



# *Welcome!*

Welcome to the inaugural Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA) quarterly newsletter. We are excited to use this newsletter as an extension of our partnership with the region's 18 [higher education partners](#) and other local [partner organizations](#) to close achievement gaps and educate students to meet the workforce needs of our region. By working together, we can increase college completion rates, develop powerful educational programs and connect employers with the talent needed to build a stronger southeastern Wisconsin.

As chair of HERA, I'm proud of the important work HERA is doing to better our region and ensure student success. In each newsletter, we will include valuable information about the needs of area employers and what HERA is doing to increase student outcomes and grow the region's talent pipeline. We will also request some information from you on how we can better work together to fulfill the needs of both employers and students.

I am looking forward to the collaboration!

**Dr. Swallow**

HERA Chair and President, Carthage College

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# The Facts



HERA is a collaborative of 18 southeastern Wisconsin public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities, and a network of partner organizations. We are dedicated to closing achievement gaps and educating students today to become an innovative and nimble workforce that meets the needs of the region's industries tomorrow. This challenge is too large for any one university or college to solve alone, so we are working together.

To ensure we are moving towards a stronger region, we are measuring our success over time across two core metrics: [degree completion](#) and [degree](#)

[production](#). By utilizing this data, we can understand how HERA's higher education institutions support students completing a degree or a certification while also evaluating the types of degrees being awarded in southeastern Wisconsin. HERA uses this data, along with the Wisconsin Department of Economic Development's [workforce data](#), to identify needed solutions that help fix talent gaps and better our entire region.

In addition to this work, HERA also develops resources and encourages student participation in career fairs to connect employers to area talent. Check out these recommended resources:



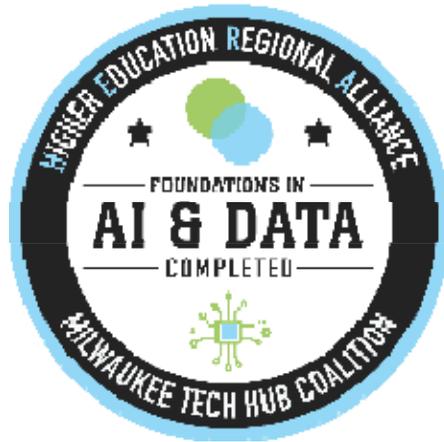
As a group of 18 institutions, HERA represents more than 140,000 students across southeastern Wisconsin who are key to driving our economy forward. However, finding and recruiting talent can be a challenge. To combat this, HERA established the [Best Practices for Recruiting](#) to share creative ideas on how employers can collaborate with and recruit from our region's universities and colleges.

**WORKFORCE FAIR**  
JOBS, INTERNSHIPS,  GRADUATE SCHOOLS

As an additional step to finding the talent you need, you're invited to attend the [2022 WorkForce Fair: Jobs, Internships, & Graduate Schools](#) scheduled for February 22, 2022. This job fair is the premier place to promote internship and career opportunities as well as graduate programs to many of HERA institution students. Below are details on how to attend and connect with students at the event.

**Stay updated on other important resources HERA develops or recommends for area employers by bookmarking HERA's [website](#).**

# HERA Highlights



HERA's Foundations in Data and Artificial Intelligence badge was launched in partnership with MKE Tech Hub Coalition's pre-internship program on the ethics and impact of data and artificial intelligence. It was awarded to 70 students from area high schools, colleges and universities who participated in the program. The certification demonstrates the knowledge the students gained from the program and the strong skillset they can offer to area employers.

HERA's partnership with MKE Tech Hub was recognized by STEM Forward with a Stemmy Award and was also featured in the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Some of HERA's partners, like UW-Milwaukee, are also considering offering college credit for students who completed the program.



HERA partners Carthage College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and University of Wisconsin – Parkside were recognized with the Student Success Collaborative – CONNECTEDness Award from education firm EAB for their commitment to the Moon Shot for Equity initiative. The four HERA institutions were the first regional consortium of higher education institutions to be part of the initiative that focuses on eliminating equity gaps in higher education by 2030.

Learnings from this initiative were shared with the 14 other HERA higher education partners to ensure all southeastern Wisconsin institutions have the resources needed to further bridge equity gaps and increase student credential and degree completion rates.

This program paved the way for some HERA institutions to develop programs to reduce institutional debt, increase the financial hold threshold and offer retention grants using Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). This in turn allowed many students to reduce or eliminate their balances and re-enroll in classes and graduate.



HERA partnered with Wisconsin Policy Forum (WPF) throughout 2021 to share HERA's [comprehensive data](#) from our institution partners.

Through this partnership, WPF analyzed HERA's data to examine degree production trends in several critical fields. WPF then gauged how the combined graduates of HERA's institutional partners align with current and projected workforce demands in the regional economy. Read the WPF reports on the region's [STEM graduates](#), [health care graduates](#) and [education graduates](#).

HERA is also excited to announce its partnership with WPF on its Student Financial Aid report, which will be published in the coming months.

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# Advance Our Region



With the success of the Foundations in Data and Artificial Intelligence badge, HERA is also considering other badges to certify student skills and meet any skills gaps found in industries across southeastern Wisconsin. Currently, a badge in the digital area is in development. If you'd like to learn more about this badge and find out ways you can partner with HERA on this badge or others, please let us know.

In addition, HERA is continuing to find ways to expand the region's talent pool and bridge equity gaps through our many impactful programs. If you'd like to partner with HERA on any of these initiatives, please reach out to us at [admin@herawisconsin.org](mailto:admin@herawisconsin.org).

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**Find Out More**

