

**Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative  
Business Environment Working Group**

March 10, 2:00 - 3:00pm  
Zoom Conference

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Julie Chen, UMass Lowell  
John Killam, MassMEP  
Emily Reichert, Greentown Labs  
Arlene Parquette, UMass Lowell  
Amy Barad, Mass Clean Energy Center

**Absent:**

Marie, O'Malley, Medtronic  
Steve Pike, Mass Clean Energy Center  
Galen Nelson, Mass Clean Energy Center  
John Regan, AIM  
Kristy Grignon, MassMEP  
Carolyn Kirk, MassTech  
Mark Fuller, EOHED

**Staff:**

Helena Fruscio-Altsman, EOHED  
Farhad Vazehgoo, MassTech  
Meghan Abella-Bowen, MassTech  
Christine Nolan, MassTech  
Cassidy Ferguson, MassTech

**Guests:**

Ben Armstrong, MIT  
Dan Rivera

**Welcome and introductions**

Christine Nolan welcomed all attendees and a roll call was taken.

**Approval of Minutes: Christine Nolan**

The approval of the November 16, 2020 Business Environment Working Group minutes was postponed pending a quorum.

**CAM update**

Christine Nolan provided an update on CAM's progress and planning process for FY 2022.

- CAM's focus moving forward will be around broadcasting that MA manufacturing is "open for business": Manufacturing provides good career opportunities, there are significant resources to support and grow manufacturing, and a connected ecosystem advertisement will be the emphasis.

- Christine Nolan displayed a chart providing CAM's overview of the manufacturing ecosystem resources as well as CAM's programs which target 3 audiences: OEMs, SMEs, and workforce.
- CAM's four core focus areas are represented by the three working groups and a fourth, business opportunity.
- It was recommended by the Innovation Working Group that we create visual "pathways" for our different audiences that demonstrate the services and resources available to them to help them scale. Note that the path is not linear, especially for startups. And hiring is important to the chart and should be emphasized. Capital, talent, and customers are primary needs.
- The legislature's new economic development bill provides funding that can be used to support SMEs with capital grants not tied to the advanced manufacturing centers.
  - CAM will focus on SMEs, access to and adoption of technologies and innovation, connecting the supply chain, and connecting focus industries (defense, med, and additive manufacturing) to the local ecosystem.

#### **Building awareness:**

- Funds available through MassBridge, to create awareness and promote manufacturing career pathways. There will be a High School Manufacturing Challenge pilot for students to create videos to promote these career options.
- Multi-pronged approach to engage a diverse workforce from the unemployed population, high schools and community colleges.

#### **Business Environment update**

Ben Armstrong, a research scientist at the Industrial Performance Center's Initiative for Knowledge and Innovation in Manufacturing at MIT, presented his research on regional competitiveness in Massachusetts.

- Key takeaways:
  - Promote the East-West gap in the Commonwealth
  - Consider upskilling of existing employees
  - Large companies are outpacing smaller organization on capital expenditure.
  - OEMs drive tech down the supply chain and rely on the smaller companies who need to be technologically capable. There is a need to upgrade technology and capital across the supply chain. OEMs are not ready to take risk of investing in new equipment.
- Need was identified to create more than a registry of suppliers. We need to figure out capabilities of each to be able to better match them with OEMs. This can help make connections and stimulate growth. R&D is accelerated when locals are more capable. Consider the FORGE model.

#### **Branding and Marketing proposed strategy**

We will continue to develop this model & roadmap, building awareness around what we have today. This will mean continuing to focus on talent and workforce. Small businesses and startups are willing to build their supply chains locally if someone helps them find it.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Christine Nolan notes that a quorum has been reached & before adjourning, the Working Group should approve the minutes from November. Emily Reichert made a motion to approve the minutes. Julie Chen seconded. All approved.

**Next steps**

The next full AMC Board will be May 13, 2021 12:30-2:30pm

The next set of Working Group meetings will be the week of July 12.

**Materials and Exhibits Used at this meeting:**

- Draft Minutes – November 16, 2020 Business Environment meeting minutes
- Presentation: Business Environment Working Group, March 10, 2021