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Lifelong Learning in Bloomsburg

The community of Bloomsburg offers educational resources that are comprehensive, well developed, and versatile. Its educational environment provides learning opportunities for residents in all stages of life. It also provides opportunities that satisfy a variety of interests and objectives, from professional development to personal enrichment to leisure.

Summary of Public Input on Current Conditions

Positives

- The Bloomsburg University offers a variety of programs and services for young, mature and older residents.
- The Public Library is a popular gathering place.
- The Children’s Museum complements the public school district, the library, and other community services for children and is a tourism destination.

Negatives

- Some residents of Bloomsburg and the surrounding area lack digital skills that would help qualify them for area employment positions.

As a result, this plan focuses on sustaining and enriching educational opportunities and increasing awareness of these resources among citizens.

Goal

Bloomsburg is a community where community partners provide high quality educational services, programs, and facilities that meet needs of the community.

We will achieve our goal if we...

1. Increase public awareness of local educational services, events, programs, and facilities available to all residents
2. Ensure that the educational services, programs, and facilities available to residents are and continue to be high quality
3. Support the Bloomsburg Public Library’s efforts to renovate and improve its existing facilities.
4. Narrow the gap in professional and digital skills to ensure a more job ready workforce.
5. (Continue to) Enhance the cooperative and collaborative relations between the Town, the University and local employers.

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A Lifelong Range of Educational Opportunities

The community of Bloomsburg offers a range of educational services, programs, and facilities for residents in all stages of life and age groups.



For children and youth, the community offers several local educational services through multiple organizations and institutions. Public schooling is available through the Bloomsburg Area School District (K - Grade 12) and Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School (Grades 9 - 12). There are opportunities for private schooling at the Columbia Child Development Center (Preschool) and

St. Columba Catholic School (Preschool - Grade 8). The local Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops, the YMCA, the Children's Museum, and Bloomsburg University's Reading Center offer enrichment programs for the community's youngest residents.

For the college bound and professionals, Bloomsburg University is the focus. Services include career counseling and planning for university students and Alumni through the Career Development Center; tutoring, academic advising, and other support services for university students through the Department of Developmental Instruction; and workforce development, corporate and customized job training for professionals of all ages through the Division of Corporate and Continuing Education. Bloomsburg University also offers programs, such as the Upward Bound Program and the Advance College Experience Program, which prepare local high school students for post-secondary education.

Learning opportunities are also available for retirees and seniors primarily through local senior centers and the YMCA. These programs encourage people to remain mentally active in their later years. They also promote social interaction and community involvement and can provide opportunities for sharing knowledge as well.

Town residents have access to excellent educational and enrichment resources. Among these are the Bloomsburg Public Library and Bloomsburg University's

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Harvey A. Andruss Library. Both are open to university students and the general public. Bloomsburg University also offers a lecture series, non-degree for credit courses, cultural events and recreational programs to the public. And the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble offers a variety of educational opportunities.

Since the Town of Bloomsburg's current educational services, programs, and facilities adequately support lifelong learning in the community, the Lifelong Learning plan aims to ensure that these resources continue to offer a variety of learning opportunities for residents. It also aims to increase public awareness of these resources to ensure that they are well used by the community.

Recommendations

- LL.1. Establish a Lifelong Learning Committee responsible for promoting learning opportunities as a way of life for Bloomsburg residents.** The committee, comprised of educational and civic leaders, would be responsible for gathering information about educational resources and making it available to the public online (see below).
- LL.2. Develop and maintain a Lifelong Learning webpage on the Town's website.** The webpage would provide links to educational institutions and organizations in the Bloomsburg area. It would also link to the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau community calendar where special events and seasonal programs could be posted.
- LL.3. Develop and distribute an annual update on educational services, programs, and facilities available to residents in the area.** The content would focus on programs offered to all members of the community and could direct readers to the Lifelong Learning webpage for more information and links. The update could be incorporated into existing newsletters distributed by educational entities or the Town.
- LL.4. Encourage Bloomsburg University to evaluate its advertising of educational services and programs available to the public as non-students.** Indeed the University's primary focus is on undergraduate and graduate academic programs. However, it offers a variety of educational and cultural enrichment programs as well as public access to its library and other select facilities. Residents' use of these free or low cost higher educational resources to date may be limited by a lack of awareness,

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which, in turn, may foster negative perceptions of the University as a community member. Evaluating and refining advertising methods may provide an opportunity for the University to strengthen participation in its community programs and its image among residents.

Lead Partners: Town Council

Support Partners: Bloomsburg Area School District, Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School, private schools, Children’s Museum, Bloomsburg University’s Division of Corporate and Continuing Education, Area Agency on Aging (senior centers), YMCA, Bloomsburg Public Library

Funding Sources: Not applicable - volunteer and staff time

Public Library



Bloomsburg’s Public Library is located in the heart of the downtown business district and within a few blocks of residential neighborhoods. The library is easily accessed by pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles and the campus shuttle. On street and metered parking as well as bike racks are available. Its central location makes it a convenient destination for many Town residents as well as an economic asset because of its ability to draw local residents and university students to nearby businesses.

The Library is a critical educational asset to the Town. The library provides free access to quality reading materials and services that enable citizens to research and reference these materials successfully. In addition, the library offers several educational programs that support literacy and reading among all ages. These programs include weekly story time for preschoolers, youth reading clubs, adult book clubs, and an award program that recognizes the reading achievements of library members. The library also offers other educational opportunities for professional development, personal enrichment, or leisure. These opportunities range from arts and crafts activities, such as scrapbooking classes, to guest lectures and special events.

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The library partners formally and informally with other community organizations to promote reading and literacy in the community. It coordinates with the school district on reading challenges for elementary students. “Readers in Bloom” pairs University students with community youth to improve reading skills. The library also provides space for adult literacy programs provided by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.

Renovations to the library in 1998 doubled its size and requests for use of library space and resources continued to grow. The library is increasingly used as a meeting place by community organizations. The library is currently undertaking significant renovations to provide more comfortable and inviting spaces in which to hold formal and informal meetings, special events and other social gatherings. The library is also expanding its online resources. Continued investment in the library’s endowment fund and support for these improvements is essential to strengthening the library’s value to the community.

The library is also home to Columbia County’s Historical and Genealogical Society. The society’s main office, archives and museum are located on the second floor and are open to the general public. The archives and museum are instrumental in preserving and interpreting the Town’s history and culture.

Recommendations

- LL.5. Support local fundraising through in-kind services, such as use of public facilities.**
- LL.6. Coordinate marketing opportunities, i.e. to report progress on fundraising and renovations.**
- LL.7. Sponsor or contribute to a special event that celebrates the completion of the renovations.**
- LL.8. Promote the availability of the renovated library, as well as other available facilities, for group meetings.**
- LL.9. Invite the library to participate in the Lifelong Learning Committee.**

Lead Partners: Town of Bloomsburg/Town Council

Support Partners: Not applicable

Funding Sources: Town Budget

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- LL.10. Continue to partner with the Bloomsburg Area School District, Children’s Museum, YMCA and other community organizations on shared marketing.**
- LL.11. Continue to explore local needs for programs, services and physical space and innovative library functions to sustain membership and community support. Consider doing so formally through a strategic plan for the library.**

Lead Partners: Bloomsburg Public Library

Support Partners: Bloomsburg Area School District, Children’s Museum, YMCA and other community organizations

Funding Sources: PA Department of Education, Private foundations

The Children’s Museum

The museum is a non-profit corporation managed and operated by staff, volunteers, and a Board of Directors. The museum is located on West 7th Street, just off South Market Street, and is easily accessed by pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles. The facility has on-street and off-street parking available. Its central location makes it a convenient tourism destination for visitors and local destination for many Town residents.



The Children’s Museum offers unique learning experiences to children of all ages by providing interactive learning materials. The museum offers hands-on exhibits at the museum as well as traveling exhibits that serve 17 school districts in the five county Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit area. The museum’s exhibits are very diverse; topics range from science, to health, to culture, and are rotated for variety. The museum also offers nine useful teaching kits for the area’s classroom. Kits come complete with a teacher’s guide and enough materials for a full classroom of students. All kits are free of cost and are conveniently available via mail. Teaching kits can be used in conjunction with classroom curriculum or for enrichment.

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The museum converted a former firehouse into a large exhibition space, gift shop, and work room that is used for after school programs, arts and crafts programs, or can be rented for special events. The museum hosts group and school visits. It offers a variety of programs including children's camps, arts and science clubs, and weekly themed events and activities.

The Children's Museum is an important educational and economic asset to the Town for many reasons. Its interactive programs and services enrich the community's existing educational system while providing fun and interesting opportunities for local employment and civic volunteerism. The museum's programs and services also provide opportunities to interpret the Town's developmental natural and cultural history for local residents, students, and visitors by incorporating related themes into its traveling and stationary exhibits. The museum is also used as a venue for parties, special events, programs, and group meetings, which gives it the ability to draw visitors and residents downtown and to nearby businesses.

The museum plans to develop additional parking, a picnic area, and a new garden. There are no current plans to expand or improve the museum's indoor facilities; however upgrades to the existing electrical system are needed.

The museum partners with several local school districts in the area to foster interactive, hands-on learning opportunities for children in the community. The museum has also partnered with the Public Library, YMCA, and Chamber of Commerce to promote its facility, programs and services. Such partnerships are essential to the cost-effective operation of the museum.

The museum could create additional partnerships in the community in order to promote its programs and services. One way would be to directly link exhibits with the community, businesses and organizations. Linking the exhibits to local professions will help children connect their museum experience to their emerging and developing skills and future employment dreams. To do this, the museum could supplement its exhibits with a "state of the art" statement. This statement would present current research topics and future research opportunities, pointing

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young visitors to opportunities for cutting edge research and employment in various fields. The museum could also supplement exhibits with a list of related local businesses or organizations as a way of connecting the exhibit with the Bloomsburg community. For example, an exhibit on dentistry might include a list of local dentists, or a wildlife exhibit might list the nearest Pennsylvania Game Commission office. This type of information sharing could be coupled with feature presentations given by a representative from one or more of the businesses or organizations listed.

Funding for the museum comes from a variety of sources including program fees, admission fees, facility rentals, membership fees, and donations. Other funding is provided to the museum by individual, corporate, and community donors.

The museum is also supported by various grants. Many of the museum's programs and services are supported by grants from the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), the regional arts funding partnership of the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts (PCA), a state agency. State government funding comes through an annual appropriation by Pennsylvania's General Assembly and from the National Endowment for the Arts. PPA is administered in the region by the Bradford County Regional Arts Council. The museum's art camps are supported by the Woodcock Foundation for the Appreciation of the Arts. Its science camps and science club are supported by a grant from Cherokee Pharmaceuticals.

Recommendations

LL.12. Invite the Children's Museum to participate in the Lifelong Learning Committee.

Lead Partners: Town of Bloomsburg

Support Partners: Children's Museum

Funding Sources: Not applicable

LL.13. Promote availability of the museum as a venue for group meetings, especially related to children's services.

LL.14. Upgrade the existing electrical system.

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- LL.15. Install new curbs and sidewalks to provide better access for pedestrians.
- LL.16. Advertise major changes in exhibits on the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau online community calendar.
- LL.17. Continue to partner with local school districts and other organizations in the area to foster interactive, hands-on learning opportunities for children in the community.
- LL.18. Enhance exhibits by directly linking them with the community, businesses and organizations. Linking the exhibits to real life will help children connect their experience to an attainable employment dream.
- LL.19. Seek dedicated long term funding, i.e. campaign to establish an endowment, for operating expenses.

Lead Partners: Children's Museum

Support Partners: Public Library, YMCA, Chamber of Commerce, Bloomsburg University

Funding Sources: Existing sources, other private foundations

Preparing the Workforce for Local Jobs

Bloomsburg's local economy offers residents a variety of employment options in many different fields. The Town's local economy is primarily based on three business or industry clusters as described in the Working and Doing Business in Bloomsburg section of this plan. These three clusters include the Textile Products Manufacturing Cluster, the University of Bloomsburg and Education Cluster, and the Downtown Business District. These clusters, or major sectors, of the local economy are very different from one another in terms of the kinds of the jobs they offer and the skill sets they require. Employment opportunities range from trade and labor jobs to sales and service to professional, administrative, and managerial jobs.

The Columbia County 2006 Needs Assessment indicated that people in the county's workforce are generally satisfied with their work, but think that finding good work locally is a significant problem. The assessment's conclusions were based on a survey completed by 1,094 county residents.

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- Survey results show that among those respondents working, 92 percent of those working full time were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their employment. Despite this positive picture, 78 percent of respondents think that finding good work is a problem.
- Among those employed full time, 41 percent think finding work is a problem. Among those employed part-time, 58 percent think finding good work is a problem.
- Among those unemployed and looking for work, 68 percent think finding good work is a problem.
- Among those unemployed and not looking for work, 49 percent think finding work is a problem.
- Among those with household incomes at or below the poverty line 69 percent believe that finding work is a large or very large problem.

These sentiments reflect a significant disconnect between the needs and skills of the local workforce and the employment needs of the local employers in the county. While there are a variety of local job opportunities, there is a lack of appropriately skilled workers to fill those positions. This is may be due to the following factors:

- Gap in Digital Skills - the local workforce is not prepared for today's technology-based workplace
- Brain Drain - young people with technical and technological skills leave for higher education or job opportunities elsewhere
- Lack of interest or willingness - the local workforce is uninterested in available job opportunities or are unwilling to work local jobs, particularly those requiring physical labor

Each of these situations may make it difficult for people in the local workforce to find good work in the area.

In addition, residents in the area, particularly those in poverty, lack digital skills that could improve their opportunities for gainful employment. The Columbia County 2006 Needs Assessment indicated that there is a clear relationship between poverty status and computer usage. The results of the survey indicate that only 61 percent of households at or below poverty have a member who uses a computer compared to 96 percent of those 300 percent or more above the

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poverty line. This “digital divide” implies that lower income residents in the area may not be skilled for jobs that require basic computing, or may not be able to access job notices or complete electronic job applications even when the available position may not require computer skills.

While there may be residents in the workforce that lack marketable digital skills, there may also be residents in the workforce that are over qualified for the job opportunities available in the area. This specific situation relates to the brain drain issue. There are many young, skilled, and college educated residents in the area who would be good contributors to the local workforce and economy if there were sufficient opportunities available to them. Many high school and Bloomsburg University graduates leave the area for higher education and job opportunities elsewhere. Retaining these individuals as members of the local workforce is important to economic growth and development in the community.

A disconnect between the needs of the local workforce and of employers can lead to long term unemployment, which could slow economic growth in the community. Programs and services are needed to address this issue.

Student Preparation for Higher Education and Workforce Entry

As previously noted, the Town is served by a high quality private school and public school system that prepares the area’s young residents for job placement or higher education. The Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School (AVTS) is part of this school system and offers practical programs to secondary school students and adults that provide training in a variety of vocational and technical areas for career development or immediate job placement in the community.

In terms of preparing the future workforce, the university offers multiple programs that give local high school students incentives to pursue higher education. The TRiO Upward Bound Program, a federal program, provides equal access to post-secondary education to local high school students by giving them adequate preparation. The Advance College Experience Program allows qualified juniors and seniors at local high schools to take regular for-credit university courses while still in high school to get a head start on college. These programs

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and programs like this are good strategies for retaining young, skilled and motivated residents living in the area.

The STEM Initiative for Pennsylvania provides strategies and resources to prepare a globally competitive science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce. It aims to dramatically increase preschool through graduate school students, especially females, minorities and the underrepresented, in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics careers while continuing the development of effective strategies to retain, recruit and retrain our incumbent workforce in these critical fields. The initiative also assists in increasing public understanding of, and support for, education reform to improve high school graduation rates and enhance the state's innovation capacity.



The STEM Initiative is in the process of developing a Statewide STEM Network and five Regional STEM Networks to share programs that expand options for students to acquire STEM literacy and other critical knowledge, skills and credentials to prepare them for high-demand, high-skill and high-wage careers in the state of Pennsylvania. Bloomsburg falls within the Central Pennsylvania Regional Network. The Bloomsburg Area Workforce Development Board and Industrial Resource Center will be key participants in shaping local and regional strategies for this statewide initiative. Other PA Department of Education Programs for 21st Century Education are shown in Figure 7-1.

Current University Programs

Bloomsburg University is a major workforce developer offers a variety of training programs and services for local businesses and their employees through its Division of Corporate and Continuing Education (CCE) located at the Magee Center. The CCE offers:

- non-credit mini courses to individuals for professional development primarily in computer training and literacy.
- on-site corporate and customized job training in Information Technology, Computer Programs/Software, Business Operations and Management, Office Administration, Languages, Manufacturing Principles/Operations, and Industrial Health and Safety.
- grant assistance for the statewide Customized Job Training program

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Figure 7-1. PA Department of Ed Programs for 21st Century Education

These programs are targeted toward the Bloomsburg Area School District as it prepares students for 21st century civic involvement, higher education or gainful employment.

Classrooms for the Future is about recognizing and embracing the need for high school reform, enabling teachers to use technology as an effective tool for educating students, and preparing students to enter and successfully compete in the ever-expanding high-tech global marketplace.

Keystones Technology Integrators (KTI). KTI is a program that celebrates model practice teachers throughout Pennsylvania. These teachers bring to the classroom content, motivational and management expertise to capture students' imaginations and harness learning in our children. Over 3000 teachers from across the Commonwealth have been identified as Keystones. These Keystones represent over 300 school districts, non-public schools, and CTC/AVTS. Approximately 100 Keystones attend a five-day Summit each year in the summer where they engaged in hands-on workshops with topics such as differentiating instruction and teaching in the 21st Century. Throughout the years, the Keystones network continues to grow stronger through use of communication tools, learning communities, grant writing competitions and professional development opportunities. Keystones also continue to be featured at the annual Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference (PETE&C).

The **Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL)** Program is a statewide, standards-based continuing professional education program for school and system leaders. The comprehensive, cohort-based program is focused on developing the capacity of leaders to improve student achievement. The program is offered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units and other partners at eight regional sites

An **IU Technology Integration Mentor (IU TIM)** acts as a support and resource for the Classrooms for the Future (CFF) coach. The IU TIM develops a professional learning community for all CFF coaches within their respective IU. In this non-supervisory role, the IU TIM supports coaches as they support teachers to deliver data-driven, technology enhanced lessons in their schools. Focusing on coaches' strengths, the IU TIM collaborates with the CFF coaches in their efforts to help teachers transform classrooms into 21st Century, authentic, differentiated, learner-centered environments. The IU TIM understands the connections between/among CFF and other PDE high school reform projects.

PIMS, or the Pennsylvania Information Management System, is PDE's data collection and enterprise-wide longitudinal data warehouse and reporting system. It is designed to improve student achievement through more efficient and effective use of data. PIMS was first implemented during the 2007-2008 to the 501 public school districts and 232 other K-12 educational agencies (collectively these are referred to as local education agencies, or LEAs) throughout the Commonwealth.

- commercial drivers license prep courses designed to prepare students to take and pass their state Commercial Drivers License written and skills test.

Bloomsburg University's Career Development Center (CDC) is another valuable asset to the Town. It provides career counseling, planning assistance and job placement to students and alumni. Therefore, the CDC would be a good partner

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in helping to retain college graduates and alumni by assisting college educated residents in finding and obtaining local employment.

Leveraging More of Bloomsburg University

As a major economic engine, Bloomsburg University is an integral asset to the Town. According to a recent study conducted by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and CEOs for Cities, there are six broad areas where universities and colleges can have meaningful impact on job and business growth in the local community: purchasing of goods and services, employment, developing real estate, incubating business, advising business and building networks, and developing a workforce (see Chapter 6, Working and Doing Business in Bloomsburg for further explanation). While all six activities are important to the role the university plays in economic development of local communities, workforce development and advising/network building are the only two that are directly linked to learning. This section explores ways in which the Town, university, and business community could work together on leveraging workforce development activities to spur economic growth and improve the standard of living in the community.

Workforce development is the second learning activity carried out by colleges and universities that can significantly impact job and business growth in the local community. According to the study, workforce development involves addressing local and regional workforce needs. The role of universities extends beyond existing academic programs to private and public sector support in recruiting, training, retraining, and promoting workers, particularly those that need skills upgrading or are adults in the labor force for the first time.

The study suggests that universities and colleges can offer the following types of workforce development programs and services:

- Research on labor supply and demand, as well as workforce development best practices.
- Program design and capacity building for workforce development partners.
- Training of prospective workers.
- Facilitating workforce development partnerships and programs through relationships with local and regional businesses.

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania offers a model program, a Part-time Studies Non-degree Program as well as Business Development and Training Services, designed to give working professionals and adult learners the opportunity to begin or renew a college education. This program is offered through the School of Continuing Education. Individuals enrolled in the program take undergraduate credit courses to pursue personal interests or acquire new skills.

The university should consider expanding internship and volunteer programs that allow students to provide their expertise and services at low or no cost to local businesses and government or non-profit organizations. Where feasible, it should consider yearlong placement of interns in local jobs to offer continuity and increase the effectiveness of the program. The university could also develop a volunteer program in which optional service learning opportunities are integrated in the classroom curricula. This would not only increase student participation in the local community, it would benefit university students by enabling them to gain hands-on, real world experience while earning credit toward their grade.

The university's workforce development programs are extremely thorough and customized to meet the needs of local businesses. To maintain and enhance the university's workforce development programs, the university should partner or continue to partner with local employers, the Chamber of Commerce and the public sector in identifying important workforce trends and industry needs and develop "pipeline programs" to fill high volume positions. In addition, the university should seek ways to expand existing workforce development programs to increase job placement and faculty research opportunities aligned with local business needs.

There are several opportunities in which the Town can work with the university to benefit from its expertise and advisory programs. In many instances, the university's faculty and students use the Town as an extension of the classroom to conduct field research and studies for hands-on, real world experience. The Town should consider these instances good opportunities to gather pertinent information about its environment, which can be used to direct local policies and investments. For example, the Town could use the university to identify and research natural, historic, and cultural resources in the area and avenues to protect or enhance them. In addition, the Town could use the university to

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gather information on labor supply and other workforce data, which can be used to develop strategies for job and business growth in the Town.

The Town could also use the university expertise to acquire assistance with operational and administrative functions of local government. As the Town's partner, the university should consider how its expertise might be used through in kind services in areas such as data system processing and development.

The Town should also work with the business community to initiate efforts with the university and increase participation in university programs and services. The Town could work with the local Chamber of Commerce to promote the university's advisory/network building and workforce development activities and encourage local businesses to utilize the university's programs and services. The Town could give local businesses incentives, such as rewards or special recognition, for offering internship programs, scholarship opportunities or tuition reimbursement. These incentives would encourage higher education and increase student and local workforce participation in university programs and services. In addition, the Town could encourage businesses to develop workforce training curricula and job placement programs with the university. Lastly, the Town could encourage the local Chamber of Commerce to act as an intermediary to identify local business needs that university expertise can address. In doing so, the Town can encourage the Chamber of Commerce to invite or recruit greater university participation on local business association boards.

Other Workforce Development Efforts

More local employers could also offer internship opportunities to university students. Internship opportunities often turn into job opportunities and could work as a job placement or recruitment strategy. Providing additional incentives that retain or attract skilled and educated workers is almost necessary in a competitive economic environment. Therefore, the Town should encourage local employers to explore employee incentives such as housing benefits, tuition reimbursement, or free specialized training.

Investing time and resources into developing a qualified and skilled workforce that meets the needs of local employers would have a series of positive impacts on the Town. The Town would experience greater productivity among businesses

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and become a more competitive market place. The increase in competition would likely improve benefits for workers and lead to an increase in job opportunities and wages, which would eventually create more disposable income on a whole. The overall result would be economic growth, a stronger and more diverse economy, and improved quality of life for Town residents.

Recommendations

- LL.20. Maintain and enhance the university’s workforce development programs.** The university should partner or continue to partner with local employers, the Chamber of Commerce and the public sector to ensure existing programs are meeting local workforce needs. The university should also seek ways to expand existing workforce development programs to increase job placement and faculty research opportunities aligned with local business needs.
- LL.21. Develop or improve internship and volunteer programs that allow students to gain hands-on real world experience while providing their expertise and services at low or no cost to local businesses and government or non-profit organizations.** The university should develop an internship program that matches students with growing companies through rigorous screening of the student and company. Students should be placed in yearlong internship positions to offer continuity and increase the effectiveness of the program. The university should also develop a volunteer program in which optional service learning opportunities are integrated in the classroom curricula. This would not only increase student participation in the local community, it would benefit university students by enabling them to gain hands-on, real world experience while earning credit toward their grade.
- LL.22. Encourage local businesses to increase the number of scholarship opportunities available to graduate students.**
- LL.23. Partner with local employers and educational service providers to develop a more focused, but not exclusive job readiness “pipeline” to local jobs.**

Lead Partners: Bloomsburg University

Support Partners: Town of Bloomsburg, Local Business Community

Funding Sources: University and private sponsorship

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- LL.24. Use university expertise, services, and programs to gather pertinent information about the Town's environment, which can be used to direct local policies and investments.
- LL.25. Use university expertise to acquire assistance with operational and administrative functions of local government.
- LL.26. Encourage the local business community to partner with the university on developing workforce training curricula and job placement programs.
- LL.27. Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to act as an intermediary to identify local business needs that the university can address. The Chamber of Commerce should invite/recruit university faculty to serve on the boards of local businesses and business associations.
- LL.28. Encourage local employers to explore employee incentives such as housing benefits, tuition reimbursement, or free specialized training.

Lead Partners: Town of Bloomsburg

Support Partners: Bloomsburg University, Local Business Community

Funding Sources: N/A

- LL.29. Incorporate university expertise in making the community more competitive for business and job growth by inviting or recruiting university participation on public/private economic development policy boards.
- LL.30. Develop a program that rewards or recognizes local businesses for offering internships, scholarship opportunities, or tuition reimbursement.
- LL.31. Incorporate university expertise in designing and implementing business technical assistance programs and local workforce development programs.

Lead Partners: Local Business Community

Support Partners: Bloomsburg University, Town of Bloomsburg

Funding Sources: Private foundations