University of Cincinnati: Human Capital in the 21st Century Knowledge Economy
ABOUT DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

In direct alignment with our vision for talent as the single most powerful force to drive innovation and economic prosperity, we have demonstrated numerous industry-powered examples of developing human capital for the 21st century Knowledge Economy. This effort is also in response to our Industry Partners, who have stated an urgent need to dramatically increase the quantity and quality of digitally skilled talent produced in our region.

In March of 2020, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, JobsOhio, the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center announced a first-of-its-kind partnership designed to build, retain and attract talent to Ohio by formally introducing the Cincinnati Innovation District™. The catalyst within this partnership will be JobsOhio investing up to $100 million that aims to, over the next 10 years, result in up to 15,000 STEM graduates, as well as the execution of $2 billion of research and real estate development within the Cincinnati Innovation District™, ultimately resulting in an estimated 20,000 new jobs and $3 billion of annual economic impact.

This $100M public investment in producing human capital for the knowledge economy is underpinned by corporate partnerships in the Cincinnati Innovation District. Exemplary partnerships include two Fortune 25 companies, Microsoft, and Kroger, which are now presented as case studies.

UTILIZING MICROSOFT TO DEVELOP EARLY IT TALENT

In 2020, leveraging the knowledge that Microsoft has of its customers’ needs, UC and Microsoft initiated a strategic agreement to develop and attract tech talent in the region. The UC-Microsoft partnership has multiple offerings: support for an early college IT program targeting high school and continuing education students; curriculum development in computer science; and the development of technical certification programs in cloud, data, and AI.
Expanding on one aspect of the UC-Microsoft partnership, UC’s “Early IT” program ignites digital talent development between UC, K-12 school districts, community colleges, and industry that challenges the status quo for college access and affordability while significantly increasing the quantity, quality, and diversity of IT talent.

Early IT partners with school districts to deliver the first year of the IT bachelor’s degree during high school and offers automatic admission to students completing all nine courses with a grade of C or better. Once at UC, students participate in co-op work programs with industry providing 20 months of real-world work experience during the bachelor’s degree program and with average earnings of $45,000 over that span. In addition, a competency-based graduate certificate program is offered to qualify high school teachers and enable them to teach the first year IT college courses. Competency and project-based pedagogy is utilized to provide hands-on information technology education.

Early IT also partners with community colleges to serve as learning centers for online learners pursuing the IT bachelor’s degree, in order to assist their transition to UC and increase completion rates. The community college partnership also increases access for adult learners. Adult learners can complete associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s degrees, and 12 months of work experience without disrupting their family or work routines.

The Early IT program continues to attract partners, and in only its third year includes:

- 33 Early IT High School partners
- 12 Early IT Community Colleges
- 40 High School Teachers Trained
- 1,800+ Students Enrolled in The Early IT Program

To ensure strong alignment with industry needs, Early IT has initiated a partnership model for programs, providing co-op and financial support to students from the following partners:

- FIS Global
- Cincinnati Insurance Companies
- Marathon
- Western and Southern
• Macy’s
• Cincinnati Bell Telephone (CBTS)
• Speedway

With such strong support and record of early success, the Early IT program plans to expand partnership to over 70 school districts.

**KROGER HELPS SPEARHEAD CID CONNECTS**

As a second example of developing human capital for the 21st century Knowledge Economy, we have also created new digital platforms in the Cincinnati Innovation District (CID) to more impactfully connect our students to internship opportunities in the CID. One such example is our “CID Connects” with our partner the Kroger company.

CID Connects have resulted in conversion rates to co-op job applications exceeding 60%, a conversion rate that far exceeds the impact of traditional career fairs or job posting boards. The Kroger CID Connect provides a platform for experts from across Kroger lines of business to connect with UC students, highlighting how Kroger is leveraging technology to redefine the grocery customer experience and sharing ways students can apply for co-ops and career opportunities with Kroger.

Amazed by the experience, students involved said the intimate collaboration shattered any preconceptions they had about the traditional grocery brand and enabled them to envision themselves working in The Kroger Co. “When Kroger leaders and experts are coming for the people who are getting internships and co-ops, that’s the kind of company you want to work for,” says Mohit Jain, a recent graduate of UC’s Information Systems and Data Science master of science program.

"Through the Kroger Tech Connect I realized that Kroger is not just an ordinary grocery store, but an innovative company solving tech problems,” says Luke Grothaus, second-year finance major and Kolodzik Business Scholar in UC’s Carl H. Lindner College of Business.

Those are just the kind of reactions Kroger hopes to evoke in the students when they take part in Kroger Tech Connect. "As Kroger continues its journey to create a seamless ecosystem for our customers, it’s more important than ever that we engage with students who can become future Kroger associates,” said Paaras Parker, HR leader for Kroger Technology and Digital. “Our partnership with the University of Cincinnati and the 1819 Innovation Hub is critical for us to engage with future
industry talent, and we look forward to continuing these virtual experiences to connect with students.”

These CID Connects have been so successful that they have been recently expanded to include nine other Universities.

LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION

Partnering Organizations:
- Microsoft
- Kroger
- Cincinnati Innovation District
- JobsOhio
- University of Cincinnati
- Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America’s oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

ABOUT THE IEP UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM

APLU and its Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The IEP designation program recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The IEP awards program recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- Talent and workforce development
- Innovation, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- Place development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: www.APLU.org/IEP