



Emerging Trends Task Force April 20, 2020 Meeting Summary

Task Force members participating: Van Dang (chair), Julian Chu, Ladan Dalla Betta, Hilary Goodkind, Steve Levy, Judy Sugiyama, and Andy Switky

NOVA staff: Kris Stadelman, Luther Jackson and Eileen Stanly

Meeting was held remotely via videoconference call.

I. Welcome

Task force chair Van Dang called the meeting to order.

II. Employers: What do we need to do now and what do we need to prepare for post COVID-19?

- **Future Jobs**
- **Changes in Skill Demands**
- **Structural Change: Data Systems**
- **Plan for Re-interviewing Employers**

Highlights of the discussion included, but were not limited to:

- Before COVID-19 pandemic, the task force launched an employer interview initiative to better understand employer needs and to validate what staff was hearing from other sources about current and future workforce trends. The interviews were conducted last fall and discussed during the January Board retreat, where input from the Board was obtained. The next step was to develop prototypes in response to information obtained through this process, but with the COVID-19 crisis, the focus of the Board's work has now shifted to responding to the impact from this pandemic. Since March 17, NOVA has received 208 WARN notices from employers of impending layoffs impacting almost 20,000 individuals, which represents triple what NOVA receives in an entire year. [Since the meeting, the number of WARN notices has increased to 309 notices impacting 29,063 individuals.] While NOVA had been seeing a steady acceleration of notices since January showing signs of a slowing economy, COVID-19 has expedited a surge in job loss.
- As part of the employer interview initiative, 10 interviews were conducted and two key points emerged from the discussions about employers' workforce needs: 1) emotional intelligence was considered an important skill as defined by empathy, ability to work in teams and self-awareness, and 2) signaling concerns has emerged in the ecosystem in how employers signal to job seekers and educators about what they are looking for in a prospective employee and how job seekers communicate their skills to employers verbally and through other methods such as the resume, LinkedIn profile and social media postings. In this new economic landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic, these trends may have changed and input was sought from task force members about employer needs now.
- Companies are still hiring but they are doing it remotely. It is more important than ever before that job seekers effectively communicate via voice, email, text and through social media.

- It's unlikely that the economic trends that were taking place before the COVID-19 pandemic will change in a year. Most job openings will come from retiring workers rather than from new job creation and the lack of middle skill jobs will be of concern. It's important that in focusing on today's emerging trends we don't lose sight of the larger economic trends. While we have to address the impacts from this crisis, it doesn't mean that other things aren't important. It's also important that we don't make any decisions in response to this short-term crisis that will negatively impact the long-term economic trends.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is not expected to be short-term and will last 12-18 months. We should continue to take a sector view of the economy, a workplace view and how employees will be transitioned back to work, and a skill-set view of what skills will be needed. Some areas that will be in-demand include human resources, remote design, customer-support functions, contact tracers in the health care sector, and internet-related functions that will be increasingly critical. In the future, we should expect to have an acute healthcare workforce crisis and, once the economy reopens, a high demand for construction workers.
- A lot of jobs require different skills but employers will always hire based on behaviors, specifically, emotional intelligence. We haven't seen the technology transformation in the workplace anticipated in response to this crisis, although training and recruitment is taking place virtually. Certain sectors in the economy, such as manufacturing and warehousing, will always require in-place workers, with challenges for individuals with disabilities.
- Education will face challenges with delivering curriculum, addressing the equity issue that has become more apparent during this crisis and assisting young people who are graduating and transitioning to the job market.
- Immigrants, who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, could be an invaluable resource for filling positions where there is a shortage of workers. If the State could provide authorization for local workforce boards to serve undocumented workers, then assistance could be provided to these individuals. A recommended resource was the Multicultural & Dream Center at the College of San Mateo.
- NOVA staff is interested in exploring donations from employers of computer equipment for customers to use that can be an invaluable resource for those who don't have access to this technology. Donations through private foundations and other emergency funds will also be explored. [Since the meeting, NOVA has been working with a tech recruiter from Colorado to explore whether her Silicon Valley tech clients would be interested in donating equipment.]
- Other partnerships that NOVA is pursuing are with local labor unions to provide supportive services to impacted workers, such as hospitality workers, during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Resources: The *New York Times* released a report on April 17, 2020 regarding the national risk of unemployment by occupation. Also, LinkedIn has a report on projected growth by industry.

III. Wrap-up and Next Steps

It is anticipated that new employer interviews will be conducted in the future given the changes with the current economic climate. As more information is collected, the Emerging Trends Task Force will be reconvened. A prototype project will still be pursued but it will look different than what was envisioned before the COVID-19 pandemic. A recommendation was made to begin compiling a list of virtual certifications that will be of value to current job seekers during the shelter-in-place order.