



Building the Employer Ecosystem

Southern California HVACR Collaborative

Background

Over the past two years, HVACR employers in Southern California have consistently expressed interest in developing a talent pipeline through community colleges. This brief proposes an “employer ecosystem” comprised of companies that support student success at multiple points in the enrollment, persistence, and completion phases of HVACR education and training. Please see the attached employer focus group and panel discussion summaries.

Definition

An ecosystem is defined as a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. A common use of the term in business is a complex network or interconnected system such as Silicon Valley’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In the HVACR talent development context, an employer ecosystem is comprised of companies that engage with faculty and students to assist in:

- Creating awareness of the HVACR cluster of jobs
- Recruiting likely completers
- Providing instructional support at key points in HVACR programs of study
- Student motivation and persistence in completing HVACR programs
- Offering work experience, typically via paid internships or part-time jobs
- Encouraging completion of HVACR certificate and degree programs
- Employing students that complete programs at participating colleges
- Fostering employees’ continuing education at community colleges

Responsibilities of the Colleges

Faculty at participating colleges will need to fulfill specific commitments in order to access the employer ecosystem:

- Benchmarking HVACR student learning outcomes against industry-recognized standards (e.g. the HVAC Excellence “Employment Ready” credential)
- Updating curricula and course outlines of record to align with industry recognized standards
- Integrating lab exercises and simulation tools into programs according to industry recommendations
- Collaborating on projects with employers for program upgrades and augmentation (e.g. Economizer training)
- Assuring certification testing by students to industry standards
- Facilitating student engagement with industry
- Participating with employers in developing and executing an employer ecosystem plan for each cohort of students

Responsibilities of Employers

Participating employers will offer the assistance to faculty and students as outlined in the employer ecosystem definition. This assistance will be framed by an employer ecosystem plan developed and executed for each cohort in collaboration with faculty.

The Plan

An advisory council led by the Deputy Sector Navigator (Los Angeles) will engage faculty and major employers in regional workshops three times per year to accomplish the following:

Workshop #1: (June) Develop and agree on the plan for the incoming cohort of students. Assign responsibilities at each college for managing the plan with participating employers.

Workshop #2: (January) Evaluate success of the plan following the end of the semester and refine as necessary. Plan events and other activities to:

- Offer work experience to students completing the first semester
- Recruit students from cohorts that will complete programs in spring

Workshop #3: (April) Finalize plans for cohort 1 work experience and cohort 2 student recruiting. Finalize recruiting events and activities for prior cohorts.

Faculty will select co-leaders to develop and execute the plan, supported by the DSN.

Next Steps

[Discussion – Bruce & Jim]

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