the community colleges is the very best way to provide this service to the citizens of North Dakota--literally, every area of expertise in employee-related skills, information, and methods can be found within the ND Community College Consortium. By providing legislative funds for administrative costs, college in-kind for overhead costs, and providing the training locally, the training TrainND provides is undeniably cost-efficient to ND businesses. In rural areas this service is about the only way employees receive training to learn new trends and improve skills and practices.
- The goals in HB 1443 are being met and exceeded by TrainND.
- This system improves each year and as I work with employers in the Minot area they seem very pleased with the system.
- Their presence is stronger today. I think the identity as TrainND has helped. They have spent time connecting with the business industry; assessing training needs and sharing what they have to offer. The training we have received has been excellent and has provided growth for our employees both, personally and professionally.
- Addressing specifically the Northwest region, Oil & Gas and Transportation had the largest and fastest employment growth & highest annual wages in 2009. There are over 1,100 jobs available in the Williston service area. Oil and gas accounts for over 60% of these positions. The oil and gas industry training programs available to individuals are a crucial component for the City of Williston when it comes to recruitment of new industry in the area. TrainND (Northwest Region) serves our work force needs. The industries in the area will vouch for their positive results. Quality of Life is a pillar of Williston Mayor's

"Build Williston Initiative" Programs in the Continuing Ed dept are vital components towards enhancing an individual's quality of life.

- They are meeting the needs of business and industry for which they have the closest relationships like manufacturing and energy. There is a broader area of growth in healthcare, IT, and emerging technical areas which aren't addressed to the depth needed. This could be an area for additional funding but certainly is a gap in the workforce system.
- We are held accountable on several areas of the program and continue to meet and exceed the expectations laid before us by the University System, DOC, CTEC, Legislative Council, Training Board, College Presidents, etc. While each request can have different set of goals and measurements we have been responsive and successful in meeting them.
- The experience I have had with TrainND has been positive. The instructor comes out to our business to gain a better idea of what our training needs are and they incorporate the company specific information within their training (to customize it to the audience).
- The number of employees participating in workforce training continues to grow. In addition, many employers request repeat training. A strong point is the willingness of regions to collaborate on delivery of training across regions as needed which is a very effective and efficient utilization of resources.
- Just the number of training sessions alone speaks to accomplishing the goal, along with the total (duplicated and unduplicated) headcount of employees receiving training.

What are the strengths of TrainND?

- Being under the four State Colleges who are more responsive and flexible than the Universities.
- Serving the needs of business & industry with training that is high quality, timely, and results oriented
- On demand training in our community.
- Affordability, responsiveness
- Responsiveness through collaboration among all the quadrants.
- Distribution across state allows for strong understanding of community and regional needs and ability to form relationships. Connection to community colleges allows for leverage of resources - financial and talent. Also, responsive to employer needs.
- Any training, anytime, anywhere.
- Flexibility, trainers, keeping current on trends and what is needed in business and industry
- Anytime, anyplace and customizing the training to meet the needs of the business and industry.
- The ability to understand the current trends in the marketplace.
- Training staff and facilities; responsiveness/timeliness, and adaptability.
- Independence from the academic model, flexibility in training offerings, ability to respond quickly with appropriate resources.
- Leadership--from the Presidents to the Directors, relationship building/communications, top-notch trainers/instructors, relationship building/communications, goodwill, and collaboration within the system.
- In my region, it's the staff. They go above and beyond to meet the needs of business and industry.
- The training is flexible and the communication is excellent.
- Accomplishing meeting the needs of workers along with employers in areas of opportunities!
- They have an identity now! Spend time to prepare a catalog for what they have to offer, promotional materials. Work with you to make sure you get the training you need with excellent trainers. Make every effort to provide good training and offer suggestions to help cost share to make it affordable Make an effort to contact you and discuss your training needs (we get too busy to initiate). Build good relationships with the business industry and other agencies; bring us together which helps us connect with each other as well.
- Northwest Region: The oil and gas training programs are strong as we continue to address the challenges faced through increased oil activity in the area. TrainND is well respected amongst the community of Williston and is regarded as a vital economic development sales tool when recruiting new business.
- New collaborative efforts in Marketing, and Brokering, this has been especially seen in the last 5 months with several more regional and statewide collaborative efforts and sharing of programs, trainers, revenues and numbers. The regional boards, the regional directors, coordinators and managers, i.e. staff. The Flexibility and Responsiveness, definite strength but could even be higher if we were able to respond at the speed of business as it gets difficult to manage all the agencies, systems, and councils requests, reporting and meetings, keeping us off track of our mission and that is serving the Business and Industry of our regions and ultimately the state.
- Relationships they form with businesses. The instructors I have worked with have such great knowledge.
- Dedicated, enthusiastic staff. Collaboration. Breadth of offerings. Responsiveness to business. Development of a unified business plan with regional emphases.
- Flexibility, reactive to industry needs, responsive, affordable, located within community colleges, access to college instructors

What unmet needs and additional opportunities exist for TrainND?

- Moving from developing programs for incumbent workers to expanding to provide lifelong skill upgrade training of individuals who do not have employers willing to invest in their training. This should result in dedicated funds to support training for underemployed and underutilized population groups.
- Sometimes the request for new training programs is difficult to have ready on time due to the lack of available instructors or college staff to work on the project. The software conversion has been a work in progress. Internal reorganizations have been a communication challenge at times.
- 1) Possibly the addition of open enrollment for some training, when feasible. 2) Always an interest by employers for soft skills training, but the need seems to be un-quantified - specific soft skills.
- Helping to keep our trainers current on some of the higher end training; budgets sometimes restrict them due to the cost of keeping them trained.
- In some instances, we need to be positioned to respond to needs faster.
- I am unaware of unmet needs and additional opportunities.
- Greater cooperation with other organizations to streamline and coordinate the resources available to businesses. Train ND needs to partner and align with the other publically funded efforts in the state such as Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
- In Home Care Provider training which is handled by the NE along with the Division of Aging Services needs 1) Higher standards for Quality Service Providers--they should all be required to go through formal training to care for the elderly and disabled 2) Additional funding--the need for in home care is growing every year and the funding only serves about 10% of the training needed. Wind safety standards - LRSC is working on the OSHA standards with the help of a small federal grant. Agricultural - understanding technology rural communities - a map (see No. 5 below) might show that there are small towns not being served. Customer Service/Communications/Social Responsibility - these types of trainings, which may need partial funding, would help with the retention of our young people, make for happier employees, and increase tourism.
- With changing technologies each company has new needs each year. The training system has to communicate with employers to make sure the training is on target.
- I think it would be a benefit to survey smaller population communities to gain information on where shortages of workers are.
- We probably need more regional training sites.
- From the business industry just having more seated on the advisory board will strengthen the presence of business. Then more discussion can take place about business needs. TrainND has not been able to cover all the businesses and get the word out about what they have to offer yet. It is the small businesses that need the collaboration because cost sharing is necessary to make training affordable.
- Increase training opportunities in the Oil and Gas fields. Increased funding for Northwest Region that will allow for a larger facility for other programs. Increased funding towards marketing the image of TrainND and its programs.
- The question is too narrow; it should be "What is the biggest gap North Dakota has in its workforce system starting from K-12 through retirement." The biggest gap is the large population who drop out of college, especially four year schools with no education or skill. These are the people who stay in North Dakota and don't know what to do next. Sometimes the skills needed are short term training like Certified Nursing Assistant, Welding, and Truck Driving. For others its short term credit programs. Where does money come from to help this group of people?
- If there are opportunities we are working to meet them.
- The fundamental model is sound. While there are always areas for continuous improvement, major change is not needed.

What should TrainND consider doing differently?

- Accountability is an important issue. At this time TrainND is not able to fully comply with the Common Accountability Performance reporting mandated by the legislature because they do not gather identifying information on participants served. This could be a service to employers and participants and help lead to an individual portfolio for future use.
- The four region set up was, and still is, an excellent idea. Having Centers of Excellence at each region allows each college to focus on an area of expertise, but has not seemed to get in the way when collaboration is needed.
- More funding to assist our trainers in keeping current so we can stay ahead of industry.
- We should perhaps put in place a pool of funds to address critical needs that arise during the interim.
- Account for its activities and budget more directly and clearly. Rethink and revise the measurements of the organization and decouple them from other programs. Further create a structure that is independent from the traditional academic environment and administration.
- Have all of the colleges establish a separate department for workforce training as was originally suggested. Housing workforce training in outreach and/or Distance Ed departments makes it harder to track and most importantly is a hardship on employees as it splits the employees' time and loyalty between two different departments. Have the workforce training directors report directly to their presidents--this would, obviously, allow statewide decisions to be made in a timelier manner than going through two or more levels. More promotion/advertising is greatly needed. Construct a map with all trainings pinpointed so as to determine which areas have weak outreach. Serve small towns better in all regions rather than just concentrating on large corporations. Add Dakota College to the two-year college workforce training consortium. Training to help with retention of North Dakota employees.
- They should have a Training Summit once a year in Minot during the North Dakota State Fair to let all employers know what training opportunities are available to them and their employees.
- Making sure that the focus is balanced in order to meet more needs of employers!
- Broaden its vision and understanding of how it impacts the whole workforce system and be so more progressive in its approach to working with all partners in the workforce system.
- Less involvement by other agencies, more involvement and guidance by our regional boards. Bringing the decision making back to the boards. Follow the business plan... refer to business, plan this is our resource reference for our future success. The business plan will drive our success by keeping us on task and will certainly guide us in meeting our goals while creating a smooth, successful and seamless system.
- Continue to hold a Summit like this at least every other year.
- TrainND needs to run like a business to remain successful. It will need state support, college support, university system support, and support of the business community.

Looking five years into the future, what changes would you suggest for TrainND?

- First I would have TrainND take on the role of being that Business Service function for the State. Now we have this being attempted through JSND, Voc Rehab, Workforce Safety Insurance, etc. Having a Central Business Service Unit would serve the colleges, state agencies and better serve our employers.
- Better alignment towards a degree, "stackable certifications"
- Assuming it is not already present in statute; ensure flexibility for TrainND to stay current with state's employers and economic needs.
- It is difficult to be highly specific here, but as ND grows further into this program, experience may suggest that certain refinements are necessary to align training with 1) targeted industries, 2) areas to incent diversification of our economy, 3) areas that currently experience high numbers of unfilled job openings, and/or 4) other reasons.
- The mission as defined in HB 1443 is solid and remains, simply stated, to serve the workforce training needs of ND business and industry. The goals for how that mission is carried out, are honorable and there is, currently, a statewide team that is genuinely interested in providing the services. The goals could be strengthened by having more staff to administer and provide the services needed to train employees. By using legislative funds for TrainND staffing and not adding the cost of hiring additional staff to the cost of training for the business, employers/administrators are able to see a good strong return on their investment. If each college were able to hire additional staff, they could do more training, perhaps with a bit more finesse. They could actually have trainers on staff that could help with outreach as well as educational needs. This would allow more contact time with clients, more time to build additional relationships, and to provide quicker service for the client's needs.
- There should be much more online or Internet training. There are better ways to communicate with and help employers/employees without making them leave their jobs for several days.
- There needs to be more collaboration and key areas focus for regions. There isn't a high enough level of collaboration and use of existing expertise. Sort of a center of excellence for training. The way data is collected needs to be more consistent and recognize the variety of ways TrainND impacts regions. Some of the best work currently being done isn't through an employer paying but a third party like Job Service.
- The change I would make is only to streamline the goals, to be in-line to the needs of Business and Industry. What they constitute as success measurements. Keep the measurement required by the legislature based on the bill and otherwise be responsive to the measurements determined by the Regional Boards as critical to the success.
- Focus not only on responding to current business needs but even more proactively assessing and preparing to meet future business training needs that are projected.
- I would leave the goal setting to the regions and their Advisory Boards as it is now.