

Summary Report: 2nd Alaska Joint Fisheries Seafood Maritime Workforce Forum

October 22, 2012

On October 2nd, 2012, the University of Alaska welcomed 67 representatives from fisheries, seafood and maritime companies and organizations to the 2nd Alaska Joint Fisheries Seafood Maritime Workforce Forum at the Hilton in Anchorage. The purpose of the day-long event was to continue the collaboration from the 1st Forum held in March 2012 towards planning for broader advancement of Fisheries, Seafood and Maritime (FSM) workforce development across the state of Alaska. Another significant goal of the day was to seek industry/ employer input on the package of FSM education program proposals submitted by UA campuses in consideration of a FY14 legislative request by the UA Board of Regents.

Fred Villa, Associate VP, UA Statewide Workforce Development, welcomed everyone to the forum. He emphasized that the day would be about the university team listening to industry, employers and policy representatives around the room, engaging and understanding how we can advance workforce development in the FSM industry within Alaska. Introductions were made around the room. A participant list can be found [here](#).

The McDowell Group's analyst Scott Miller presented a summary of the [Education and Training Gap Analysis for the Fisheries, Seafood, Maritime Workforce Report](#) including the survey results from April 2012. Click [here](#) for the presentation.

Dr. Gunnar Knapp, Professor, ISER, UAA, presented a summary of his exploration of other FSM education programs in Iceland, Norway and New Zealand to learn best practices that we consider applying to our FSM Initiative. Click [here](#) for the presentation.

During the morning Q&A session, Greg Cashen, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, emphasized the various funding streams available through

Alaska Workforce Investment Board and encouraged leverage funding from employers. He also emphasized that AWIB has worked directly with a number of employers and institutions in designing WFD apprenticeship and other programs.

In the last morning session, representatives from fisheries, seafood processing and maritime organizations adjourned to small group break-out sessions to discuss:

- 1) Group Goals for providing feedback on Process and Proposals
 - Are your education and training needs being addressed?
 - What are your highest priorities for education and training?
 - Have we missed anything?
 - Identify top proposals
- 2) Shared perspectives and moving ahead
 - How do we collectively sustain an ongoing long-term discussion of FSM workforce education and training needs, gaps, opportunities?

After lunch, Representative Bryce Edgmon was invited to provide remarks. Representative Edgmon expressed thanks to all for making the effort to participate in this forum. He emphasized that it goes along way when Industry, UA, voc-tech centers, NGOs work together to advocate for legislative funding. He further noted that Alaska is one of very few states with a funding surplus but it is short-term in nature given the reliance on oil. So even with a surplus, the competition for funding is fierce.

Attendees reconvened in the afternoon to share results of their small group discussions. Candid discussions ensued on a broad range of topics. Common themes emerged including the establishment of an Industry Advisory Committee charged with: (1) providing an inventory and needs assessment of FSM occupations, (2) assist in

building a comprehensive integrated workforce development action plan representing all FSM sectors and all training needs from K-12 to post-secondary and into post-employment development; and (3) work

What you can do:

- Review the UA Education and Training Inventory, let us know what programs are relevant to your company's/member organization's education and training needs alaska.edu/fsmi/reports-documents
- Let us know how you can contribute to developing the comprehensive industry occupational needs assessment.
- Let us know if you would like to commit your time to the Industry Advisory Committee in the year to come.

Fisheries, Seafood, and Maritime Initiative:

-engaging fisheries, seafood and maritime sectors and community partners to assess, develop and deliver programs, training and research that prepare Alaskans to meet current and emerging workforce, economic and scientific needs.

The FSMI Goals are:

- (1) **Sustain and enhance the economy and the communities of Alaska** by developing a responsive workforce that enables the fishing/seafood and maritime industries to stay vibrant and substantial contributors to the state;
- (2) **Support Alaska's workforce, particularly in coastal communities**, in discovering and preparing for the wide range of employment opportunities in the fishing, seafood and maritime industries, and
- (3) **Provide research to sustain resources** on which these communities and sectors depend.

with UA in making recommendations for highest priority training needs and funding.

Fred Villa facilitated a large group discussion to further identify priorities, link this FSM Initiative with other state economic and workforce development initiatives and to identify opportunities to continue engagement. It was reiterated that the University has been given the opportunity by the Governor and the UA President for a placeholder for FY14 funding of programs that meet immediate FSM needs. Further, there was overwhelming support in the room for industry engagement, that is, to commit time and resources, in moving forward with the more strategic goal of building an industry-driven comprehensive WFD plan.

The day wrapped up with all participants having the opportunity to share their reflections on the day. There was much positive feedback from the day and a wide recognition of a lot more work ahead in developing a comprehensive workforce development plan. Based on the Forum's dialogue and subsequent work, the UA FSM Initiative will undertake these next steps:

- Establish an Industry Advisory Committee
- Complete an industry-driven occupational needs assessment
- Assess occupational areas of highest projected need
- Conduct a gap analysis of current training capacity vs highest need
- Make recommendations for programs and funding within a comprehensive workforce development plan

UA Fisheries, Seafood and Maritime Initiative

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We want to hear from you!

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