

Annual Colloquium Overview

On April 10th, nearly 100 thought leaders and expert practitioners from across the country convened in Washington, DC to participate in our 6th annual Colloquium focused on fostering greater economic opportunity and prosperity in America. Throughout the day, the diverse group of participants worked to break down silos by collaboratively assessing barriers and agreeing upon plans of action for bold and sustainable impact. The primary goal for the day was for this very diverse group to think differently and connect to offer a "sense of the possible" —it was not about recreating the wheel, but rather bringing up the best practices and ideas to have greater impact.

In an ever-changing world, we need to be more prepared to solve for our growing achievement gap, a stagnant middle class and, ultimately, a workforce not prepared for the global economy. Despite the great innovations that currently exist, and the multitude of human capital and financial resources we filter toward these challenges, we have created a system that does not effectively build upon best practices, nor aggressively invest in proven models. This lack of synthesis and strategic growth has resulted in our failure to reach the critical scale we need.

The goal of the Colloquium was to discuss how to overcome these systematic challenges our nation faces, tapping into each other's work and ideas to harness our collective problem-solving capacity. The day kicked off with Hope Street Group's Chairman of the Board Ted Meisel underlining the importance of working together creatively to embolden economic opportunity. Participants were encouraged to identify current and emerging innovations and to discuss the most important trends forecasted over the next 5-10 years—all in an effort to help us stay ahead of a rapidly evolving landscape.

To further drive the context and momentum for the day, the morning continued with an exceptional panel, moderated by Steve Clemons, Editor at Large at *The Atlantic*, that included panelists Jim Shelton, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Education, Jamie Merisotis, CEO and President of Lumina Foundation, La June Montgomery Tabron, CEO and President of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Seth Goldman, Co-Founder and CEO of Honest Tea. Tapping their unique experiences from across the public and private sector, these esteemed panelists identified how we can expand public, private, philanthropic, and individual investments in approaches and technologies that have demonstrated success in broadening opportunities for all Americans. Each speaker was able to touch on key initiatives that represented this theme, such as the U.S. Department of Education's I3 fund, Honest Tea's unexpected alliance with Coke, Lumina's campaign and efforts to re-envision how we define postsecondary education, and Kellogg's regional programs of uncovering pioneers and spotlighting champions of change.

The lunch activity, led by Co-Founder of LinkedIn and Hope Street Group Board Member Allen Blue, challenged participants to understand key technology trends (reputation building, ecosystems, big data and scale) so that they can later apply them (during the day and in their future work) to solve challenges in education, jobs and/or health. Each table, moderated by a technology entrepreneur and/or expert, initiated the activity with broad scenarios familiar to all participants to encourage greater understanding of technology trends, motivations and impact to then apply to the second part of the discussion.

Throughout the day, there was much emphasis on the necessity of recognizing and demonstrating the untapped potential of ways we can work together—in and outside of government—to enhance upward mobility throughout the country.

Working Sessions: Topics and Ideas

Throughout day, participants engaged in in-depth dialogues on specific topics. Summaries are provided below. To learn more about the dialogues and next steps, we encourage you to read the full session memos.

Working collaboratively to connect learning to employment, entrepreneurship and upward mobility

A 60 member Jobs and Education Working Group came together to explore the collective contributions from the private, public, social, and tech sectors that are needed to transform the education-to-career process in the U.S., with a focus on fostering collaboration. The participants examined five “future states of the world,” selected based on topics Hope Street Group’s network thought critical to improving economic opportunity for all Americans.

We asked participants to imagine a United States where:

1. Educators, workforce and economic development work hand-in-hand driven by best practices.
2. Education is focused on adaptability and “learning how to learn”, rather than solely on today's skills.
3. Learners enter the workforce with a career mentality.
4. Skill training is entirely in sync with changing skills needs.
5. Excellent job/skill/person matching, which facilitates broad economic prosperity.

We designed these topics to stimulate robust discussions and the germination of bold ideas from talented people with diverse backgrounds, ideas that would leverage public-private innovation and accelerate the pace of reform. Our ultimate goal was to identify “big ideas” and areas of collaboration that could help move the nation toward more holistic solutions, which would ensure broad economic growth and prosperity through collective action.

Some of the innovative ideas derived included:

- The development of a new Work + Learn model that will position employers to take a leadership role in providing job exposure and skill development opportunities to learners during high school.
- Creating a method for stakeholders to adopt core competencies and a common language for skills definitions that are shared across sectors and industries, allowing for streamlined hiring practices and clear, adaptable career pathways.
- Defining common dominators between academic and workforce skills (both K-12 and college) and drive efforts for this foundational work through peer-to-peer instruction models.
- A broad national campaign promoting career-mindedness, with a focus on encouraging alternate career pathways, which would help create a norm that focusing on one’s future is the most “American” thing one could do, equating career-mindedness and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial spirit with patriotism itself.
- Developing a comprehensive, accessible and real-time national labor market information system that identifies trends in employment, jobs and skills.

Accelerating for a culture of health: a collaborative approach

The goal of the Colloquium health dialogue was to gain a macro understanding of the culture of health spectrum and how to cultivate such cultures more broadly across communities. Even though exceptional best practices and multisectoral pioneers exist in this space, there still remain fundamental challenges and barriers to scaling cultures of wellness, including leadership, resources (both in human capital and financial), messaging, and a channel to transcribe community needs to those decision makers implementing programs. Making the proper connections to accelerate positive work being done is also key.

Focusing on barriers that need to be removed or realigned, the group discussed the market forces and systematic changes needed to make the shift for a strong culture of health more transferable across the country. Together, they determined the following actions were vital:

- Realigning high-level decision-making to connect back to what community-articulated needs and desires through effective user (community) input
- Creating a marketplace and modifying financial resources to value health and evidence by outcomes (e.g., social impact bonds and accountable care organizations)
- Constructing employer programs built from quality user input and best practices, accounting for integration of community wellness needs, rather than centering only on employee wellness (user-centric approach model)
- Linking wealth creation to prosperity to change motivations at a systematic level, with investors and government entities partnering to change models that aren't working to stimulate or sustain a positive culture of health

Overwhelmingly, the majority of the group agreed that the foundation for a successful culture of health must be embedded in engaging community organizers and other community representatives in the beginning, when they can help define the problems they face, and together build the capacity to respond to and engage others. Two primary challenges outlined are the way we frame the issue and build a campaign to motivate this paradigm shift and the resources, financial and human capital needed to sustain these endeavors. Although the private sector can support a scaled culture of health, it was determined that we must broaden our scope to engage community members and other champions of change.

Next Steps

We at Hope Street Group are deeply appreciative for all those who participated in our Colloquium, and look forward to the work ahead. Collaboration and collective action are essential for enabling any of these above ideas presented by the working groups to come to fruition. Hope Street Group intends to examine all of these concepts and will reach out to the Colloquium participants and members of our network to determine next steps for collective action.