

Education and Industry Consortium

These minutes will be reviewed for approval at the next Education and Industry Consortium Meeting scheduled for 2:30 PM on March 25th, 2026.

Program Year 26 – Second Quarter Meeting

Date: December 11, 2025

Time: 11:01 AM – 11:55 AM

Location: Zoom

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:01 AM by Jonathan Leslie, serving as Interim Co-Chair in the absence of Consortium Chair Lisa Anderson.

II. Attendance – all participants appeared virtually, via Zoom

Consortium Members Present:

- Jonathan Leslie – Interim Chair
- Shawn Holmgren
- Sara Maxwell
- Ryan Wilder
- Tracey Higdon
- Jessica Hurov
- Brent Ferns
- Charlie Turley (representing Anita Rembert)
- Bailey McClellan (representing Sean Mclendon)
- Chris Mecusker (representing Mike Ripplinger)
- Nancy Holbrook (representing Lisa Anderson)

CareerSource North Central Florida Staff:

- Phyllis Marty
- Diane Burke
- Jessica McCrae
- Alex Ganz
- Michelle Guash (Scad Media)
- Elora Duong (Scad Media)

Guests/Public:

N/A

III. Approval of Minutes (September 24, 2025)

Motion: Tracey Higdon | Second: Shawn Holmgren | Outcome: Approved unanimously

IV. Introductions

New Consortium members and designees introduced themselves and their respective roles and contributions.

- **Jessica Hurov** – Consortium Member, Alachua County Tourism and Economic Development.
 - **Charlie Turley** – on behalf of Anita Rembert, Palms Medical Group.
 - **Nancy Holbrook** – on behalf of Lisa Anderson, Santa Fe College, Career and Job Placement.
 - **Bailey McClellan** – on behalf of Sean McLendon – Alachua County Economic Development Team.
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V. Follow – up/Open Agenda Items

- **Providing Service to the Underserved:** From 9/24/25 meeting

- Sean McLendon asked if there was any quantitative data that we could track from the discussions in the last meeting. These would include: The amount of people served in the new offices, any high demand jobs but limited enrollments, any changes or trends surrounding offerings based on real-time community job demand, and the need in each of the represented communities.
 - CareerSource could not give quantitative data on the offices as they are not yet open to the public. CareerSource was able to provide data on the Metrix soft skill training, which has seen a 9% increase in enrollments YOY over the same time period.
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VI. Apprenticeship & Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

- Shawn Holmgren discussed the need to develop pre-apprenticeship programs to better prepare individuals for industrial workplaces, citing high costs and high failure rates in existing apprenticeship structures.
 - Nancy Halbrook noted that while traditional trades have strong apprenticeship programs, there is potential for expansion into non-traditional areas such as bookkeeping and insurance.
 - Charlie Turley agreed with Nancy's sentiments that medical administration needed to be a focus with so much consistently changing in the healthcare sector. He discussed that Palms is looking to start internships and also stated the need for nurses, as that continues to be a high demand across the board.
 - Ryan Wilder suggested emerging fields such as Solar PV Installation and Electronic Systems Technicians.
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VII. Community Hub & Resource Centralization

- Shawn Holmgren introduced LakeCityHub.com as an example of a community information platform.
- Nancy Holbrook highlighted the importance of grassroots engagement.

- Jonathan Leslie emphasized the need for a centralized location for apprenticeship resources, as many interns are not aware of available opportunities.
 - Alex Ganz suggested CareerSource could host a centralized hub on its website.
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VIII. Workforce Gaps & In-Demand Occupations

- Jonathan Leslie led a discussion on addressing workforce gaps in high-demand occupations.
 - Ryan Wilder requested clarification on how these occupations are defined.
 - Jessica McCrae explained the Targeted Occupation List, which identifies high-skill, high-wage jobs and includes apprenticeships to align workforce development with market needs.
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IX. Workforce Development & Technical Training Needs

- Jonathan Leslie reiterated the broad range of occupations listed and the importance of building pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs in our current in-demand fields.
 - Shawn Holmgren expressed concerns about the workforce's readiness for high-tech roles and noted that current college curricula may not fully prepare students for rapidly evolving technological careers.
 - Tracey Higdon asked if Shawn Holmgren thought more technical specialization pathways would assist with the gap, and Shawn said he did. They further discussed that currently the curricula is broad and not as specialized as it may need to be to also attract future business to the area.
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X. AI Integration in Workforce Education

- Tracey Higdon from Florida Gateway College emphasized the need for practical AI skills in workforce training and discussed progress on an AI degree pathway.

- Jonathan Leslie acknowledged the rapid evolution of technology and raised questions about how AI could support learners with disabilities.
 - Dr. Brent Ferns advocated for integrating AI throughout the curricula while emphasizing critical thinking.
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XI. Internships & Soft Skills Development

- Dr. Brent M. Ferns discussed the importance of partnerships between employers and educational institutions to ensure students receive real-world experience and develop soft skills.
 - Alex Ganz noted that mandatory internships at Santa Fe College have led to successful job placements.
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XII. Open Discussion and Public Comment

- Jonathan Leslie recommended adding soft skills development to the next meeting's agenda.
 - No Public in attendance.
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XIII. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.