

A photograph of two men in a computer lab. The man on the left is wearing an orange shirt and glasses, leaning forward to look at a computer monitor. The man on the right is wearing a dark suit, a red tie, and glasses, smiling and looking towards the first man. The background shows several computer workstations with monitors and red chairs.

# Employer Advisory Council Resource Guide

A GUIDE DEVELOPED FOR ZANE STATE COLLEGE  
FACULTY LEADING EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCILS

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



Achieving the Dream

Community College Count

ZANE STATE COLLEGE  
**ZSC**



## STEM Regional Collaboratives

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Jobs for the Future** works with our partners to design and drive the adoption of education and career pathways leading from college readiness to career advancement for those struggling to succeed in today's economy.

[WWW.JFF.ORG](http://WWW.JFF.ORG)

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**Achieving the Dream, Inc.** is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Conceived as an initiative in 2004 by Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations, today, Achieving the Dream is leading the most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history. With over 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams—working throughout 34 states and the District of Columbia—the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network helps nearly four million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.

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# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



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“Our employers are the real key to our college’s student success and should be intricately involved in deep and meaningful ways, not only in our Employer Advisory Councils (EAC), but across more events at our college. We owe it to ourselves, to the community-at-large and, most importantly, to our students to develop, fully utilize and expand our employer partnerships and employer advisory councils in all facets of our operations.”

– Chad Brown

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At Zane State College, we recognize that in order for our programs to be successful, it is imperative that we collaborate with our Central and Southeast Ohio businesses and industries, K-12, the workforce system, four-year colleges and universities, and key community-based partners. This is why we believe that our 25+ employer advisory councils are an integral part of student success, curriculum relevancy, and institutional effectiveness. All of this leads to a more vibrant regional economy.

Over the past decade the College has been transformed in so many important ways; including a stronger commitment to student success, the development of guided pathways, and other re-design efforts to positively impact student outcomes. We believe the time is right to continue to leverage our student success work by rethinking our employer advisory councils: a focus we think is long overdue.

This resource guide is designed to help you, as a college program chair/faculty member leading a College employer advisory council. We think this guide will be instrumental to help you strengthen, expand, and leverage your council to benefit your program, students, employer community, and ultimately the College in better ways.

It’s more important than ever in a constantly changing labor market to meaningfully connect with our employers. I am very thankful that we have so many college faculty deeply committed to our students, employers, and are willing to re-think ways to revitalize these councils.

Thank you,

Chad Brown, PhD

## PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

Our employer advisory councils are the primary vehicle by which our academic and technical programs strengthen their alignment with employers. We need to continue to grow and respond to the ongoing and emerging needs of local business and industry knowing that employers are the hiring bodies and our goal is to understand what they want in employees.

It's our goal to help you and the College **update our approach and strengthen these councils** as a tool for aligning College programs with the economy. By focusing on improving council management we can build a next generation employer advisory council model that will play a foundational role in ensuring our College is producing graduates that meet the needs of today's complex economy.

Specifically, this guide will help you:

- Better **facilitate** meetings by structuring dynamic dialogue with employers;
- Offer suggestions on how to **recruit and expand the membership** of your employer advisory council so that more employers and other key community partners attend council meetings;
- Move toward meetings that help draw out **employer guidance around strategy, advocacy, and higher impact partnerships**;
- Work with employers to gain deeper involvement of them in your programs by growing **work-based learning** opportunities; and
- Develop innovative strategies to engage employers between meetings to **keep interest, investment, and engagement going**.

## ROLE OF THE EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCIL

According to state and federal mandate, each institution must establish separate industry-based advisory councils for each workforce education program or cluster of closely related programs. An individual programmatic advisory council is also required by the accrediting agencies of certain professions.

The broad purposes of an advisory council are: 1) to help the college document the need for a workforce education program; and 2) to ensure that the program has both adequate resources and a well-designed curriculum to provide students with the skills, knowledge and behaviors necessary to successfully meet the needs of business and industry.

The advisory council is one of the principal means of ensuring meaningful business and industry participation in program development and revision. Acceptance and continued support of education often hinges on a community's knowledge of the various career-training workforce opportunities.

## THE REASONS WHY EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCILS ARE SO IMPORTANT:

The mission of our college lays the very foundation for institution/employer relationships. The employer advisory councils (EAC) serve as a framework and a means to develop partnerships with vested interests for both the college and employers.

- Employers are the entities that provide jobs and meaningful work to our students after they graduate
- Employers are primary sources of occupational data and hiring trends
- Employers provide a continuum of work-based learning opportunities to help students understand their career choice and what the work entails
- Employers are an excellent marketing resource
- Employers ensure curricular relevance
- Employers provide invaluable feedback regarding program design, program competencies, the employment community and the industry-at-large
- Employers can help define what it means to be “work ready”
- EACs provide a platform for ongoing communication among the College and its employment partners
- Employers, through EACs, play a vital role in assessment of programmatic effectiveness by evaluating at a minimum:
  - Student Retention Rates
  - Graduate Placement Rates
  - Student Learning Outcomes
  - Student Transfer Rates

## EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IS:<sup>i</sup>

- **Continuous** vs. episodic or “one-off” (more than advisory)
- **Strategic** vs. transactional (high-impact partnerships)
- **Mutually Valuable:** creating value for employers as well as the college and students

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<sup>i</sup> Wilson, R. A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers. Jobs for the Future, January, 2015.  
<http://www.jff.org/publications/resource-guide-engaging-employers>

- **Wide-Ranging:** going beyond “usual suspects”
- **Comprehensive:** engaging in a variety of roles and activities
- **Intensive:** engaging employers in depth on skills & program needs
- **Empowering:** employers assume leadership roles
- **Varied:** using many channels, including employer associations

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCILS:**

- Planning and strategy are key elements of the meetings
- Meetings are structured by College staff to engage employers, allowing them to have a voice, and have ample opportunity to offer data, guidance, information, and resources
- Agendas are developed on time
- Follow-up action steps as a result of the meeting are accomplished
- Advisory council members have a clear understanding of the college’s mission and vision as well as their roles and functions
- Advisory council members are serving as ambassadors for the College to the outside community
- EAC members have the opportunity to engage with and interact with a variety of College staff and faculty
- Value is added to the College through committee member involvement
- Value is added to the employer through involvement on the EAC
- The EACs are making a difference in program effectiveness and graduate placement
- A more vibrant workforce is developed and the regional economy grows
- Committed to continuous improvement and supportive of metrics to measure effectiveness

## **COMPOSITION OF ZANE STATE COLLEGE EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCILS**

Historically, advisory councils have been composed of employers and College staff. A new approach at Zane State College is to encourage the expansion of the EACs to include other vital community partners and to ensure that members broadly represent our College service area

demographics, including ethnic and gender diversity, as well as the demographics of the occupational field. All council members should be knowledgeable about the skills used in the occupation for which they are providing information and guidance.

## **GUIDANCE:**

- Employer members should be drawn from both the private and public sectors
- Full-time faculty and staff of the College offering the program should consider not being members of the advisory council but serve in ex-officio roles.
- Part-time faculty who hold full-time positions within the career field may be members of the council.

## **SUGGESTED COMPOSITION:**

- Robust group of employers from the occupational field
- Four-year college and university partners
- K-12 teacher(s)/others from K-12 with a key role in your field
- Pickaway-Ross or Mid-East Career and Technology Center instructor/faculty member from aligned programs of study
- Adult Basic and Literacy Education staff
- Community Based Organizations staff (United Way, Big Brothers/Big Sisters)
- One student representative from your program of study
- Representatives from local or regional industry associations (e.g., Central Ohio Builder's Association, BioOhio)
- Local workforce staff from Jobs and Family Services

## **CHAIRPERSON OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL:**

The College encourages all of our 25+ advisory council leaders to seriously consider appointing an employer to **chair** the council, instead of the Zane State College program chair. While we acknowledge that the advisory council serves in an advisory function, the symbolic and functional appointment of an employer to lead the meetings will create stronger employer engagement and better partnerships in the long term. Your role as College lead for the advisory council is to staff the chair position and facilitate the meeting with initiation by the chair. This means collaborating with the chair in advance of the next meeting to co-develop the agenda and inform the chair about meeting outcomes.

# EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Advisory council members should understand the following general set of expectations:

- Attend the meetings (since these meetings are mandated by both state and federal law)
- Contribute subject matter expertise by actively providing perspectives and strategic guidance and knowledge about trends in the field
- Help the College understand workforce readiness needs
- Hire students and provide meaningful feedback on student performance
- Help the College stay up to date or modernize/co-design curriculum or training methods
- Respond to email, text, or other information channels sent out by the College to members
- Provide support to the College (a continuum of support; such as participating in the meetings to helping with equipment, resources, work-based learning opportunities, training faculty, and/or recruiting and hiring students)
- Help the College with a feedback loop about recent student hires (rating technical and workforce readiness)
- Support College grant writing and/or grant funded opportunities
- Advocate for the College and the program area, when appropriate

## FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

Every Zane State College Employer Advisory Council will meet in person ***three times a year***.

- Each semester the individual Employer Advisory will set two council meetings (likely one meeting in each semester);
- The third meeting will be a College sponsored in-person **Annual All Employer Advisory Council Summit**. This summit will bring together all 25+ councils to one exciting event to showcase the work among and across the College and community and to create a sense of collective impact and action; then councils will break out into their own separate meetings. This annual event will highlight best practices in workforce development, and other key connection points between education and training and business and industry.

## WHAT TO DO IN BETWEEN MEETINGS:

**Program Information:** Email and keep in contact with the employer advisory council in between meetings with key program updates, information on what your students are doing, news items, awards, new grants or initiatives, etc. Embed some polling/voting in the email to ask them their guidance on key issues.

**Knowledge Sharing:** Share/email key reports, articles, briefs, or things happening in your profession to keep your employers most up to date on promising workforce practices and trends; you are creating a learning community for them and many employers find having this knowledge sharing very valuable.

**Labor Market Data Sharing:** If possible, provide your EAC with updated LMI data in a webinar format and ask for validation of forecasted trends and/or job hiring needs.

## MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

One of the most often cited challenges in managing employer advisory councils is attracting, recruiting, and retaining great employers who will stay with the council. Building out your employers and membership requires five key elements:

- 1) Recruiting takes time, so take a **long-term view** and keep working on it.
- 2) **Relationships** and contacts are most important, as employers will only attend and participate if they trust you and are aware of the College and the specific program. Again, you need to **put time** into this recruiting effort.
- 3) Develop a **strong value proposition** (write a one-pager) so that employers see the benefit of giving up their time to be part of your council.
- 4) Facilitate **dynamic meetings** so that employers see the value of collective membership and the ability to solve things they wouldn't be able to do on their own; their opinions are sought and coming to meetings is something they see as a priority.
- 5) Meet with employers or other partners you want on your council armed with data (see the Office of IE&P and Director of Career Services to determine how many of your grads over the past five years have been hired by the employer, as well as other applicable data).

Advisory council members are recruited from the Zane State College service area labor market. Advisory council members are selected based on:

- Knowledge of the community and the occupation
- Experience in the occupation

- Interest and willingness to get actively involved
- Civic-mindedness and desire to be involved with student issues and advising
- Enthusiasm and desire to make a difference
- Ability to communicate and to be dependable
- Interest in youth and adult education and training
- Ability to represent the ethnic makeup of the community
- Ability to hire students

The department head or program director will make initial contact with potential advisory council members. A potential member should be advised of the purpose, function, and role of the advisory council and of the obligations and responsibilities of each member.

Potential advisory council members may be referred by current members, by faculty of the department, or by other community contacts. In some cases, the department head/program director or academic dean might contact businesses for appropriate recommendations.

Members of an advisory council shall be appointed by the College Program Chair or Dean in writing for a three-year term with the possibility for a renewable three-year term if all are in agreement.

## **HOW TO RECRUIT AND EXPAND YOUR EMPLOYER ADVISORY COUNCIL:**

- **Create a program database of key business contacts** (use Excel or coordinate with your workforce development/career services office; EMSI (a Labor Market Information software program available via OACC) can also generate a list of employers hiring for certain credentials in your service area) and begin informing them of your program and program successes; and issue an invitation to come to the College-wide All Employer Council Summit as a special guest;
- **Schedule a meeting with the local Chamber of Commerce** and provide them with a list of your current members and ask to present at upcoming events about your program and the opportunity to participate on the council;
- **Have breakfast/lunch with one or two current key employer council members** and ask for referrals to other employers and see if they will come with you and invite those potential employers to lunch or breakfast and recruit for the council;
- **Call an employer** and ask to come on-site and see their facilities and see if you can get 30 minutes to sit down and consult with them on their needs; then invite them on your council as a solution;
- **Schedule a meeting with Zane State College senior leadership team** with career

services and workforce development staff together with all of the College program chairs who are managing the councils and collectively brainstorm on key employers and determine who has contacts and can provide introductions;

- **Meet with local industry associations** and talk over the best methods to reach out to employers;
- **Meet with local temp hiring agencies** and ask for help identifying potential employer partners;
- **Develop a list of other key partners** and begin the recruiting process (K-12, ABLE, Career Center, Community Based Organizations);
- **Invite potential employers** who are not currently on the council to key College events (judge robotics competition, participate in mock interviews, become a guest lecturer, or involve them on other activities to become engaged and interested in the program.

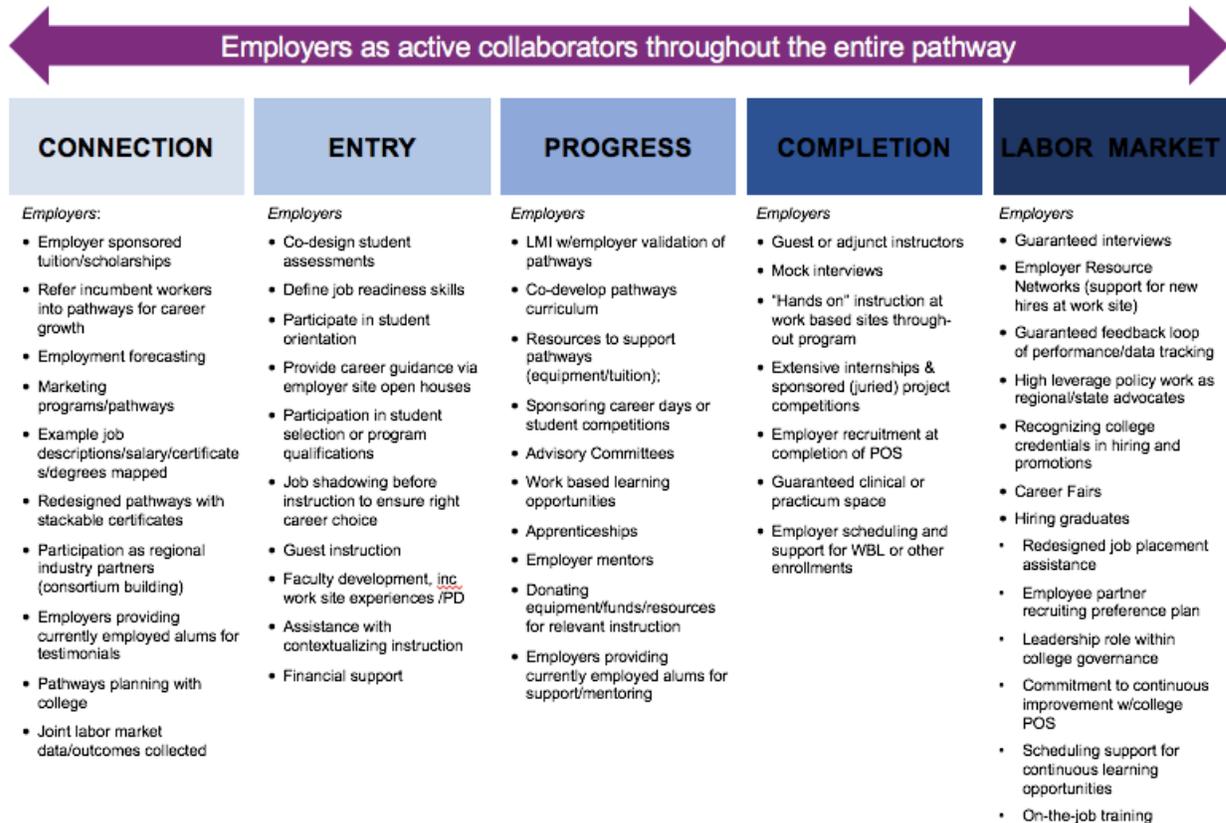
## PREPARING AND CONDUCTING THE MEETING

- Designate a chairperson from the employer-base
- Redesign meetings to foster employer interaction and guidance on key strategic directions/College staff listens
- Co-develop the agenda (the ZSC Program Chair connects with the EAC Chair) to include equal parts strategy, planning, and updates
- Invite a student (when appropriate) to talk about the program (different than a student representative)
- Prepare and distribute the EAC meeting agendas a minimum of two weeks prior to meetings
- Introduce EAC members and give them the opportunity to meet each other
- Introduce key College staff—all faculty that are part of the program, both full and part-time, may very well participate in EAC meetings
- Provide an overview of the College and specific programs (mission, vision, and history, etc.)
- Discuss the number of times and estimated meeting dates for the EAC
- Set outcomes and expectations for committee members and provide orientation/training (orientation can be short [30 min] and delivered for new members before their first meeting)
- Ensure responsibilities across all members are evenly distributed
- Follow-up action steps are provided by the Program Chair/EAC Chair when needed
- Distribute meeting notes and/or minutes, including action plans, anticipated results and timelines, within a minimum of two weeks
- Proactive follow-up actions should be started right away after meetings
- Include conference calls or web conferencing as an option for those employers to participate in meetings if he/she can't attend in person

# APPENDIX

## FRAMEWORK FOR EXPANDED EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

### College/Employer Engagement Momentum Framework: Getting Students into and through Postsecondary Pathways



# **SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA**

**Zane State College**  
Advisory Council Meeting Agenda  
Monday September 10, 201X 5:30 pm  
Health Science Hall, H3XX

## **SAMPLE AGENDA**

New Member Orientation (30 minutes prior to the start of the regular meeting for new members; if needed).

- I. Welcome, Introductions and Call to Order
- II. Review of Minutes from previous meeting
- III. Employer/Council Member Updates: What's Happening in the Field? Employers share key trends or news impacting regional workforce, hiring, and/or education and training areas
- IV. College Program/Curriculum Updates
- V. Student Progress Updates (review student persistence data and discussion of how to ensure completion)
- VI. Review of Labor Market Information – current openings, forecasting hiring needs, validation of credentials; input from employers
  - a. Job Readiness Skills
  - b. Completion rates
  - c. Job Placement rates
- VII. Review of Work-based Learning Opportunities; providing employers with more touch points to meet students; increasing student opportunities to learn valuable work place skills on-site
- VIII. Announcements
  - a. Upcoming OACC meeting – which employers will attend?
  - b. Employer Guest Lecturers needed
  - c. Employer Student Recruitment Opportunities; review of upcoming programs ending with opportunities for employers to recruit students once they finish their degree/certificate
  - d. Scheduling available now for Job Shadowing
- IX. Next Meeting: rotating meeting locations – next meeting at Employer X's site
- X. Adjournment

# LIST OF WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

June 20, 2016

Zane State College

When employers are engaged, there is a two-way street that delivers for the student. At the most effective institutions, colleges are deeply shaped by employer needs. For example, employers in some places, co-design curriculum, share data, and provide work-based learning, as well as document needed skills and competencies. A recent Gallup survey noted that 88% of business and industry leaders favored stronger collaboration with higher education institutions.<sup>ii</sup>

Zane State College is very much responding to labor market and employer needs, but could it be stronger? We believe there could be a stronger set of college policies and practice that work toward embedding more work-based learning opportunities for ZSC students.

Work-based learning skills: what we know students gain from more work related experiences.

1. Develop solutions to workplace problems drawing on theory and practice.
2. Exploit the workplace as a learning resource.
3. Manage oneself (and others).
4. Reflect on what has been learned in and from the workplace.
5. Transfer existing knowledge, capabilities and competences to new or different contexts.

The following broad-based **work-based learning** (WBL) examples can be for credit or noncredit, short or long-term activities, or adapted in ways that support how faculty or staff facilitate the vital exchange of real work experiences benefitting students and strengthening employer engagement. Zane State college faculty and staff should view these as opportunities and important components of an overall workforce and classroom strategy. Working toward embedding WBL into formal courses and programs of study is a noteworthy goal.

## ***WBL Examples***

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We have categorized WBL into three major areas:

- Career exploration (exploring options to foster motivation, consideration of career opportunities, and informed decision making about career choice)
  - Work-based learning (learning through real-life experience and connections with the labor market to reinforce academics and deepen workplace related knowledge)
  - Career preparation (preparing for entry into a specific profession)
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<sup>ii</sup> The 2013 Lumina Study of the American Public's Opinion of Higher Education and U.S. Business Leaders Poll on Higher Education: What Americans Need to Know. Released February 25, 2014. Gallup/Lumina Foundation.

### ***WBL Career Exploration Examples***

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Job shadowing (half day to one or more weeks)  
Work-based site field trips  
Employer engages at student orientation/FYE to share knowledge of field  
Employers lead/manage student service clubs  
College communications/media related Programs of Study students video employers - what some jobs are like  
Employers engage in skill panels w/students/faculty  
Students host employers in structured learning exchanges on campus  
Employer review of student portfolios for Credit for Prior Learning  
Employers augment college delivered career exploration  
Career mentors

### ***WBL Examples***

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College develops a noncredit/credit WBL course for students  
Registered/unregistered apprenticeships  
Internships (paid and unpaid)  
Cooperative work experiences  
Guest lecturing by employers  
Technical mentorship  
Practicum  
Juried competition (employers judge)  
College-based enterprises with employers (college run cafes, video productions, auto repair)  
Service Learning (short to long term)  
Employers help establish off-site labs at employer based work sites  
Volunteer service together  
College courses taught on-site at employer sites  
Students assigned a case study with employer guidance  
Faculty team up w/employers for updated industry training over summer (reimbursed as part of their load)  
Employers assist faculty and students with contextualizing course(s) or POS curriculum  
Employer led student independent study on work related/business solutions topic  
Employer tutors

### ***WBL Career Preparation Examples***

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Capstone report/course led by employer  
Teacher externship  
Employer driven research project  
Employer mock interviews  
Employer informational interviews  
Job fairs  
Employers who are engaged on college employee advisory boards receive advanced recruiting privileges in classes/programs that are about to graduate students  
Students conduct focus groups with employers