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## **Cross-Border Business Forum May 23, 2017**

### **“Accessing Cali-Baja’s Unique Workforce” Recap**

The Cali-Baja region is home to a large, educated, and highly skilled workforce that benefits businesses on both sides of the border. For businesses looking to tap into this talent, or those that want to leverage the talent of their employees, it’s important to know what’s involved in making the most of this diverse and talented human capital.

Our May 23<sup>rd</sup> forum featured a panel discussion on the unique needs and opportunities of our binational workforce and focused on addressing three fundamental questions:

1. What programs are in place to develop our binational workforce?
2. What issues are we facing when it comes to cross-border workforce development?
3. What are the regional workforce needs and opportunities for business expansion through a binational workforce?

## FEATURED PANELISTS

					
<b>Nelly Cervantes (Moderator)</b>	<b>Francisco Vidal</b>	<b>Dr. Olivia Graeve</b>	<b>Andy Hall</b>	<b>Mohammad Karbasi</b>	<b>José Luis Arroyo</b>
Hispanic Media Relations, Del Mar Fairgrounds	Vidal Law Firm	Professor Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, UCSD Jacobs School of Engineering	Vice President & Program Officer, San Diego Workforce Partnership	Director of Turbomachinery International Operations, Solar Turbines	Corporate Relations Director, CETYS University

### Below are notes on key points of the discussion

#### **Andy Hall - San Diego Workforce Partnership**

Referenced a survey they conducted of thousands of businesses in San Diego where the overwhelming response pointed to one common challenge: a shortage of talent to fill middle skill jobs. These jobs typically require less than a four year degree but more than a high school diploma. Examples of these jobs include: machinists, welders, healthcare administrators, pharmaceutical technicians.

[See attached report](#) produced by the San Diego Workforce Partnership.

Problem: Growth in jobs, but a lack of qualified talent.

- K-12 system points to 4 year degree or “bust”
- K-16: lack of integration between education and workplace. Lack of career awareness at this level.

Solution: Programs need to be more focused on the needs of the regional workforce.

- Industry- or employer-driven curriculum, programs and training will be key in closing the middle-skill jobs gap.
- The workforce development system will need to focus more on internships and apprenticeships where hands-on training will help develop workers' knowledge, skills and abilities for middle-skill jobs.
- Employers would benefit from participating in high school and higher education curriculum development. Past public-private partnerships have been shown to generate workers with strong "foundational skills" such as mathematics, and will increase availability of talent as well as employee retention.
- Policymakers have the ability to pave the way for more productive collaboration between educators and employers by implementing effective interventions and removing regulatory and legal barriers.

Problem: Training and experience in the military does not directly translate into civilian jobs. The Cali-Baja region misses out on much of the talent within our strong military community after their service.

Solution: Review existing transition programs. Include the Chamber's Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee or Chairperson in workforce development discussions.

### **Olivia Graeve - Professor at UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering**

Current work: UCSD has joined with UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico) and CICESE (Center for Scientific Research and Higher Education of Ensenada) to form the Baja California Center for Nanoscience and Nano

Technology. The center features facilities, laboratories and staff at locations on both sides of the border, focused on STEM research. They aim to develop the 21<sup>st</sup> century engineer who crosses borders seamlessly and has a global view of the world.

On June 9<sup>th</sup> UCSD will be signing 10 MOU's with higher education institutions in Baja and formally establishing the "Cali-Baja Education Consortium". The aim of this consortium is the development of a STEM workforce establishing a connection between education and industry.

UCSD sponsors the ENLACE program which brings to UCSD high school students in STEM to work in laboratories during the summer break. The participants in the program are half from Mexico and half from the Hispanic community in San Diego.

Goal: To produce Baja-San Diego global laureates, connect higher education with industry and bring together researchers and scholars drawing from the talent on both sides of the border.

Few are aware of this Center and these types of partnerships. The Chamber is working to play a role in outreach and public awareness.

### **Jose Luis Arroyo – CETYS University**

CETYS is working to meet the unique needs and demands of companies in Baja California by working directly with them.

Success Story: Companies such as Medtronic, Skyworks and Honeywell have all approached and worked directly with CETYS to design curriculum to meet their unique workforce needs. CETYS in turn works with universities in the USA and elsewhere to source the specialists and academics to deliver the required training and education for their students.

This is a prime example of industry or employer-driven programs. This work needs to be expanded and replicated throughout the region.

### **Mohammed Karbasi: Solar Turbines**

Problem: The advanced manufacturing sector has workforce needs ranging from operators and machinists up to PHD level engineers. The skill sets have diminished or disappeared to fill many of these positions.

Solution: Solar Turbines provides training programs to organically grow these skill sets in house. An assembler can learn and practice skills and work up to be an advanced executive, building brand loyalty and company stability.

Success Story: They have 50+ internships and apprenticeships at the company, due to good relationships with the universities. This serves as a recruiting platform, and gives students experience in the workplace.

Subsequent problem: organic growth has its limits so if the talent is not found, efforts move toward automation.

Solution: More collaboration is needed between university training programs and industry.

### **Francisco Vidal: Vidal Law Firm**

Works with companies to fill workplace needs not found within local workforce community

Problem: Immigration system is antiquated, doesn't change easily and hinders companies from hiring foreign talent when local talent is not available. Many visa programs were created before current workforce needs existed.

Ex: There are 235,000 petitions for HIB Visas each year, but only 65,000 are granted. Each petition can cost an employer approximately \$7,000 with no guarantee that their petition will be granted.