

I. **Source**

CORPORATE CASH ALTERS UNIVERSITY CURRICULA, Douglas Belkin, Caroline Porter, WSJ, April 7, 2014.

II. **Credibility of Source**

A news journal article that quotes several university officials and a few industry sources as well as some university funding statistics. The quoted sources are credible because of their positions but may not be based upon scientific studies. The article is perhaps a little more credible than an anecdotal piece but less than a solidly researched, statistically based study. The WSJ is well-respected journalistically but not scholastically.

III. **Summary of Content and Conclusions**

Though industry-university partnerships have been around at the graduate level and among the nation's polytechnic schools and community colleges, they are now migrating into traditional undergraduate programs. States on average cut per-pupil funding for university systems by 28% between 2008 and 2013. Those cuts have forced tuition up and helped inflate student loan debt to \$1.2 trillion. Now they are prompting schools to seek new revenue streams.

This article looks at a historical view of how education has met workforce needs in the past, employment projections, employer needs, and how educational institutions might respond to the call to develop a highly skilled workforce. A model designed to partner industry and education in the development of educational curriculum is offered to promote conversation as to how to better prepare workers with the competencies and employability skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Meanwhile, corporations, concerned about a mismatch between their needs and graduates' skills, are starting to pick up some of the cost of select undergraduate programs.

At the same time, a recent Gallup poll found that only 11% of business leaders strongly agree that college graduates have the necessary skills and competencies to succeed in the workplace. The emerging public-private partnerships are part of a response to that mismatch. Employers now require stronger skills of entry. The labor market wants more specific things out of students.

Several examples are given of how industry sponsors a program, donates equipment, helps design the curriculum and in some cases help to teach courses. Their pay-back is a cadre of well trained graduates with the specific skills capable of hitting the ground running when they join the sponsoring company.

IV. **Relevance to the Department of ECE**

The examples presented are unique but fast becoming less so. Furthermore the programs they model are not easily emulated because the commitment of resources on the part of the company is not trivial. Also, such collaborations are more likely to take root if originated from the corporation side rather than the university side.

This model is difficult to assess. In order for it to work several things have to come together. First a corporation (or cluster of corporations) will have to be of sufficient size such that the demand for high quality, ready-to-perform graduates is large enough to justify the expenditure of resources. Secondly, almost certainly there will need to be a fervid champion for this initiative in the corporation(s). Third, the curriculum must be broad enough to specifically address the needs of several related companies in order to achieve critical mass.

V. Recommendations for the Department or the IAB

This idea will need to be driven by one or more Board members working inside their respective companies. The first step should be a polling of the Board to see what the interest level would be for taking on a formidable, but potentially very fruitful, venture. It is potentially a big win for students, Department and corporation.

VI. Contact Information).

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The full article can be found here:

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303847804579481500497963552>