

September 28, 2017

Onondaga Pathways to Careers Community of Practice - In-Person Meeting

Attendees:

Groups: DEI, Pellissippi, Nebraska, ODEP, LEAD, OCC, IEL, and SEADA

Individuals: Sheldon, Meera, Helga, Michael, Dave, Miranda, Aimee, Taryn, Janet, Rebecca, William, Mindy, Stephanie, PAM

Sheldon: Can we do a roll call so we know who's here?

Meera: Yes, we always do a roll call the beginning.

Sheldon: Excellent.

Meera: All right well I just have to check that Michael Morris has joined us as well. I think I heard him.

Helga: Hi, this is Helga.

Meera: Hi, Helga!

Michael: I'm on Meera!

Meera: Okay, Great!

Dave: Sorry, but...

Meera: Who's there?

Dave: Dave here.

Meera: Hey Dave.

Sheldon: Can we identify what entities they're representing as well Meera?

Meera: Yes. We have everybody joining us I think. We have some new folks joining us today and so as part of the roll call we definitely want the new folks to speak up. If folks can let me know that they're there, your name, and where you are calling from. I also know that there are folks who got our recent invitations and are interested in joining our group but were unable to join us today specifically. So if you have members of your team that fit that bill you have our presentation materials certainly, but we also have our website where you can go in and view and listen to archive versions of our past presentations and this one will also be posted for your colleagues.

So we'd like to do our welcome and introductions. This month, as I mentioned in the email, we don't have a specific substantive topic, you know, about an element of the Career Pathways Program. We really wanted to welcome our new members, let you know a little bit about us because you are coming into this for the first time but then really get to hear from some of you as well and then talk a little bit about an opportunity for an in-person meeting that we have because we meet virtually like this, in the past it's been every two months now we will go every month, but it really helps us to meet in person and have a much deeper dynamic conversation around some of these things, so we wanted to plan for that as well. This is Meera Adya from the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University and Michael Morris will also be facilitating this conversation.

I will move ahead to the next slide- slide three. Now in terms of advance notice I did try to note as many of the folks that I could here, but I would like to go through the roll call and get everybody to make sure we're not missing anyone. So I did hear that we had folks from Pellissippi joining us, but I'm guessing we have a whole raft of folks from Pellissippi joining us. Is that the case?

Helga: We have five people from Pellissippi joining.

Meera: Okay, great, well welcome. We're so glad to have you joining us and I believe we have someone from Gateway Technical College with us as well? Not yet, okay. We had

an RSVP so I do hope that they'll be able to join us shortly. What about Richland College? Maybe this is them? Hello, welcome to our group. Did someone just join?

Miranda: Hi Meera, this is Miranda. Sorry, I was ending up another call.

Meera: No worries. Hey Miranda. So Miranda is from the DEI TA team and is joining us as well and it sounds like Richland College may not have joined us yet as well. Do we have any other community colleges on the line today?

Miranda: And your volume is really low, I was just wondering if you could kick that up.

Meera: Yeah, I think it's a function on my phone. I apologize, I'll continue to try to talk louder. All right well I heard Helga is joining us from Kentucky VR and I know that Janet couldn't join us from Nebraska, but I think Zack might be with us?

Aimee: This is Aimee Navas with Nebraska VR, Zack couldn't join either but I am a new Career Pathways Recruiter.

Dave: Yay!

Aimee: Thank you!

Meera: And as I mentioned we have our DEI TA representative, I heard Miranda and I heard- Dave, are you WINTAC or DEI?

Dave: DEI one hundred percent!

Meera: DEI one hundred percent, great! And I think sometimes we have Doug joining us from the WINTAC but I know that they are having all day meetings this week so I think Doug might be unavailable and not with our group as well. Pause to clarify that?

Helga: Yes.

Meera: And I know we have Sheldon from ODEP and Sheldon do you have Janet and Taryn as well.

Janet: Hi Meera, this is Janet on the line.

Taryn: Hi Meera, this is Taryn on the line as well.

Meera: Hey Taryn. Great, okay, and did I miss anybody, is there anyone else with us?

Rebecca: Hi, it's Rebecca Salon from the LEAD Center.

Meera: Hi Rebecca.

William: And William Myhill here at OCC.

Meera: Hi, William.

Mindy: Hi Meera, this is Mindy Larson. Can you hear me?

Meera: Yep.

Mindy: Okay, Great.

Meera: Welcome!

Mindy: I wasn't sure if I came through over the computer. This Mindy Larson from IEL, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth.

Stephanie: Hi Meera, it's Stephanie Zumbuhl from OCC.

Meera: Hey Stephanie. Okay, last call to see if anyone else has joined us. All right, well, hopefully we will have a couple of our other new members joining us. As I mentioned, I did get the RSVP's so I was I was hoping to hear from them and if they come through then we will definitely introduce them as well.

Looking ahead to slide four. We can review our agenda. You know, as I mentioned, we wanted to just review a little bit about our group for those that were new. And Aimee, I

know you're new to our call so hopefully this will be useful for you and, you know, if any of our new community colleges join as well, but perhaps Michael, we can zip through that a little bit as we don't have new folks right now and we might just go ahead and move into our proposed new format for the Community of Practice- some of the details I mentioned- and then we can skip ahead if needed to go and talk about the in-person meeting. So with that we can move to slide five and I'll turn it over to Michael.

Michael: Thank you. Thanks Meera. Again, I appreciate the people joining: from the several states VRs, RSA funded projects, our collaborative with DEI training and TA team, and of course Rebecca joining from the LEAD Center. I think that really, probably known to all of us who have been on these calls before, is that the IOA expanded an emphasis on Career Pathways with particularly bringing into focus where the demand is for highly skilled workers in high-demand industries and that this project and the project in Tennessee funded by ODEP is all about. Can we further build, refine, and identify the key strategies that bring students with disabilities into what would be considered inclusive career pathways? And that requires diverse multiple levels of partnerships that involves not only the workforce development system, but also the community college working with local high schools and working with employers to not only to get students through their different skills training, but actually, the bottom line is to increase employment outcomes in high growth, high demand industries that engage students with disabilities and with new certifications and with new skillsets, becoming a part of inclusive workforce.

The OPC project brings together Onondaga Community College, Syracuse University, the Syracuse City School District, the public workforce system, multiple employers, and regional efforts to further advance economic development and a variety of disabilities service agencies. So I think that the purpose of the Community of Practice- if we can keep moving to, go to slide six, and then go to slide seven- that really what we're trying to do is modeling in Syracuse that can be both sustainable and scalable that aligns IEP transition planning with programs and services that support access completion and subsequent employment in multiple education and employment pathways. That requires, as I mentioned, diverse partnerships coming down into the high schools, supporting the transition planning process, and helping students not only get into the community college programs but participate in both non-credit courses as well as the courses that can lead to certification in multiple key skills areas that have been identified

by employers working with OCC, working with the workforce development system. Meera, maybe let me turn it back to you.

Meera: Thanks Michael. So are we on slide nine, is that showing? I'm sorry I'm still not in the webinar.

Michael: Yeah, we should, yeah, the OPC's Scholar's Program slide.

Meera: So slide nine and slide ten show you the two sides of Onondaga Pathways to Careers Scholars Program brochure. This is an element of their Career Pathways program that we have discussed on previous calls, but is one that appears to be, you know, when we look at it in terms of recruitment and students maturation through their pathway at OCC, a successful program that is being expanded and it has been useful to engage in conversations around it previously. So as part of the recap that we did today I wanted to make sure that we put that up there so that you had renewed access to see what some of the aspects are.

It's morphing into other elements of the program as well so that students are gaining leadership experience. They are engaging in activities like peer mentoring that are giving them other skill sets and these are hopefully the kinds of things that we would love to hear about from some of our other projects as well. What are the elements of your projects that are leading to student successes and particularly giving them the kinds of skills that are going to facilitate their employment outcomes, elements that are going to lead to successful work based learning opportunities and internships and then ultimately careers?

Moving ahead to slide eleven and then twelve we wanted to move into just a quick discussion of our focus and our goals as we move forward. As I mentioned, you know, turning over a little bit of a new leaf this year with how we approach this. So rather than meeting every two months we now hope to meet every month and we would like to lengthen our discussions from one hour to one and a half hours as many of our past meetings when we have gotten into great discussions around meaty topics related to an element of a career pathway, a particular focus, we tend to have to end abruptly on the hour and so we thought we would at least see if we could book on everyone's schedule for an hour and a half so that we could continue and wrap up our discussions well.

In terms our focus and our goals- hi there, did someone just join us?

Pam: This is Pam, I'm sorry. I'm a little late!

Meera: From the Southeast ADA center. Thanks for joining us. We're just introducing everybody so we just wanted to mention who you are and who you are with. So in terms of our focus and our goals, we believe that this can be a great opportunity for participants at different levels of implementation of career pathway programs who could all offer something to each other because we're all going to approach implementation and implementation challenges differently and we're going to benefit from hearing how we are doing that because there may be strategies that some of us haven't thought about but can either adopt wholesale or with some tweaks we can adapt them and they can work for our colleges and our programs as well.

So for those of you who would be joining us and our new, you know, completely understand that a lot of this may at first be foreign but there are things that you are doing to include students with disabilities in your programs, in your colleges, and in your pathways and we will benefit from learning more about those and we hope that we can share some of our practices and see them benefit your students as well. So we want to bring people together from a whole host of different perspectives, but the common focus, really for all of us, is we want to develop programmatic strategies that are going to increase employment outcomes for youth with disabilities, particularly in the high growth career pathways that exist in our area. So what I'm finding as I look across many of these programs is the same career pathways tend to be high growth, you know, really across a lot of different jurisdictions and workforce areas such as informational technology, advanced manufacturing, health care- these are coming up in different ways it seems the across a lot of different areas.

We would like to share the elements of our program, our retraining, and how we implement those and learn from these other programs so that we can, as I mentioned, adapt and adopt these strategies. And then we don't want to be afraid to be able to raise challenges with each other. This is not meant to be a venue where you bring only your best and your most successful strategies, we would like to discuss the challenges

that we're all going to face from time and see if we can troubleshoot those with each other. This is meant to be very practical hands on interaction.

Sheldon: Hold on a second. Whoever has background, please mute when you're not speaking.

Meera: Okay thanks Sheldon. Okay, so I think we're through sort of what our new focus was and I wanted to pause and ask if there are any questions, especially because I know we have some of our core members here, so you may have some thoughts about this so I'd love to hear back from anybody if there's any concerns or thoughts or further ideas. Alright, silence being acquiescence, we can move ahead.

Michael: Well Meera, I'm going to stop just for a second because before we move to the next slide and I'm meeting new friends, go back one slide. You know, I think it's important maybe if we can get a little bit of discussion is I know there are other efforts out there in terms of trying to define inclusive career pathway models, as we as we have on this call, funded by different federal agencies or even some of the same agencies and I guess the question is, you know, how can we add to another level knowledge translation and sort of accelerate the learning curve with- I guess the way we're looking at this is where people not only share really strong elements of the program models that they're building, but that they also discussing where they are getting stuck. And I just wonder if, you know, if there are other areas, Miranda and Dave in the DEI Career Pathway Projects, or some of the others that are on the call- is there a way to differentiate what can we try to do here that adds to the body of knowledge that's translatable in the broader work that's going on and with workforce development systems all across the country? That's, I guess, a question really and I don't know, Miranda, whether you can talk about some of the challenges you're seeing in the projects that you or Dave are working with and particularly trying to think as well about how do you sustain or replicate positive things that are also happening?

Miranda: Is Dave able to join us today? Is he on?

Dave: I most certainly am.

Miranda: Great, I'm so glad! Because I know he'll be able to speak to this quite well as well and I think this is also so much what we're hoping to be able to address as well when we all come together, when we kind of finalize our planning around the meeting to be able to bring in some folks and some examples.

And I am- we had talked about bringing New York in, potentially, next month to present as well from what they're doing, but Dave I'll go ahead and hand this over to you. I know they have been working quite a bit lately on career pathways strategies and DEI how to continue to move forward with that and learn from what's happening on the ground as well as continue to move forward and challenge ourselves to go to higher levels. So Dave if you want to take the first crack at this and I'll weigh in if I have anything else to add. He is our subject matter expert on the DEI related to career pathways and had served, for those of you who don't know, as the project leader for the Roundside California Project and he's also going to be presenting and supporting our WINTAC partners around career pathways as well and has been doing that. So he's been very engaged with all of this, so I just want to give you a little a little sell there Dave.

Dave: Thank you very much, I appreciate that. Can everybody hear me alright?

Pam: Dave, if you could speak up just a bit please?

Dave: Is that much better? Yes, okay, great thanks. Thank you, thank you Miranda, I truly appreciate it. Yes, and we have been working diligently to come up with some strategies on how to bridge exactly what Michael was talking about- the fact that there are so many communities of practice and commissions and consortiums and committees and, you know, teams that are trying to get together and tackle the same challenge of how to really create a symbiotic relationship between the different systems throughout. We all are. And, you know, ironically we are at eleven o'clock today or two o'clock Eastern time. I'm in California so I'll speak in eastern terms.

We are going to be presenting on career pathways and bringing in a model from South Carolina which is a connection between the VR and the local technical institution. And we would love for everybody on the phone to dial in if you need the information. Make sure that you give us your information beforehand so we can send that to you if you don't have it already.

So we have- we're involved in a number of different models and it seems like each group is seeking the answers and trying to figure out what's in their best interests and I know that it's important because each system does have a few different questions to answer on how to effectively create the partnerships that are going to help career pathways become much more effective. But I think that one of the things that we hear all the time is that issue of support from the state workforce development board, who is supposed to be that they have every system representative on it and making sure that they're including inclusive career pathways as being a true strategy to help move forward. So I think that that's one of the things that we've been doing recently is really just trying to take each one of these community's practices and find out who the members, what the members of that specific community practice are interested in looking at, and definitely the idea of finding out where the gaps are. Where the challenges are is the most important piece of moving forward because we can share a lot of successes and that's important, but definitely if we have similar challenges there are things that we can concentrate on going forward and trying to get some solutions to.

I don't know if that helped at all but it's definitely on everybody's radar right now is that, you know, where do we go forward with community practices and how do we bridge the gap between the systems? And we see more and more of the DEI projects making connections with community colleges, with technical career and technical education colleges, and with K-12 systems that are showing that really when they start making that connection, when the work force and VR makes a connection with those educational institutions who have the lead on most of the Career Pathways models and programs, that that's really where people start talking and that's where most of the positive outcomes come from. Anything to add Miranda?

Miranda: No, I think you did a very nice job there Dave. Nothing that wouldn't just be reinforcing things you've already said.

Michael: I just wonder and this for anyone on the call- I guess I was looking to dive deeper in terms of what I'm seeing in interactions with community colleges is their schools of education they're better at, and getting better and some of these grants funded projects, at the supports that are being provided both in the classroom and

outside the classroom to keep the students enrolled in. But the place it seems for so much improvement, and I know a major topic for the in-person meeting, is employer engagement and fighting through some of the traditional, stereotypical thinking about concerns from employers about bringing on candidates with disabilities in terms of their fears of costs, their continued concerns about insurance costs, combination costs, and other things. So I know that will be one of the areas that would be a focus of the in-person meeting, but I wonder if that for those projects that are on does that seem to be a significant challenge with particularly the movement of students into everything from internships, job shadowing, and paid positions?

Sheldon: I want to add a little bit to that. One of the statements you made just now was really deficit based, prospective of employers our employer technical assistance center and the outreach that we've done to employers seems to indicate that they are looking for quality candidates and they can't seem to find quote unquote "the pipeline". And this, I think, is where we need to get community colleges into that pipeline with qualified students and put them in front of employers. I'm not sure it's always deficit based, I'm reluctant to hire. It may be how do I find and make the connection? So I'd like to kind of add that into the discussion.

Miranda: You know I would like to add Sheldon, I think, and Michael too, these points something that we can contribute from the DEI and I know that DEI and WINTAC are going to be moving forward with business engagement discussions moving forward but, VR and the workforce really together, but we had a business engagement community, a practice with the DEI where we were able to capture a number of best practices that address exactly this. So I'll tell you I just saw Karen Quesnel, who is our project lead for our DEI project in Connecticut. They had an adult that's just now wrapping up round four project and a youth project that's just starting, that's round seven and this month, well this next month, in October they're going to be doing five diverse ability career fairs and it's very targeted to employers and it's a practice that after this they will have conducted nine of these. And it's considered the best practice in the DEI and we have presented on it and provided guidance on how to do these diverse ability career fairs, how to execute them. We've had others look to this across the country in the DEI projects to replicate this similarly. We have reverse job fair strategy out of Iowa that we've presented on and also business tours and business interviews along with the toolkit on how to do those and execute those out of our Shop the Code project and

those are all in tandem, of course, and working with and collaborating with the community college system at the front levels. It could be increased. I think there could be an increase in that role that community colleges are playing there is serving, is that funnel getting those folks there and including them in this and of the career pathways focus of it? And we were talking about that just on Friday, Karen and myself, how to increase that and potentially having her come and join us in December at this meeting we want to have.

But we have these listed out on our workforce G.P.S. It's available, these types of strategies. We could send that out, Meera, to this group who would be interested in checking out those strategies. It's typically a twenty minute presentation on how- twenty, twenty-five minute presentation from the state on the practice and then a discussion that came out of that. We're currently working to pull these into kind of one and a half pager best practice write ups that give additional resources related to these types of strategies and that's part of our DEI best practice series. So I think those are some concrete examples and I know there are many others but those are some things that come out of the DEI that could be looked to and that the purpose of that in our community of practice of business engagement has really been to share these ideas. And the beautiful piece about it is that we're hearing often from others across the DEI and workforce around the country who are replicating those strategies and it's provided a guide for them on how to engage business and with career pathways and community colleges included in that mix.

Michael: Miranda I think that's very helpful and Sheldon, I would concur that the pipeline issue is just a very significant issue. The deficit issues I think also depends on the sophistication of the employer. Lot of the work, well I won't speak for I don't know, for say related to the employer TA, but if the work's with larger employers, they're beyond these old myths about hiring people with disabilities. I think perhaps if you get in central New York or, you know, some areas in a country where you're not dealing with these giant national or even global companies, that some of those issues become still prevalent. But I would agree with you completely, is the community colleges are poised to meet that new entrance opportunity into the pipeline, absolutely.

Dave: One of the other things that we really need to look at and concentrate on is making sure that all of the systems business, their business entities, representatives, are

speaking with one another so we're not inundating businesses and organizations, corporations, business associations, with requests to speak about working with people with disabilities to. There needs to be coordination between the systems to ensure that it doesn't become another nightmare of, just you know, who's going to be calling. Which system's going to be calling today and asking the same question. We need to get on the same page in that capacity and I think that's a session that we can really have within the different systems on these communities and pathways.

Miranda: You know and to kind of draw that back because I know you weren't on this presentation and maybe not privy to this practice, but the five diverse ability career fairs that are going to be taking place in Connecticut in October, there's a demand for these and there are multiple different systems that are coming together. Our DEI project lead is in a fairly rare position among our leads, they're not always at the table the way she is. She is helping to oversee implement first, she's part of that discussion in her state, she's also been at the table with WIOA implementation which, you know, being able to connect all of these pieces has been important. She's got a lot of the different players engaged and they're providing a lot of support cohesively, very collaboratively, together to business to help them be prepared and excited to bring in folks and hire them and retain. So if they already have disabilities have the supports to do so deal to accommodate those folks. So it is having the right people at the table and being able to coordinate that, to address the kind of the nightmare that can occur that Dave was just talking about. And that takes time you know. I'll note that Karen had a round one, she's had a round four, the trapping right now she's got a round seven DEI projects because these things take longer than three plus years so her having that kind of longevity is help to establish that so she's continuing to move those things forward. And they're growing.

Michael: Okay, well before moving to the next slide I think that discussion is helpful and will play into some of the focus that can take place at the face-to-face meeting later this year.

Sheldon: Michael can I ask a question? Meera, some of the things that were just mentioned are really what we need to sell to these new community colleges in some form of communication if they haven't made it to this meeting. This is the benefit to them. What we just heard from two individuals is how much information there is there

to share and successes and best practices that they can use, so I'm thinking if we do any more outreach, and on a personal level maybe even one-on-one calls, that is the messaging that may bring them to this meeting.

Meera: Okay great.

Sheldon: Sorry Michael go ahead.

Michael: Oh, I was just going- I know the next slide, number fourteen- I don't know if they joined us. Did anyone join from Gateway Technical College or Richland College?

Meera: Jonathan or Emily do we have you with us? Well they were tentative in their ability to make it based on their schedules, they wanted to be joined to our group but they weren't sure if they would be able to make today. They were hoping to so hopefully next time.

Michael: I think let's take it to slide fifteen and talk about the in-person meeting purpose and goals.

Meera: Sure thing. So if we move ahead to the next slide, slide sixteen. You know for those who joined us previously this is a little bit of a review, but again it really is to continue to deepen our connection amongst our existing group but we also really look forward to being able to meet these new colleagues and, as I mentioned, there's some folks who weren't able to join us on today's call but did receive the materials about the in-person meeting and were interested in it. So they will be getting back to me to let me know if they can make it to that meeting and I hope they can because it will be that opportunity for us to meet some new colleagues and then move our work forward together by sharing some of these strategies. Sheldon, as you said, there's clearly so much good information, there are things happening that we can all hear more about and learn how to do in our area, so that's going to be fantastic. And as I mentioned previously, you know, as with this community of practice meeting in general, at this meeting we want to both highlight our good work cross-pollinate strategies that we know are proving effective and promising, but we also want to be able to help with the challenges that we all may be facing in implementation and those challenges will shift over time depending on the level of implementation. So the nice thing about having

folks from different levels of implementation is some of us may have crossed a bridge and be able to share while others are still in the process of figuring out how to cross that bridge.

And we may find that there are folks who are particularly suited to sharing strategies with. There may be a program that's designed to be very similar to ours and so we hope to develop these kinds of relationships that will facilitate some more cross-pollination easier so it may be that you go on to have offline meetings with one or two parties and we hope something like that can come out of this. And you know, really specifically we don't want this to be a general learning session like many conferences can be where folks go and, you know, you listen and you learn, but then you have to take it home and absorb and think about it further. What we would like is you go home and you absolutely have something in hand, a strategy, one or two, that you know you're going to implement and you have some ideas about how you're going to begin to implement it. We really want this to be meaningful for your program in a constructive way.

Michael: Meera, I want to kind of wrap around the idea of funding again, funding for the trip. The individuals that you're mentioning who could participate, who have a wealth of knowledge to share, may not be the recipients of ODEP's funding to travel to the meeting. You had expressed concern that there may be, or others have expressed concern, that there may not be sufficient funding where they may not be allowed to travel under their funding sources. So I wanted to kind of check with those individuals on the phone today, would you be able to participate if ODEP did not fund your travel? Because that's going to be critical to the go-no-go sharing information type of decision.

Meera: I know that, again we don't have Janet from Nebraska's VR, but she was reaching out, I think this week, to her funder to determine whether or not they could go, and Helga, I don't know if you would have a similar update. Both, I know Helga, you are connected to CTE programs and Nebraska has a connection and an interesting approach with the community college and was going to do outreach and see if they could attend.

Helga: I believe we did get approval from R.S.A. to travel to your event and we have identified within our own group, we haven't reached out, but we've identified who we would ask from the community college to attend.

Meera: Excellent.

Helga: Yeah, so good news. I think, you know, I think that all four grants, if they can identify where on their budget they have permission to, for the grant staff person to travel and then I guess we were looking at perhaps sending that community college individual through you all.

Sheldon: Dave, would you be able to attend as a subject matter expert?

Dave: I think I'm actually having a haircut that day, but sorry. No, just kidding.

Miranda: He's being funny! We've both been approved. This is Miranda and Dave from the DEI side.

Sheldon: ODEP will offer to provide haircuts on site.

Miranda: That's good to know Sheldon because I was about to schedule one I'll hold off.

Sheldon: Given our expertise in hair cutting, at least I can speak for myself, I think you'd best get your hair cut before the conference.

Dave: Sheldon I'm going to hold you to that.

Sheldon: You know, clippers... I have almost a shaved head, I'm really good at that. So bear that in mind. If you can attend-

Dave: I can.

Sheldon: Knowledge experts, that's really critical for us to have you there in addition to the community colleges. I wanted to make sure that what you're sharing today would be something you'd be able to attend and share.

Dave: And remember it's the fact that it's just a different lens, it's a different angle, and a different view, and that's what's the most important because I'm as much of a knowledge expert as the information that I've been gleaning for the last two years. But I'm really excited about the opportunity, getting in the room with education, that's always been my goal is to really have that robust conversation with education folks and really make a connection.

Miranda: So I'm going to go ahead and call out Dave on being humble here which that's because he's actually learned a great deal. I hope we all have as we're living in all of this. I think he has a great deal to offer and I'm glad that he's able to join it and myself as well. One other thing we had talked about in the past was our capacity to bring in other DEI folks; invite others and their community college partners that they're working with and their VR system so workforce be our community colleges and bring in some of these other examples that we can certainly help to convey, but it's always powerful to have been actually in the room right instead of their TA providers or only their TA providers. So when we looked into that it did look like the feedback we got was that our DEI projects don't have funding in their budgets for travel outside their state. So I'm not sure if that might be something if there were any additional funds and we wanted to highlight a couple of folks who were really leading the charge and being quite innovative. Some of these practices that Dave and I just referenced, if we can bring any of those folks, and I'm just throwing it out there, no one has heard about any of this so they won't be disappointed if they don't come. But it may be something to think about if there was additional funds from ODEP to support bringing in some of those other folks. Just a thought.

Sheldon: In addition, our workforce recruitment program sponsored by ODEP has provided Meera with a list of community colleges that currently participate in the interview process for their students. Some of these may be in states where you also have other representation. So Meera, you might be able to share those with the states if they can identify which schools and then they may be able to make a link that they had not otherwise been able to make.

Meera: Sure, will do. Miranda do you think that the New York DEI would be able to come because they're local or close?

Miranda: Right. I will- they have been attending a number of conferences lately so I haven't been able to follow up with those since we realized we might be limited to just the New York DEI project attending. But I could definitely- we'll explore that with them and see what the timing is. Do we have a confirmed date for this now?

Meera: Yes, it's the sixth and the seventh.

Miranda: The sixth and the seventh, okay. Alright that's helpful to know. And it's taking place in Syracuse.

Dave: In December?

Meera: Yes.

Janet: Yeah Meera, this is Janet. I'm wondering because it seems like it's taking even those colleges that we're reaching out to, like we reached out to Richland and Gateway, it's taking them a while to get on board with the COP, whether or not December feels soon for people. I hear all these great connections and networks people are building and it feels like it's going to take more time to build them. I just wanted to get a sense of timing from people.

Miranda: I was wondering if, since I believe the focus of the meeting that we were talking about with partnerships, if it might be great, depending on what it is we're trying to do with this meeting time, that I know we've gotten feedback from LEAD Center and WINTAC and DEI as well, if we are going to include a couple of other folks, if those partnerships- if that is the focus if that's not the focus- that changes things but it might be timely to do that early. And Meera, I don't know if you want to elaborate on that or if you have pursued that, I'm not sure if that was followed up on.

Meera: I'm sorry Miranda, could you repeat that?

Miranda: Kind of our initial agenda we had talked about covering all six key elements and having people present and then we had talked about maybe we need to, if we're bringing in partners from workforce VR and community college systems together, maybe we focus on those key elements that would, where the combined Career

Pathways, where the collaboration really makes sense to share, where they can learn from each other instead of all the key elements.

Meera: Right, if we could move ahead to slide eighteen just so others have that in front of them and can see what we're talking about. Yes, in our last call we had noted the six elements that are key to the Department of Labor's Career Pathways Toolkit and you'll see them listed there at the top of the slide. I have highlighted the first two because we thought it may make more sense to focus on just a couple and go really deep into those and so to your point Miranda, that's built cross-agency partnerships and identified industry sector and engage employers which I think we also talked about today and are important things. These elements felt relevant and timely and important especially given all of our employment goals, but I left the remaining there because I wanted to bring it up for discussion with this group and see if this made sense to others as well.

Miranda: Well in response to the earlier person who was speaking about the timing for that, that was if we focused on those key elements would that make more sense in terms of having it in December, to be able to build off of that energy and connect with other folks and deal with these so that networking and problem solving cross-systems or would it still feel too early?

Meera: That was Janet that was suggesting we could maybe adjust. Janet is also from ODEP.

Janet: I think my comment was more that the partnerships coming in would need to be readied to participate in the conversation and we are now into October, just about to have another call, and then it is this meeting, and my feeling being that we want to provide time for the preparation for this meeting as well as to have the structure for the meeting itself. I think that one of the challenges is that we have this process called community of practice where things are being shared and we want to meet so we are still sort of settling on the meeting about what and how and I think it's important to answer that what and how and then practice out of that what and how a little bit in terms of what we want the practices to emerge to be, if that makes any sense, in order to have the most productive meeting face-to-face. I thin- I don't know about- I guess I too want to get to hear from the community colleges who are on here both from Onondaga and Pellissippi, who are our grantees, about what would benefit them from

their perspective of this meeting and how this meeting can best meet their needs as they're expanding and enhancing their program goals. So William and then Vera if you have any comments as well I would love to hear your perspective.

Pellissippi: Well this is Pellissippi, I mean for us, we weren't sure what this meeting was actually going to be about. For us our problems all extend with working with the students. We've been pretty successful with the businesses and engaging them, we have traveled with partnerships with some state agencies here, but that's because they're in chaos right now. But our problems, what we're working on, is motivating the students to see the need to work, to see the need for internships, to see the need for going out and getting a job and leaving their parent's home. They don't want to do that so that is our biggest struggle honestly. That if anybody has strategies on those, it's not going to be engaging employers, they're willing to take the students and the students don't want to go, and the parents don't make them go when they're involved. The parents seem perfectly happy to say, "Oh well they couldn't do it so they can come back to live in my basement and play video games the rest of their lives." So I mean, as far as the meeting itself, that's not a great time for us. It's the last two weeks of school and we have- that's when all the students basically flood in because they all wait until the last minute to do stuff. So we might be able to send one or two people up but that would be the max of the staff because we go out on break on the fifteenth of December. I mean just sort of logistically. But you know that's the kind of stuff we we'd be interested in hearing about strategies for motivating students.

Dave: This is Dave and I think that we were- I've heard it mentioned a number of times, I know that Meera was talking about it with the Onondoga program or grant is definitely the peer mentoring piece, getting that rolling. And I know that what's happened in South Dakota, I know that Miranda had mentioned it earlier, is they are working with one of the local community technical education schools- a similar process of putting together career success coaches and having people who are introduced to the students as they come into the school. And what may be difficult in a community college where there are three thousand, four thousand students, but definitely when you're working in a disabled student services general population program, it might be more doable to make that connection and have some student success coaches who really are connected with both the student and the instructors and can become a part of their support system.

Pellissippi: Well our program we have academic coaches and career coaches and career specialists so they've got three people that help them as part of our program so it's not that they don't have people that follow them through from the two weeks before school starts and we do an academy for them until the day they leave they've got people there giving them support doing what we call guided nagging. You know and so they have a lot of point services it's getting them to realize that the ultimate goal of them going to school for us at a two year college is a job. We have a lot of students who graduate and then decide they want to come back and get another degree because they don't want to go get a job.

Dave: Do all three of those coaches work in the same department?

Pellissippi: Yes, we're all part of the UPEP program, we work through ODEP and so yes, they're all part of the Universal Pathway to Employment Project. They all talk to each other, they all work together.

It's an integrated program where they come in and work with the career specialist to kind of oversee everything, and then they have academic coaches and they work a little bit in the front end with career coaches in terms of determining which degree they want to get, and then academic coaches getting through that first year, and then they have intense workshop experiences and all kinds of other experiences that they can take part of. And all to lead them to how to act appropriately at work, how to do a resume, how to go through and do an interview, how to do disclosure, I mean, they are helped all the way through the process. But unfortunately, they seem to be, I mean to me, it seems to be the biggest issue is that they come from a system where they never had homework or nobody's ever expected anything out of them at all and they come to college and all of a sudden someone expects something out of them and they don't like it. And so we push them through and get everything going and help them, but then they're like, "Oh well, you know, I don't want to do WRP because I might have go to an internship in the summer and this is the last summer I have off," or "I think now I might want to get a different degree or I want a four year degree." So it's how do you overcome those attitudes? It's quite frustrating to say when I've got all these wonderful interventions and they come up at the end and they have little or no interest to getting a job or they have a job that is underpaid employment. They're working at Pepsi delivering drinks on the

Pepsi truck or they're working at the local pizza area and they've got a degree that's going to pay them more and they're talented and they're marketable, but they just don't want to be bothered with the job search and they're comfortable where they are so they don't look for more. So I would really like to find out what people's ideas are on how do you change or influence a student to want more from themselves? And particularly, they want parents to think that their student actually can do more.

Dave: And that may never happen. That may be a futile attempt, but that's okay. Obviously the ultimate outcome would be that we could bring the family in and have them participate and then see that they can also have a life beyond their wildest dreams too. But definitely speaking of the student, I mean, the possibility and some of the practices are working with around discovery and one of the things that's happened in Idaho recently is they've been using something called the Core Gift Assessment which is really going to the root of somebody finding out what their one true gift is and trying to not concentrate on the whole entire population being a problem, but looking at each individual student and slowing down and really spending time with that student to show them that they really have something to offer the world because that's something that they've never heard before. So, I mean, and it's a matter of just going through and trying to find something that your team believes in. And going to that direction of trying to change that frustration into something that really can become real positive. And it's not going to work for everybody, we know that. We're not trying to help the world, we're trying to help as many people as are willing to do the work because we can't do it for them.

Pellissippi: So what is this Core Gift Assessment?

Dave: I will send it to Meera, some information, and she will be able to send it out.

Pellissippi: Okay, we'll have to look at it because there's a point where there's only so many interventions you can do and we do them all. But you've got to change a person's perspective of what they expect of themselves.

Dave: And what they're what they're capable of.

Pellissippi: Right.

Dave: A lot of times that's what it is.

William: So I've lost track of the question and would appreciate sort of a refresher.

Janet: Sure William, this is Janet. I think the question with two-part: one was to the community college career pathways what would you like to get out of a convening and also to touch on timing and availability.

William: Well touching on the last issue first, OCC has gone to a lot of trouble to find space and make space available and put arrangements in place for the current meeting. No small feat. I think when it comes to the content of this I see this in a couple of different ways. There is this broader sense of how different minds with different experiences, with some real concentrated time, can generate some new ideas and new things to work on and I will go back to our example. Here in our very first summer transition planning meetings where we did trainings for our local city school district on transition planning, and what directly came from that was articulated that strong need for a bridge program for students with disabilities into college which belongs what has become the Scholars Program which is now a rapidly growing and very successful program for preparing young people who not only have disabilities but who come from pretty marginalized backgrounds in other respects for the college experience and bringing them into the program.

So I see with things like that tremendous benefit from having this kind of concentrated time that we don't get to have on one hour call every month or every couple months. We are not without challenges and struggles on this project here. We probably have had, in the past, greater challenges with engaging employers than Pellissippi has had. I think we would- we have the expertise when it comes to preparing the young people for the workforce, but I think we also deal with an element of... I'm not sure what it is. It may be that they are eighteen and really are still struggling with where they want to go with things, but just getting them, at times, engaged in the many good services we have to offer them the co-exploration where they can really explore further those types of opportunities and then actually keeping appointments with our staff who are developing action plans and developing individualized plans and setting up various opportunities for students. I think those are challenges for us and I'm sure we're not the

only ones to have them, but I suspect that out among the people who can get together on these calls with all of our common concerns for trying to raise the opportunities for this population that there are other ideas out there, that with some concentrated thought on this we could come up with some new approaches to build on the things that we're doing.

Janet: Okay. And I think coming up with the new approaches is an important part and an important issue. I know here and we're really trying to figure out the critical mass issue around this meeting because it's unclear what or who's coming and how it's coming together. So the feedback that everyone is offering is very helpful to that process.

And it is really useful to hear the range of topics and issues that are salient for the program, some special interest community college programs because up through the grant funding that's who the grant can fund. That's why you hear Sheldon pushing in with those questions as well as myself pushing in for more clarification around those issues. Okay so with that, I know that was an aside to your agenda Meera, but I thought it was important to hear from both of the community colleges. Thank you.

Meera: Nope, no problem. Thank you. That was right on point with where we were, actually, in terms of saying here's our list of topics that are possibilities and wondering which worked for the groups. So I appreciate you pulling for that feedback and thank you to Pellissippi and Onondoga for sharing their thoughts. Helga, I don't know if you have thought about which of those elements to be important for the work that you're doing as well and your partners.

Pam: This is Pam, Helga had to leave for an appointment. She put a comment in the chat area.

Meera: Oh thank you. So somehow on the webinar I missed that. Okay, well I'll solicit feedback separately and also I can certainly circle back around with Nebraska because I don't want to put Aimee on the spot too much. I know you're new to our group, but from your perspective, Aimee, do you have any thoughts given what you see?

Aimee: Like you said, I'm pretty new. I'm sorry, I don't have much to contribute.

Meera: No problem. I'll circle back to you and to Janet and Zack who have joined us several times before and I know Janet had some ideas, she was reaching out to her community college partner. They seem to have a very interesting approach. Nebraska, as we've discussed before, they are actually going back to their pool closed cases, successfully closed cases- so individuals who are already employed but could maybe move up with some further retraining and then they could backfill in that way they are actually pushing people along the career pathway. And they are working with the community college specifically when they find out, okay, so what other retraining needs, that the employers are articulating and that their clients are articulating, would be useful for that? So it is targeting those high growth career pathways but in a much more individualized way which I think is an interesting strategy that would be good for us to hear about.

I think I heard a little ping on our line and I just wanted to touch base one more time and see if the ping I heard was anybody new joining our group. Okay it could have been someone dropping on and dropping off. I also wanted to turn to Pam who has joined us from the Southeast ADA Center. Pam has been working with the Georgia Career Pathways Program and they have taken a couple different approaches. But touching a little bit around what Pellissippi was saying, one of the things that has been developing are a set of modules, learning modules, to teach students some skills that may support them. Again, thinking about where they are going and what they can do and how they can advocate for themselves. So Pam I'll turn to you and maybe you could share a little bit more to see if that would be something useful.

Pam: Hey everyone this is Pam Williamson with the Southeast ADA Center and Meera mentioned, we've been working collaboratively with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and our part of their career pathways grant was to develop a module- a modularized curriculum focused on youth and students with young people and young adults with disabilities and the target audience would be the age fourteen to twenty-four under WEOVA. And what we have done to this point is that we have eight modules focusing on anything from just a rope-out on pathways to careers, disclosure, ADA in the workplace, ADA in higher ed., learning to self-advocate with the ADA, the soft skills for successful employment, talking about ADA and racial accommodations, and looking at ADA in the community. What we've done is developed facilitator manuals for each module along with a student handbook, a PowerPoint, many PowerPoint

handouts, there are also anywhere from three to eight interactive exercises in these modules that are designed to reinforce all the points that are in the various modules. The modules can be used either in a one-time setting or the module can be broken up over multiple sessions.

It is truly a way to help, it's another tool to help those of you that are working with young people to be able to get that, trying to get that buy in. And I've noticed that Matthew Ramsey is with us and he is a young person working with us and a fellowship at BBI; prior to that he was an intern in our office here in Atlanta and he has reviewed this curriculum with us because we really truly wanted to get a young person's perspective. And we also did this with, as a part of, we had five focus groups that led up to the development of this and we had input from students, parents, teachers, and other education personnel as well as VR staff. It is and right now it's in a place where it could continue to grow to meet the needs that you may have and one of the things that in our vision would be to add some of those parent modules. With those, as we all know, if you don't get parents buy in and you may not get students buy in. And so it's really, like you said, another tool, something would be more than happy to share with you if that would be of interest to you and something that we can look at, how do we expand this to meet your needs? So Meera I'll turn it back to you.

Meera: Thanks Pam. Okay, well moving forward to that slide. Beyond just the topic of what we were thinking about, again, we're short presentations to the group. Again, this isn't meant to be like a conference where you develop a super long presentation but rather a short one because a vast majority of the time what we would like to do is really engage in a discussion and this is the case where you had to struggle through trying to identify how best to put it together to be useful for this meeting. This is something that certainly those of us who are interested in bringing you to the table will be helping you myself and others in thinking through; just talk to us about what it is that you're doing and what you're really proud of and where you're having difficulties and we'll work with you to craft that into something that brings to the table a discussion of strategies and practices and how they have impacts and how they can be adapted.

Again, it would be nice to see that those are some challenges as well as some promising practices and then what we hope is that we would engage with the group in conversations around that. When you're bringing up challenges, what solutions are

there? When you're bringing up promising practices, how do they fit into the rest of our programs? Because it's great to share that practice but you stretch it a certain way that's helping to work, so when we think about our other programs at the table, how might it need to be restructured? How would it work in their local area? That's something that we can all talk and think through and then ultimately this is something that we'll all be facing. We are all funded projects that will be coming to the table and we need to think about sustainability beyond initial funding periods. How do we continue to sustain not just the larger programs but the individual strategies that we've been developing so that we continue to forge through the individual level and systems level outcomes that we want to see happen?

So given that that is something we want to do, we want to have time to work through this with you, I think that circles back around to, Janet, your point about whether this might feel a little bit early. And I think we can see that in the fact that we had several of the folks that we did outreach to, come forward and say, "Yes I'd like to learn more and like to try to join this group but this call it was coming out to soon to get on their calendar and that will really only leave us one month to be able to connect with them. So maybe offline what I can do is send around a message in here for everyone if it does make sense to consider pushing the dates around. It sounded like that may be useful for Pellissippi, I know for OCC they're going to have a similar semester based issue facing them. Helga would that present difficulty for you if we were to shift the dates? Oh Helga left, I'm sorry, I'll have to circle back around with Helga after this meeting.

So how about that I will take this offline and I will discuss with ODEP and I will discuss it with all of you and we will see if that might be something that we want to consider pursuing. And Sheldon our next slides really are about the opportunity for funding. You know, as we've mentioned previously and so I think you and Janet have already covered this, we do have some limited travel funding that's available for community colleges so we're just looking to hear back from you and your partners and programs you might know of if they have a community college partner they can bring to the table, certainly that partner could express an interest in the meeting and we would solicit an application for them for funding and then work with ODEP to see just how many folks we can bring. If you don't have any materials related to this and you need them, let me know and I will definitely get them to you right away.

Sheldon: Meera, one of the nice things is coming out of this discussion are ways to make even the monthly call more meaningful to more people. So the points that we're talking about, although we're eager to discuss them in December, for those who are still on that curve moving up to that we have some concrete things to make this an even more robust community of practice

Meera: That's right and that was part of our goal was regenerating our membership so that's correct.

Dave: Well guys, I hate to leave on such an awesome note but I need to get ready for our community of practice on the other end with the VR. Have a wonderful day everybody.

Meera: Sounds good. Thank you, Dave, for joining us. I do see us approaching the end of our hour and a half. I think our next set of slides are really just to generate some ideas from other folks and we certainly talked around those so what I will do is rather just open it up to any further discussion, any other thoughts that anyone wanted to reflect?

Sheldon: If we could send the slides around for those of us on the phone who are having problems. Unfortunately, some of us are not authorized to use Blackboard and so they'd been taken off of some computers so if you could send those slides Meera that would really be helpful.

Meera: Sure, we'll push the slides out on the listserv. Celestia sent a reminder email this morning and there is a link to the slides as handouts not as a PowerPoint deck, but as a handout. So that can be immediately available to you but I will also ask Celestia and Thao, who are on our line, if they would send out the actual PowerPoint deck for folks. Well then I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today. Please do stay in touch with me about any additional ideas you might have, any questions that I can answer in between, and tell all your friends about it. We look forward to having even more folks join us. Take care everyone.