

National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers

Working Group on Developing, Supporting, and Expanding the Modern Innovation Workforce

Session 2 Discussion Guide

Friday, September 15th, 2023
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Agenda

- 11:00-11:10 – Welcome & Introduction
- 11:10-11:45 – Topic #1 Discussion
- 11:45-12:20 – Topic #2 Discussion
- 12:20-12:30 – Conclusion & Next Steps

Background & Context

The Future of Work: Developing, Supporting, and Expanding the Modern Innovation Workforce charter identifies five broad issue areas for the Commission and its Working Groups to explore:

- 1) Revitalizing U.S. education and training systems to foster a high-skilled future workforce.
- 2) Leveraging telework capabilities, digitalization, and emerging technologies to augment conventional work.
- 3) Navigating workforce challenges and opportunities created by increased automation.
- 4) Adapting to rapid labor force shifts and new models of work organization.
- 5) Expanding efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in the innovation workforce.

When the Commission convened at UC Davis earlier this year, discussion focused on the topics 2 and 4. Discussion during this and subsequent Working Group meetings will unpack those topics further, explore the remaining issue areas, and respond to recent policy and technology developments that are shaping the broader landscape of the innovation workforce. Specifically, major recent developments in this space include:

- Generative AI: With the advent of ChatGPT and other large language models, the challenges and opportunities of increased automation have gained national attention. Navigating these issues will be critical for students, workers, and businesses alike.
- Staying Power of Remote Work: More than three years since the onset of the pandemic, hybrid and remote work have remained the norm in many companies, opening new opportunities for talent sourcing and collaboration and bringing new challenges for worker integration and knowledge spillovers.

- Critical Talent Shortages: Talent shortages in critical industries and technologies have proven a continued challenge, and are projected to grow significantly in areas like cybersecurity.

The questions below are intended to guide discussion and provide food for thought. Not all questions need to be directly addressed during the Working Group session. Moderators and Working Group participants will collaboratively shape discussion around priority issues.

Discussion

Topic 1: Revitalizing the U.S. education and training systems

- How can industry and academia collaborate to identify critical future skills and jointly invest in workforce training? What kinds of new partnerships, curricula, and/or communication channels should be established?
- What steps can be taken to encourage a culture of lifelong learning throughout the workforce and across all age ranges? How can workers, both current and future, be equipped with technological savvy and the skills to thrive after future disruptions?
- How can technologies such as AI, modeling and simulation, gaming, etc., be best used to improve learning?

Topic 2: Leveraging international talent to augment the U.S. innovation workforce

- What changes should be made to the U.S. immigration system to support and invest in building a competitive, high-skilled workforce of the future?
- How can the U.S. better retain international students, who are increasingly returning to their home countries? Are new job-matching programs necessary to place these potential workers?
- Are special policies and exceptions required for particular critical industries facing acute talent shortages (e.g., semiconductors)?

Conclusion & Next Steps

- Our second session will be held **October 17th, from 3:30pm-5:00pm**, and will focus on strategies to support underrepresented, vulnerable, and displaced workers. [*Moderators thank WG participants*]