

CONVERGENCE

Northern California's only ongoing forum showcasing the issues that intersect education, workforce development and the economy

12.09.2011

CONVERGENCE VIII: HIGHER EDUCATION

Presented By:



TO ADVANCE NEXT ECONOMY, EDUCATION MUST BE TOP PRIORITY



(L-R) Moderator Martha Clark Lofgren, left, interim president and CEO of the Sacramento Metro Chamber, UC Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi, Sacramento State President Alexander Gonzalez and Los Rios Community College District Chancellor Brice Harris participate in a panel discussion at Convergence VIII. Photo courtesy of Steve McKay for Office of Public Affairs, Sacramento State

Over 300 participants attended the final Convergence program of 2011 on December 9th, which focused on the region's higher education sector.

Higher education in the Capital Region, comprised over a dozen public and private colleges and universities, is a powerful industry sector in and of itself, in addition to its core role of producing intellectual and human capital in the form of research, and a talent pool of educated and highly skilled people.

While offering degree programs that provide graduates the education and skills they need for careers in the region's highest demand fields—healthcare, engineering, clean energy technology, business/entrepreneurism, education, biotechnology—higher education leaders continue to struggle with the adverse impacts of the state's chronic budget crisis to curriculum, programs and operational budgets.

LEED Board Chairman Leroy Tripette (Intel) opened the program by announcing that LEED CEO David Butler will be participating on the steering committee for the NextEconomy initiative-- a region-wide, sector based economic development strategy managed by Valley Vision, in partnership

with the Metro Chamber, SARTA and SACTO—launched in August. Tripette credited LEED's work in initiating the discussions of high demand sectors at Convergence in helping to move the Capital Region forward

toward the development of NextEconomy. More information about NextEconomy can be found at nexteconomycapitalregion.org

LEED CEO David Butler provided attendees with a recap of the previous discussions that occurred at Convergence over the past several years. *Continued on next page*

"Higher education must be California's top priority – our state's best hope for a brighter future is by investing in education."

*Linda Katehi, Chancellor
University of California, Davis*

CONVERGENCE QUICK LINKS

Download: [CONVERGENCE VIII PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Save the date! 02.12.2012: The P-20s: Power of Employer-Education Partnerships



Continued from first page

Butler emphasized that cooperation, collaboration and strategic action among employers, civic leaders and educators, across the education spectrum and across jurisdictional boundaries, is critical to ensure that our region and our residents compete and succeed in the economy of the 21st Century. Previous Convergence programs focused on: US Competitiveness, STEM Education, Career and Technical Education, Career Academies, Regional Economies, The Third California, and Federal and State Policy. During 2010 and 2011, Convergence has showcased industry sectors critical to the economy of the Capital Region, including Healthcare and Bioscience, Clean Energy Technology, Public Service and Education, Technology and Entrepreneurism, the Capital Clusters (Legislature, Lobbying, etc.), Food, Farming and Agribusiness, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, and December's topic, Higher Education. This full recap can be found

by clicking [here](#), or visiting LEED's website at [leed.org](#).

Butler noted that LEED has responded to this information by strategically expanding its board to include regional representation of employers and education leaders, and formalizing as the Capital Area P-20 Council. As part of its 2012-14 strategic plan, the employer and education leaders at LEED will have the opportunity to establish region-wide goals for high school graduation, post secondary enrollment and post secondary degree completion, aligned with the region's economic objectives.

Convergence provided a powerful platform for three of the region's higher education leaders: UC Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi, Sacramento State President Alex Gonzalez, and Los Rios Community College District Chancellor Brice Harris. The three were asked to discuss how their institutions were poised to advance the region's economic future and discuss what civic and business leaders in the Capital Region can do to support their efforts. Martha Clark Lofgren, interim CEO of the Sacramento Metro Chamber, moderated the panel.

PANEL DISCUSSION

All three leaders, during some portion of their comments, declared that education must be the top priority for the Capital Region if the business and civic leaders are to be successful in diversifying our economy and providing economic opportunity for our residents.

Katehi: Pointing to the recent student demonstrations on the UC Davis campus, Katehi noted that the state of California is renegeing on the promise it has made to current and future college students. Budget cuts have resulted in fee increases which, when combined with reduced economic opportunity for students and their families, has created a situation in which young people are fearful of their future.

"Higher education must be California's top priority—our state's best hope for a brighter future is by investing in education."

One approach that UC Davis is taking to address this problem is through the university's "20-20 Initiative" which will leverage private funding opportunities

to enroll more California and international students at UC Davis and recruit more faculty and researchers to bring new ideas, innovation, start-ups and support more companies. "This can

provide a catalyst for economic development," said Katehi.

Gonzalez: Gonzalez emphasized that active funding is necessary to sustain and increase enrollment and academic programs. "We have to be mission-driven in higher education, and in the CSU that mission is clear: We are a regional comprehensive university. Our mission is to produce the individuals who are job ready and ready to go out into the workforce," said Gonzalez. Noting that each year, Sacramento State graduates 450 engineers, 350 accountants, and 200 nurses, and that the demand on education and healthcare will continue to increase, Gonzalez emphasized that "the region cannot expect to be competitive unless the region is creating jobs for the students who are graduating."

"Sacramento State is an economic engine – providing \$1 billion in economic impact and a \$5 return on every \$1 invested by the public."
Alexander Gonzalez, President Sacramento State University

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONVERGENCE VIII: HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education leaders UC Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi, Sacramento State President Alex Gonzalez, and Los Rios Community College District Chancellor Brice Harris emphasized the following:

- Education must be the top priority for the Capital Region if the business and civic leaders are to be successful diversifying our economy and provide economic opportunity for our residents.
- College/university and employer partnerships increase the number of graduates that are prepared for today's workforce needs. Ongoing partnerships and support are critical in continuing this momentum.
- If 2% more of Californians earned an AA degree and 1% more earned a BS, colleges and universities would generate \$3 billion more for the state's economy.

Special thanks to our sponsors!

2011 SERIES SPONSOR



EVENT SPONSORS



CONVERGENCE



Convergence VIII: Higher Education, was attended by more than 300, making it the largest attendance at LEED's Convergence series to date. Photo courtesy of Steve McKay for Office of Public Affairs, Sacramento State

Gonzalez noted that Sacramento State is an economic engine—producing a \$5 return on every dollar invested by the public. He also went on to state that if 2% more of Californians earned an AA degree and 1% more earned a bachelors degree, colleges and universities would generate \$3 billion more for California's economy.

Gonzalez also described other job creation activities driven by the university, including the \$200 million of construction projects at no taxpayer expense—due to the construction of the Rec Center and new residence halls—projects funded through student fees.

Lastly, Gonzalez emphasized the need for the university to create more partnerships with business, and learning from the businesses how the university can be a better partner in tailoring its programs to better serve the needs of employers.

Harris: Harris noted that enrollment has diminished not because demand has declined but because the colleges have cut classes from the schedule due to state budget cuts. Pointing to the economic impact of the Los Rios campuses, he noted that the Los Rios Community College District has 7,000 full and part time employees, most of whom are highly educated individuals. "As an industry, we pay a fairly high wage and attract highly educated individuals to the region," said Harris.

Harris noted several ways in which the Los Rios Community College District prepares students for the workforce: through preparation to transfer to a university; career and technical workforce preparation; and an economic development unit that provides services to large and small businesses.

Harris remarked that although higher education needs the state's economy to recover, higher education also needs to turn to the region for non-taxpayer funded support. He also expressed concern about the potential of limited access to higher education by those who are the most socioeconomically disadvantaged due to the rising costs of education and reduced course offerings.

Harris ended his remarks by stating, "The regions that have great jobs and high employment are the ones that work to strategically align education to advance their economic objectives. I believe that the Sacramento region can do that, but we have to adequately support higher education to accomplish this."

Each participant was asked to identify one growth opportunity for their respective institution. Katehi, Gonzalez and Harris each noted that enrollment growth will be their greatest opportunity. Gonzalez also added that Sacramento State is focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) to lead growth of these careers in the region.

Katehi noted that, in addition to enrollment growth, UC Davis is also looking at opportunities to enhance subsidizing the tuition of in-state students, noting that incubating start-ups and companies as partners will help with pursuing this opportunity while growing the economy. "Public and private partnerships are critical," she concluded.

Following the panel discussion, the audience was invited to ask questions of the panelists.

How does higher education need to change to provide students the skill sets they need for job opportunities?

Katehi: Students need to have different skills—ones that need to be strong to allow them to be successful in this new economy. Universities have not made the changes necessary for this change. Across the board, universities have been developed to operate on different guidelines. This will be a challenge to develop these changes internally so that we can provide our students the resources they need to be successful.

Gonzalez: We have been grappling with this for a long time. We have to build a system for the 21st century—universities were built on a premise that existed long ago. Students need to think critically, compute and communicate with each other. We have to realign what we do. Higher education has a lot of history and culture, and we are slow to change. We can do it, but we have to go to our students first to ask them how we can prepare them for the workforce, society.

SAVE THE DATES

2012 CONVERGENCE

02.24.2012: P-20s: Power of Employer-Education Partnerships

05.18.2012: How the Education Will Power the Next Economy

09.14.2012: The State of Education in California and the Capital Region

12.14.2012: Celebrate: LEED Turns 20!

7:30-11:15 am

7:30-9:30 am Program

10-11:15 am Employer/Educator Roundtable



"The regions that have... high employment are the ones that work to strategically align education to advance economic objectives... but we have to adequately support higher education to accomplish this."

**Brice Harris, Chancellor
Los Rios Community College District**

Continued from Page 3

Harris: While we are evolving our curriculum, we also need to educate our students in the basic skills. We also know that students are changing careers to change with the economy—we need to prepare our students for a flexible job market and flexible economy.

We hear about the culture of innovation, entrepreneurship—what are your institutions doing to foster this?

Katehi: We just recently announced the creation of an institution for innovation and technology, which will provide courses and practical skills for our students so that they can take to the marketplace in an effective way. We will provide seed funding for start ups. Currently, this program is available to our business students, and a minor in innovation and technology will also be offered to students pursuing degrees outside of this major.

Gonzalez: The students drive innovation—they think green, they think the future, they think innovation. They push us to think differently. Provost Sheley is evaluating all of our programs for this. If we are able to cut the number of students who take GE classes that do not have specific outcomes, that is innovative.

Harris: Innovation at Los Rios has been driven in large part by our public-public and public-private partnerships, most notably our HealthForce and GreenForce initiatives—a lot of the innovation and creativity are faculty-driven, and we support those.

EMPLOYER/EDUCATOR ROUNDTABLE

Roundtable participants discussed which remarks made by the Convergence panelists were the most enlightening to them. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Are the skills coming in the skills that are needed? [No.] Dr. Gonzalez said they've been doing the same thing for a long time [and this was just what we've been thinking].
- Our level of technology has made up expect more out of courses. Whether face-to-face, hybrid, or online, we expect much more interactivity and variety than in the past. We do not expect (or want to suffer through) 6 hours of lecture! Educators need to find new ways to design education.
- Soft skills are very important.
- Counseling and career guidance in high school was cut, so kids are not oriented. Parents and community need to tell all kids "You need higher education and training." They need to have goals and expectations for themselves, especially if they don't have family role models who can provide experience and guidance.
- Many kids haven't grown up with educated, successful role models. They don't know how to get there. They need mentorship and advocacy.
- Instructors need professional development in order to (1) teach relevance and (2) teach in a manner that actively engages their students. "How can business help?" asks Sutter Health.
- Comment that LEED is the ideal organization to help coordinate schools and business partners in a matchmaking role so that business partners are not hit up for support from too many schools at once.
- We need to focus on STEM because American schools are having trouble leading/meeting the demand.
- For student engagement: the most important thing is relevance. Teachers need to make the connection to "why this is all relevant."



LEED Board Chairman Leroy Tripette of Intel announced at the December 9th Convergence that LEED CEO David Butler will be participating on the steering committee for the NextEconomy initiative-- a region-wide, sector based economic development strategy managed by Valley Vision, in partnership with the Metro Chamber, SARTA and SACTO. Photo courtesy of Steve McKay for Office of Public Affairs, Sacramento State

- The wage/job gap: what will the emerging middle class look like? What will the "great jobs" be for our kids? How can we build bridges/connections for them?
- The high school California Partnership Academies have been very successful, but their funding may end. Project Lead the Way has been very successful, too. How can we sustain these kinds of programs if funding disappears?

LOOKING AHEAD-CONVERGENCE 2012

The 2012 Convergence Program will be focusing on:

- P-20s: Power of Employer-Education Partnerships;
- How Education will Power the Next Economy;
- The State of Education in California and the Capital Region; and
- Celebration of LEED's 20th Anniversary.

Please see the "Save the Dates" box on the previous page of this report for additional information.