

## State Workforce Youth Council

Meeting Date: October 12, 2018

Meeting Time: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Meeting Location: Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City  
900 N. Portland, Oklahoma City, OK  
BT 304A, Business Technologies Bldg., 3rd floor

### AGENDA

Welcome & Introductions	Chuck Mills, Co-Chair Cecilia Robinson-Woods, Co-Chair
Review of August 10 Meeting Minutes (Vote for approval)	Co-Chairs
Review of Proposed 2019 Meeting Dates (Vote for approval)	Co-Chairs
Discussion on Committee's purpose and priorities	Ed Long
Committee Reports Old Business New Business	Co-Chairs
Adjourn	Co-Chairs
Next Meeting December 14, 2018	

### ATTACHMENTS

- August 10, 2018 Meeting Minutes (Draft for approval)
- 2019 Meeting Dates (Draft for approval)

### GUEST SPEAKERS

**Ed Long**, Founder Cross-Sector Innovations, LLC

## ATTENDEES

Chuck Mills, Co-Chair	Mills Machine Company
Curtis Calvin	OETA
Greg Hall	Youth Advocate
Karen Davidson	Southern Workforce Board
Toni Pickle	Pioneer Telephone Cooperative
Lance Allee	Lifelong Learning, Oklahoma CareerTech
Lester Claravall	Oklahoma Department of Labor
Rhonda Mize	Choctaw Nation
AJ Crowell	CareerTech
Teresa Croom	Oklahoma Dept. of Mental Health Substance Abuse Services
Darrell Strong	OETA
Emmit Grayson	Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development
Jeane Burruss	Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development
Darcee Simon	Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development
Ed Long	Cross-Sector Innovations, LLC.

## MEETING MINUTES

### Welcome & Introductions

Chuck Mills, co-chair of the Youth Programs Committee, welcomed attendees and asked them to introduce themselves. New attendee, Teresa Cromwell from the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, introduced herself and discussed the young adult career development through career ladders work that her office is working on. She also mentioned awareness of the substantial workforce shortage among trades through her family's construction business.

### Approval of August 10, 2018 Minutes

Chuck asked for a motion to approve the August 10, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion was made by Karen Davidson and seconded by Toni Pickle. The motion passed unanimously.

### Approval of 2019 Proposed Meeting Dates

Chuck asked for a motion to approve the proposed 2019 meeting schedule. Rhonda Mize made the motion to approve the schedule. Karen Davidson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Discussion on Committee's Purpose and Priorities

Chuck introduced Ed Long, founder of Cross-Sector Strategies, LLC. Ed shared more of his background and experience with a range of public and private entities. Chuck shared the reason for inviting Ed to the meeting to focus on the overall vision for the youth

council and re-clarify priorities looking ahead to 2019. Ed thanked the committee for inviting him and appreciated what he has learned from attending previous committee meetings. He hoped that the conversation would lead to more learning for everyone on the direction of identifying a common vision and priorities.

He asked Teresa to share more about the IPS, Individual Placement Support program at the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The program is available to anyone receiving behavioral health services. They are trying to partner with the Department of Rehabilitation Services for a pilot. Chuck stressed the partnership opportunities within the workforce system for this type of program and related it to the efforts of the character.org program and subcommittee.

Ed initiated the discussion by emphasizing the reason for the conversation as a result of the many ideas and initiatives that come before the youth programs committee and not as a reflection of poor performance. He praised the success of the work coming out of the committee and the efforts to move the needle. He emphasized the resources and strong network of the committee and hoped to help the committee decide on the most efficient and effective ways to continue to leverage those. His first question for the committee was *"who is/should be your end user?"* Lester Claravall suggested that it is students and youth participants. Curtis Calvin suggested that students and youth are the end product of the workforce system but the end user is businesses where they are employed. Chuck added that the education system including schools and classrooms are end users because we are helping kids be prepared for careers and the result of that is more engaged students with better discipline and better focus. He said we focus on the kids and the end result but there's a system in the middle that can be efficient or not. Emmitt Grayson agreed with the previous responses, but added that parents/families and homes are also end users because they have the responsibility for supporting youth. Teresa argued that improving each of those things is a broader improvement on society as a whole (less incarceration, more employment, etc.). Toni Pickle agreed with the previous statements and added that we must consider the culture of the communities and work to impact those. She cited the example of her board chair who employs re-entry individuals from the criminal justice system as a practice of going directly to the target population to see what's needed and the additional circles that are impacted by these efforts. She stressed the importance of education in making self-sufficient, contributing members of society who feel good about themselves and the ultimate impact on the state at large.

Ed asked *"if you all as a Youth Council are successful in what you do, what does that look like in the end?"* Curtis stated that success of the committee would include an increase in Oklahoma's quality of life for all citizens. Lance Allee said that he would be out of a job for high school equivalency testing or at least serving fewer students as a reflection of improved drop-out rates. Ed mentioned the fear of goal misplacement that we may experience when our metrics change and we lose focus of what we're supposed to be

doing. It can be a good thing, but we have to think about it in a different way sometimes. Rhonda added a decreased number of individualized utilizing social services. Lester suggested that long-term success would contribute to the state's economic development resulting from having a trained workforce. Chuck added an increase of career-ready students. Emmitt suggested an increase revenue from income tax complementing the decrease to social service usage. Karen shared a decreased skills gap. Darrell Strong added improved state retention of workforce talent. Chuck observed an overlap and crossovers between many of the indicators suggested.

Ed recapped the previously discussed main points and asked the committee *"thinking about these outcomes, what is the unique, specific role of the Youth Council in making these things happen?"* Curtis suggested that based on Chuck's framing of the youth committee under the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, the committee informs policy around our main points. Chuck added that we have the advantage of input from our diverse group membership. This allows us to proof out ideas and develop the mechanism to send to the council, who also has a diverse group for vetting ideas to go before the governor. He said that people are starting to understand the necessity of business and education working together and the ability of the council to make ideas doable and actionable. He compared the youth committee to a lab or an incubator of models to present. He stressed the importance of member engagement to make this work successful. Ed asked what is unique to the committee/members to be able to do this work. Karen said aligning resources and services to meet needs is unique to the committee. Ed added that this will hopefully reduce duplication and promote collaboration. Toni suggested that the committee has done, but needs to do more, is identify champions who are doing great work across the state and share more about their work with other committee members to broaden awareness and increase exposure. She stated that she would like to see more presentations in/for the group and potential site visits to hear more from people who are making a difference for youth. Ed restated these ideas that the committee is uniquely able to identify state best practices and/or promising products adding that one solution may not work for all problems so it's important to be able to identify a variety of solutions to problems. Curtis referred back to Ed's question and reflected that everyone on the committee is working with youth and/or workforce development and the uniqueness of the committee is holding that market for collaboration as being *"the somebody else's"*. Ed referenced the concept of cross-pollination of ideas that happens from this group.

Ed referred back to Chuck's point on engaging multiple system partners and asked the committee *"how do you engage (currently or ideally) to find out the needs, priority areas, etc. of your system partners?"* Teresa referred to needs assessment conducted through her office that includes community-based level surveys, town hall meetings or focus groups. Input is solicited and then compiled in a report to build a needs assessment. Curtis asked if Ed was referring to individual organizations or the

committee as a whole. Ed clarified that he wanted to know how the committee engages partners. Curtis reflected that members contribute findings through assessment conducted through their respective organizations through the subcommittee work groups. He was not aware of a formalized committee-wide needs assessment process. Teresa said that it would not be difficult to implement. Following up to Curtis' response, he asked how individuals assess needs in their organizations. Chuck referenced Toni as an example of someone who is well networked and connects ideas from different groups or involvement. He stressed the importance of being able to sell or market ideas for them to build momentum to become viable. Curtis observed that policies are developed from a top-down perspective, but we need to consider a bottom-up strategy to connect the ideas and implementation to our youth. There has to be investment and youth need to see that they need something for a project or initiative to take off. He stressed the importance of the committee in finding out directly from youth what they need. Chuck cited previous challenges of having youth members (high school and college students) on the board due to scheduling and logistics. Curtis observed that the information members bring from their organizations is also susceptible to bias in favor of agency priorities and work that may prevent it from being a pure perspective of youth needs. Teresa suggested the opportunity for the collective youth committee to generate a core set of questions and offered her agency as an administrator to distribute surveys or host focus groups in alignment with work that they already do. Curtis stated that it sounds like the committee needs to do a needs assessment. Teresa added that there is existing data related to youth and the workforce, especially around barriers to employment, but it could be beneficial to conduct a collaborative assessment. Chuck responded that youth do not always know what their needs are in a way that they can respond to such an assessment.

Curtis reiterated the importance of looking at challenges from a bottom-up youth perspective and not prescribing youth pathways based on state strategies. Chuck responded that every child should have an opportunity to do what they like to do and what they're good at, but it has to start earlier through career exploration and awareness opportunities for exposure. Curtis observed that ICAP begins in middle school and asked what are they exposed to before middle school, remarking on the current trends in STEM subjects. Chuck cited an example from his daughter's Pre-K classroom that used work stations to teach about different jobs and companies. Other programs like Junior Achievement also engage in this type of work. Darrell added that there has to be an understanding of cultural factors that contribute to early age career exposure and child development that we need to consider with group initiatives. AJ Crowell mentioned that CareerTech is about to launch a new K-5 program called Galaxy that uses age-appropriate questions to develop initial career awareness and builds on OKCareerGuide. The soft launch will be piloted in the fall with 10-12 schools and expanded in the spring before going statewide.

Rhonda mentioned the contributions of the committee members and urged the importance of maintaining community connections to keep a pulse on the needs of youth and our communities. She stressed that additional resource from all areas of the state beyond just the jobs and organizations that people represent. Darrell asked how the committee imparts the value of business engagement, especially around the issue of social support services. Teresa added the challenge of “the cliff” that occurs when social supports are removed.

Ed emphasized that these are significant, complex issues that many people and organizations are trying to tackle. He asked how the committee vets ideas to determine if they're going to be successful. It's not possible to do everything, so how does the committee decide and vet ideas. Curtis noted that there is not a formal process at present, but the committee may need to develop one. Ed recommended a systematic, structure process. Chuck expressed concern about complicating progress and stressed the importance of keeping things as simple as possible. He reference his experience working with Early Childhood and realized how many limits there are to influencing change in that area for himself as an individual. Chuck stated that the youth committee must be able to decide what they can do through their sphere of influence and focus on those things. Collectively as a group, we can do a lot of things but the bottom line is narrowing it down to how we can make a difference through policy and what we can get into the Governor's hands. Emmitt added that it's easy to feel like you're not doing enough to make a difference, but cited examples from the committee where he's been able to gain perspectives from business, education, industry and local areas. While he is in a position to administer funds as a policy person, the committee makes him accountable to know the rules but helps him be more flexible to prioritize and consider different perspectives when making decisions in his role. He referenced policy red tape for the site agreement for youth work experience and how he was able to reduce that with local input based on their experiences with businesses.

In reference to Chuck's point, Curtis suggested that the committee can put together a needs assessment to make the needs more evident to the whole council to see where the resources and gaps are. Toni said that it's been good to have this discussion and mentioned having guest presenters or brief demonstrations of expertise was helpful in the past. She expressed her passion for allowing education to work with business in NW Oklahoma, but also have K-12 education work more with CareerTech. She said they started a group called Northwest Oklahoma Alliance that took issues (healthcare, state issues, etc.) and invited Chuck and Cecilia to present on youth workforce issues that have made workforce a standing focus of the alliance. Through her company, she was able to bring school superintendents from the area together for some of these meetings. Toni mentioned the model that co-chair, Cecilia Robinson-Woods uses in Millwood schools to partner with local businesses and expand opportunities for her students. Toni stated that knowing stuff isn't enough, we need to be encouraged by the difference that people are making and the committee needs more of that. Toni asked

how information and ideas from the youth committee gets shared with the Governor's Council and how it can have more weight and effect. Chuck responded that he makes presentations to the Council on behalf of the committee and shares regular updates.

Ed agreed with the importance of translating knowledge into tangible action. He said it comes back to the question of *"how do you decide?"* There is an inherent limitation to the knowledge in the room and there can never be too much representation. It comes back to the criteria for making the decisions. Ed acknowledged upcoming changes with a new gubernatorial administration in January. The process for identifying information and priorities shouldn't matter on who the governor is. Ed asked *"who is your primary customer?"* distinct from an end user as who the committee is serving. If you're representing them, you're building a constituency that supports what you're doing and is different from someone in office and goes beyond politics. It's about finding solutions that work for your customers. The criteria for deciding will serve as a framework for maintaining a consistent process and staying focused on the purpose and priorities of the committee.

Ed shared more about human-centered design and its phases of inspiration, ideation, and implementation along with but not for customers. Person-centeredness relates to understanding needs but also to designing and developing the processes for solving them. He mentioned that from a facilitator's perspective, he has not yet heard agreement that there is a need for a needs assessment and that the committee will need to decide if they want to do that or not. Chuck acknowledged his bias as an employer and the broader need for skilled workers with technical and employability skills. Through his experience, it's been important to understand a lever of influence and select a position to make the biggest impact. He reiterated his previous point that students may not always understand their needs. Lance said that culture, home and family stand out the most to him because those are the factors for his students that are beyond his control. He cited an example from his recent experience visiting a class of 5 students who all had jobs, but wanted careers. They had limited family support and were most motivated by having the acknowledgement or recognition of a graduation ceremony to show their families what they'd accomplished. Teresa responded that those types of issues come out in a needs assessment based on how it is designed, which can account for student indecision. Ed iterated that it's ok if the assessment reveals that the needs are the same as what the committee has identified, but it can validate and affirm the work in a way to strengthen its ability to move forward.

Chuck emphasized that the committee must prioritize public/private partnership to enhance career exploration opportunities for learning and awareness building. Teresa expanded the importance of public/private partnerships in the community as a whole to educate and support parents and others through exposure. She referenced the 8,000 kids in Oklahoma who are in out-of-home placement. Alignment is the best way to coordinate resources and sustain impact of the system. Ed observed how it's easier to

advocate for other people by telling their stories to compel people to collaborate rather than tell people what they should do. He identified the work of the committee as somewhere in the middle between the top-down and bottom-up model with a unique position to generate momentum. Ed put the question before the committee of “*when you’re deciding on priorities, how do we make sure it’s connected to youth and make sure that it’s really what they need and want?*” Curtis responded that he doesn’t see a way around conducting a needs assessment. Teresa reiterated that it does not have to be complicated. Ed agreed and stressed the simplicity of what the committee can do. What’s most important is to provide the venue and opportunity to build trust for people to show up and know that we’ll be here and be able to listen. The idea would be to tap into the committee’s partnership with existing organizations to generate input. Ed stated that he would refer to Darcee and Chuck for follow-up, but would put together some notes to capture and continue the conversation. He thanked the committee for their time and engagement. Chuck thanked Ed for his insights, leadership and guidance in facilitating the conversation.

#### **Committee Reports**

Due to time restrictions, the committee postponed committee reports to the next meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Old Business**

None.

#### **New Business**

None.

#### **Next Meeting**

Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am  
Oklahoma State University – Oklahoma City  
BT 304A, Business Technologies Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:08pm.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Darcee Simon*