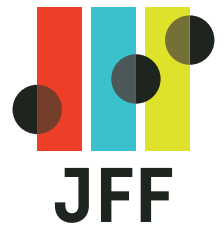


Employer Partnerships that Drive Systems Change



Accelerating Change at The City University of New York



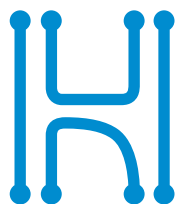
Photo credit: CUNY

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HERE TO HERE

About HERE to HERE

HERE to HERE is a Bronx-based nonprofit that unites employers, educators, and community-based organizations to connect young people to family-sustaining careers and create a thriving, inclusive economy.

www.heretohere.org



About JFF

JFF is a national nonprofit that drives transformation in the American workforce and education systems. For 35 years, JFF has led the way in designing innovative and scalable solutions that create access to economic advancement for all. Join us as we build a future that works.

www.jff.org

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Introduction

Alignment between education and employers is more important than ever. The rapidly changing labor market and economy demand that work and learning are better braided together. As the labor market shifts and inequities persist, it is important for postsecondary institutions to provide the opportunities and foundational skills for young people to compete in the labor market and increase their social mobility. In this changing landscape, the knowledge, skills, competencies, and credentials that people receive at educational institutions cannot remain stagnant; they also must be connected to real employer needs and portable between the workforce and education systems.

Strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships between postsecondary institutions and employers are critical to the success of today's students, companies, communities, and the economy. When school and work are aligned, it helps young people contextualize their learning, build their social capital, enter the labor market quickly and successfully, and develop a foundation for lifelong learning.

The postsecondary institutions that can adapt to these changes will thrive and will help young people to thrive. The City University of New York (CUNY) is well positioned to be on the forefront of reshaping our education system in a way that responds to the evolving needs of students, employers, the labor market, and society at large.





The City University of New York

CUNY is the largest urban postsecondary system in the United States, serving over 500,000 students, including 275,000 degree-seeking students and over 225,000 adult and continuing education students. CUNY has 25 institutions across the five boroughs of New York City, including 11 senior colleges, 7 community colleges, and 7 honors and professional schools. It is consistently recognized for its nation-leading mobility rates, with recent data showing that the CUNY system “propelled almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all eight Ivy League campuses, plus Duke, MIT, Stanford, and Chicago, combined.” It is a critical engine of talent and economic development in New York City, with more than three-quarters of its graduates working in the city across a range of major industries.

Many individuals, within and outside the university system, are working to renew CUNY’s focus on the career success of its students by partnering with employers at scale to inform that effort, and drastically reimagining its core activities of instruction and accreditation. CUNY has a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of redesigning talent development through a student-centered, employer-driven approach. Not only can this increase the number of individual students who earn postsecondary credentials that allow them to successfully enter family-supporting careers; it can fundamentally reshape the role of public postsecondary institutions in ensuring that all New Yorkers, regardless of background, can participate in and benefit from our economy. It can also offer valuable lessons for other postsecondary institutions and systems seeking to better align with their local economic needs and opportunities.

This Report

This report highlights the elements—key distinguishers—that make employer-postsecondary collaboration effective by exploring strong partnerships across the CUNY system. The examples in this report represent only a small slice of a much broader network of connections between CUNY and local industry within a large, complex, and evolving ecosystem. The team sought to deepen understanding of the conditions and mechanisms that enable effective partnerships, tell stories of success, highlight key champions, and identify areas for further employer engagement.

In this report, JFF and HERE to HERE partnered together to identify, highlight, and promote practices that, if adopted at scale, could fundamentally reshape our education systems. These practices address existing challenges faced by students, postsecondary institutions, and employers. The team developed and used an Employer Bright Spot Analysis, an original process to identify relevant programs, conduct interviews and research, and analyze learnings to determine best practices and core learnings. JFF aimed to identify strategies that move beyond individual programs toward systems and policies. As mentioned above, this report highlights only some of the employer partnerships across the CUNY system; also absent are voices from students—critical stakeholders in this work. There is more to learn from these and other programs and stakeholders. To read about the full EBSA process and how to conduct it, see Appendix B.

The EBSA process served as a foundation to develop nine key distinguishers, a set of practices that can expand and enhance postsecondary work-based learning and career pathways initiatives. Ultimately, this report is intended to help inform strategic employer partnerships and needed change within not only CUNY but in education systems across the country.

Career Readiness and Success at CUNY

This report is intended to live alongside, complement, and accelerate priorities and efforts at CUNY that focus on career readiness and success, at both the central and campus levels. The commitments, programs, and initiatives listed below provide additional insight and depth to the key distinguishers and examples discussed in this report. They are also part of a larger system that is committed to ensuring that all CUNY students are prepared to succeed in their careers.

CUNY Career Success Initiatives

The CUNY Career Success Initiatives at Central Office is a hub of career support, working to connect all students on all CUNY campuses to “full-time, high-paying jobs that drive social and economic mobility for New Yorkers through higher education.” The Career Success Initiatives team supports students through a range of work-based learning opportunities with employers and careers. They also lead a number of CUNY-wide efforts focused on building capacity and connection across CUNY and workforce systems, including a Sector Innovation Team and a university-wide career success teaching and learning community.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Through work-based learning, a student or worker completes meaningful job tasks in a workplace that develop readiness for work, knowledge, and skills needed to enter or advance in a particular career field. Work-based learning supports a continuum of lifelong learning and skill development for a range of workers and learners—K-12 students, young adults, college students, adult jobseekers, and incumbent workers.

Learn more about work-based learning at www.jff.org/resources/work-based-learning-framework.

The CUNY Career Success Approach

The CUNY Career Success Initiative takes a sector-based approach to improving the career outlook for CUNY students. Developed in partnership with employer partners, the approach is a tailored model of career exploration, skill development, experiential learning, and internship placement to fit the specific demands of each economic sector in New York City.

Career Exploration: On a monthly or bimonthly basis, Continuing Education and Workforce Programs (CEWP) partners with an employer to host an event. At these events, students tour the offices of the partner company, attend a panel discussion about the industry, and network with professionals within the industry.

Skill Development: CEWP hosts boot camps, hack-a-thons, and workshops to teach students general and/or industry-specific skills. Industry-specific events include a real estate evaluation and underwriting boot camp in partnership with Project Destined as well as a data-set analysis workshop taught by analysts from Guardian Life Insurance. Widely applicable skill-building events include workshops to earn certification in platforms such as Hootsuite, Salesforce, Tableau, and others.

Experiential Learning: Long-term experiential learning programs provide students with the opportunity to develop skills and complete a project worth talking about in a job interview. #CUNYCodes is one of the experiential learning programs run through CEWP and is designed to replicate the software development product cycle. Students work in teams and learn how to build a mobile app, moving through the stages of product development, pitching, and running a live demonstration in front of an audience of hundreds of their peers.

Internships: Studies have found that internships are more critical to early career success than which academic subject a student studies. CEWP believes that students excel in their schoolwork when they have the opportunity to apply their classroom learning to work situations. With this mindset, the office supports students in preparing for, screening, securing, and completing internships in each major sector.

Sector Innovation Team

The Sector Innovation Team serves as CUNY's "front door" for employers—the team engages local employers to serve on academic advisory councils, participate in employee volunteer opportunities, and provide students with internships, career exploration or experiential learning activities, and employment opportunities. Since it was launched in 2018, the Sector Innovation Team has secured over 300 employer partners. The team is comprised of a director of sector innovation and four sector innovators covering the financial services, business, technology, and health care sectors.

Career Success Learning Community

Also launched in 2018, the Career Success Learning Community aims to improve CUNY's career success outcomes by providing a space for experimentation, idea creation, and development of best practices. To date, a dozen colleges have participated in this community, represented by teams of five to eight staff members, faculty, and alumni representing various roles and departments across the colleges. This representation is critical to making longstanding systemic change.

Topics covered during monthly Learning Community meetings include:

- Training for career services staff on how to use labor market data
- Individualized technical assistance at each college based on their individualized requests with a subject matter expert in higher education career services
- Defining levels of employer engagement and identifying new ways to partner with employers
- Defining a minimum standard of career readiness
- Identifying and sharing web-based tools that can be used to expand existing programming to reach more students such as Accenture's Skills to Succeed and Learning Exchange platforms

Alongside centralized efforts and resources, individual campuses are working on comprehensive career success initiatives. Informed by their unique contexts and the needs of students and employers, colleges are realizing new strategies that focus on creating strong career foundations for students. For example, campus leaders are initiating sector-specific employer engagement, employer-informed course and program redesign, experiential learning, and data-driven decision making.

New York City Labor Market Information Service

The New York City Labor Market Information Service is a workforce and labor market research and consulting service that is a part of the Center for Urban Research at CUNY's Graduate Center. NYCLMIS is working in collaboration with CUNY's Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Development to understand how recommendations from the 2012 report, [Jobs for New York's Future](#), have been implemented across the CUNY system. An upcoming NYCLMIS report will identify programs or initiatives that position CUNY students for greater labor market success and compare CUNY graduates' labor market outcomes with the overall labor market of New York City. Release of the report is scheduled for fall 2019.

Continuing Education and Workforce Programs Career Success Initiatives Research

The CEWP Career Success Initiative research highlights how CUNY faculty and classroom instructors are driving new innovations in teaching and advising that promote student's long-term career success. By engaging in direct conversation with faculty, this research team hopes to capture the diverse ways in which educators integrate career-readiness content and competencies into academic coursework. The research also explores how faculty understand their role in building career readiness, and draws attention to the relationship between academic advising and students' postgraduate trajectories.

This research is part of a larger project conducted by the CUNY Office of Research, Evaluation & Program Support that highlights promising campus-level career success initiatives and lays the groundwork for a responsive evaluation framework to be designed in the coming years.

Key Distinguishers of Effective Postsecondary-Employer Partnerships

Through analysis of the CUNY system, knowledge of promising models in other contexts, and a literature review, JFF has developed nine key distinguishers of postsecondary-employer partnerships. These key distinguishers describe important components of postsecondary-employer partnerships that lead to meaningful outcomes for students. These distinguishers can serve as guidance for postsecondary and employer partners working to build or improve their partnerships and programs.

The nine key distinguishers of effective partnerships between postsecondary institutions and employers are:

1. Strategies to respond to the needs of industry
2. Clear value for students, employers, and other stakeholders
3. Experiences connected to academic credit and/or portable credentials that enable economic advancement
4. Champions at both program and organizational levels
5. Program staff with industry expertise and/or experience
6. Financial and human resource commitment to the partnership
7. Commitment to co-design with employers
8. Access to existing infrastructure and resources that add capacity to the partnership
9. Collection and use of data

CUNY has many assets to celebrate and learn from, and the stakeholders featured in this report are true leaders in this work. Their work and approaches offer critical insights that help to shape our understanding of what it takes to build successful partnerships, including every one of the nine key distinguishers.

Key Distinguisher 1: Strategies to respond to the needs of industry

The first key distinguisher of a successful postsecondary-employer partnership is that the program or initiative exists and evolves over time in response to industry needs. Industry needs are usually identified through two primary methods: (1) the joint analysis of regional, state, and national labor market information, and (2) consistent discussion and feedback on microtrends within a specific industry sector or within a specific partnering employer. To foster a partnership that is responsive to industry needs, the employer or industry partners have to regularly analyze and audit their own workforce needs to identify in-demand skills, competencies, and credentials. The postsecondary institution[s] must then make appropriate and timely programmatic changes to meet the shifting needs of their employer partners. NYCLMIS, profiled above, is a foundational resource for this kind of analysis that has the potential to catalyze real change.

Some strategies to ensure partnerships are responsive to industry needs include:

- Convening postsecondary faculty and staff with employer partners to jointly analyze labor market information
- Convening sector-specific employer councils to discuss sector-wide needs not captured in labor market information
- Ongoing co-design of program curriculum and work-based learning experiences to ensure skills and competencies developed hold value with employer partners and in the industry more broadly
- Providing credit for the training and learning a CUNY student gains in the workplace, and professional development for faculty and program staff to develop industry-specific knowledge, such as externships

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM AT BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Automotive Technology Associate of Applied Science (AAS) program at Bronx Community College prepares students for a career as an automotive technician. Clement Drummond, the director of the program, is an industry veteran with a strong professional network that he activates to partner with the program and its students.

Across the CUNY system, AAS programs have employer advisory councils to ensure programming and curriculum are aligned with industry. According to Drummond's colleagues, the advisory council for the Automotive Technology program is one of the most impactful and efficiently managed advisory councils within CUNY. The employer members of the advisory council provide guidance and feedback on curriculum, host internships, donate equipment so students are trained on the latest technology, and hire students after they graduate. When the advisory council said that the automotive industry currently and will continue to need technicians with skills in diesel technology, program staff at Bronx Community College developed a specialized diesel technology track. This training leads students to jobs in fleet management and transit for some of the city's largest government agencies.

The program's responsiveness to shifts in the automotive industry is a significant strength that supports the success of all involved. Students in the program have more employment options, are equipped with skills and competencies that matter, and have a direct connection to their local employer community. Partnering employers gain access to an enhanced pipeline of talent that they know has been specifically trained to meet their needs.

Key Distinguisher 2: Clear value for students, employers, and other stakeholders

For a partnership to thrive, it must create value for every stakeholder. Employers and postsecondary partners should clearly articulate the value proposition for their partnership and for students during the start-up phase, then intentionally design programs with those intended outcomes in mind. Whatever value employers and postsecondary institutions find, it is essential that their partnership delivers clear, concrete value to students related to their career entry and trajectory.

CUNY Spotlight: CUNY Service Corps

Founded in 2013, CUNY Service Corps connects CUNY students with paid work experience and, when appropriate, academic credit through a civic-oriented job in either a government agency or a community-based organization. The program, created in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, has grown to serve over 700 students and 112 employer partners from across New York City.

The value for participating students is clear: the program connects them to local employers for paid, real-world work experience that is designed to make an immediate impact on the employer and the community it serves. The program provides many benefits for employers as well. Emily Goldman, who manages the CUNY Service Corps partnership for the Office of the Manhattan Borough President, said the fellows are a "serious value-add" to their work, contribute meaningfully to their mission, and help them test and improve their data literacy curriculum and other products before release. For Noel Blanchet, who oversees the program across eight CUNY campus partners as associate director of workforce programs, the program positions CUNY as a trusted source of talent for the city's public agencies and community-based organizations and allows CUNY to support and serve its communities.

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Key Distinguisher 3: Experiences connected to academic credit and/or portable credentials that enable economic advancement

Programs should recognize students’ individual contributions and skill development in a variety of ways. Ideally, students receive academic credit for their experience, which is a key lever for student success. There are many examples of credit-bearing academic courses directly connected to work experience, including a web security course at The City College of New York (CCNY) that was developed in partnership with Facebook, the Housing and Community Problem Solving Course at John Jay College, and the IQ4 Cybersecurity course offered through the Tech Incubator at Queens College. Guttman Community College’s Ethnographies of Work course is a unique example. In this required first-year course, students reflect on the character of work as part of the academic curriculum and take on a year-long ethnographic study of a career or workplace they’re interested in.

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: CUNY 2X TECH AT THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

CUNY 2X TECH is an initiative to double by 2022 the annual number of CUNY students who graduate [1] with a tech-related bachelor’s degree and [2] prepared to launch careers in New York City’s tech ecosystem. The Mayor’s Office and NYC Tech Talent Pipeline rolled out initiatives at a number of CUNY schools, including The City College of New York. According to program staff, CCNY has experienced an influx of incoming students who express an interest in computer science; however, the program faces retention issues similar to many other postsecondary programs in the CUNY system and elsewhere.

To encourage completion, the CUNY 2X TECH model includes a 7-month long apprenticeship for juniors that focuses on engineering. The fellowship runs much like a co-op model, where students simultaneously engage in work-based learning and related academic coursework. Students also participate in a paid and credit-bearing internship. Though still in its early days, CUNY 2X TECH at CCNY shows promise for its commitment to honoring students’ contributions and supporting their advancement in many ways, including the co-op model and industry involvement.

Key Distinguisher 4: Champions at both program and organizational levels

Active champions at multiple levels are important throughout the lifecycle of a partnership, from start-up through sustainability. Many of the partnerships featured in this report began as initiatives from executive-level offices. For example, the Civil Services Pathways Fellowship is a joint effort between CUNY, New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services, and Mayor's Office Center for Youth Employment (CYE) that places recent CUNY graduates in New York City agencies that originated in the chancellor's office. Similarly, CUNY 2x TECH, the citywide initiative highlighted above, was launched in 2017 as part of Mayor Bill de Blasio's New York Works plan. This kind of executive-level support is helpful during the startup phase as it provides visibility, access to key partners, and resources.

It is equally crucial to the successful start-up and sustainability of the program to have program-level leaders from both the postsecondary and employer partners. These individuals are responsible for designing and implementing the program, maintaining the partnership, and supporting students. There are multiple models for staffing partnerships for both postsecondary institutions and employers. Some employers have a position dedicated to the program. For example, Tim Coan is the executive director of the Deerfield Management Fellows Program, providing critical leadership and support for all aspects of the partnership between CUNY and Deerfield, a health care investment firm. He has worked closely with Beth Spektor, who works in CUNY's Office of Workforce Partnerships and who leads the internship and fellowship programs for students. Other employers support the program through broader human resources initiatives at the company. In any case, champions from the college and the employer must work together to move the work forward.

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: GUTTMAN-CHASE PART-TIME TELLER PROGRAM AT GUTTMAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Guttman-Chase Part-Time Teller program prepares students for entry-level employment as bank tellers. The partnership between JPMorgan Chase and Guttman Community College began at the organizational leadership levels; HERE to HERE facilitated a connection between Jesse Jackson, chief learning officer at JPMorgan Chase, and the president's office at Guttman Community College. This connection was critical as leaders worked together to develop the partnership and determine intended program outcomes.

The program launched in January 2017 and continues to thrive today, in large part due to dedicated program champions at Guttman Community College and JPMorgan Chase. At Guttman, Linda Merians, chief of staff to the president, is a dynamic leader of the program and responsible for maintaining partnerships, delivering curriculum, and iterating on program design. Linda and her colleagues at Guttman—Professor Naveen Seth, program coordinator of business administration, and Valora Blackson, director of the center for career preparation and partnerships—bring a deep commitment to the students they serve. In Linda's words, they do "whatever needs to be done." Guttman program leaders are quick to celebrate their counterparts in JPMorgan Chase's human resources department, who they describe as truly equal partners in this work who are absolutely crucial to the program's success. Caitlin Crump, recruiting, community, and workforce engagement manager at JPMorgan Chase, connects with the Guttman team through weekly phone calls and works to ensure that students are prepared and have access to entry-level bank teller positions.

The program just hosted its third cohort at Guttman, with a success rate of 90 percent of graduates hired at JPMorgan Chase. It recently expanded to Bronx Community College, which hosted its first cohort this year.

Key Distinguisher 5: Program staff with industry expertise and/or experience

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: TECH INCUBATOR AT QUEENS COLLEGE

One component of the Tech Incubator at Queens College is preparing students for information technology internships in New York City. Ying Zhou, executive director of the Tech Incubator, is an industry alum who came to the program in 2016 with over 20 years of experience in computer applications, accounting, and information systems. Zhou has maintained relationships with former colleagues and peers, and has stayed current on industry trends and needs. For example, Zhou responded to the increased demand for cybersecurity professionals by piloting a course to better prepare Queens College students for cybersecurity internships and careers. Students who complete the course are eligible for internships with employers like Lazard and Atlas Cybersecurity, two employer partners cultivated from Zhou's professional network.

Key Distinguisher 6: Financial and human resource commitment to the partnership

To be effective and sustainable, successful partnerships must be grounded in a commitment to consistent communication, responsiveness, and joint problem solving. They require consistent and ongoing attention to ensure they can evolve to meet the needs of all stakeholders—a role that Ying Zhou, executive director of the Tech Incubator at Queens College, refers to as “chief cooperating officer.” Partnerships should incorporate a range of formal and informal feedback loops to drive continuous improvement, with open lines of communication and a team approach. For example, Linda Merians of the Guttman-Chase Part-Time Teller Program has weekly meetings to discuss program updates and curriculum development with her partners at JPMorgan Chase.

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: CIVIL SERVICE PATHWAYS FELLOWSHIP AND DOITT TECH FELLOWSHIP

The Civil Service Pathways Fellowship and the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) Tech Fellowship programs are innovative partnerships between CUNY and New York City agencies. These full-time opportunities are open to recent CUNY graduates and are designed to facilitate their seamless transition from fellow to permanent employee. The fellowships are comprehensive, supporting young people through professional development, specialized training, networking, and completion of the civil service exam.

There are many moving pieces that require ongoing communication and collaboration. Through bimonthly meetings, Caroline Thrun and Kristen Kainer-Turner worked closely with partners at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and CYE to identify opportunities and troubleshoot challenges. They continuously work to make processes more streamlined. Over time, they have tackled a number of programmatic and bureaucratic challenges, including state approval of civil service lines, funding, individualized professional development, and hiring timelines.

Key Distinguisher 7: Commitment to co-design with employers

Partnerships that actively engage postsecondary institutions and employers in co-designing programs and experiences generate value for stakeholders. In authentic co-design models, partners work together to develop the program, including its curriculum, structure, and processes. In some programs, such as CUNY Service Corps, employer partners provide feedback that directly informs the content of student trainings. In others, such as the cybersecurity course at the Tech Incubator at Queens College, employer partners play a prominent role in designing and leading the course content.

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: WEB SECURITY COURSE AT THE CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

Each semester, The City College of New York offers a course that provides students with instruction and hands-on experience in the fundamentals of web application security. The course was developed in partnership with Facebook and CodePath, a nonprofit committed to increasing diversity in tech through computer science education. It is a hybrid, project-based course that includes a weekly student-led lab. Rosario Gennaro, a professor of computer science and the director of the Center for Algorithms and Interactive Scientific Software, oversees the course and supervises the students who lead it. CodePath helps to select the CCNY teaching team, then works closely with that team, Facebook, and other employers to improve the platform and the curriculum. The partnership with Facebook also includes additional opportunities for career learning and networking, including a “Cybersecurity with Facebook” event, access to internships, and invitations to conferences.

Key Distinguisher 8: Access to existing infrastructure and resources that add capacity to the partnership

Partnerships are most effective and sustainable when they are integrated into a larger infrastructure. Partnerships can use a range of creative approaches to leverage existing assets and resources—on campus, at the employer, in the community, and across the larger workforce and education ecosystems.

First, career offices and human resource departments often have existing systems and structures to support the goals of partnerships. On a logistical level, technology tools like Symplicity or Handshake can support the management of processes and data, and several programs profiled here benefit from the advantages of such tools. From a student support perspective, individual programs can benefit from larger systems of mentoring, career development, wellness resources, and other holistic supports. For example, students in the TechHire OpenCode at LaGuardia Community College have access not only to the resources of the program and its partners, but also to wraparound services and supports available on campus. Students also receive supports from employers; students in the Guttman-Chase Part-Time Teller Program benefit from Chase’s strong commitment to supporting and developing its employees.

Overall, students’ actual experiences in the programs are impacted by the extent to which the goals of the partnership are aligned to the larger priorities of the postsecondary and employer partners involved. This alignment also impacts the long-term sustainability of the work. This can extend to the larger organization or institution. At John Jay College, leaders are focused on integrating employment into academic work, blurring the traditional separation between career-focused and academic learning on campus. Similarly, as part of CUNY Central’s Career Success Initiative grant, leaders at Borough of Manhattan Community College are taking a holistic approach to career development by integrating academic and career advising, and embedding career exploration and readiness assignments into academic curricula. On both campuses, these larger structures can serve as a powerful foundation for employer partnership efforts.

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT BARUCH COLLEGE

The Financial Leadership Program at Baruch College is an intensive training program that propels students into successful careers in finance. It is highly competitive and respected across the finance industry. The FLP classroom environment is modeled as closely as possible after “real life” at an investment bank, and students are trained and treated as analysts would be in the corporate environment. Students who complete the program consistently receive offers for front-office positions in top analyst programs.

Marietta Bottero is the visionary leader of the program, crafting a comprehensive curriculum and set of experiences that span technical, leadership, and professional skills. She is able to leverage the Starr Career Development Center at Baruch for resources, expertise, and capacity. The SCDC has an expert employer relations team and plays an important role in marketing, recruitment, career counseling support services, and other programming. For example, all FLP students attend a dining etiquette workshop hosted by SCDC. Additionally, the FLP leverages the resources and expertise of the Baruch College teaching staff, including a session called “The Nexus of Real Estate and Finance,” taught by Professor Yildiray Yildirim. The FLP also relies heavily on the support of a global network of program alumni, which currently includes about 500 professionals.

Key Distinguisher 9: Collection and use of data

A complete understanding of partnership effectiveness—of a particular partnership or of postsecondary-employer partnerships more generally—requires data. Programs and initiatives must have clearly defined metrics of success, as well as the systems in place to collect, analyze, and share those metrics. Improvement science offers a powerful framing question for such efforts: What works, for whom, and under what set of conditions? Answering these questions is important to identifying effective practices and to ensuring equitable access and outcomes within and across programs. It is also complex and challenging for a number of reasons: availability of data, confidentiality concerns related to data sharing, the delay between the experience and the desired outcomes, and capacity, among others.

CUNY SPOTLIGHT: STARTUP EXPERIENCE THROUGH COMPANY

Company is a tech accelerator in New York City with a diverse community of entrepreneurs and startups. Since 2016, Company has hosted between 25 and 50 summer interns per year. Interns are placed with start-ups in Company’s portfolio in a range of business, technology, and marketing roles. Company also hosts programming, including speakers and community conversations, with a vision of a more thoughtful and efficient operating model for the tech sector.

According to its website, Company is committed to “taking a data-driven approach to establishing maximally effective strategies for connecting too-often-overlooked NYC-area talent to opportunities at tomorrow’s leading tech companies.” They recently hired a full-time director for their impact work. They define clear metrics and consistently measure their progress toward those metrics. For example, they have a focus on intern conversions, or the rate at which internships translate into additional internships or permanent positions in the tech sector. They use data to improve their strategy and their impact.

These nine key distinguishers provide a framework for creating and sustaining powerful partnerships between postsecondary institutions and local employers. Individually and collectively, they have implications for program quality and effectiveness. They also have systems-level implications, offering guidance toward better alignment between education and work.

National Exemplars

Below are other models outside of the CUNY system that exemplify the key distinguishers, in practice and at scale.

- California Community College System's [Doing What Matters and Strong Workforce Program initiatives](#) are leading the field in developing the system infrastructure to support high-quality partnerships with the employer community.
- Massachusetts Department of Higher Education is piloting a new [Performance Measurement Reporting System](#) that aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the performance of each of Massachusetts' community colleges and state universities on a set of key indicators focused on access and affordability, student success and completion, workforce alignment, and fiscal stewardship.
- Through the U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) grant program, [many community college systems](#) across the country are partnering strategically with their local workforce development boards to improve labor market outcomes for students.
- [Work-based courses](#) are community college courses that have been redesigned in partnership with employers, so students learn competencies in the classroom and lab as well as through the job itself. This builds on work-based learning models such as apprenticeship.
- Columbus State Community College in Ohio is shepherding a regional strategy for economic development through its participation in the [Central Ohio Compact](#) and its other workforce and transition initiatives.
- [Elevate Iowa](#) is a system-wide initiative of 15 community college districts, industry, and the state's workforce system to meet the needs of employers seeking skilled workers in advanced manufacturing.
- Many other exemplary programs are described in Aspen Institute's recent publication, [The Workforce Playbook: A Community College Guide to Delivering Excellent Career and Technical Education](#).



Conclusion

Across the country, postsecondary institutions and employers are seeking and acting in new ways to bridge education and work, recognizing that these connections are essential to creating access to economic advancement for all. Exploring model programs within the CUNY system and determining the key elements that drive their success can inform not only the design of individual programs, but the policies, priorities, and resources of the institutions that offer those programs.

As the work of identifying promising programs and essential practices is undertaken, it is also important to think of larger goals and systems. What does an ideal future look like—for students, for employers, for educational institutions, and for the overall economy? And how do we get there? This report is one iteration of how we can take promising programs at CUNY, identify essential practices within those programs, and codify those practices as a guide for institutions and stakeholders as we strive for that envisioned future. As we learn more about what works and how it works, we can more effectively advocate for and implement the broader systemic and policy changes that can translate and transform systems that are working for some into systems that work for all.

Partnerships that Drive the Future

Building stronger postsecondary-employer partnerships must move beyond individual programs toward systems and policies. We must also address system-level policy issues if integrated educator and employer partnerships are going to become the norm rather than the exception. JFF offers three recommendations for these kinds of changes, presented specifically within the CUNY context but relevant to other postsecondary institutions working to improve career outcomes for its students.

Common Standards for Academic Credit

First, there is currently a bright line that separates programs that are operated through continuing education offices from those that are offered through degree-granting academic departments. That bright line must become blurred. CUNY should develop a common set of standards for awarding academic credit regardless of where that course is housed. CUNY should also be open to awarding credit for courses delivered through their employer partners when those courses meet common standards.

Ultimately, the goal should be to create a set of competency-based certificates and applied degrees that are respected both by academics and employers, and that can be attained through an integrated set of courses and aligned work-based learning experiences. The ideal system is one that is permeable, with no dead ends, and that enables students to earn transferable credentials that are valued in the labor market.

Define Success

Second, we need to think more systemically about how we define student and institutional success. By blurring the lines and creating a more permeable system, campuses and faculty will be better positioned to align with employers and prepare students to benefit from and contribute to the New York City regional economy and beyond. It is necessary for CUNY to create an infrastructure that will allow for consistent data collection and sharing, enabling them to tell compelling stories and identify and scale effective practices. This will better position CUNY as a critical economic development engine in the region's economy.

Shared Responsibility for Talent Development

Finally, educators and employers must share responsibility for developing talent. If partnerships with employers are to become a central component of CUNY's strategy to enable all of its students to become more career ready and well positioned for promising entry-level positions, it is necessary to develop a coordinated, system-wide structure. For example, in partnership with the individual colleges in the system, CUNY could consider creating a network of small, employer-facing, campus-based units. In addition to employer outreach, these units would bring employers and faculty together to develop new programs, courses, and curricula that are responsive to emerging labor market needs and opportunities. The units would need to work across the continuing education and degree program divide. They would also

need to coordinate with their peer units at other colleges and work under the broad supervision of CUNY's central employer engagement team to reduce the risk that the same employers will be bombarded with requests from multiple institutions.

For example, City Colleges in Chicago, which is comprised of seven independently accredited community colleges, have established "Centers of Excellence." In their model, one of the colleges takes the lead within a particular industry to identify the in-demand occupations and develop curriculum. That curriculum is then made available to and taught at other colleges, making it accessible to as many students as possible.

We envision a CUNY in which every student in every academic program can easily gain credits for work experience that is provided through rigorous instruction and supervision, with employers and educators collaborating as partners. If this is to happen, it cannot be left to individual students, faculty, or programs to negotiate the arrangements; a dedicated network of campus-based units would facilitate alignment, consistency, and efficiency.

Accelerating Change

Ensuring that all CUNY students have access to the skills, experience, credentials, and networks necessary for career success in New York City's dynamic labor market is an urgent matter that holds significant implications for the economic and social future of the city and region. This challenge is complex and requires leadership from every corner of the university and city. As this report demonstrates, the work to develop more integrated education and workforce systems is already underway.

Assets, champions, and innovative approaches to the career development of students abound across the CUNY system. They can serve as a foundation for a future that puts CUNY at the center of a system that effectively connects New York City's diverse talent to the region's many promising opportunities, translating pockets of success into a comprehensive and aligned system of career readiness that reaches into New York City's deep talent pool.

At the same time, we can look to and build upon this work and the nine key distinguishers to transform all our educational institutions to make these best practices a new status quo, in New York City and beyond.



Appendix A

Additional Resources

The following resources offer additional information about employer partnerships and other concepts covered above, many of which shaped the thinking and analysis presented in this report.

- [A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers](#)
January 2015, JFF
- [Career Pathways: Five Ways to Connect College and Careers](#)
July 2017, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
- [Community Colleges and the California Dream: Engines for Income Mobility](#)
March 2018, Rachel Lipson and Noah Stern, joint MPP/MBA candidates, Harvard University
- [Effective Employer Engagement Practices: Observations from Select Technology Apprenticeship Programs](#)
August 2018, JFF
- [Employer Engagement Toolkit: From Placement to Partners](#)
September 2015, JFF
- [Framework to Improve Student Transitions through College & Career Readiness System Alignment](#)
October 2017, North and East Bay Pathways Consortium (NEBPC); College & Careers Academy Support Network (CCASN)
- [Framing the Opportunity: Eight State Policy Recommendations that Support Postsecondary Credential Completion for Underserved Populations](#)
April 2017, JFF
- [Making Work-Based Learning Work for Retail](#)
June 2018, JFF
- [Powerhouse Partnerships: Community Colleges and Workforce Boards Working Together](#)
March 2018, JFF
- [Preparing America's Labor Force: Workforce Development Programs in Public Community Colleges](#)
December 2016, Brookings Institution
- [Work-and-Learn in Action: Successful Strategies for Employers](#)
November 2015, National Network Connecting Learning and Work
- [Work-Based Learning with Small Business](#)
November 2018, JFF
- [Workforce Agenda for New York City](#), September 2018, Workforce Field Building Hub



Appendix B

Employer Bright Spot Analysis Process

The Employer Bright Spot Analysis included four stages: program identification, literature and practice review, interviews, and analysis. The process was not linear; the stages informed each other in an iterative way. For example, interviews and analysis surfaced additional bodies of literature and new programs to study. In addition, through update memos, check-in meetings, and working sessions, JFF worked with HERE to HERE and CUNY to calibrate goals and integrate additional context. Overall, the EBSA process enabled us to synthesize conversations with stakeholders and national best practices to identify core themes and lessons related to postsecondary-employer partnerships.

Program Identification

Using a set of program scan criteria, JFF worked with HERE to HERE and CUNY to identify a list of programs for possible analysis. The team then worked with our partner at NYU Steinhardt to conduct an initial scan of the proposed programs to ensure a diverse range of CUNY-employer partnerships across three groups. During the project, additional programs were added to the list based on new insights and information. It is important to reiterate that the list is not complete; there are additional programs and initiatives doing powerful and innovative work with local employers that are not captured.

One goal of this process is to develop and maintain a directory of programs, practices, and initiatives. If you know of a program or initiative that you think should be highlighted and added to the directory, please contact Chloe Evans-Cross, project manager of postsecondary partnerships at HERE to HERE, at cevanscross@heretohere.org.

Literature and Practice Review

Throughout the EBSA process, JFF utilized a range of sources to inform design and analyses. This included asset-mapping documents, best-practice reports about postsecondary-employer efforts, research literature, relevant JFF publications about employer engagement and partnerships, and local labor market information. Appendix A on page 23 provides a list of resources about employer partnerships and other concepts presented in this report, many of which shaped our thinking and analysis. There is an overview of strong models outside the CUNY system on page 19 of this report. JFF also completed desk-based research about each program prior to the interviews.

Interviews

Informed by JFF's research and experience, the team developed an interview protocol to gather information about the practices and structures underlying successful partnerships between CUNY and employers. The interview protocol was loosely organized into three categories: context, outcomes, and mechanisms.

The interviews were designed to:

- Provide detail about a program's key components and strengths
- Identify additional sources of information and data about the partnerships (e.g., program staff, employers, key partners, etc.)
- Inform the development of a set of key distinguishers for postsecondary-employer partnerships

The team interviewed a total of 31 people across 16 CUNY programs and offices for this report. A complete list of interviewees is included in Appendix C below.

Analysis

Using the interview protocol categories as an overall frame, JFF identified core themes that emerged from the conversations and were informed by national best practices. By conducting additional interviews, examining additional practices, and engaging in discussions with partners and stakeholders, the team continuously fine-tuned the synthesis to better understand and capture the mechanisms of the bright spots within and across programs.

Challenges and Limitations

In this report, JFF and HERE to HERE hope to capture a broad and representative range of roles, experiences, organizations, and types of partnerships across the CUNY system. However, we recognize that some important voices are missing from our research and interviews. First, as stated in the introduction, this report highlights a small subset of a much larger group of employer partnerships across the CUNY system, including some that are quietly propelling the career trajectories of students under the radar of accolades and recognition. There is more to learn from such programs. In addition, the voices of students and employees—critical stakeholders in this work—were not included in this methodology and would likely add important layers to our findings. Finally, JFF mostly looked at partnerships through a lens of specific programs with a goal of identifying strategies that move beyond individual programs toward systems and policies.



Appendix C

Interviewees*

- APPLE Corps, John Jay College
 - Jennifer Hernandez-Khan, program coordinator
- Automotive Technology Program, Bronx Community College
 - Clement Drummond, director of automotive technology
 - Kenneth Adams, dean of economic and workforce development
- Web Security course, The City College of New York
 - Rosario Gennaro, professor and director of the Center for Algorithms and Interactive Scientific Software
- Civil Service Pathways Internship & Fellowship Program
 - Caroline Thrun, fellowship and training manager, internship programs, CUNY Office of Academic Affairs
 - Kristen Kainer-Turner, director, CUNY internship programs
- CUNY 2x Tech, The City College of New York
 - Martha Hantzandreou, CUNY 2x Tech academic advisor
 - Tiffany Jackson, academic specialist and CUNY 2x Tech campus manager
- CUNY 2x Tech, Lehman College
 - Lawrence Fauntleroy, director of CUNY 2x / Tech Talent Pipeline
- CUNY Office of Research, Evaluation & Program Support
 - Corinne Kentor, research fellow
 - Charles Madsen, assistant director
- CUNY Sector Innovation Team
 - Zach Levek, program manager for sector innovation
 - Katie Lyon, business sector innovation specialist
 - Ka Yee Tom, finance sector innovation specialist
- CUNY Service Corps
 - Noel Blanchet, associate director, Continuing Education and Workforce Programs
 - Emily Goldman, associate director, Civic Innovation Fellowship Program
- Deerfield Management Internship and Fellowship Program
 - Beth Spektor, Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Partnerships
 - Nakisha Evans, director, Office of Workforce Partnerships
 - Mariam Sow, CUNY life sciences program coordinator
 - Tim Coan, executive director, Fellows Program—Deerfield Management
- Financial Leadership Program, Baruch College
 - Marietta Bottero, manager, Financial Leadership Program
 - Ellen Stein, director, Starr Career Development Center, Baruch College
- Housing and Community Problem Solving Internship course, John Jay College
 - Chantelle Wright, director, Center for Career & Professional Development
- Guttman-Chase Part-Time Teller Program, Guttman Community College
 - Linda Merians, chief of staff
- New York City Labor Market Information Service, The Graduate Center, CUNY
 - Jaclyn Kelly, deputy director, NYCLMIS
 - Kathleen Flandrick, research manager, NYCLMIS
- OpenCode TechHire Program, LaGuardia Community College
 - Seema Shah, director of technology and innovation initiatives
 - Michele Valdez, director of workforce technology initiatives
- Tech Incubator, Queens College
 - Ying Zhou, executive director
 - Peter Keenan, chief information security officer, Lazard
 - Benjamin Dynkin, co-executive director, American Cybersecurity Institute, and co-founder & CEO, Atlas Cybersecurity

*The titles listed reflect titles at the time of the interview.

Appendix D

Possible Categories of Data to Inform Partnerships

Category	Indicator/Data/Question
Program Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many students can the program serve? • How many students are enrolled (total and as a percentage of total institution enrollment)? • What is the acceptance rate? • What are the demographics of enrolled students (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.)? • What degree programs or areas of study are participating students enrolled in? • What are the admission requirements/criteria?
Institutional Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What institution(s) are involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Type of institution ◦ Size of institution • What degree programs or areas of study are offered at the participating CUNY institution? • How many students are enrolled in each degree program or area of study? • What employer(s) are involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Type of organization ◦ Size of organization • Regional Labor Market • What is the status of the regional labor market specific to the relevant sector(s) and/or occupation(s)?
Regional Labor Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of the regional labor market specific to the relevant sector(s) and/or occupation(s)?
Completion and Credential Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of students persist through X benchmark(s) of program duration? • What is the average time to completion? • What percentage of students complete the program with a credential (industry-recognized or otherwise)? • What are the graduation rates of students involved in the program?
Transition to Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of students transition to employment upon program completion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What percentage of students transition to employment after X benchmark(s) of time? • What are the median wages for students who transition to employment? • What types of employment (job titles, part or full time, benefits eligible, etc.) do students have? • What are the retention rates after X benchmark(s) of time on the job?
Transition to Further Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of program completers transition to further education? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Two-year degree? ◦ Four-year? • For those who transition to further education, what are the graduation rates?

Endnotes

- 1 Randall Wilson, *A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers* (Boston: JFF, 2015)
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- 3 "CUNY & The City," City University of New York, accessed June 1, 2019
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- 6 Davis Jenkins and Thomas Bailey, "Early Momentum Metrics: Why They Matter for College Improvement," CCRC Research Brief, no. 65 (February 2017)
<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/early-momentum-metrics-college-improvement.html>
- 7 Mary Gatta and Nancy Hoffman, *Putting Vocation at the Center of the Curriculum: The Student Experience in CUNY's Ethnographies of Work Course* (New York: Guttman Community College; New York: CUNY; Boston: JFF, 2018)
https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/Vocation_at_Center_of_Curriculum_FINAL.pdf
- 8 Charlotte Cahill, *Making Work-Based Learning Work* (Boston: JFF, 2016)
<https://www.jff.org/resources/making-work-based-learning-work/>
- 9 Anthony Bryk et al., *Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2015).

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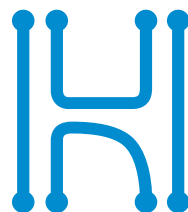


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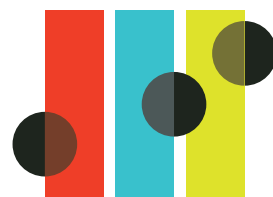
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