47th NAWI Annual Conference - 2012
Boston, Massachusetts

Pathways to Prosperity: Innovation for the 21st Century Workforce
May 24-24, 2012

Conference Program

Presentations

National Association for Workforce Improvement hosts annual conference on innovation for the 21st century workforce.

Boston, MA, July 2, 2012:

NAWI’s 47th Annual Conference, held at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers, offered attendees a broad range of learning opportunities focused on improving educational models to address the ever-changing needs of the 21st century workforce. Conference topics included creating a culture of innovation in teaching and learning, industry/education collaborative best practices, igniting student interest in STEM, sustainable and interdisciplinary product design, and workforce initiatives in emerging technologies.

The event kicked off with a Keynote from Charles Fadel, founder and chairman of the Center for Curriculum Redesign and Visiting Scholar at Harvard, MIT and Wharton/Penn, on technology, 21st Century Skills and STEM. Mr. Fadel is author of 21st Century Skills – Learning for Life in our Times. The luncheon keynote topic was “Human Centered Design: Transforming Spaces in the 21st Century” by Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director, Institute for Human Centered Design. Ms. Fletcher conveyed the importance of assuring that workplaces meet the needs of our changing population base. On Friday, Dale Dougherty, founder of Maker Faire, and Editor and Publisher of Make magazine, presented and led a group problem-solving and report-out session on integrating Maker Spaces into public schools. The final session of the conference, Friday’s luncheon keynote, was from William Symonds on “Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenges of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century.” Mr. Symonds is Director of the Pathways to Prosperity Project at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education.

Attendees included state- and local-level career and technical education administrators and practitioners, faculty and staff of secondary schools, technical institutes, community colleges and universities as well as workforce development and business partners from 22 states and the Island of Guam.
Here’s what attendees are saying about the NAWI Conference:

“The NAWI conference brings together scholars from workforce and education. It is where the future of STEM education is designed, driven by the need for continued innovation to create real world opportunities for students.”

_Pete Symula, Department Chair, Design and Technology Education, Bellows Free Academy, St. Albans, VT_  

“NAWI is a great conference. The size is just right to meet the people you want to meet and interact with. The presentations were timely and relevant to my needs as a program coordinator. Attending the NAWI conference activates the collective creativity of the team we take to the conference. If we could only attend one conference next year, I would choose NAWI.”

_Jim Gibson, Professor and Program Coordinator, Electronics, Illinois Valley Community College, Oglesby, IL_  

“I would definitely recommend the NAWI Conference to any professional educator who wants to keep up to date on Career and Technical Education at the national level. I found the presenters very knowledgeable, and the small, interactive formats were informative and responsive to my needs as a Career and Technical Education professional.”

_Dr. Oscar Carter, Northeast District Supervisor, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Jefferson City, MO_  

“I found the NAWI conference to be an exceptional experience. The collection of professionals spanning the high school – 2 year community college – 4 year university – employment spectrum shared relevant information to align and bridge our nation’s workforce pipeline. The connections made with some of these individuals were the biggest benefit of the conference experience.”

_Mark Vesligaj, Professor and Program Coordinator, Engineering Science & Technology Studies, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Danielson, CT_  

“I found the [NAWI] workshops both interesting and energizing. . . As interesting as the workshops was the discussion with some of the vendors. I was able to make some connections with vendors for resources we did not know were available.”

_Twiladawn Perry, Assistant Head for Special Education & Technical Education, Lyndon Institute, Lyndon Center, VT_  

In addition to the rich educational content, the conference also offered a range of exhibits featuring alternative energy training systems, welding and cutting training, robotics and electronic supplies for the classroom, and technical education and workforce capacity-building services and publications. Just
recently, NAWI began inviting exhibitors to showcase products and services, and the Board anticipates that next year’s event will offer even more opportunity for exhibitor participation.

“We have a newly designed curriculum kit that we’re trying to get in front of curriculum directors at the state level. So the NAWI event was a great place to meet educators and administrators responsible for seeking out new and innovative means for educating today’s students,” said Betsy VanDuyne, a marketing manager at Hypertherm, Inc.

Since 1966 NAWI has served members who have connections to Career and Technical Education and the workplace, with the goal of providing top quality education and training to individuals preparing to enter the workforce. NAWI seeks to:

- ensure that workplace innovation, including new technologies, is featured in education/training,
- promote cooperation among business, education, and community entities through regional and national events and strategic partnerships, and
- highlight successful program improvement activities in Career and Technical Education.

For more information, contact Douglas Webster, gcfusa@yahoo.com

Doug Webster, Vermont Dept. of Education; Fenna Hanes, New England Board of Higher Education; Dale Dougherty, Founder, Maker Faire
Presenter Joyce Maylin-Smith, Education Development Center; Nicole Schepker, New England Board of Higher Education

Marc-Charles Morquette, student; Dale Dougherty, Founder, Maker Faire