



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **New MI Higher Ed Council Begins Work**

*Innovative Partnership Accelerates Collaboration to Meet State Talent Needs*

**August 13, 2015, LANSING, Mich.** — A unique panel of business, government and college/university leaders met today, launching a new, voluntary partnership aimed at boosting the economic contributions of Michigan’s higher education sector.

The Michigan Higher Education Partnership Council was created in response to a growing demand for educated, skilled workers in Michigan and the need to fully leverage the potential of higher education to meet that demand and drive economic growth. The partnership is unique in that other such bodies across the nation are usually operated by government or public authorities.

“Our state’s future economic growth depends on having skilled, educated workers,” said Doug Rothwell, President & CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM). “The Council will help Michigan more effectively and consistently address talent needs by forging a public-private partnership that works through election cycles and leverages the strengths and assets of our higher education institutions.”

Rothwell referenced a February 2015 BLM report showing 70 percent of Michigan jobs in 2020 will require some level of education beyond high school. Currently, however, only 37 percent of the state’s working age population has more than a high school diploma.

“We already are facing a talent crisis and it’s only going to get worse,” Rothwell said. “Michigan needs a lot more educated and skilled talent —and we believe the establishment of this Council will accelerate efforts to address it.”

“The blend of business, higher education and state government perspectives brought forward by the leaders represented on this Council will help leverage our collective ability to harness the full potential of the state’s postsecondary education providers in meeting the state’s economic goals,” said Daniel J. Hurley, CEO of the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan.

“Collaboration at this level between the business community and our institutions of higher education is unprecedented and extremely important in furthering Michigan’s economic recovery,” said Robert LeFevre, President of Michigan Independent Colleges & Universities.

“Given our strong business partnerships and ability to react quickly to changing needs, community colleges are in a unique position to provide the skilled trades programs necessary to fill the talent gap in these areas,” said Dr. Timothy Meyer, Chancellor of Oakland Community College. “Through our agreements with colleges and universities across Michigan, we also facilitate the successful transfer of students to four-year institutions.”

The Council is expected to achieve the following objectives within the coming year:

- Build public understanding of the economic impact of higher education.
- Help avert Michigan’s looming talent crisis by launching a marketing program to boost state college/university enrollment.
- Define Michigan’s future talent needs and develop a shared roadmap for helping the state’s colleges and universities address them.
- Provide a common data portal that allows the public/consumers to assess institutional performance.

“This is ambitious work,” Rothwell said. “However, we already have begun building some of the necessary infrastructure, and the high-caliber leaders on the panel are more than capable of seeing these objectives through to fruition.” Rothwell cited growing recognition of the need for more education, the growth of regional talent development strategies and development of online data portals to help consumers assess higher education performance and career options.

The Michigan Higher Education Partnership Council consists of:

- **J. Patrick Doyle**, President & CEO, Domino’s
- **Mike Hansen**, President, Michigan Community College Association
- **Daniel J. Hurley**, CEO of the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan
- **Miles E. Jones**, Co-Chairman of the Board, Dawn Food Products, Inc.
- **Blake W. Krueger**, Chairman of the Board, CEO & President, Wolverine World Wide, Inc.
- **Robert LeFevre**, President of Michigan Independent Colleges & Universities
- **Dr. Timothy R. Meyer**, Chancellor, Oakland Community College, representing the Michigan Community College Association
- **Dr. Glenn D. Mroz**, President, Michigan Technological University, representing the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan
- **Dr. Richard J. Pappas**, President, Davenport University, representing the Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities
- **John Walsh**, Director of Strategy, Office of the Governor

The BLM report that initially recommended the creation of the voluntary Council can be found at:

<http://www.businessleadersformichigan.com/research-and-reports/business-leaders-insights-how-higher-education-can-help-mich.html>.

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### **About Business Leaders for Michigan:**

Business Leaders for Michigan, the state’s business roundtable, is dedicated to making Michigan a “Top Ten” state for jobs, personal income and a healthy economy. The organization is composed exclusively of the chairpersons, chief executive officers, or most senior executives of Michigan’s largest companies and universities. Our members drive 32% of the state’s economy, provide nearly 375,000 direct jobs in Michigan, generate over \$1 Trillion in annual revenue and serve nearly one half of all Michigan public university students. Find out more at:

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