

**Questions for the Record from
REPRESENTATIVE Frederica S. Wilson**

**Committee on Education and the Workforce
Full Committee Hearing:
“Competencies Over Degrees: Transitioning to a Skills-Based Economy”
Thursday, June 22, 2023
10:15 a.m.**

Representative Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL)
Questions for All Witnesses

1. What are your own organizations—who are leaders and innovators in credentialing and work-based learning—doing to address the gap that exists in soft skills acquisition, such as team building, communication, collaboration, etc., which are also in high-demand by our employers?

Mr. Healey Response:

Along with building the technical skills of our employees and customers, SAP delivers extensive employee upskilling on critical soft skills such as leadership and ethics. For example, we deliver targeted learning journeys by leadership level that are focused on building high performing teams and communicating and collaborating across SAP. These learning journeys reinforce our defined leadership behaviors: being agile, ethical, accountable, inclusive, and bringing our strategy to life. In addition to offering traditional courses on what we call “professional” skills, we strengthen those skills with on-the-job training and hands-on programs such as coaching, mentoring, and fellowships.

SAP also works with a variety of organizations and industry leaders on skill-based learning and credentialing for both hard skills and soft skills. By aligning this approach across organizations, including our peers and other technology companies, we can increase access to learning for individuals, close the industry-wide skills gap, and collaboratively upskill, hire, and redeploy talent. For instance, we follow a unified skill taxonomy driven by Lightcast's Open Skills Library, which defines competencies around specialized skills (technical skills) as well as common skills (soft skills). This enables us—and others who align to this common skills language—to thoughtfully focus on the right skills for each role, whether those are technical skills or soft skills.

Similarly, when it comes to credentialing, SAP delivers certifications and badges via Credly, an Open Badge platform that closes the gaps between skills and opportunities by making it easier for learners to share verified digital credentials. SAP SuccessFactors is also part of the Velocity Network, a non-profit, vendor-neutral organization formed to reinvent how career records are shared globally via a blockchain-powered solution that uses trusted student, employee, and candidate data to give power to individuals to take

ownership of their career credential and develop a reliable way for organizations to ensure they have the right talent in the right roles.

Finally, we are heavily focused on increasing access to learning for underserved communities through programs that prepare people in transition, veterans, and those underrepresented in technology for jobs through both technical and professional training. For example, our global, publicly funded “People to Work” program equips participants with technical solution training as well as social competence topics and soft skills that are key to helping facilitate reentry to the job market. SAP also works with organizations such as the Discovery Partners Institute (University of Illinois System) which prepares students and workers with a range of skills required to step into high-demand tech jobs, and Diversibord, which helps match highly qualified diverse individuals with jobs. We often look to best-practices of other leaders in the space, including Apprenti, an apprenticeship program that connects underrepresented groups with the necessary training to be successful in tech, and Siemens, which has a strong and long-standing vocational training program.

2. How would you propose collaborating with leaders in higher education, particularly at large urban, public, minority-serving institutions, so that they benefit from some of your proposed models?

Mr. Healey Response:

I recommend inviting leaders of those institutions to consider partnering with SAP and collaborating with our ecosystem by exploring the following current SAP initiatives:

The “SAP University Alliances” introduces students and faculty to SAP software by providing networking and educational activities and partnering to build technology skills. This is a program that opens up the world of SAP to more than 3,200 universities in over 111 countries worldwide and aims to develop the critical skills for the digital enterprise among university students and young thinkers. In partnership with SAP’s six University Competence Center (UCC) locations and five Academic Competence Center (ACC) locations around the world, universities gain access to an ever-expanding range of SAP software and curriculum. With SAP University Alliances resources, faculty help students better connect business and IT concepts to practice, and prepare them to be the next generation leaders, designers, developers, data scientists, makers, and entrepreneurs who will drive the digital transformation of business.

“Project Propel Empowered by SAP” is a strategic collaboration program among SAP and the Americas’ SAP Users’ Group supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in the U.S. to empower students with knowledge of the latest SAP technologies to enhance their academic and career outcomes. The program aspires to strategically enable young, bright, HBCU and MSI minds to participate and contribute creative ideas via crowdsourcing including industry consortiums, co-innovation projects, and research projects empowered via the SAP HANA Cloud Platform. The goal is to drive unprecedented empowerment of the

HBCU University community on the latest, most innovative topics from SAP including Universities leveraging SAP's Massive Open Online Courses at openSAP and running operations in the SAP Cloud. This is a potential model for Higher Education research.

"SAP Next-Gen" is a global community for students, universities, schools, and educational partners, who are passionate about innovation and technology. Our community is an innovation platform for SAP's more than 440,000 customers around the world. To drive innovation, the initiative leverages more than 3,100 educational institutions in 110 countries, SAP's more than 100 innovation and development centers, and startups in the global SAP ecosystem. SAP Next-Gen Labs at universities foster connections between academic thought leaders, researchers and students, and the SAP ecosystem including SAP customers, startups and accelerators, tech community partners, venture firms, purpose driven partners, and digital innovation experts from SAP and its partners, to drive innovation with purpose.

3. How can we begin, even before college, to foster collaboration between formal curriculum tracks and competencies, credentialing, and organizations like yours?

Mr. Healey Response:

SAP and other BRT member companies are beginning to create partnerships so the knowledge, skills, and abilities that our companies look for are built into high school curriculum and also through out of school programs. We agree that more needs to be done by tapping the talent much earlier in the pipeline which will also create greater opportunities for underserved populations.

My own experience with my 5,000 Role Models program has shown that we cannot wait until students reach higher education.