

# **Pathways to Aviation Board of Trustees**



**Simple SWOT Study  
November 2, 2021**

# Strengths

- Pathways has expanded geographically and significantly increased the number of institutions involved
- The content is excellent
- Pete Parker has been an outstanding facilitator for the top notch content and expansion

Great concept. Great programs. A gift to all that participate.

Long established existence and reputation. Good publications and literature  
Good name and signage. The idea of Pathways has an enduring quality.

Personable approach to students and job seekers. Engaging the aviation industry and connecting them with their future leaders and employees. Providing students and jobseeker with mentorship to map out their higher education and career path. This is all over and above the program goals of equipping them to pursue their dream career/jobs! Only ED and Chair driving decisions, ideas and opportunities for success. Skunkworks baby!!! This process helped avoid delays on to market success and time stuck in committee.

- Unique program, especially for the local area, but also online.
- Flexibility. During Covid and even with meeting the needs of individual students it seems Pathways was good at pivoting into what was needed. As we try to figure out what the best way forward is I think this flexibility is what will allow us to pivot or move forward without having to change too much.
- Solid cadre of volunteers, industry speakers, mentors, and board members that have a great depth of knowledge and excitement for the industry.
- One hell of a damn fine point man in Pete. Singlehandedly navigated Covid, growth of Pathways, and taking real steps to make Pathways a major industry player.

- Pete Parker as keystone to all efforts as executive director
- Significant experience and wealth of knowledge available through the board

Pete. Great group of mentors. The right organization at the right time. Website with archived training videos. Aviation connections.

# Weaknesses

- There is no backbone to the organization without Pete Parker
- There is a lack of funding to sustain the current pace and outreach of the organization
- My understanding is that Pathways still owes money to Pete Parker

## Funding!

Lack of sustainable funding. No large charitable anchor. Some Board members work, some along for the ride. Lack of in-person meetings. COVID has hurt us. Pete has moved out of the area, so in-person meetings and programs are reduced.

Lack of funding. Non-engaged board members. Pathway's success falsely implying that the finances are already in place to support the organization. With the change in the non-profit world and who supports which non-profit and why... there is a lack of focus to address this. Program is solid! Only ED and Chair decisions, ideas and opportunities for success.

Funding. We have a deep cadre of industry professionals and an awesome knowledge base but it's hard to put that into practice without money. I think the real place the money is needed is to buy us manpower to pursue so many of the things we want to pursue. Interns can only go so far and Pete cannot do it all himself forever. I think there is a path to the subscription model from businesses bringing in some real money but to get there I think we need some un-restricted funds from people who donate a large amount simply because they believe in what we're trying to build and we start building from the base again.

The board needs to be more vocal about what its vision is or how they feel about the current vision. As a board we need to be more clear with what we feel a solid and attainable 2 / 5 / 10 year plan is and give Pete the direction he needs with concrete timeline goals. I am 100% excited for the big picture that has been laid out and the possibilities of where we can go but without major funding perhaps we need to re-group and have a smaller focus. Once that builds we can begin branching back out. I'm curious as to what each board member feels Pathways is. Are we a mentoring group, a job placement assistance group, a networking organization? Not that any of these are the right answer but if the board has a cohesive vision under the correct assumptions then our chance of success is that much higher.

- Lack of focus on one or two specific efforts, specifically aviation-centric activities
- Inconsistent board participation

Lack of money to hire someone to help Pete

# Opportunities

- There is opportunity to attach to some other funded entity
- Pathways could partner with an educational or non profit organization

Pathways programs should be offered to all young people across all fields, not just aviation.

Still a great idea. Captures the imagination. Everyone wants to help our youth. Aviation is a growth industry. Good opportunity of reeconomic developemnt in Nevada an elsewhere.

How to pursue funding and support in the ever changing non-profit landscape.

Keep doing what has created success for students, jobseekers and industry.

Engage key leaders locally and nationally to understand Pathway's why and benefit to our future by championing Pathways. Byhelping with sustained funding, Awareness and evolvemnt in the program.

Our hybrid ability for in person and online (both workshops and mentoring) is where I think we may have more opportunity than we realize. As of now, with one full time person and a variety of volunteers it's hard to pursue the loftier goals but online mentoring is an easy way for people to connect on their own time and is a sustainable thing considering the one man show Pete has had to run.

Our loftier goals where our subscription model, "Pathways Certified", and growing an active alum of individuals who have been in the program, bring in major funding and are rolling along with real steam, are incredible selling points to donors. Once we have the funding and the clear way forward to sustain these things I think there is major opportunity in already having started those things and saw what worked and what didn't.

- Resurgence of aviation industry

Large aviation manufacturers and groups to finance Pathways. High schools to partner with Pathways in exchange for their monetary support

# Threats

- There will be failure without a change in the current way that the organization is run
- There will be total burnout of Pete Parker and he could quit the organization entirely
- Activities will need to be scaled back to match funding

## Funding!

Candles burn out. People burn out. No long term financial support has been found. Other groups and entities my "borrow" our concepts without paying for them. There is no way to can and sell our program. I cn be duplicated by others. The window of success may be closing.

Growing too fast without the accompanying financial support. Trustees not fully understanding Pathway's program and life changing impact to students and job seekers. Another group running with Pathway's plan.

- Lack of funding
- Lack of a workforce past just Pete
- Lack of a single laser focus and clearly defined timeline with assumptions met before we grow.

- Internal complacency
- For-profit career preparation firms

AOPA or EAA or similar copying what Pathways does. They have the volunteers and finances to succeed.

# What would you do?

-Need to look at funding or operating Pathways in a new manner. After many tries, the funding has not come to fruition.

The key right now is sustainable funding sources. Pathways should reach out to experts in "giving" to understand what is involved with developing consistent funding.

Enlarge the Board. Have in-person Board meetings. Have small or large Speaker Meetings or programs. Find one or more large financial sponsors. Find many sponsors. Promote Pathways locally and nationally. The Board needs to give or get, substantial financial support.

Keep doing what has created success for students, jobseekers and industry.

Engage key leaders locally and nationally to understand Pathway's why and benefit to our future by championing Pathways helping with sustained funding, Awareness and involvement in the program.

-Narrow the scope of Pathways to the mentoring program

-Fully fund negotiated salary for the Executive Director (whose scope of work would be limited to daily operations and grant requests/funding coordination).

Take a break from all the time consuming day to day operations. Use the next weeks or months to regroup by using the time previously spent on Wednesday video training sessions, taking job seeker calls, etc and use that time to seek partners. FedEx, United, Southwest, Boeing, Lockheed, Clickbond, and the like will be desperate for talented and trained employees in the very near future. Make any changes to our business Model as needed. We had much more enthusiasm during the in person training events - what happened to all those kids when we went online? When Covid allows go back to in person events at local aviation businesses for some hands on encounters for the job seekers.

# What would you do? (pg 2)

I would start by saying that some of our big goals of a financially lucrative subscription model, Pathways Certified program creating active alumnus, and creating content online for mass consumption are good ones. We just need to decide when it's the right time to be able to do each of these sustainably.

Initially I would give in to the fact that even if we have active volunteers at the end of the day we have a single person running the show. Until we get more funding that's the reality. What can one person truly do without burning out? I would re-focus energy on 3 things IN PRIORITY ORDER:

## 1) Aggressively pursuing funding

-Funding allows us to do all of the things we want but can't mostly due to workforce. Pete needs to do what he does best and steer the ship with a vision but be able to delegate the minutia to a small cadre that can be counted on more than the intermittent availability of volunteers. With funding comes everything else. There are free programs to help teach people how to ask for money and perhaps some board members (certainly myself) could do well with more focused efforts on getting money.

## 2) Prioritizing and managing the connection of mentors and students via the existing website / online portal.

-The connection of mentors and students is a low hanging fruit, especially when done online. We already have the portal built to do this but i'm unsure we are using it to it's potential. It allows people to work on their own time which is very important for a group of volunteers and it also allows students to work through the Pathways program and for Pathways to continue to build an alumnus. I would ask that each student, once they find success in the industry, be asked as part of payback for having a mentor be willing to be a mentor themselves if we feel they should. For the time that we have one person running the show this is a relatively low impact thing that costs little to no money but most importantly is still growing our cadre of people to include mentors, students, and it gives us something to show donors / industry leaders.

## 3) Hosting workshops

-Hosting workshops (in person once in a while) keeps us in front of people real time and also is mainly a portal for asking industry leaders to speak, and therefore find a connection with Pathways. Through this we would mainly be trying to secure donors and mentors to feed the previous two priorities. Even if we do some in person workshops, we can zoom in industry leaders so that our reach stays national like it is now.

Overall these three things allow Pathways to continue to build on our group of students, mentors, and possibilities for money, in something that might be more sustainable for one person to own. If it get's to be too much we drop things in reverse priority order and stay small until the base is built to go big.

Each of these also allows for growth when the time is right. We have our big vision goals and each of the above allows the loftier vision to grow from it. Online mentoring can easily grow into the Pathways certification which could then be followed by the subscription model for employers to use. Concentrating on these things exclusively allows us to continue to grow our people, are things that are more sustainable for one person, and are things that are easily avenues for our loftier goals to come into fruition once we have built a solid and sustainable base.

It's not retreat, it's re-group for a more calculated and focused attack until we can deploy our loftier strategies.

Pete, I would also take more vacations!