GREEN(ER) CREDENTIALS: IMPROVING SKILL DELIVERY IN THE CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

Sarah L. White
COWS, University of Wisconsin-Madison
March 9, 2011
First Things First

By way of introduction
CENTER ON WISCONSIN STRATEGY (COWS)

National research and policy center at UW Madison

“Think-and-do tank” for high-road economic development

Focus on good jobs, human capital, and clean energy

Co-founder, Apollo Alliance & Emerald Cities Collaborative

www.cows.org
GREETINGS FROM THE HEARTLAND
FROM TEAMSTERS AND TURTLES (SEATTLE, 1999)
TO SOLIDARITY (MADISON, WISCONSIN 2011)
UNIONS
THE VOICE
OF WORKING
FAMILIES

SUPPORT
ALL
W.I.
FAMILIES

AND A COMMON GREEN AGENDA
WORKING FAMILIES FOR A GREENER FUTURE

THIS IS OUR HOUSE
AND NOW

The stuff I’m really supposed to talk about
OF LABOR MARKETS & GREENERY

Three U.S. Challenges

- Skill delivery (how do training systems work?)
- Skill measurement (what do workers know?)
- Skill demand (what do industries need?)
And clean energy in particular, where credentials defy order

- Diplomas
- Degrees
- Certificates
- Certifications
- Industries
- Occupations
- Technologies
- Institutions
- Systems
- Sectors
A Greener Skills Agenda

- Establish a national qualifications framework, and, in the meantime:
  - Support and train to high quality third-party certifications
  - Build career pathways, and make them greener
  - Use sector strategies to forge green (or greener) industry partnerships
  - Focus on associate and journey level training
WHAT’S WORKING: FEDERAL INITIATIVES

- DOL Green Jobs Grants & Credentialing Guidance: Steering states toward alignment and relevance

- DOE Home Performance Guidelines & Solar Instructor Training Network: Moving training toward standardization and quality
Getting the supply side right, even and maybe particularly in times of high unemployment & anemic job growth, is critical.

Renewable energy, energy efficiency, and alternative transportation are under tremendous pressure – economically and politically.

We cannot build and sustain a clean energy sector on a patchwork of poor quality work done by poorly trained workers scraping by in poor quality jobs.

Our work on credentialing is an attempt to both stand up an industry and rationalize a training system. Both are essential to building a robust, prosperous green economy in which low-carbon enterprise, democratic communities, and working families thrive.
Sarah L. White, COWS

Green(er) Credentials: Improving Skill Delivery in the Clean Energy Economy


Saratoga Springs, New York

March 9, 2011
Sarah L. White
swhite@cows.org

Sarah White is a Senior Associate at the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), a national policy center at the University of Wisconsin dedicated to high-road economic development. Her work at COWS focuses on the intersection of labor and energy policy at state and federal levels, and she is a national expert on jobs and training in the emerging green economy. White has written widely on education for sustainability and social change, and co-authored two major recent reports: Greener Pathways: Jobs and Workforce Development in the Clean Energy Economy, and Greener Skills: How Credentials Create Value in the Clean Energy Economy. White came to COWS from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, where she served as the Secretary’s policy advisor for federal employment and training programs. Before that, she ran the Development Education Program of Interfaith Hunger Appeal in New York, working to integrate academic and NGO efforts addressing poverty, food security and sustainable development. A labor historian and Fulbright Scholar, White holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a B.A. from Wellesley College.