America’s HR Leaders and Top Educators Meet to Improve Skills of the Nation’s College Graduates

New partnership will help colleges equip students with the skills that companies are seeking

Washington, DC – Today, more than 250 members of the HR Policy Association, representing senior human resource executives of the largest employers in the United States, met with representatives of two of America’s leading education organizations to identify ways to improve the skills of our nation’s emerging job seekers.

Although Congress is faced with the challenge of reauthorizing the nation’s most important education bill (No Child Left Behind) and the nation’s most important job training bill (Workforce Investment Act), both bills currently appear to be stalled this session. Therefore, leaders from the Education Commission of the States and community college presidents representing the Auto Communities College Consortium met with members of HR Policy Association to discuss more closely aligning the training needs of employers with the training capabilities of community colleges and other education providers.

Eva Sage-Gavin, Executive Vice President, Global Human Resources and Corporate Affairs of Gap Inc. and Chair of the Workforce Development Committee of HR Policy Association said, “By bringing together top employers and educators we hope to match education and training with the skills employers are seeking. We’re optimistic that our partnership will unlock exciting possibilities, provide real solutions and help restore American competitiveness. Working together, companies, colleges and government can help better prepare people to join the workforce.”

Bringing together educators and employers has been a priority of HR Policy Association. In the Association’s Blueprint for Jobs in the 21st Century: A Vision for a Competitive Human Resource Policy for the American Workforce, members called for, “An ongoing dialogue between educators and employers to ensure that educators understand the career opportunities available to graduates, the competencies and skills employers are seeking from graduates, and what colleges and universities can do to increase the probabilities that graduates will find quality jobs.”

Dr. James Jacobs, President of Macomb Community College in Warren, Michigan said, “As community college leaders, we understand that in order to be successful, we must provide students with the latest and most in-demand skills. Strong partnerships with business will help translate their needs into trained, qualified graduates is an important mission for community colleges.”
Roger Sampson, President of the Education Commission of the States, said, “There is much to be gained from bringing educators and employers together. Educational institutions are expected to produce ‘career ready’ graduates and employers are seeking the best fit for their job openings. It’s critical, in order to get it right, that we work to promote a better understanding between those who educate and train and those who hire.”

HR Policy Association’s Workforce Development Committee will continue the dialogue that began this week with the education organizations and plans to release recommendations for joint initiatives they will undertake to improve training in America.

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**HR Policy Association** is the lead organization representing chief human resource officers of major employers. The Association consists of more than 330 of the largest corporations doing business in the United States and globally, and these employers are represented in the organization by their most senior human resource executive. Collectively, their companies employ more than ten million employees in the United States, nearly nine percent of the private sector workforce, and 20 million employees worldwide. They have a combined market capitalization of more than $7.5 trillion. These senior corporate officers participate in the Association because of their commitment to improving the direction of human resource policy. Their objective is to use the combined power of the membership to act as a positive influence to better public policy, the HR marketplace, and the human resource profession. For more information visit [www.hrpolicy.org](http://www.hrpolicy.org).

**The Auto Communities Consortium** - The Auto Communities Consortium is a collaborative network of 34 community colleges in 16 states, which have united to address the permanent economic losses to auto communities. This consortium is designed to facilitate a college-to-college institutional peer learning environment where members share best practices in education and training.

**Education Commission of the States (ECS)** - ECS is a nationwide, nonpartisan organization that brings together key leaders — governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education officials, business leaders and others — to work side by side to improve education. For more than 40 years, ECS has been helping policymakers improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information and ideas across states. A nonprofit interstate compact with 350 commissioners from its member states, ECS is the leading nonpartisan source of information, ideas and leadership on education policy. It tracks trends, translates research, provides advice and creates opportunities for state leaders to learn from one another. The mission of ECS is to help states develop effective policy and practice for public education by providing data, research, analysis and leadership; and by facilitating collaboration, the exchange of ideas among the states and long-range strategic thinking.