

TALENT DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

The Talent Development Task Force is an innovative and practical workforce project unlike any other in Canada.

Co-chaired by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) and the Alberta Post-Secondary Network (APSN), the Task Force brings together the province's business community and top educational institutions to help "job-ready" students start careers, provide businesses with qualified workers, and contribute to a skilled Alberta workforce well into the future.

"We get students into positions quicker in their academic career and businesses benefit from getting these educated, talented individuals into their organizations," said ACC President Shauna Feth. "Relationships are being built so that ultimately, at the end of the day, we're keeping Alberta students in Alberta because they've already created these connections and we're not losing our talent to other jurisdictions."

The three-year project, now entering its third year, is a stool built on three strategic legs: business; post-secondary institutions; and government.

Funded by PrairiesCan; Alberta Jobs, Economy and Northern Development; and Mitacs, the project will help align post-secondary programming to the needs of employers. It is developing a strategy to allow employers to connect with post-secondary students across Alberta to form a mutually beneficial relationship that will not only help individual students and businesses flourish but promote economic growth province-wide.

The strategy includes scoping a provincial pilot of a "concierge" online portal set up by Calgary Economic Development and the city's seven post-secondary institutions where employers can post jobs, students can find jobs, and institutions can post their opportunities.

A cornerstone of the project is using the most up-to-date Labour Market Information that is analyzed by the Strategic Counsel, a market research firm with expertise and experience working with post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

“We’re building not just day-to-day, current-case labour market information, we’re building a labour market information system that has predictive capacity,” said Bill Werry, Executive Director of the Alberta Post-Secondary Network. “So when you start in a post-secondary program, which usually takes three to four to five years depending on what kind of program you're in, you want to know there's going to be a job for you when you get there. So, this information will inform students to help them better career decisions.”

Carolyn Campbell, Task Force co-chair and president of NorQuest College, said it is rewarding to know everyone is pulling together: “When employers know that post-secondary institutions are giving future employees the skills they need, that’s a good thing.”

Those future employees might be in a post-secondary institution now or they might still be in high school or even grade school. They might be in the workforce already, or are looking to re-enter it, and want to increase their opportunities through reskilling and micro-credentialing. It is never too early or too late to build connections between employees and employers.

Jason Leslie, Chief Operating Officer of ACC, said the project’s three-year goal is to better connect K-12 education into the process. Its 10-year goal is to ensure Alberta has “the best informed post-secondary system in North America with high quality labour market information to continually meet the needs of employers.”

With its 270,000 students, the Alberta Post-Secondary Network represents a vital pool of talent and potential. With its 22,000 members, the Alberta Chambers of Commerce represents huge job-creation across the province that is too often disconnected from opportunities of working with post-secondary institutions.

The Talent Development Task Force is determined to change that.



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