

Establishing Linkages between Higher Education Institutions and Industry

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Over the past few decades hundreds of linkages between higher education institutions and business/industry have been initiated, formalized, and expanded. This rapid increase in linkages is a reflection of a number of forces active in the larger society. Linkages are viewed as a way to address local, regional, and national needs. Their proliferation reflects the growing importance that is ascribed to these ventures by various institutional, business, and governmental bodies.

Industry/College partnerships are important to various groups. Many top-level administrators place significant emphasis on establishing and nurturing collaborations. At the faculty level, business and technology areas are obvious participants, along with many other departments that are able to offer needed services and skill sets aimed at workforce development and employee growth. Attainment of corporate goals means that organizations have to improve product quality, increase efficiency, incorporate technology, and function effectively in a globally dependent economy. Higher education institutions, at all levels, are often viewed as an important partner that can help industries in their quest.

The focus of this workshop is on those ventures and activities that are to some extent organized, established, and supported by institutional organs. Since institutional involvement exists, one may then view such endeavors as extensions of institutional vision, mission, and objectives with respect to interaction with a particular external constituency. More specifically, the external constituency consists of business organizations, and the involvement revolves around mutually beneficial arrangements that are centered mainly on economic issues.

The workshop will address three broad goals. The first goal is to present a summary of existing collaborative activities at higher education institutions. Some examples of such activities include certificate programs, customized training programs, internship programs, technology transfer, workforce development, and industry advisory boards. The second goal is to engage in a roundtable exchange of ideas and experiences pertaining to the establishment and/or enhancement of collaborations with industry. While there is much focus on the benefits of collaborative endeavors, some challenges and concerns need also be addressed. The third goal is to explore ways and means whereby the workshop participants and other interested parties may continue to network and interact, using the Internet as a primary medium for ongoing discussion.