



Education practitioners, researchers and policymakers discuss the relationship of higher education programs to workforce needs

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Cincinnati - Legislators and higher education leaders of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact's (MHEC's) governing board joined additional education practitioners, researchers and policymakers in Cincinnati on November 19-20 to discuss the relationship of education programs to workforce needs. The annual MHEC policy summit focused on the renewed attention surrounding the purpose and role of higher education and how postsecondary institutions might align their academic programs with specific industry or workforce needs.

"I believe the summit topic is extremely relevant," said Jeff Haverly, South Dakota state senator and outgoing MHEC chair. Educators and policymakers will need to continue to work together and evaluate the value of a college education and how best to turn our graduates into an educated and trained workforce."

"We are always looking for innovative ways to engage our constituency of postsecondary institutions to be better aligned with the workforce needs," said MHEC President Larry Isaak. The summit brought together a diverse audience of higher education leaders and policymakers from the Midwest.

The opening keynote address was given by Charles Kolb, president of the French-American Foundation and former president of the Committee for Economic Development (CED).

Attendees at the MHEC summit also heard from panelists of leaders on a variety of interest sessions, including addressing data on job openings and employment trends, the content and substance of academic programs, the relationships between higher education and employers, and the policy structures that influence academic planning.

The closing address was given by Chris Farrell, chief economics correspondent for American Radio Works and contributing economics editor for BusinessWeek.

MHEC's commissioners conducted business during their annual commission meeting in advance of the policy summit on November 18 and 19 where they heard statewide updates from fellow commissioners as well as a regional update from the Midwestern office of The Council of State Governments.

This was Haverly's last meeting as a MHEC commissioner. Presiding over the meeting he said, "I am honored to have served as the chair of the MHEC commission, it goes without saying that we as a commission carry more power collectively than we do on an individual level." Haverly was appointed a commissioner in January 2009, and was elected chair in 2011, he completed his term this month. Haverly was recognized for his term as chair during the annual meeting.

"Without a doubt our states face the same issues, maybe on different scales, but the same issues," he added.

ABOUT MHEC

Since its formation in 1991, MHEC has been committed to cost-savings programs, student access and policy research and analysis. The compact consists of twelve member states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Statutorily created, the member states' five commissioners are appointed and are leaders from higher education, the legislature, and the governor's office. Commissioners meet twice a year and will meet again in June 2013 in Indianapolis, IN, and in November 2013 in Omaha, NE. MHEC is headquartered in Minneapolis and led by President Larry Isaak. For more information about the compact, please visit www.mhec.org or call 612-677-2777. For a list of all MHEC commissioners, click here <http://www.mhec.org/commissioners>. For more photos of the event, please see MHEC's Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/mhec12> or Flickr <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mhec> pages.