

Skilled Technical Workforce Program High Impact Training for Ohio Workforce

Project Summary

Background and Need

The traditional role of private universities is changing relative to meeting the needs of the American workforce. According to a 2019 report issued by the National Science Board, there are over 33 million Americans who have a significant gap in their education relative to skills necessary for them to be able to function at a high level in the ever-advancing, technology-infused economy. These workers have been identified as needing education and skills training to keep pace with technology that is integrated into their work environment. Although still vital in providing undergraduate and graduate degrees, the traditional role of Universities must remain nimble in helping businesses “meet their workers where they are in their learning” and find flexible platforms by which workers can access education to develop practical and useful skills within the context of their everyday job responsibilities. Walsh University has been a leader in meeting these needs for Ohio businesses and is at the center of the national conversation as to the important role that private universities will play in contributing to the global competitiveness of the American workforce.

The Role of Private Universities in Meeting the Needs of the Workforce of Tomorrow

Walsh University is committed to strengthening the scientific and technological competitiveness of our regional workforce to provide significant advantages for our community and retain businesses in Northeastern Ohio. Walsh University’s Skilled Technical Workforce Program (STWFP) has demonstrated how higher education and economic development are closely coupled and how private colleges and universities play a critical role as a resource to provide growth opportunity for employees to develop skills through pathways outside of the traditional four-year college degree.

The popularity of the Walsh University STWFP is largely due to the flexibility and speed by which we are able to deliver strategic program curriculum that provides baseline learning with customized components tailored to the needs of each individual company. Smaller private universities are best suited to address the training needs of a broad audience, from front line workers to upper management, while still providing alternative pathways for some learners to transition into a tradition degree path, should they desire.

The Model

Walsh University has created a strategic partnership with local industry experts and business leaders for the design and implementation of the STWFP. This initiative provides customized training and “up-skilling” for regional citizens in the latest “smart” technology and practices, data analytics, and other key workforce development skills (www.skilledtechworkforce.com). Coupling the resources of the university with business professionals with highly specialized expertise in the subject matter to facilitate and assist in the teaching of the course has led to a program that is very unique in the education market and very attractive to employers who do not want the standard, “one-size-fits-all” curriculum found in many traditional training programs offered at a vocational or technical college or coursework offered by larger research institutions. As a result, employers find the program to be relevant, practical and high-impact with an immediate ROI.

This program has gained national attention for being in alignment with a [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#) initiative that was outlined in the 2019 report issued by the National Science Board. Further, we have been recognized by the state of Ohio as an education provider in their TechCred program, an initiative which reimburses businesses for tuition invested in employees for technology-related certificate programs and credentialing.

The Results

The STWFP coursework and credential/certificate programs to date have proven successful and were featured in [Crain's Cleveland Business](#) for the transformational impact on participants and immediate ROI for their businesses. The need for this project has been reinforced by the exceptional response thus far from regional employers and employees who have participated in the STWFP. As an education provider of Ohio's TechCred program, we are able to leverage dollars provided by the tuition reimbursement program to provide the training at no out-of-pocket cost to employers or their employees.

Skilled Tech Workforce Impact

2020-2021 Training for



50 Companies
1200 Credentials

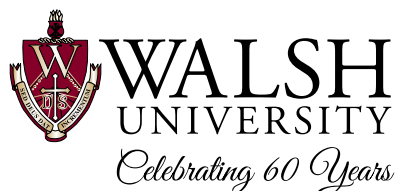
Through this program, to date, we have enrolled Ohio workers from 41 different Ohio-based businesses into training programs representing over 850 credentials to be delivered in the next 12 months. By the end of April 2021, we anticipate that number to grow to as many as 50 companies and over 1200 credentials to be delivered in that 12-month period. The businesses represent the manufacturing, retail, education, financial services, healthcare and scientific industries.

The Future

Not only is this project currently helping businesses thrive, but Walsh University and our industry partners are actively seeking opportunities to expand program offerings and create opportunity for access to underemployed and unemployed Ohioans. We are also working with local business leader to pursue funding through the EDA for a capital project for the renovation of a building to create an 18,000 square foot, state-of-the art, eco-friendly training facility that includes classroom space, conference rooms, offices and a hands-on laboratory with "smart" technologies and equipment used in modern manufacturing settings or other business applications. The complex would also include an Innovation/Incubation Center to foster new business development and ideas. This project provides an extension of STWFP and new hands-on education and training capabilities for the benefit of regional employers, employees, and community workforce development. As such, the program will not only develop student and employee skills, but also attract new employers to the region and thereby promote economic growth and employer-base diversification.

Summary

With the rapid integration of technology in the workplace, American companies are changing how they do business and their workers must be equipped with the proper skills to keep their companies competitive in the global digital economy. Small private universities, like Walsh University, have always been a core strength of our nation's educational system and will now play a critical role in this transition. These institutions are typically more intimately connected to the businesses within their communities and can most effectively foster partnerships to create unique programming that is customized to the needs of the local economy. They are best positioned to provide the resources for learners to pursue traditional degree-path opportunities but remain nimble enough to quickly adapt to the ever-changing needs of the businesses and the modern workforce.



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