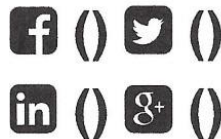


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Panel Discusses Job-Readiness of College Graduates by Catherine Morris

November 16, 2014 | :



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[content/uploads/2014/11/111714_JOB_MARKET.jpg](http://diverseeducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/111714_JOB_MARKET.jpg)) WASHINGTON — Can postsecondary education keep pace with changes in the economic landscape in the years ahead? Business and education leaders discussed

APPENDIX J

the fraught topic of job-readiness at a two-part panel hosted by the Committee on Economic Development in Washington, D.C., on Thursday afternoon.

Panelists generally agreed that there needs to be greater collaboration between business, academia and policy.

"There's a huge gap between the needs of our society and the way we are preparing young people now," said Dr. Pedro Noguera, professor of education at NYU.

Dr. Robert Mendenhall, president of Western Governors University, identified a "mismatch" between the skills that businesses are looking for and the skills that students are taking with them from postsecondary education.

He pointed to two Gallup polls that demonstrate the fundamental disconnect between academia and business. One poll, sponsored by the Lumina Foundation, showed that only 11 percent of business leaders strongly agree that graduates have the skills to succeed at work. The other, created with the help of Inside Higher Ed, showed that 96 percent of academic officers believed that colleges were preparing their students for workplace success.

Complicating the issue is the constantly evolving jobs market, where the rapid pace of technological change requires workers to constantly be adapting. The question that remains unresolved is how best to ensure that graduates and workers receive up-to-date training.


"What we're not doing with the students we're graduating—and policy makers aren't making it easy to do—is training people how to keep themselves continually skilled and trained. We need an emphasis on getting people not only through a degree, but then we need an emphasis on ... continuous training," said Carl Camden, president and CEO of Kelly Services, Inc.

Panelists suggested that technology and better, cheaper access to information could help solve some problems, such as the cost of education.

Others, such as Bill Goodwyn, president and CEO of Discovery Education, advocated for better compensation for teachers, to attract and support talented individuals to the profession. "The number one factor about quality of education is the quality of the teacher," he said. "We need to invest in them."

Dr. Noguera said that efforts to improve the current educational system should be non-partisan. "It should not be the case that depending on who the president is, or who the governor is, that that's going to shift our policies one way or another," he said.

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