

Future of Work Task Force

Meeting 3 Minutes

November 30, 2021

Elgin Community College

- I. Call to order. Meeting is called to order at 10:21 am by Senator Don DeWitte.

- II. Roll Call
Senator DeWitte requests to call the roll. The following task force members were present:
Senator Cristina Castro
Representative Ryan Spain
Andrea Kluger
Tyler Diers
Clark Kaericher
Sean Stott
Magda Derisma
Alec Laird
Sarah Hartwick
Colleen Daley
Dalene Bramer
Julian Federle
Erica Bland
Juan Salgado
Mike Ciaccio
Director Michael Kleinik
Director Kristin Richards
Acting Director Sylvia Garcia
Marci Johnson on behalf of Superintendent Carmen Ayala
Haeyoung Yoon on behalf of Ai-Jen Poo

- III. Approval of minutes from October 25 meeting
Senator Cristina Castro moves to approve the minutes. Seconded by Senator Villivalam.

- IV. Approval of Agenda
Tyler Diers moves to approve the agenda. Seconded by Senator Villivalam.

- V. Welcoming remarks from task force co-chair Senator Don DeWitte. He noted that there will be opportunity to hear several presentations and discuss related issues in a small group session.

- VI. Welcoming remarks from Elgin Community College President David Sam

- VII. Senator DeWitte introduced first presenter, Darrell West of the Brookings Institute.
 - COVID has accelerated on-going change in the workforce – notably increases in automation and an increase in the employee mobility across careers and employers.

This implies the need for a revised social contract around worker benefits and adult skills training.

- Automation has both advantages and disadvantages for workers. It can reduce health/injury risks and the drudgery of repeatable tasks. However, automation may also leave some people behind and increase inequality across skill levels and geography, undermining social cohesion.
- Suggested priorities for a new social contract:
 - Facilitation of portable benefits -- This will help to accommodate job “churn” without leaving gaps in health/pension coverage, etc.
 - Facilitation of life-long learning – Continuing education will continue to grow in importance, and the existing frameworks are not adequate at providing (or paying for) skills training for adults
- The good news is that the changes needed are not as dramatic as the ones required to adjust from an agrarian to industrial society 100 years ago. But we need to test new ideas and new strategies for service delivery – and rigorously evaluate results.

VIII. Senator DeWitte introduced the second presenters, Aaron Rieke and Natasha Duarte of Upturn

- This presentation discussed how web-based tools, including those using AI, are used to facilitate hiring decisions and reviewed findings from a study of hiring practices of large retail operation in the Washington, DC, area.
- These HR tools encompass the full range of the hiring process, including Sourcing, Screening, Interviewing, and Selecting prospective employees. While the hiring apps on the market are rarely (if ever) used to actually make final hiring decisions, they do serve to screen out candidates that do not fit preferred profiles.
- These tools have the potential to streamline hiring, reduce costs, and improve hiring results. However, the risks are largely unknown and may include perpetuating systemic bias.
- Skills-oriented test and questions are generally straightforward and easily justified. The benefits of personality testing, pay preference, etc. are more dubious. Additional specific concerns include:
 - Screening on “availability” can exclude applicant inappropriately
 - Background checks may be discriminatory
 - Little legal protection for applicants
 - Unclear how applicants with disabilities are protected
- Policy recommendation include:
 - Regulators must be proactive to address abuses, since applicants lack sufficient information to know if they have been discriminated against
 - Hiring applications should focus on skills needed for the job
 - Applicant should have access to more information on how their personal data will be used.

Task force members briefly discussed the implications of the presentation, including how applicant privacy is and should be protected, and what measures have already been put in place by the state to provide those protections.

IX. Task Force Member Discussion

Task force members separated into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- With technological innovations appearing across all industries, what protections are necessary for workers to maintain their autonomy, dignity, and well-being?
- How can businesses leverage emerging technologies to increase productivity and employee well-being?
- What are creative ways for businesses to use emerging technology to adopt high-road employment strategies?
- How can the government facilitate business and employee needs to build a strong and resilient economy with emerging technologies?

X. Julian Federle introduced the third presenter, Kate Gebo of United Airlines

- COVID imposed extreme conditions on the airline industry and its workers – including rapid swings in operation levels.
- Lessons learned by the company during COVID included:
 - Good labor relations are critical, especially during turbulent times
 - Company agility is critical
 - The PPP program was enormously helpful in keeping workers on the payroll
 - These attributes and resources helped the company navigate its vaccination policy implementation, among other challenges.
- UA has many long-term employees, and is focused on using partnerships to develop workforce skills and improve diversity. Examples include:
 - Academy for pilots
 - Aircraft maintenance effort at Rock Valley Community College

XI. Clark Kaericher introduced the final presenter, Nicole Overley of Deloitte.

- Change in the workplace is nothing new, though the pace of change has accelerated dramatically in the COVID era.
- The last couple years have shown that remote work works – at least for knowledge workers.
- Automation can serve to cut back on workplace drudgery.
- Some populations may be left behind, and burnout is a legitimate concern.
- Effective broadband infrastructure is a necessity.
- What to expect in the future
 - Roaring economy with more work than workers. Employers will need to pay attention to worker preferences
 - Jobs and skills will evolve, with a greater emphasis on technology. Soft skills, however, will remain important. Companies need to make work, the workplace & workforce coherent.
- Companies and policy makers need to take time to understand what future jobs and workers will look like.

Task force members had an ensuing discussion following these presentations. Presenters mentioned the importance of government funding for apprenticeships or similar programs so that trainees can receive a wage while they're training, and partnerships between public

and private sector on Rapid Upskilling or Reskilling. Also discussed that preferences for remote work vary within demographic groups, so not helpful for employers to make assumptions about those preferences based on demographics.

- XII. Senator DeWitte adjourned the meeting at 1:22 pm, noting that the next meeting will be held in December. The meeting will be remote, and Andy Manar of the Governor's Office will be a guest.