

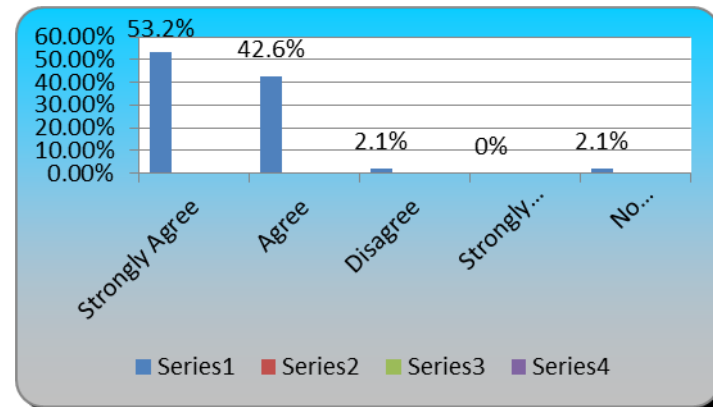
## Preparing for, Getting in & Moving Ahead in the Workplace

Community Forum Co-Hosted by Project 20/20, Battle Creek Area Young Professionals, Urban League of Battle Creek Young Professionals & Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Southwest Michigan  
 May 30, 2012, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Burnham Brook Community

After a panel discussion with Patricia Adams (Bronson Battle Creek), Trina Lewis (Kellogg Company), Chris Sargent (United Way of Greater Battle Creek) and Lisa Westbrook (Employment Group), attendees (53) were asked to choose responses, via a clicker, to a series of questions about the workforce and youth/young professionals. Afterwards, attendees were asked to discuss one question in small groups. The following responses and discussion took place. Please note, a total of 51 people participated via clicker and some did not participate on every question.

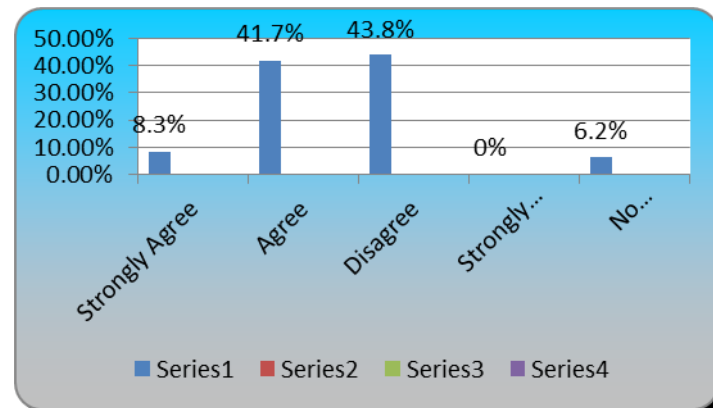
### 1.) My education and experience prepared me for the workforce. (multiple choice)

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	25	53.19%
Agree	20	42.55%
Disagree	1	2.13%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
No opinion/not sure	1	2.13%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>



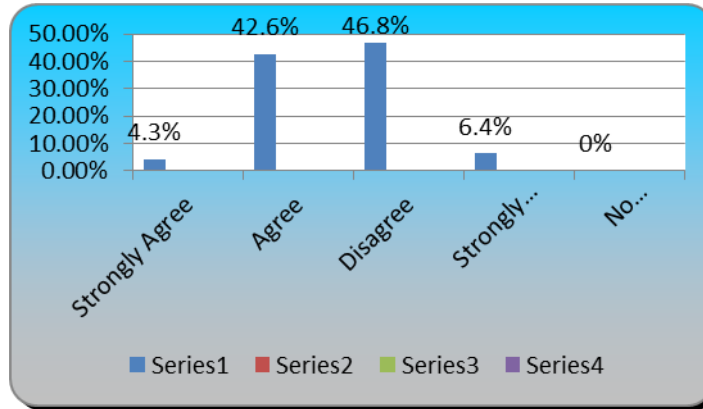
### 2.) I feel youth/YPs have the "hard" skills (education, expertise, job-specific) they need to be successful in today's economy. (multiple choice)

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	4	8.33%
Agree	20	41.67%
Disagree	21	43.75%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
No opinion/not sure	3	6.25%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>



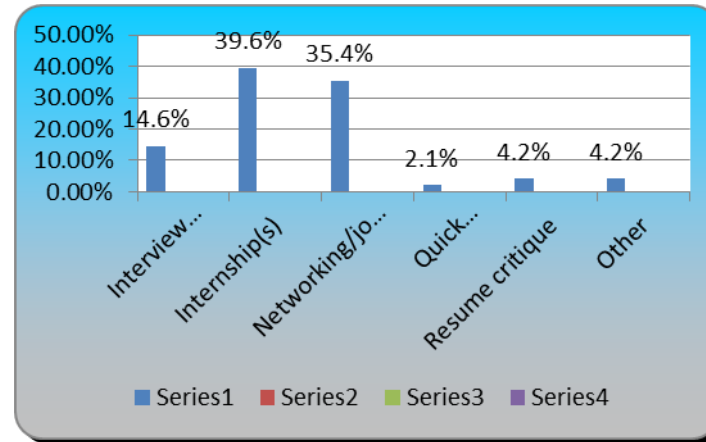
**3.) I feel youth/YPs have the “soft” skills (leadership, teamwork, interpersonal) they need to be successful in today’s economy. (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	2	4.26%
Agree	20	42.55%
Disagree	22	46.81%
Strongly Disagree	3	6.38%
No opinion/not sure	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>



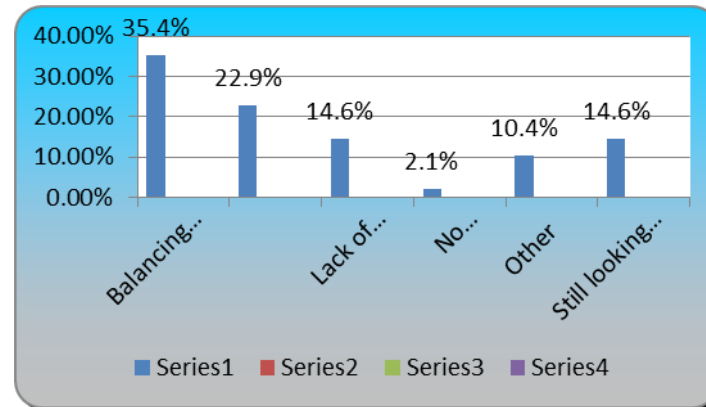
**4.) What would help (or did help) you in your employment search? (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Interview training	7	14.58%
Internship(s)	19	39.58%
Networking/job referral	17	35.42%
Quick notification of job opportunity	1	2.08%
Resume critique	2	4.17%
Other	2	4.17%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>



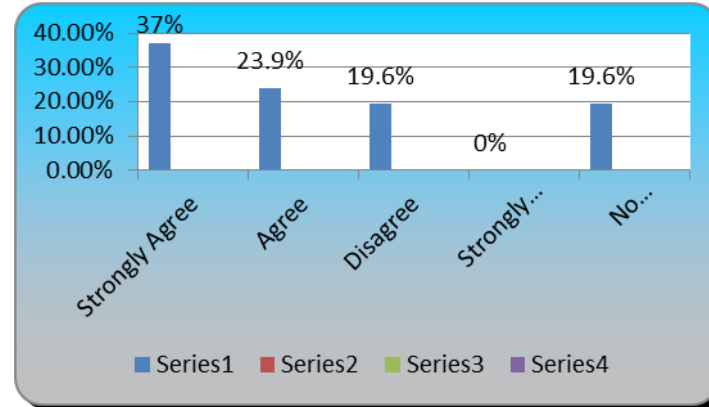
**5.) What is your biggest challenge in your current job as it relates to your personal growth? (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Balancing work/life	17	35.42%
Generational work practices & communication	11	22.92%
Lack of personal dev./ training opportunities	7	14.58%
No opportunity for leadership roles/adv.	1	2.08%
Other	5	10.42%
Still looking for work	7	14.58%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>



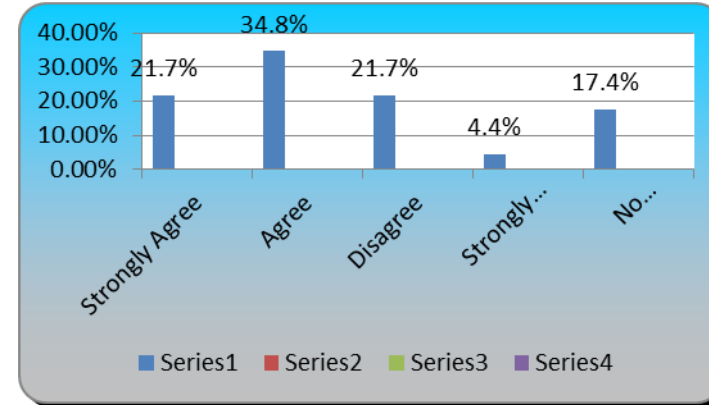
**6.) I feel my employer values youth/young professionals.  
(multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	17	36.96%
Agree	11	23.91%
Disagree	9	19.57%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
No opinion/not sure	9	19.57%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>



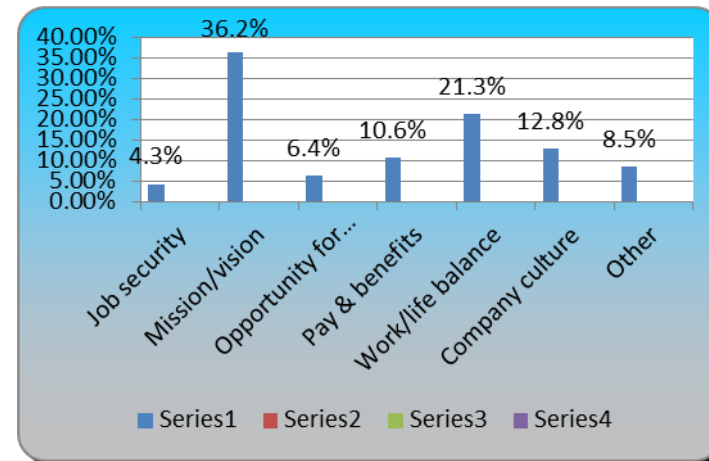
**7.) I feel my employer empowers youth/young professionals.  
(multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	10	21.74%
Agree	16	34.78%
Disagree	10	21.74%
Strongly Disagree	2	4.35%
No opinion/not sure	8	17.39%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>



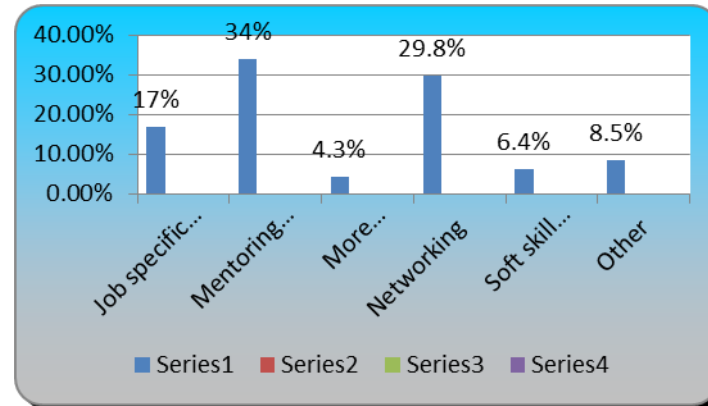
**8.) What attracted you most to your current position or is most important when selecting a job? (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Job security	2	4.26%
Mission/vision	17	36.17%
Opportunity for advancement	3	6.38%
Pay & benefits	5	10.64%
Work/life balance	10	21.28%
Company culture	6	12.77%
Other	4	8.51%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>



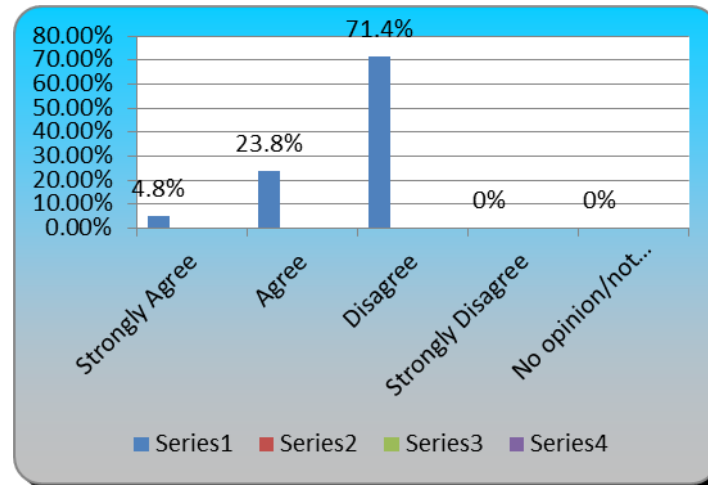
**9.) What would help you advance in your career? (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Job specific training	8	17.02%
Mentoring (peer/industry)	16	34.04%
More involvement in the community	2	4.26%
Networking	14	29.79%
Soft skill training	3	6.38%
Other	4	8.51%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>



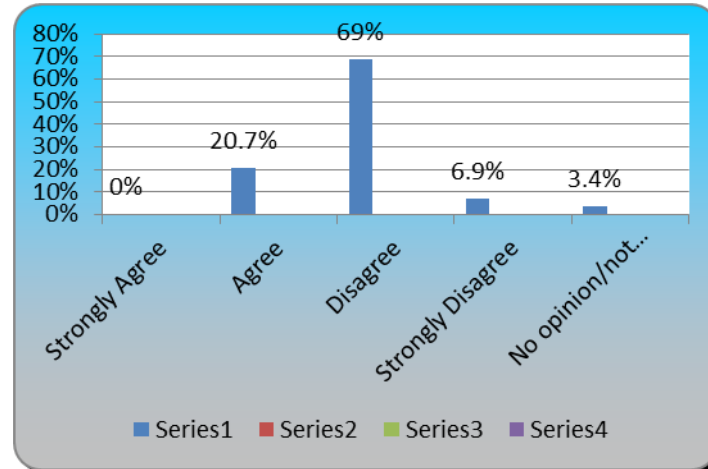
**11.) Follow-Up Question for YPs ONLY. I feel youth/YPs have the “soft” skills (leadership, teamwork, interpersonal, ) they need to be successful in today’s economy. (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	1	4.76%
Agree	5	23.81%
Disagree	15	71.43%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
No opinion/not sure	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>



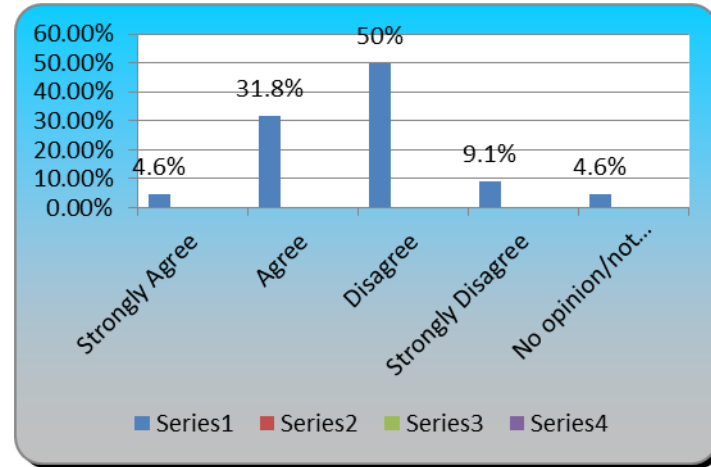
**12.) Follow-Up Question for Employers ONLY. I feel youth/YPs have the “soft” skills (leadership, teamwork, interpersonal, ) they need to be successful in today’s economy. (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	6	20.69%
Disagree	20	68.97%
Strongly Disagree	2	6.90%
No opinion/not sure	1	3.45%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>



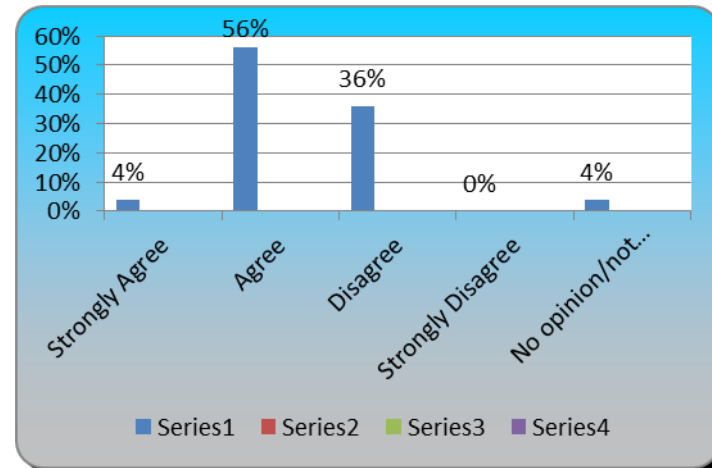
**13.) Follow-Up Question for Yps ONLY. I feel youth/YPs have the “hard” skills (education, expertise, job-specific) they need to be successful in today’s economy. (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	1	4.55%
Agree	7	31.82%
Disagree	11	50%
Strongly Disagree	2	9.09%
No opinion/not sure	1	4.55%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>



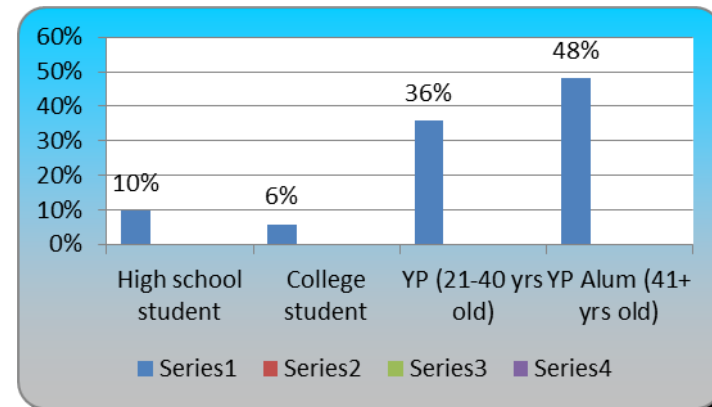
**14.) Follow-Up Question for Employers ONLY. I feel youth/YPs have the “hard” skills (education, expertise, job-specific) they need to be successful in today’s economy. (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Agree	14	56%
Disagree	9	36%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
No opinion/not sure	1	4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>



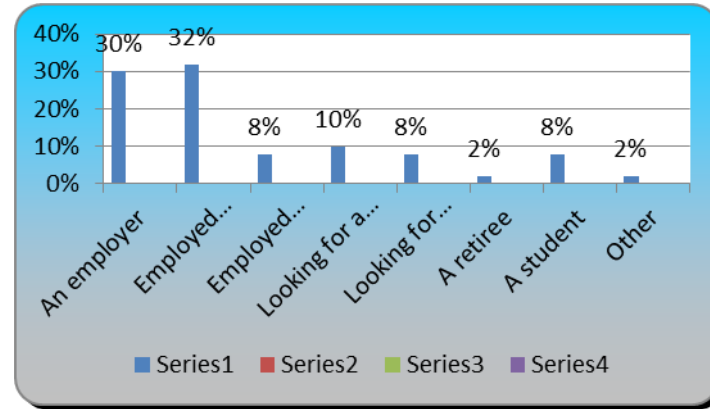
**15.) I am a....**

	Responses	
High school student	5	10%
College student	3	6%
YP (21-40 yrs old)	18	36%
YP Alum (41+ yrs old)	24	48%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>



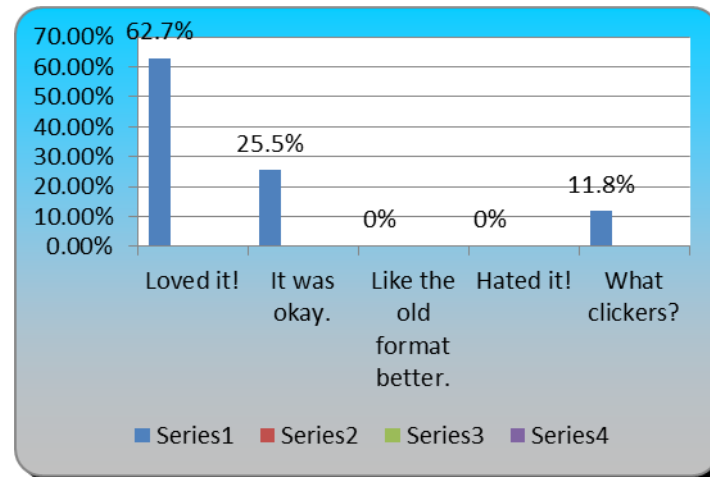
**16.) 1. I am:**

	Responses	
An employer	15	30%
Employed full-time	16	32%
Employed part-time	4	8%
Looking for a job	5	10%
Looking for an internship	4	8%
A retiree	1	2%
A student	4	8%
Other	1	2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>



**17.) What did you think about the format of the meeting tonight (using clickers followed by small group discussion)? (multiple choice)**

	Responses	
Loved it!	32	62.75%
It was okay.	13	25.49%
Like the old format better.	0	0%
Hated it!	0	0%
What clickers?	6	11.76%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Small Group Discussion Notes**

Attendees were asked to select one of the clicker questions and discuss with their groups what answer they chose and how they voted. Most groups chose to discuss hard and soft skills of youth and young professionals. However, some general discussion also took place.

- Youth difficulty getting work experience
- Hard to compete against people with more experience
- Young people relate to technology but not people
- Generation gap on manners, etiquette
- Missing a service orientation
- Diversity training needed?

- Hard skills taught by company, come with soft skills
- Filtering things on social media (professionalism)
- Don't have a knowledge basis, but have social aspect
- College students not as well prepared in soft skills as they are in the hard skills
- Able to communicate (what you can bring to the table)
- Adaptable to job/flexibility
- Technical skills part of hard skills
- YAC and such: good opportunities to gain leadership skills
- Basing it on high school students instead of what youth would be like after college
- Sell yourself more, "brag" a little
- Clothes for interview depends on your industry
- Hard skills: younger people know technology better
- Networking is important: many don't advertise since they know people in the job, asking employees who are good for job then give those possible applicants a job interview
- Internships go along with networking, not know who everybody knows
- Word of mouth important, knowing right people who push for you (successful, networking)
- Mentors help when moving jobs, show you the ways of the company, fills in cultural gaps of company
- Mentors can be found for you (set-up within) or you can find them yourself
- There is a generational divide between old and new generations. Skills are different.
- Parenting and socio-economic levels affects values and skills development. Some young people have limited opportunities to learn soft and hard skills
- We believe the key to changing lives and closing the divide in opportunities for young professionals may be found in building relationships between young professionals and older, experienced people. We need to connect.
- Generational shift with social media has caused loss of soft/interpersonal skills
- Education system lack substance in foundational skills – doesn't prepare kids for college and competition
- Lacking critical thinking skills because so dependent on technology – greater access to information but it's fed to people. How can teacher teach that "need to teach how to fish"?
- Real life job experiences can help teach these skills – volunteer, internships, networking
- Get rid of Facebook and Twitter
- Education in foundational skills + intern, volunteer, paid, real life + empowerment to take ownership of own learning = more critical thinking, motivated, prepared YP/youth
- Lack of education on soft skills
- Society has changed – generally all society lacks soft skills
- Changing of occupations creates obstacles for individuals to succeed

- We are training kids/youth equally as good or better with job training and soft skills but what has changed is the market. Jobs have a higher level of soft skills
- Youth need more experiences and opportunities for experiences
- Back in the day – most new hires came as a result of networking. Friend makes recommendation.
- Youth need to know how to build a resume – get exposure from volunteer opportunities
- Talked about the need to not overlook the youth that don't follow the traditional paths
- Mandates from Fed – prevents schools from preparing kids for trades
- As a community we can do some things different to surround youth that have a focus toward the trades
- Back in the day – education was broad and not so narrow focused. Learning was on the job.
- There is always room for improvement
- Education is teaching more hard skills than before
- Students often don't have the opportunity to learn the soft skills. They learn as they mature.
- In middle school we have career training about soft skills and entrepreneur training where they learn both hard and soft skills
- Soft skills are a matter of maturation, some do and some don't
- Plant the seeds early i.e. life skills and soft skills
- Some soft skills align with leadership and personality
- “We are fighting a “cultural battle” and we are losing!” – quote from a veteran teacher
- Some issues are causing a divide in cultural differences in our youth. Some students will move ahead and learn their skills, other will not have the opportunity to acquire necessary skills both hard and soft skills.
- Other organizations that don't work with youth don't value them as much
- People and organizations hire someone with experience
- Older adults have their voice heard more than youngest
- Youth don't get the opportunity easily
- Youth's voices don't get heard over experienced people
- Youth have gotten lazy and prefer working for something easy to get
- Technology changes youth
- Youth wait for the job to come to them and don't understand they need to start somewhere where you'll find experience and training
- Many youth look more into the money than the interest