

Honorable Chairperson Himes, Ranking member Steil, Representative Moore and members of the House Select Committee on Education Disparity and Fairness in Growth welcome to our community and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Bryan Albrecht and I serve as the President of Gateway Technical College.

As an advocate for higher education and the economic opportunities it provides for graduates I am proud of our collaboration with the University of Wisconsin- Parkside, Carthage College, Herzing and all colleges engaged with our Higher Education Regional Alliance.

I have no doubt that each of our institutions put student success and the possibilities of a rewarding and fulfilling career success at the top of any graduate outcomes report.

Today I am sharing the Gateway story. One filled with over 111 years of dedicated service to the Racine, Kenosha and Walworth communities.

Our Vision states it best "We make life-changing educational opportunities a reality." Our Mission assures alignment with workforce needs and local economic prosperity. "We deliver industry-focused education that is flexible, accessible and affordable for our diverse community."

In that regard, I will share with you just three of the effective partnerships that meet your objectives today:

First is a partnership that serves as a model being replicated in over 1,000 schools and colleges throughout the nation. Snap-on Corporation and their CEO Nick Pinchuk has served as a national champion for the value of technical education and the dignity of work. Gateway and Snap-on have partnered to establish the National Coalition of Certification Centers to advance the alignment of curriculum in schools with the needs of the transportation, energy and manufacturing sectors. This work culminates with a nationally recognized certification adding value to the academic preparation of students. To date over 100,000 certifications have been awarded increasing the capabilities of the automotive industry and advancing the careers of certified technicians. Local automotive dealers like the Palmen Group, Lynch Auto and Truck and Kunes Country Automotive are just a few of the employers that have benefited from direct students placements.

The second example is from Walworth County. Mike Reader, CEO of Precision Plus has made it his passion to strengthen the technical capabilities of schools, teachers, and students. Sponsoring Gateway's RPM manufacturing Center on our Elkhorn Campus has led to student internships, apprenticeships and a variety of work based learning opportunities. Mike and his team are directly engaged with our faculty to ensure students are not only well prepared but connected to area employers to address the regional manufacturing workforce shortage.

Lastly, I will highlight an exceptional partnership with SC Johnson Corporation of which you will hear more about today. Gateway and SCJ have been partnering to address the employment and economic condition of Racine County for many years. In this short testimony, I can only cover a few highlights and then one of our graduates Sherry Carrion will share the impact of such partnerships. Fisk Johnson, Chairman and CEO of SC Johnson has made a commitment to improving the lives of the citizens in our community and communities around the world where they do business. Our history runs deep with customized training programs for incumbent workers, short term boot camp training for dislocated individuals, high school academies to address critical workforce needs like smart manufacturing and IT, STEM Scholars pathways that focus on young women, and underserved students, Promise Program support to address affordability and access and the High Skilled Occupations for Professional Employment or HOPE for short. The HOPE program was specifically intended for displaced workers due to the pandemic. HOPE provided funding and support for short term training programs that were identified as critical to our business community. Dislocated food service workers into healthcare jobs as an example. This program not only provides the skills training but the necessary support services to acquire and maintain a new career. Equipping students with skills and community resources serves as a foundation for career and family success.

There is so much more that I could tell you about our college community but I believe it is more important that you hear from one of our graduates. Sherry is proof that Gateway lives up to its name as a gateway to hope and prosperity.

Thank you.

Bryan Albrecht
Gateway Technical College
President and CEO