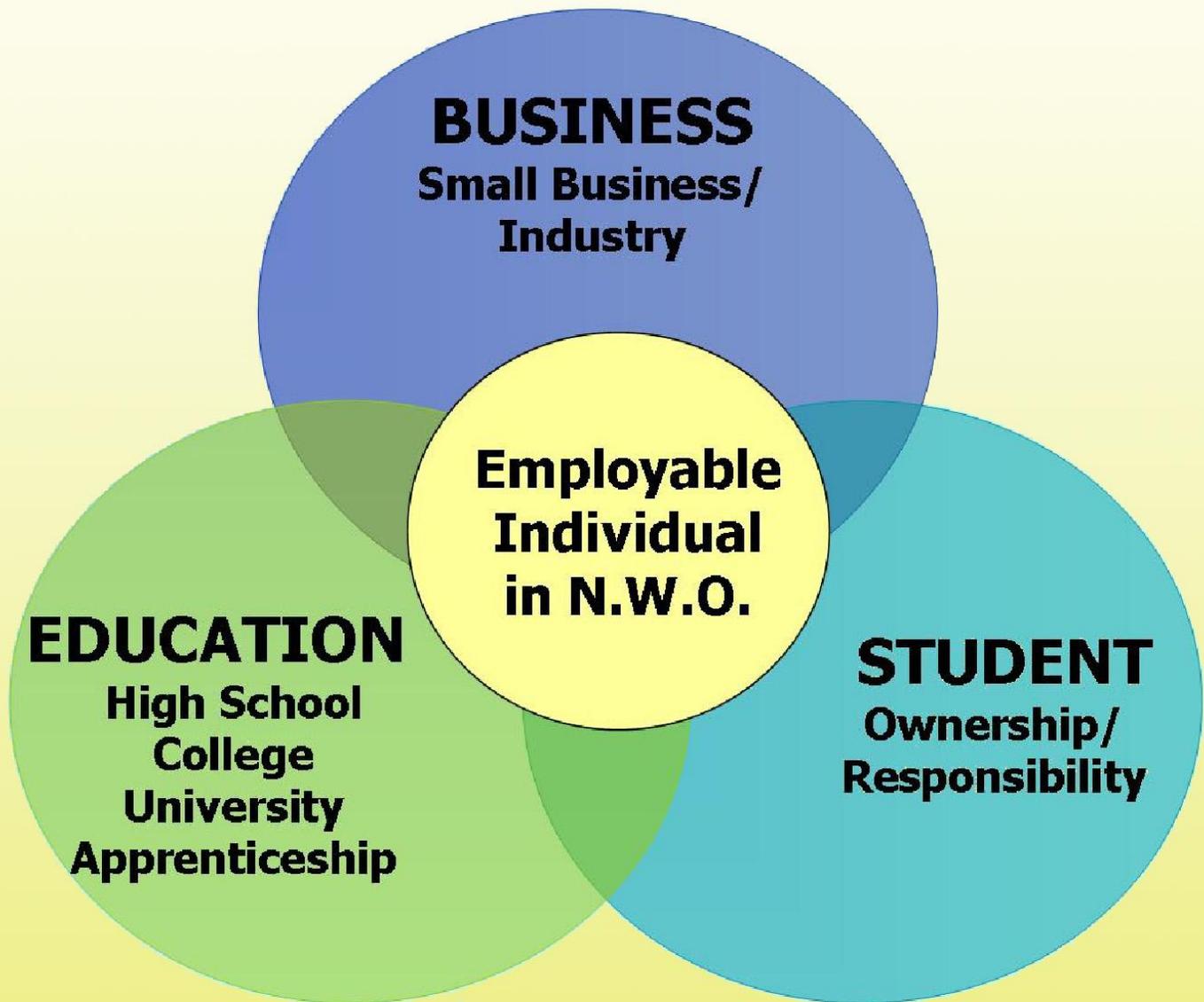


Mission Employability III



BUSINESS EDUCATION FORUM THUNDER BAY REPORT

September 2007

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Health Sector-Business/Education Forum "Mission Employability III"

Goal: To enhance communication among the health sector, educators, students and parents.

Objectives:

- To identify the hot trends, essential skills and expectations required for careers in the health sector as they relate to education.
- To increase awareness of opportunities and resources for educators to help students prepare for a career in the health sector.
- To identify challenges and obstacles experienced by students interested in training for careers in the health sector.
- To prioritize and develop an action plan to address issues identified and to maintain ongoing proactive communication.



For More Information
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Featuring Keynote Speakers:

Laura Kokocinski

Senior Director, Planning, Integration and Community Engagement
North West Local Health Integration Network

Stewart Kallio

Chair, Community Services
Confederation College

Date: Thursday, September 20, 2007

Time: 5:00 pm—8:30 pm
~Light Dinner Served~

Location: Victoria Inn
Kensington Room

Cost: FREE

RSVP by: Friday, September 7, 2007
By calling 346-2940
Or email p2p@nstb.on.ca

Agenda: 5:00 pm—5:30 pm ~ Light Dinner
5:30 pm—6:15 pm ~ Keynote Speakers
6:30 pm—7:30 pm ~ Roundtable Discussions
7:30 pm—8:00 pm ~ Plenary



BUSINESS/EDUCATION FORUM *“Mission Employability III”*

Executive Summary

Dear “Mission Employability III” Delegate:

On September 20, 2007 a group of dedicated and enthusiastic representatives from local secondary and post-secondary institutions and health sector businesses came together in Thunder Bay to participate in a Forum entitled “Mission Employability III”. Attendees came prepared to discuss the needs and expectations of business and education as they relate to the world of work, specifically to careers in the health sector. This Forum provided an opportunity for clarification of roles in preparing students and to identify strategies for change.

The event was organized by the North Superior Training Board and Passport to Prosperity in partnership with the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce (Education, Business and Student Services Committee), Lakehead Public Schools and the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board. Local Training Boards champion local labour force development efforts that respond to the needs of local economies. Business, labour, education and community representatives work collaboratively to develop solutions to address labour market needs. The Local Board initiative began in 1996 and is funded by Employment Ontario. Passport to Prosperity is a provincially funded public awareness program that focuses on increasing employer participation in the education of youth.

In conducting the Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) research and community consultations with partners and stakeholders throughout the region, the Local Board heard that employers face challenges in finding the right person for the job, one who has essential and employability skills and is able to make a seamless transition to entry-level employment. By communicating directly with the local business community, educators were able to speak to the necessity for accurate human resource forecasting needs, to know where the jobs are and will be, and to learn first hand the skills and qualities employers are looking for.

Northwestern Ontario is becoming a leader in the health sciences and is host to a number of opportunities for careers in this ever-expanding field. The Northern Ontario School of Medicine; hospitals; research centres; laboratories; clinics and various other health centres employ over 10,000 people in Northwestern Ontario and contribute significantly to the growth and development of the region. At Mission Employability III educators were made aware of career opportunities for their students, from careers in patient care to health sector occupations that do not involve contact with patients i.e. administrative and support services; research and laboratory work; technological careers including diagnostics and information technology; maintenance and repair of medical equipment.

Laura Kokocinski, Senior Director, Planning, Integration and Community Engagement for North West Local Health Integration Network was one of two keynote speakers whose presentation, “Creating Opportunities for the Future” detailed timely information on current and future health human resources needs and ways to prepare our students to meet these demands. Stewart Kallio, Chair, Community Services at Confederation College, provided information on health-related programs at Confederation College and Lakehead University, and outlined the opportunities and challenges facing students who are interested in careers in the health sector.

Following the keynote addresses, delegates proceeded with roundtable discussions to explore where the jobs will be in the health sector in the near future and to learn about what recruiters are looking for and what students require to enter into these careers; what resources and information educators need in order to prepare their students; and what steps can be taken to address all of these requirements.

Due to an aging population, a number of health career opportunities exist in rehabilitation and therapy and personal support work. Nursing is also a vibrant area, with the emergence of more areas of specialization. Shortages are forecasted in the region for pharmacists and medical lab technicians due to retirements. As the use of technology is increasing in all sectors, numerous careers exist in this field as well.

Recruiters and employers in the health sector stated that, in addition to the requisite math and science requirements, students require a number of essential skills to enter into a career in health. Compassion, teamwork, motivation and time management ranked among the most important skills and attributes. A strong sense of professionalism and work ethic is necessary. Many careers in the health sector require a significant amount of time, dedication, education and training and students entering into these careers need to know what to expect ahead of time. Many health careers are not structured around the regular work week and require a great deal of flexibility. Students must understand this requirement, as well. In order for students to have a realistic vision of what health careers entail, they, their teachers and their parents need resources and information on the various post-secondary programs and careers. Professional development sessions and detailed information packages from health employers will help teachers share current, in-depth information with their students. Hands-on cooperative education placements, guest speakers and promotional resources can promote health careers in positive and realistic ways to students.

Among the challenges faced by students wishing to enter into careers in the health sector include maintaining high marks; accessing information on particular careers; and a shortage of spaces in post-secondary programs at both the College and University level. Health programs fill up quickly as there are more interested students than there are qualified instructors and expensive equipment. Alternative delivery methods can address these issues, i.e. virtual and distance education programs and technologies that allow a greater number of students access to programs without requiring their actual presence or one-on-one instruction. Distance education courses are especially beneficial to people living in remote communities.

As the opportunities in the health sector continue to expand in Northwestern Ontario, it is necessary that awareness of the various career options is shared among all stakeholders. By bringing together employers, educators, students and parents this Forum helped strengthen the communication and partnerships between each group. On behalf of all the partners, I would like to extend our thanks for your participation in this important Forum. Evaluations were once again extremely positive with all delegates requesting future opportunities to generate discussion and solutions on how to collectively better prepare students for the world of work.

Marg Scott
Executive Director
North Superior Training Board



Keynote Speakers

Laura Kokocinski

Senior Director, Planning, Integration and Community Engagement
North West Local Health Integration Network

Stewart Kallio

Chair, Community Services
Confederation College



Laura Kokocinski – Senior Director, Planning, Integration and Community Engagement, North West Local Health Integration Network

Laura has an extensive background in the integrated delivery of health services in Northwestern Ontario. In addition to having held the positions of Vice President, Health Services at the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre and the Executive Director of the Community Care Access Centre for the District of Thunder Bay, she has a strong background in leadership, education, policy development and research.

Laura holds the degrees of Masters of Education and Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Lakehead University and is currently completing her Doctorate in Education with the University of Toronto.

Laura is a life long resident of Northwestern Ontario. She lives in Thunder Bay with her husband of thirty years and she has three children.

(Insert Powerpoint Presentation here)

Stewart Kallio, Chair, Community Services, Confederation College

A Sudbury native, Stewart Kallio has spent the last twenty years in the Ontario College system—Cambrian and Niagara and now Confederation College. His primary focus has been on access, transfer and preparatory programming, helping learners at risk of not succeeding make the successful transition to post secondary education by building their student skills and preparing themselves academically.

Mr. Kallio has an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts, a Masters degree in Community College Education and is now doing his Ph.D. in Community College Leadership. He has been married thirty years to Thunder Bay native Lesley.

(Insert Powerpoint presentation here)

Roundtable Discussions

What are the *Hot Trends* in careers in the health sector?

What skills and attributes are recruiters looking for?

Do educators have the resources to equip students for these careers?

What do students need to best prepare and what challenges/barriers do they face?

What can be done to address these issues?

Roundtable Discussions

1 – What are the hot trends in careers in the health sector – where are the jobs?

- ◆ Nurse Practitioner
- ◆ Registered Nurses
- ◆ Registered Practical Nurse (the scope of their practice has increased)
- ◆ Nurse Specialists (e.g. diabetes; wound; chronic disease; brain injury; spinal injury)
- ◆ Operating Nurses
- ◆ Emergency Nurses
- ◆ Physician's Assistant
- ◆ Doctors
- ◆ Pharmacy Assistant/Pharmacist
- ◆ Occupational Therapist - rehab
- ◆ Physiotherapist – rehab
- ◆ Alternative, Preventative and Complimentary Medicine (massage therapy; homeopathy; naturopath; acupuncture; yoga, etc.)
- ◆ Speech Language Pathologist
- ◆ Recreationist
- ◆ Sports Medicine
- ◆ Kinesiology
- ◆ Dieticians (healthy living)
- ◆ Foot Care Specialists (chiroprapist)
- ◆ Audiologist
- ◆ Medical Lab Technician (70% retiring soon)
- ◆ Diagnostic Imaging
- ◆ Health Informatics – information and data management
- ◆ Information Technology – support to maintain new equipment
- ◆ Radiation Technologist
- ◆ Researchers – Cancer, Bio-Medical
- ◆ Administrative Support Workers
- ◆ Personal Care & Personal Support Workers

2 – What skill sets and attributes are health care recruiters looking for and what will they be looking for in the future?

Skills

- ◆ problem solving and critical thinking skills
- ◆ organizational skills
- ◆ interpersonal skills
- ◆ communication skills
- ◆ computer skills and the ability to adapt and re-train
- ◆ customer service skills
- ◆ math (numeracy) skills
- ◆ science
- ◆ literacy – medical terminology
- ◆ multi-lingual

Attributes

- ◆ self motivation
- ◆ good time management; ability to meet deadlines
- ◆ teamwork/group work
- ◆ common sense
- ◆ motivation and drive
- ◆ enthusiasm
- ◆ creativity
- ◆ good work ethic and professionalism
- ◆ compassion/empathy
- ◆ understanding it is not a 9-5 job
- ◆ commitment to lifelong learning; willing to ask questions
- ◆ volunteer experience
- ◆ cultural sensitivity

3 – Do educators have the resources to ensure that students are equipped for a career in the health sector? What challenges/barriers do they face?

Sharing of Information

- ◆ There needs to be more information available to high school teachers so that they can pass it on to their students.
- ◆ Students need to be informed of the various programs and career opportunities. It is very time consuming for high school teachers to research this specialized information on their own.
- ◆ Health employers could produce packages (video, multimedia) to distribute to high school teachers to make it easier and faster for teachers to learn what is out there.
- ◆ The use of technology should be used as much as possible. Teachers must have an awareness and comfort of technology and new methods so that they can pass these on to their students.
- ◆ There is a need for improved information specifically for science teachers (e.g. Teacher Outreach Program for Health Technology; virtual programs). Professional development is needed.
- ◆ Teachers do provide information to their students but it doesn't always get to the parents, who are often the most influential in helping guide students into careers.

Promotion of Health careers

- ◆ Health careers are not attractive to students. There are stigmas attached to health care professionals – that they have little time for a social or personal life because their work is too demanding.
- ◆ Students need to meet real-life health professionals who can promote jobs in health. Earlier exposure to both traditional and non-traditional health careers will help make them more attractive.

Resources

- ◆ The standard of education in remote Northern communities is not as high as in urban centres. Teachers and students in these communities need resources in order to

prepare for careers in the health sector. The Internet, distance education and virtual technologies can help.

- ◆ There are limited placements for co-op students since many levels of students require placements (high school, college, university, medical school, high school). There are staff shortages resulting in fewer staff available to supervise students.

Preparing Students

- ◆ Laddering and bridging needs to be done in the colleges and universities to ensure the pathway chosen is suitable and practical for students. This is good for students who just find it overly difficult to go into the health sector.

More Spaces in Post-Secondary Programs

- ◆ College and University programs fill up quickly and are over-subscribed. There is not enough equipment or teaching staff – i.e. Dental Hygienist; Radiology programs can only take a limited number of students per year. We must address the issue of limited courses offered in the region. Some suggestions are different delivery modes, i.e. distance education and virtual learning coupled with research.

4 – What do students need to best prepare for careers in the health sector?

Skills and Attributes

- ◆ excellent interpersonal skills
- ◆ solid study skills
- ◆ 3 Ds – drive, determination, discipline
- ◆ social and life skills
- ◆ resilience and strong work ethic

Resources and Information

- ◆ Students need information on all levels of health careers (university, college, apprenticeship and work streams). Working in health does not just mean being a doctor or nurse
- ◆ knowledge that it is hard to get into programs
- ◆ awareness of and access to resources on health programs and careers
- ◆ information on administrative and technological opportunities in health
- ◆ details on what different careers entail
- ◆ a sequenced introduction into health careers

Supports

- ◆ strong support system
- ◆ mentors and positive role models
- ◆ access to counseling
- ◆ valuable work experience placements

What challenges/barriers do students face?

- ◆ costly tuition
- ◆ significant investment of time
- ◆ overall lack of knowledge of career opportunities within health sector
- ◆ shortage of good co-op placements and opportunities

- ◆ students need a realistic idea of the physical, mental and emotional characteristics required in these careers
- ◆ there needs to be more funding for outreach and partnerships
- ◆ pre-health program – 1 year for students to experience and decide
- ◆ secondary students are not always ready to make career choices
- ◆ students sometimes do not have the persistence or motivation to stick with the program

5 – What can be done to address the issues identified here – Next Steps:

- ◆ lobby for funds for resources, equipment and programming
- ◆ forge more partnerships and collaboration
- ◆ earlier and increased exposure, promotion and awareness of health careers in elementary and secondary schools
- ◆ provide incentives: tuition agreements, scholarships, bursaries
- ◆ encourage parental engagement
- ◆ more events like the Mayor's Reception for Thunder Bay Students in Health Care that encourage students in health programs to stay/return to Thunder Bay to pursue health sector careers here
- ◆ co-operative education placements could be made shorter to allow more students the opportunity to access the limited positions.
- ◆ promotion of math and sciences in high schools
- ◆ professional development for teachers and more educational resources for students
- ◆ Ontario-specific information, programming and training
- ◆ communication between business and education on programs, trends, jobs, requirements
- ◆ ensure that conversations continue between community, business and educators; bring people together to find solutions
- ◆ create a list of health speakers to speak at schools
- ◆ listen to different perspectives and work towards a new beginning
- ◆ identify best practices elsewhere and adapt them to Thunder Bay and region
- ◆ look at programs like the Early Childhood Education program in 18 First Nations Communities, delivered with computers through distance education
- ◆ increase number of spots in college/university programs
- ◆ Specialist High Skills Major in Health sector – many graduates will go directly to post-secondary in Health
- ◆ ensure that the City of Thunder Bay's Strategic Plan is aligned with these goals
- ◆ encourage more students to get their volunteer hours in health environments