

NHMA Workforce Enhancement Committee 2016-2017 Annual Report

While this has been a year of change and challenges, the committee continues its mission of funding important school programs and meeting with many key stakeholders who influence educational outcomes.

Our interaction with Bullard Havens, Platt, Eli Whitney, and Emmett O'Brien Technical High Schools remain strong and vibrant. Many of our committee members serve on at least one TTAC (Technical Trade Advisory Committee) at each school. Committee members also serve on industry advisory boards or work with program directors at Housatonic Community College, Gateway CC, Naugatuck Valley CC as well as UConn, CCCSU, SCSU, UB and Quinnipiac.

We provide financial support for Agri-Science and Technology student achievement contests and also judge at their events. -- We fund the "SUPERMAN" Award at Eli Whitney and plan to expand it the other three schools. This award is unique in that the students choose the winner who they feel best exemplifies dedication and excellence in their craft. In addition to the award, the winner receives tools for their trade worth \$250. -- We pre-judged the Underwater Robotics team at The Sound School and then prepped the students in areas that needed improvement so they were ready for the national competition. -- Committee members judged at the New Haven Science Fair and the FFA Ag Station science fair -- the East Coast Regionals held at the Big E -- and have provided financial support for the Invention Convention in Shelton (a program we would like to see expanded).

Members also participated in Career Fairs at Bullard Havens and Emmett O'Brien and shared information about careers in manufacturing here in CT. We have met several times with one of the Department of Education's consultants regarding skills and STEM issues and what changes are needed in the comprehensive high school system in order to provide more career skills and career perspectives to their students. Co-chairs Kris Lorch and Bob Klancko continue to serve on the Technical High Schools' Superintendent's Advisory Committee.

However budget cuts on the state level and the trickle down impacts to the local level have affected many workforce programs. For example the deep cuts in the Agri-Science and Technology and Technical High Schools for programs where job demand exceeds the number students who are matriculating. This situation coupled with leadership changes have added to the complexity of our tasks. We have worked with our lobbyist, Melissa Biggs to keep abreast of these issues, meet with legislators, and testify on behalf of these programs that are so critical to manufacturers and need to be expanded and not diminished. We have advocated for more budget monies to be allocated for lower grades in the education system in order to provide stronger skill sets to the high school and community college graduates.

We continue to advocate for the inclusion of "hands on" applied learning in all engineering programs. Quinnipiac has continued a spirited and fruitful dialog with us since the inception of their engineering program and their commitment to this model is evidenced in their curriculum and their investment in equipment necessary to support hands on engineering projects. At Housatonic Community College we have worked extensively with the new President, Dr. Broadie and new Director of Continuing Ed, Dr. Bonaguro on the expansion of night classes in partnership with Dave Tuttle at Platt Tech. The full time manufacturing program under Rich Dupont is expanding rapidly and members continue to mentor, provide internships and hire graduates.

Other activities include: the groundbreaking STEM Program led by Peter Dimoulas, of Career High School, and Rebekah Laudermlch, of Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School in New Haven; the new Mentoring Program that Dave Tuttle at Platt Technical High School is creating with support from our members; and last but not least, for the 5th year, Bob Klancko and Dr. Christine Broadbridge have chaired the Materials and Manufacturing Summer Teachers Institute which has been expanded to 4 days. We give special thanks to Peter Dimoulas at Career High School and Dave Tuttle and Greg AmEnde of Platt Tech as well as the member companies providing tours and speaking to the teachers about how STEM is applied in our factories. The common factor in all of these activities is the visible Workforce Committee presence.

This committee has active members with diverse backgrounds who historically rise to the needs of students and programs. New ideas and opportunities are always welcome, as are new committee members.

Kris Lorch, Maribel Morgan, Bob Klancko