The inaugural meeting of the Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion was convened by the chair of the Task Force, Secretary of Labor R. Alexander Acosta, on November 13, 2017. The meeting was held from 3-5 p.m. at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C.

The following Task Force Members participated in the meeting:

- Chair – Secretary R. Alexander Acosta, U.S. Department of Labor
- Vice-Chair – Secretary Betsy DeVos, U.S. Department of Education
- Vice-Chair – Secretary Wilbur Ross, U.S. Department of Commerce
- Michael Bellaman, President and CEO, Associated Builders and Contractors
- Joshua Bolten, President and CEO, Business Roundtable
- *Neil Bradley, representing Thomas J. Donohue, President and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO, American Association of Community Colleges
- Wesley G. Bush, Chairman, CEO, and President, Northrop Grumman Corporation
- The Honorable Dennis Daugaard, Governor of South Dakota
- Emily DeRocco, CEO, E3 Engage Educate Employ
- Cari M. Dominguez, Principal, Dominguez & Associates
- Montez King, Executive Director, National Institute for Metalworking Skills
- Andrew Liveris, President, Chairman, and CEO, The Dow Chemical Company
- *Ronald Marlow, representing Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League
- Douglas McCarron, General President, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
- Sean McGarvey, President, North America’s Building Trades Unions
- John Dezsö Ratzenberger, Actor, Entrepreneur, and Workforce Development Advocate
- The Honorable Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa
- Mark B. Rosenberg, Board of Directors, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
- Joseph Sellers, General President, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers
- Dawn Sweeney, President and CEO, National Restaurant Association
- Jay Timmons, President and CEO, National Association of Manufacturers
- *Shelly Weir, representing Katherine Lugar, President and CEO, American Hotel & Lodging Association

*Task Force Member's Designee

Task Force Member's Guests

- William Erwin, Guest of Douglas McCarron
• Brenezza DaParre Garcia, Guest of Mark Rosenberg
• Rob Gifford, Guest of Dawn Sweeney
• Carrie Houtman, Guest of Andrew Liveris
• Carolyn Lee, Guest of Jay Timmons
• Dane Linn, Guest of Joshua Bolten
• Michael Monroe, Guest of Sean McGarvey
• Denise Peppard, Guest of Wesley Bush
• Catherine Ross, Guest of Montez King
• Drew Schneider, Guest of Michael Bellaman
• Jennifer Worth, Guest of Walter Bumphus

Government Officials and Federal Staff

• Ivanka Trump, Senior Advisor to the President
• Kara McKee, White House, Domestic Policy Council
• Paul Ray, Counselor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
• Rosemary Lahasky, Deputy Assistant Secretary Employment and Training Administration and Task Force Designated Federal Officer (DFO), U.S. Department of Labor
• Ondray Harris, Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
• Diane Jones, Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
• John Ladd, Administrator, Office of Apprenticeship, U.S. Department of Labor
• David Langdon, Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of Commerce
• Ebony Lee, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, U.S. Department of Education
**Introductory Remarks/Responsibilities of the Task Force**

R. Alexander Acosta, Secretary of Labor, welcomed and thanked the Task Force members on behalf of the Administration, describing the work of the Task Force as incredibly important in transforming workforce education in America.

Secretary Acosta introduced Rosemary Lahasky, Deputy Assistant Secretary Employment and Training Administration and Task Force Designated Federal Officer (DFO), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), who stated the Task Force will consider testimony, reports, research, evidence, and existing practices on apprenticeship to develop recommendations for inclusion in the final report to the President. Ms. Lahasky stated that members had completed an ethics briefing prior to the commencement of the Task Force meeting and that deliberations would be part of the public record. Secretary Acosta reinforced the importance to the Administration of workforce education as critical to job creation. He also observed the need to develop workforce skills demanded by business.

Secretary Acosta emphasized the President’s priority with respect to labor is “job creation, more job creation, and even more job creation.” He described the country’s skills gap—which contributes to the 6.1 million open jobs. He told the group that labor ministers from G20 nations all share the same concern, so solving the skills gap will give the United States a competitive advantage globally.

Secretary Acosta then introduced Task Force Vice-Chair Betsy DeVos, Secretary of Education, who thanked her fellow Secretaries and Task Force members. Secretary DeVos reinforced that workforce training and apprenticeship are very important to the President and this Administration. She stated that we need a change of mindset on higher education and to stop forcing kids into believing a traditional four-year degree is the only viable pathway to success. Secretary DeVos emphasized treating students as individuals and the importance of having multiple apprenticeship models. She noted that apprenticeship’s “earn and learn” approach removes barriers for students who have to choose between education and earning income to pay the bills and that furtheing education and preparing students for workforce opportunities should be a “both/and” and not an “either/or.” Secretary DeVos stated that the federal government will not solve this problem but that the federal government can use the bully pulpit and funding programs such as Perkins loans, with real substantial change coming from the private sector. Secretary DeVos encouraged Task Force members to be active innovators to help unleash American potential. That might mean, she said, the government getting out of the way of the private sector in a number of areas.

Secretary DeVos mentioned that she visited Florida International University (FIU) with FIU President and Task Force member Mark Rosenberg, noting that FIU has put together many great partnerships with local industry partners and allied organizations. Secretary DeVos noted that FIU partnerships would be a good model to consider nationally. She stated that solutions are likely to be regional in nature, and that there will be no one-size-fits-all solutions. She also relayed a recent conversation with the Israeli Ambassador to the United States who asked why the U.S. education bubble has not burst and suggested that a cohort of large businesses might
collaborate to create their own solutions. Secretary DeVos shared this comment with the Task Force as it works to shape solutions and opportunities for the future of the workforce for young people.

Task Force Vice-Chair Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce, welcomed the group and commended Secretaries Acosta and DeVos and Senior Advisor Ivanka Trump for their leadership in building the workforce of the future. Secretary Ross applauded the DOL for bringing the Task Force together. Secretary Ross said the Task Force is here to figure out how to expand and improve apprenticeship programs, especially programs that provide training while allowing students to earn while they learn. He said that outside of the skilled trades, apprenticeships remain “niche programs,” but they are potentially broad-based and an ideal solution for companies seeking ways to address specific skill shortages. Today’s 6.1 million job openings, he said, would be easier to fill if the benefits of apprenticeship were more widely known. Secretary Ross noted that it is especially hard for small companies – more than 52 percent of small businesses cannot find qualified job applicants, according to an October 2017 report of the National Federation of Independent Business. While Secretary Ross praised the innovative models found in Germany and Switzerland, he stated that the challenge in the United States will be to figure out how to roll apprenticeship out on a larger scale. He asked what the proper delivery mechanisms are for apprenticeships and what is the right way to certify that graduates of apprenticeship programs have the necessary skills. Secretary Ross noted that states and governors will play a key role, and acknowledged Governor Reynolds of Iowa and Governor Daugaard of South Dakota, who are bringing innovative programs to their states in the form of public-private partnerships. As Secretary of Commerce, he hopes to break down barriers to states, municipalities, and private sector firms and unions in creating, managing, and certifying apprenticeship programs. Secretary Ross concluded his remarks by saying if we work together and continue to grow our partnerships, we can make this problem of expanding and improving apprenticeship programs a thing of the past.

Ivanka Trump, Senior Advisor to the President, thanked the Secretaries for their leadership and stated that the Task Force’s work is incredibly important. Ms. Trump thanked the members for their commitment to helping find innovative ways for Americans to prepare young people for the jobs of the future and access job training programs so they can earn while they learn and provide for their families, and master skills to succeed in the 21st century economy. She recognized the ingenuity and leadership of the private sector in bringing ideas to fruition. She noted that the Executive Order addresses a few major problems that exist in the U.S. economy today: (1) the growing skills gap – over six million open jobs, among the highest level on record, due in part to the skills gap, especially in the technology field; and (2) the student loan crisis, with the average student graduating last year with $37,000 in debt, and total student loan debt climbing to more than $1.3 trillion. Because the federal job training programs are not equipped to serve the millions of Americans who need to learn valuable skills at an affordable cost, Ms. Trump stated that expanding apprenticeship opportunities will enable more Americans to leverage the benefits of on-the-job training. She said it is clear we must do more to expand apprenticeship. Ms. Trump added that the creation of the Task Force recognizes that scaling up apprenticeship in a meaningful way requires soliciting input and ideas from the private sector, academia, organized
labor, and trade associations, and that it is important to come together as partners in a collective effort. Ms. Trump said creating a robust apprenticeship model is a key priority for the Administration. Ms. Trump thanked the group once again and noted that she looks forward to hearing their recommendations.

Task Force Member Discussion

Secretary Acosta said the Task Force is charged with producing a report with recommendations in four areas as identified in the Executive Order:

1. Federal initiatives to promote apprenticeships
2. Administrative and legislative reforms that would facilitate the formation and success of apprenticeship programs
3. The most effective strategies for creating industry-recognized apprenticeships
4. The most effective strategies for amplifying and encouraging private-sector initiatives to promote apprenticeships

He again noted the skills gap. Secretary Acosta knew about one state system with 67 percent of college students graduating in six years. Fewer than half of the students starting college in that state system finish college and have a job that pays $25,000 or more. He questioned whether colleges are offering opportunities to develop skills of value in the workplace. He emphasized that being a lifelong learner and a lifelong earner should not be mutually exclusive and that this Administration has a passion to rethink higher education and think outside the box.

Secretary Acosta stated that the current Registered Apprenticeship program does not work. It is not scaling in a vast majority of industries, with only 0.3 percent of the workforce coming up through Registered Apprenticeships. He said that the Registered Apprenticeship program set by Congress will continue, but that the Administration’s vision is to set up a parallel apprenticeship program, separate from Registered Apprenticeships, that gives industry a prominent role in developing and recognizing high quality apprenticeships. He charged the group with the question:

How do we take apprenticeship to scale?

Secretary Acosta then addressed Dennis Daugaard, Governor of South Dakota, whom Secretary Acosta recognized as making workforce development the key issue for the Western Governors’ Association. Governor Daugaard participated in the meeting by conference line and, due to interference on the phone line, his response was inaudible to the group. Secretary Acosta asked the question about scaling apprenticeships to Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa.

Governor Reynolds expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve. She stated that the number one priority in Iowa is workforce development and getting Iowans the skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Governor Reynolds related that, as she travels to all 99 counties in Iowa, companies are optimistic and anticipating growth, but the lack of a skilled workforce is preventing them from expanding. She said Iowa has tripled the funding for apprenticeship programs, with the numbers of apprentices expanding from 4,700 in 2011 to 8,685 today. Governor Reynolds mentioned the Iowa Department of Corrections’ programs that offer 19
apprenticeship programs in all facilities for more than 300 apprentices, giving skills to inmates as they return to their communities. She described her Future Ready Iowa initiative – addressing the middle skills job gap – with a goal of ensuring that 70 percent of Iowans receive advanced education or training to prepare for high demand jobs by 2025 (currently the number is 58 percent). Governor Reynolds said internships and apprenticeships are essential to meeting this goal and that young people need to be exposed to middle skills jobs, which today are jobs that require innovation. She recalled a forum Mike Rowe held during which he discussed the need for workers in the skilled trades and highlighted pre-apprenticeship programs, calling them a model for every single high school in the country. Governor Reynolds said that Iowa has Registered Apprenticeship programs in technology, agriculture, advanced manufacturing, construction, hospitality, energy, healthcare, and financial services, and that these need to be expanded to meet the needs of business and industry in Iowa. She added that Iowa is in the process of completing a regional asset map to identify assets where programs are working, and where there are gaps. We need businesses, she stressed, to partner with government to provide internships and possible performance-based bonuses, and to hire apprentices. Governor Reynolds said it is most important to make sure students are exposed to the job opportunities that exist in each state, what career paths look like, and for young people to have the skills needed to get jobs. She said the lack of a skilled workforce is the biggest barrier to economic growth in Iowa today.

Ms. Trump thanked Governor Reynolds for her participation on this Task Force and for her contribution to the Executive Memorandum for K-12 innovations.

Secretary Acosta moved on to identify a challenge in skills acquisition: ensuring that skills offered are aligned with skills in demand in the 21st century workplace. He called on the business leader members of the Task Force and asked them:

*From a business perspective, what should the Task Force be thinking about to ensure that the skills offered are aligned with the skills in demand?*

Josh Bolten, President and CEO of the Business Roundtable, said that he speaks on behalf of 200+ CEO members who solidly support the work of the Task Force. Mr. Bolten said that finding a skilled workforce is the biggest challenge facing his members as well as the secondary service providers to Business Roundtable companies, who employ many more people. Member companies recognize the importance of apprenticeships in creating the necessary skilled workforce. Mr. Bolten also mentioned that his members recognize the need to increase the number and quality of apprenticeships in the United States, especially in new sectors. Mr. Bolten recommended two resources for the Task Force’s consideration: (1) the Business Roundtable’s Work in Progress Report, published in June 2017, which contains more than 70 practices companies use to try to close the skills gap that could be scaled and broadened; and (2) the National Network of Business and Industry Association’s recommendations on streamlining the approval process for apprenticeships. Mr. Bolten said the most important action that the Task Force can take is to promote the creation of a new employer-driven system to recognize apprenticeship so that we can fill the 6 million jobs identified by Secretary Acosta with qualified American workers.
Wesley Bush, Chairman, CEO, and President of Northrop Grumman, discussed his role as chair of the Business Roundtable's Education and Workforce Committee which conducted a survey in 2016. The survey showed that 95 percent of Business Roundtable members—across all sectors—identified the skills gap as a key impediment to growth. He was struck by the consistency of the responses and similar root causes of the problem identified across the country. Mr. Bush identified several issues impacting the problem: (1) the pace of change in the economy is more rapid than the pace of change in our educational system; (2) scaling good ideas and practices in skills development is a challenge, and business can play a role in scaling; (3) business is not doing a good job of communicating the skills needed (the “demand signal”) to educational institutions, and students entering the educational system do not necessarily know what skills they will need or how to get those skills in order to qualify for good jobs; and (4) a marketplace is needed to address the mismatch between skills needs and existing capabilities. Mr. Bush said that businesses cannot simply identify the issue, but must be part of the solution, and there is an “awakening” among the business community on this need. He identified some successes, including the Business Higher Education Forum’s Higher Education Workforce Initiative that brings together companies with universities and colleges to identify workforce gaps and develop curricula. For these partnerships to work Mr. Bush said faculty must be willing to develop a curricula that meets current and future skill needs, and business must communicate its needs and provide apprenticeships and internships to students who can then participate in skills training programs. He also said industry is working to improve the demand signal by helping launch a “Credential Engine,” which will help students understand what credentials they will need to compete for good jobs. Mr. Bush challenged his fellow Task Force members to understand root causes of the skills challenge and to focus on partnerships that bring together capabilities to solve the problem.

Andrew Liveris, Dow Chemical President, Chairman, and CEO, stated that the skills gap is one of the greatest “elephants in the room.” Mr. Liveris shared that companies do not perfectly know their skill demand because things move very quickly, but that the supply side (skilled workforce) is very slow to develop or is nonexistent. As a result, Dow Chemical and others have had to build their own talent supply. Mr. Liveris said that companies must inventory best practices to build supply, leverage these practices, and then scale because the best practices and learning have already been piloted. For example, Mr. Liveris said that to address a shortage of welders Dow set up its own apprentice program, working with area community colleges, and introduced curricula, guaranteed hiring, offered retirees as instructors, and began extensive branding and marketing to change the minds of young students. Also, he said that Dow has recently launched STEM programs in elementary and middle schools in Midland, Michigan, working with children, parents, and educators, to raise awareness about occupations with salaries that exceed $50,000 with just two years of training in advanced automation or advanced technology. Mr. Liveris said the DOL registration process for apprenticeship does not work well, and we need to set up a separate apprenticeship program to provide scale.
Secretary Acosta directed a question again to Governor Daugaard:

*Are students and parents getting unbiased career information so they can make their own choices?*

Governor Daugaard participated on a telephone conference line and, due to interference on the phone line, his response was inaudible. Secretary Acosta shifted to the representatives from the building trades, noting their success in aggressively scaling up apprenticeship over the years and working well with the business community. He asked:

*What can we learn from the building trades’ long and successful experience with apprenticeship about how to scale up in new sectors?*

Sean McGarvey, President of the North America’s Building Trades Union (NABTU), affirmed that apprenticeship programs in the building trades are over 100 years old and came to the United States from the guilds in Europe. Mr. McGarvey said that NABTU invests nearly $1.4 billion per year to support 1,600 training centers, across 15 trades, operating more than 120 apprenticeship readiness programs. He said that these programs include pre-apprenticeship programs targeting women and communities of color. In a cyclical business like construction, Mr. McGarvey said that it is a challenge to predict demand and get the right number of people in a training program; nothing is worse than bringing someone into a training program and subsequently finding that a job does not exist. Mr. McGarvey said the only organization that trains more people in hard skill sets is the military – they have the experience and capability to ramp up. He encouraged the group to consider the “economics of the jobs” and suggested that $50,000/year is a good target. Mr. McGarvey finished by saying that the building trades are an example of labor and management coming together to figure out how to fund training, project skill needs, and prepare workers.

Doug McCarron, General President of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC), said that they also have a lot of experience with apprenticeship, with 60,000 registered apprentices in 250 training centers. He said that one thing UBC does is centralize its training at its 1.5 million square foot facility in Las Vegas, where it develops all curricula, leadership and technical training designed to make young people employable. Mr. McCarron noted that UBC would be willing to share with the Task Force the many lessons they have learned over the years that could help expand apprenticeships in other industries.

Joseph Sellers, General President of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART), a building construction trade union, said his organization represents 200,000 members – 140,000 in the construction trades plus 60,000 rail members. Mr. Sellers shared that he is a product of an apprenticeship, a machine metal worker by trade. Based on SMART’s experience, he suggested the group consider a few key questions as they expand apprenticeships: (1) what are the needs of the industry; (2) what are the skill sets; (3) how are we developing the curricula; and (4) how are we monitoring the skills on the job. He stated that people often need ongoing training, so many programs have 4-5 year apprenticeship tracks, in addition to journeyperson training to help people refine and update their skills. Mr. Sellers stressed that generations have been shortchanged because people no longer make the connection
in school between apprenticeships and a good living, as they did in the past with shop classes or technical training. He said that the problem is further complicated as high school counselors drive students to two- and four-year colleges, in part, because high schools are measured by college attendance rates.

Secretary Acosta noted that a critical piece within building trades is that businesses do not act as small actors but come together for training – achieving scale. Secretary Acosta believes industry associations will be critical partners in creating apprenticeships. He asked the industry group representatives on the Task Force:

**What are industry groups’ perspectives on apprenticeship?**

Michael Bellaman, President and CEO of Associated Builders and Contractors – a 21,000 member organization – thanked the Secretary and said that his organization has many stories to share regarding scaling up. He said that ninety-nine percent of construction companies employ fewer than 100 employees, and these companies employ about 71 percent of the workforce, so his organization is familiar with the needs and challenges faced by small businesses. Mr. Bellaman’s organization commonly partners with technical and community colleges and high schools, with over 800 career and technical education facilities to meet talent needs. Mr. Bellaman stated that he believes there are opportunities to shift the paradigm, so people see a career in trades as a track to a prosperous future.

Governor Daugaard (now on an audible phone line) reiterated that neither students leaving high school nor their parents understand that there are “many roads to heaven.” The demand side, he said, is not signaling well, and we share a responsibility for that. He indicated that South Dakota is trying to do better career counseling in middle and early high school, and to offer more work experience starting in high school so students understand the breadth of careers available through apprenticeship and that success can come from other paths than a four-year college degree. Governor Daugaard noted that many in Iowa do not enter the college path, and of those that do, only about 60 percent complete college and many will not find jobs. He said that more and earlier career counseling and work experience in high school will give students better awareness of apprenticeship programs, and that this can benefit students who need income, lack funds for college, or are generally attracted to the apprenticeship model. Governor Daugaard also stressed that the United States must streamline ways apprenticeships can be created and registered.

Secretary Acosta turned to Dawn Sweeney, President and CEO of the National Restaurant Association, and asked for her perspective.

Ms. Sweeney said that she represents an industry of one million restaurants, 15 million employees, and $800 billion in annual revenue, and that their single biggest challenge is recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. Her association, in partnership with the National Hotel and Lodging Association, has signed up almost 500 apprentices in the hotel and restaurant space and expects to have more than 1,000 apprentices next year. She said that the National Restaurant Association has certified over 6 million employees in food safety and is building certification programs for restaurant managers and other employees. The industry offers millions of jobs that pay over $50,000 (with no college education required) within three years of
entering the industry, so she expressed enthusiasm about building apprenticeships more formally into these good jobs. She said that the Association is also working with the military to identify competencies that returning veterans have that enable them to step directly into management roles. Ms. Sweeney noted that apprenticeships provide recognized training and stackable credentials that people can access without the cost of a post-secondary degree. She shared information about ProStart – a project helping 140,000 high school students interested in careers in the restaurant industry to explore the field and enter industry directly or through universities, colleges, or apprenticeship programs. Finally, Ms. Sweeney offered two recommendations: (1) focus on competency-based apprenticeship programs (instead of time-based programs); and (2) find a way to harmonize the bifurcated federal/state approval system. She said that the DOL is the registration agency for half of the states, with the remainder requiring standards to be submitted at the state level, and that this bifurcated system results in employers being unable to access federal funding or receive tax credits for which they might otherwise qualify. Ms. Sweeney said trade associations are ready and willing to deliver millions of apprenticeships over the next several years.

Jay Timmons, President and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), said that he is honored to serve on behalf of NAM’s 14,000 members, and that it is encouraging to see the Administration’s seriousness in taking on this challenge, as evidenced by three Secretaries and a presidential advisor present. NAM’s members are mostly small and medium-sized manufacturing companies, many of which are concerned about the lack of qualified candidates for open positions. Over 400,000 of the six million open jobs are in the manufacturing sector, Mr. Timmons said, which affects the full development of a modern manufacturing sector as well as the economic development of our country. He stressed that the manufacturing sector has tried many approaches to addressing this skills gap. The Manufacturing Institute, part of NAM and led by Carolyn Lee, administers programs to attract students into advanced manufacturing, including women and transitioning military personnel. Mr. Timmons said that the cost and complexity of the existing Registered Apprenticeship programs make it hard to scale programs, so he is excited about a streamlined parallel system that relies on industry recognition. Mr. Timmons shared three critical design features that he thinks are needed for a new apprenticeship training system to have broad appeal. First, the system has to be flexible and recognize that some positions in manufacturing require two months of training, and some three years, depending on the region, sector, and occupation. Second, he said, the solution needs to be industry-led and employer-driven. It is the only way to get the buy-in from industry and to scale the program. Lastly, Mr. Timmons urged everyone to consider an incentive structure that gives all participants “skin in the game.” Concern about the return on investment for developing apprenticeship programs is one barrier to entry for small companies, Mr. Timmons noted, because there is no guarantee that workers will stay on after a training investment is made in them.

Secretary Acosta shared that when he talks with people from higher education, they acknowledge things need to change. The educational system is examining its own structure, but Secretary Acosta wondered what the appetite is for flexibility within higher education. He asked:
What does higher education think about the apprenticeship effort and how does higher education fit into the effort?

Walter Bumphus, President and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), shared that each of the nation’s almost 1,200 community colleges (with 12 million students across the country) offers a work-based learning component, and several hundred are involved in apprenticeship through membership in the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (which helps apprentices get college credit for training). Apprenticeship, he said, offers an excellent evolution for the community college system. Mr. Bumphus noted past successes that community colleges have achieved in expanding access to apprenticeships and improving student retention and graduation rates. However, he said community colleges have struggled with how to measure and account for those students who do not attend college with a goal of completing a degree but rather getting a job. Community colleges, he said, want to prepare students not just for a job, but also for careers with family-sustaining wages. This has led community colleges to focus on “stackable credentials,” leading to certificates and transfers to four-year colleges and universities.

Mr. Bumphus provided examples of community colleges working closely with businesses to establish cutting edge apprenticeships: Austin Community College partnered with Apple to offer a coding program using Swift to design apps, through which students gain skills in software development and information technology. Another example is Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, which partnered with Ocean Spray to develop training in mechatronics and industrial maintenance. Another is the City Colleges of Chicago, which partnered with Accenture to develop apprenticeships in information technology. He shared that AACC is developing a Virtual Apprenticeship Network (with the DOL) designed to scale solutions for industry, with four industry partners: Lockheed Martin, Lincoln Electric, IBM, and Northrop Grumman. Mr. Bumphus said no scalable solution exists for industry partners to work with multiple community colleges across multiple states/communities simultaneously for talent pipelines. AACC looks forward to designing and executing employment solutions that utilize the community college system.

Mark Rosenberg, Board of Directors, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, representing 237 colleges, stated that the public and land-grant universities understand the importance of finding a new conversation about what the 21st century workforce looks like. Mr. Rosenberg said he believes the future system will be a blend of career and technical skills, baccalaureate education, and an increase in more competency-based programs that complement a traditional education that emphasizes literacy, critical thinking, decision making, financial literacy, and other similar skills. Mr. Rosenberg said he sees this Task Force as a first step in changing the paradigm about how the educational system does business. He mentioned the regulatory environment and the need to deepen dialogue between the private sector and higher education, so that universities become more market-sensitive and their outcomes better measured. Mr. Rosenberg said he sees a huge upside for public universities in fostering a 21st century workforce where universities are more sensitive to industry needs, so students — “lifelong learners” — can find work and return to college and training to keep up their skills.
Secretary Acosta stated that standards are important in setting up apprenticeships in order for there to be consistency, portability, and quality. He asked Montez King, Executive Director of the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), to talk about the importance of consistency and portability.

Mr. King shared his story and connection to apprenticeship. He was introduced to his trade as a machinist at the age of 13 and joined a work-study program at age 16, which gave him exposure to a professional environment that he had not experienced in his childhood neighborhood. Upon graduation, Mr. King described how his mother told him to thank his boss for the work-study opportunity, but instead of saying goodbye, his employer offered him a job as an apprentice. He accepted and began work, earning $10/hour - $400/week (more than double his mother who earned $4/hour). After the apprenticeship program, Mr. King transitioned into management, and he went on to earn a master's degree because he still had some concerns about career growth if he had just an apprentice credential. But, he stated, all of his jobs have been based on his work experience and apprenticeship credentials. Mr. King shared that when he talks to students, he tells them about how they can earn stackable credentials, which are competency-based and require practical skills. He tells students that many of these stackable credentials are transferrable to college credits, so they can earn, learn, and work toward a degree.

Ms. Trump thanked Mr. King for sharing his inspirational story. She noted that she keeps hearing about the delta between awareness of opportunity among young people and great-paying jobs that don't require a four-year college degree. In Germany, she said, one-third of the workforce goes through an apprenticeship program, so we know this is scalable, however, in the United States, less than 1% of the workforce goes through apprenticeship programs. Ms. Trump stated that there is tremendous opportunity and, as Mr. King said, not to the exclusion of formal college education for those who want to pursue college credentials as well.

Secretary Acosta then asked Cari Dominguez, Principal, Dominguez & Associates and a Board member for Manpower and the Empire Group, for her perspective.

Ms. Dominguez thanked the President and Secretaries, calling the Task Force meeting a meaningful way to kick off National Apprenticeship Week. She said the issue cuts across labor, business, and education. Ms. Dominguez said that in her work on the Board of the Manpower Group, where they place about 2.5 million workers each year, she understands the challenge of preparing and identifying the talent pool. Ms. Dominguez shared that 25 percent of the workforce is drawn from people of color, people with disabilities, women with low skills, and those who have barriers to work, including the need for transportation to work and reasonable accommodation. This is too large a component of the talent pool to ignore. Ms. Dominguez said the hardest jobs to fill are in the skilled trades, which is unfortunate because skilled trades are the fastest way to small business ownership, and small businesses drive the U.S. economy. She mentioned changes in farming (automation and technology) and the need to upskill and reskill workers. Ms. Dominguez shared that Manpower just signed a commitment to transition 1,000 members of the military, through a partnership with Rockwell Automation, to careers as automated instrumentation control technicians. Workers entered the program earning $30,000 and at the end of the training program were earning $60,000, and all participants were placed in
jobs. Ms. Dominguez stressed that soft skills are very important, like preparing a resume or participating in an interview, and that many lack soft skills that will help people find and keep jobs. She said that the DOL is uniquely positioned to elevate the dignity of work by emphasizing competencies, skills, and apprenticeships. This is important because whether an employee is an engineer or mechanic, both contribute to high functioning communities.

Secretary Acosta said that he loves the phrase “the dignity of work.” He noted that rather than applauding a family-sustaining job, sometimes we judge someone for having a job that we do not think is the right kind of job. The Secretary then turned to Emily DeRocco, CEO of E3 Engage Educate Employ and former Assistant Secretary of Labor, and asked for her perspective, as someone who has overseen these programs.

Pain can be a great motivator, Ms. DeRocco replied. She said the skills gap is a great motivator for businesses, which is why companies are showing interest in work-and-learn models including apprenticeship. She pointed to the National Network of Business and Industry Associations’ recommendations for a national work-and-learn initiative that includes applied learning, mentorship, and paid work experience. Ms. DeRocco noted that National Network members believed that the term apprenticeship refers to both the Registered Apprenticeship model as well as a broader “work and learn” model. Many employers, she stated, believe in and are pursuing work-and-learn models, but reject Registered Apprenticeship due to the cumbersome registration processes. She expressed concern that the return on investment for the federal government’s Registered Apprenticeship is lower than larger scale private-public partnerships. She concluded her remarks by making three recommendations: (1) build more work and learn apprenticeship pathways around industry-recognized credentials with nationally portable standards; (2) integrate apprenticeship work and learn and industry-recognized credentials with career and technical education to provide opportunities, especially for under-represented populations, in high wage, high skilled work; and (3) build the capacity of business organizations to play a more significant role in defining the learning outcomes for success in high-demand jobs. She said that it can be difficult to convince business to play a leadership role in workforce preparation, but when they do, there has been a lot of success.

Secretary Acosta noted the absence of Katherine Lugar (American Hotel & Lodging Association), Marc Morial (National Urban League) and Tom Donohue (U.S. Chamber of Commerce) whom we will hear from at the next Task Force meeting. Secretary Acosta then asked actor, entrepreneur, and workforce training advocate, John Ratzenberger, who was participating by phone, the following question:

As you travel the country as an advocate for workforce skills, an issue is not just “what is apprenticeship,” but the perception of these jobs, especially among parents. What are your insights?

Mr. Ratzenberger has been crisscrossing the country for 15 years talking about the skilled trades. Before becoming an actor (on the television series “Cheers” and in various movies), he was a journeyman carpenter, and his son is an apprentice plumber making more money than he ever thought he would make. While doing the show “Made in America,” Mr. Ratzenberger said he
discovered that there were few young people in the factories, including in his home town of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Mr. Ratzenberger said that young people who apply for jobs are not qualified, largely because shop classes were canceled 30 years ago. The perception of a child wanting to be a plumber or carpenter or electrician is that he is stupid, Mr. Ratzenberger noted, and that these perceptions are born of the media, TV shows and films that portray workers in skilled trades as being illiterate or dishonest. Mr. Ratzenberger stressed that he hears parents all over the country express these concerns. To counter that perception, Mr. Ratzenberger runs a summer camp through his foundation “Nuts, Bolts, and Thingamajigs” in Rockford, Illinois for kids to learn how to use machines, and he has also opened the American Museum of Manufacturing in Connecticut to make people understand that manufacturing jobs are great and dignified jobs. He said he wants to change the perception of jobs from being “blue collar” to being “essential jobs.” Mr. Ratzenberger said that being part of this Task Force is like seeing the cavalry coming over the hill, and he cannot wait to get started. He noted that in Germany and Switzerland, if you are a plumber or electrician, you have the same dignity and respect given to an attorney or stockbroker – no difference. We tend to denigrate these important, skilled trade jobs, and he wants to turn these perceptions around.

Secretary Acosta shared a story of a miner he met who made the simple point that everything we see around us was either found below ground or was grown above ground. He said we take for granted all those things around us, and we forget the men and women who make the things around us, which is unfortunate and needs to stop.

Review and Action Items

Secretary Acosta summarized the highlights and themes from the remarks of the Task Force members:

- There is a career awareness issue. High school students and parents lack the information they need to make informed choices about in-demand skills and opportunities outside four-year college degrees.
- Colleges and universities are interested in engaging on apprenticeship.
- There is a great deal of flexibility within the apprenticeship model.
- There is a great deal of flexibility within the new apprenticeship model described in the Executive Order, which must be flexible and nimble and allow variation across industries and regions.
- In an age of acceleration with a rapidly changing economy, we need life-long learners, and completing an apprenticeship is not mutually exclusive of being a life-long earner.
- Industry needs to be a partner in developing and expanding apprenticeship.
- There is value in credentials that are portable and stackable.
- The Registered Apprenticeship model is not sufficiently flexible; barriers to entry (including regulatory processes) are too high, so Registered Apprenticeships are under used.
Without changing the existing Registered Apprenticeship system, there is value to a separate parallel, industry-recognized apprenticeship system, which is the vision set out in the President’s Executive Order.

Secretary Acosta described that the next step would be for the Task Force members to break into smaller committees to focus on discrete areas and to designate staff who can work on a day-to-day basis. The Task Force will meet regularly, but much of the work can and should be done at the staff level. The Secretary also indicated that the U.S. Department of Labor would begin work on a guidance document that will describe industry-recognized apprenticeships. Finally, Secretary Acosta urged everyone to work quickly to develop recommendations and issue the report. The President has indicated that he wants this effort to take weeks not years, he said, noting that every week we delay, there are real jobs not being filled and that affects real people.

In closing remarks, Secretary DeVos thanked Secretary Acosta for convening the Task Force and thanked all participants. She looks forward to the work we will be doing together. Secretary Ross said the key will be in implementation, to get something practical into being should be the focus. Ms. Trump thanked the group for an incredible conversation, the first of many, and said she looks forward to realizing the goal of expanding apprenticeship and “earn while you learn” opportunities for all Americans. Secretary Acosta closed out the Task Force meeting by thanking the members for serving the nation and America’s workforce.
CERTIFICATION

As the Chairperson of the Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion, I hereby certify the accuracy of the November 2017 Summary Meeting Minutes.

FEB - 8 2018

R. Alexander Acosta
Secretary of Labor
Task Force Chairperson