



TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR 3.0

October Community of Practice

Preparing Talent for an AI-Shaped Future, Together

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

NEW ENGLAND BOARD
of HIGHER EDUCATION 

AND



The Business-Higher Education Forum is a national network connecting pioneering corporate and higher education leaders to identify emerging skills and **co-develop pathways that address talent gaps.**



We empower and catalyze collaborations that deliver accelerated, inclusive, and effective solutions across education and work.

Business and college leaders join BHEF to drive innovation that meets the changing talent needs of learners, workers, and businesses.

BHEF builds the agile, inclusive higher education paths that align to the workforce of the future

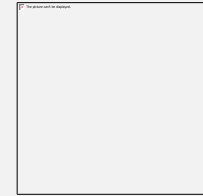
We focus on three goals critical for our economy and people:



Increase learners/earners with high-value skills and credentials aligned to employer needs.



Expand access & adoption of work-integrated learning models that inclusively connect and prepare talent.



Scale & implement with regional networks and leaders.

A National Network of Partners



Non-exhaustive list last updated August 2026

CASE STUDY

Employer Signaling to Build Paths into Key Regional Roles

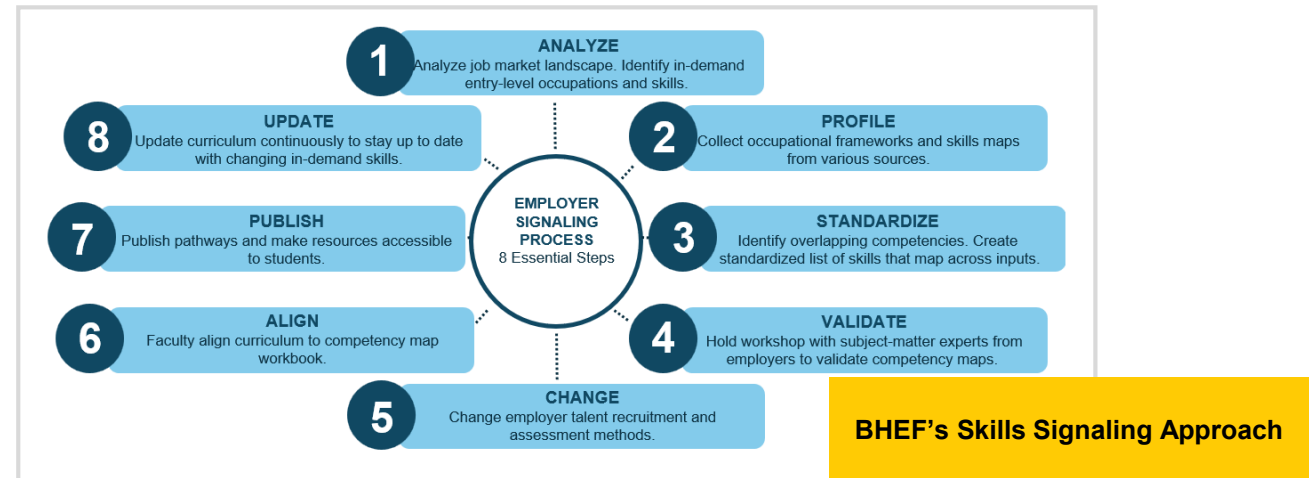
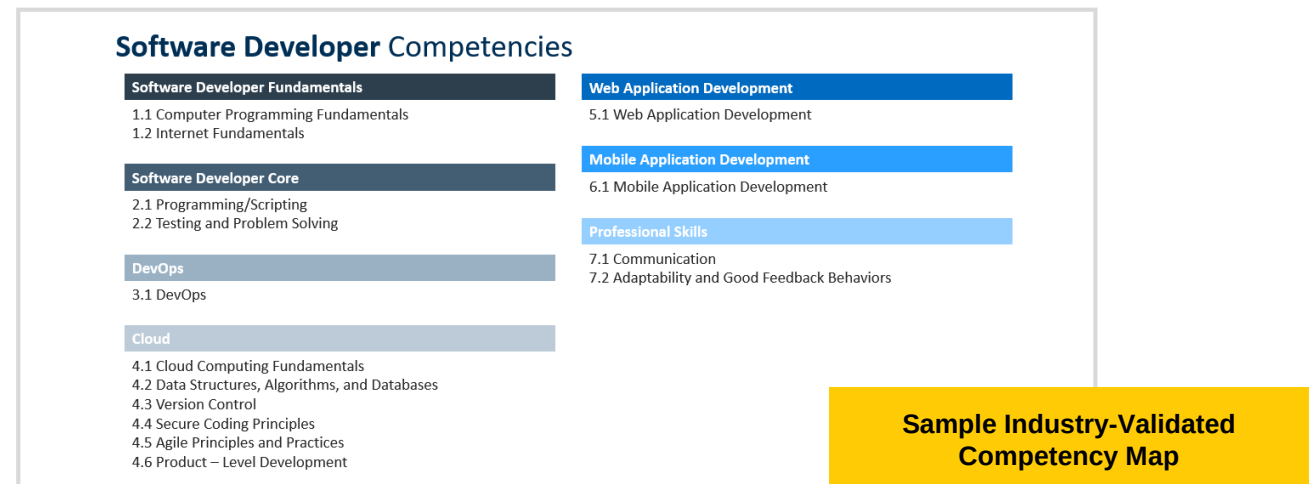
Problem:

High-demand and limited supply for entry level, in-demand roles in finance, business, and tech.

Solution:

BHEF led work with key regional industry groups incl. Partnership for NYC, NY Jobs CEO Council, to develop competency framework for enhancing curricula and preparing a skilled workforce aligned with industry needs.

BHEF built skills signaling mechanisms to inform employer industry alignment using our unique methodologies.



The Tech Talent Accelerator

The Tech Talent Accelerator is an accelerated solution to ensure Connecticut's workforce is competitive in a time of rapid technological change. The Business-Higher Education Forum and The New England Board of Higher Education developed and launched TTA in 2022 with funding from the state. TTA 3.0 (launched in 2025) focuses on integrating AI skills into training pathways.

TTA 3.0 IS DESIGNED TO

- **Reskill/upskill the tech workforce for AI competencies**
- **Align postsecondary training programs with industry AI needs**
- **Create pathways to AI skills for secondary students**
- **Expand work-based learning opportunities**

To learn more about TTA 1.0 & 2.0, visit bhef.com/techtalentaccelerator

WITH SUPPORT FROM

The Tech Talent Accelerator is made possible through the support of



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

Agenda

2:00 – 2:20 PM

Welcome & Thank You from Partners

2:20 – 3:00 PM

Program Showcase & Peer Q&A: Breakout Sessions

Each team shares an overview of their program, then engages in facilitated, industry-focused discussion.

3:00 – 3:25 PM

Fireside Chat: Grounding the Vision

Employer reflections on preparing learners for an AI-shaped world, followed by group discussion.

3:25 – 3:30 PM

Updates & Housekeeping

3:30 – 4:30 PM

Networking at Parkville Market

WELCOME

Thank You from Our Partners

CONVENER

Business-Higher Education Forum

Candace Williams

HOST

Hartford AI Center

Jeff Auker

PARTNER

New England Board of Higher Education

Michael Thomas

FUNDER

CT Office of Workforce Strategy

Kelli-Marie Vallieres

ICE BREAKER

How do you define the word
“Innovation”?

2:20 – 3:00 PM

Program Showcase & Peer Q&A

1

Present

Each team gives an overview of their program, built from the scoping worksheet completed with academic and employer partners.

2

Share Decisions

Tell the group where you landed on key design decisions, and what you are still figuring out.

3

Discuss

Facilitators open questions after each overview. Return to the main room when your group finishes.

PROGRAM SHOWCASE

Breakout Groups by Industry Focus

Healthcare

Breakout 1 · Madison - Outside

Quinnipiac University

Clinical Healthcare

Western CT State University

Healthcare

Eastern CT State University

Cross-Disciplinary in Health, Computer, Data

Business

Breakout 2 · Sierra - Side Room

Sacred Heart

LOT Lab (nonprofit/business)

University of Bridgeport

AI Leadership/Governance

University of Hartford

AI in Business

Manufacturing

Breakout 3 · John - Downstairs

Fairfield University

AI-Assisted Manufacturing Readiness

Southern CT State University

Manufacturing

UConn

Manufacturing

Tech

Breakout 4 · Michael & Robert - Upstairs

Sacred Heart

AI TalentBridge (Cyber)

University of New Haven

Cybersecurity

University of Saint Joseph

Business, Software

Durable / Cross-Disciplinary

Breakout 5 Candace - Main Room

Charter Oak State College

Durable Skills in Age of AI

Mitchell College

Durable Skills

Central CT State University

SCALE

Quinnipiac University

Interactive Media and Design

3:00 – 3:25 PM

Fireside Chat: Grounding the Vision

Employer representatives reflect on what it means to prepare learners for an AI-shaped world.

PANELIST

Anna Daley

Travelers

PANELIST

Nick Kelley

Travelers

PANELIST

Yue Tang

The Hartford Steam
Boiler

PANELIST

**Candy
Carlson**

Hartford Healthcare

FACILITATOR

Candace Williams

Business-Higher Education
Forum

3:25 – 3:30 PM

Updates & Housekeeping

UPCOMING DATES

November 2026 Check-Ins: PIs will receive an email with a Doodle poll to schedule their first check-ins!

NEXT TOUCHPOINT

Our next Community of Practice will be virtual on December 4, 12:00 – 1:00pm.

3:30 – 4:30 PM ET

Networking at Parkville Market

ADDRESS

1400 Park St
Hartford, CT 06106

PARKING

Lot behind the food hall
Free



ONE DUPONT CIRCLE, NW SUITE 360 / WASHINGTON, DC 20036

BHEF.COM / INFO@BHEF.COM



SCALE Pilot: Scientific Communication + AI Literacy Experience

Project Summary

The SCALE Pilot teaches CCSU undergraduates to evaluate evidence across disciplines, test AI output against primary sources, and translate what they find for decision-makers. Translational Literacy in Science, a 3-credit course built on the Translational Literacy Framework, runs in spring 2027 for up to 40 students across majors, co-taught by natural science, social science, and library faculty using fifteen discipline modules written by CCSU faculty. The top 20 earn paid summer 2027 micro-internships with Connecticut hosts (\$1,000 each, half matched by the host; CCSU is employer of record). The pilot is the first piece of a proposed Certificate in Applied Scientific Communication.

Status, October 2026: all 15 module authors confirmed; drafts due late November. Lead partners signed. Recruiting 20 host positions across libraries, nonprofits, manufacturing, healthcare, and financial services.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

New Britain Public Library (lead host), CT Humanities (lead sector)

Industry Focus

Science Communication & AI Literacy (cross-sector)

Priority Area(s)

2: Industry-Aligned Programs; 4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

Undergraduates across majors (up to 40; 20 in paid internships)

Project Stage

Development (course launches spring 2027)

Charter Oak State College



A Higher Degree of **Online** Learning

Durable Skills in the Age of AI

Project Summary

Charter Oak State College, in partnership with the Community Health and Wellness Center and curriculum developer Education Design Lab, will launch Durable Skills in the Age of AI, a noncredit course for incumbent healthcare workers. Serving 25 learners, the self-paced open edX course pairs a weekly faculty-led synchronous component with a culminating applied project. MetroHartford Alliance members will serve as additional employer validators across Connecticut's healthcare and service sectors.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Community Health and Wellness Center, Education Design Lab, MetroHartford Alliance

Industry Focus

Cross-sector durable skills (healthcare-anchored)

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upskilling; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Incumbent healthcare workers (25 learners)

Project Stage

Planning

Eastern Connecticut State University



Curricular Pathways to AI Skills in Health, Computer, and Data Sciences

Project Summary

Eastern Connecticut State University, in partnership with lead employer Hartford HealthCare and workforce advisor Daly Analytics, will embed employer-informed AI competencies into ten existing for-credit courses across scientific, technical, and professional disciplines. Approximately 80–100 students will receive AI instruction during the grant period, scaling to more than 200 students annually. The modules, anchored in healthcare, require no additional coursework or fees and lay the groundwork for a future interdisciplinary Applied AI certificate.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Hartford HealthCare, Daly Analytics

Industry Focus

Healthcare (cross-disciplinary)

Priority Area(s)

2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Undergraduates in health, computer & data science courses (80–100, scaling to 200+/yr)

Project Stage

Planning

Fairfield University



AI-Assisted Manufacturing Readiness

Project Summary

Fairfield University, in collaboration with Sikorsky (a Lockheed Martin company), ASML, and Accurate Lock & Hardware, will launch AI-Assisted Manufacturing Readiness, a schoolwide digital-thread pathway embedding responsible AI and digital manufacturing skills into for-credit engineering coursework. For-credit, course-embedded modules will reach 200–250 students, complemented by a summer Manufacturing AI Bootcamp for about 20 industry-facing participants. The project uses a course-embedded work-based learning model with employer-informed micro-projects and materials organized for badge or short-certificate use.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Sikorsky (Lockheed Martin), ASML, Accurate Lock & Hardware

Industry Focus

Advanced Manufacturing (aerospace, semiconductor)

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upstreaming; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs; 4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

Engineering undergraduates (200–250); ~20 industry professionals in bootcamp

Project Stage

Planning

Mitchell College



Workplace AI Readiness Accelerator

Project Summary

Mitchell College, developed with regional industry partners TurboFlow AI Solutions and Darsan Technologies, will launch the Workplace AI Readiness Accelerator, a blended 8-week noncredit certificate for early-career employees. The program combines foundational AI literacy, applied workflow practice, and human-performance skills, serving 40 learners across two pilot offerings and scaling to 80 in year two. Participants will earn digital badges and certificates, with Darsan Technologies also interviewing course completers. The Chamber of Commerce for Eastern Connecticut will provide logistic support as well as communication and recruitment support.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

TurboFlow AI Solutions, Darsan Technologies, Chamber of Commerce for Eastern Connecticut

Industry Focus

Cross-sector / Workplace AI (IT)

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upskilling; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Early-career employees (40 learners, scaling to 80)

Project Stage

Planning

Quinnipiac University



AI-Augmented Clinical Healthcare Communication & Coaching Micro-Credential

Project Summary

Quinnipiac University, in partnership with VRSim and Connecticut healthcare employers including Griffin Health, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, Hartford HealthCare, and Connecticut Children's, will offer a noncredit, simulation-based micro-credential upskilling incumbent clinical healthcare workers in AI-augmented communication and coaching. Using conversational AI simulation technology, participants will gain hands-on experience in AI-supported communication analysis and responsible AI use. Available to QU graduate students in health sciences, nursing, and medicine, the program is projected to serve at least 120 learners, up from 70 in the prior pilot.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

VRSim; Griffin Health, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, Hartford HealthCare, CT Children's

Industry Focus

Healthcare (Clinical)

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upskilling; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

QU graduate students in health sciences, nursing & medicine (120+ learners)

Project Stage

Planning

Quinnipiac University



Interactive Media and Design Professional Companion Course System

Project Summary

Quinnipiac University, in partnership with Inbox Health, will launch a credit-bearing, stackable AI credential pathway within its School of Communications. The system introduces nine 1-credit companion courses paired with existing Interactive Media & Design and Digital Content Creation & Strategy courses, projected to serve 20–35 learners in Year 1 and 35–50 in Year 2. Credentials will be issued as portable Credly digital badges, preparing students for industry certifications from Adobe, Google, Meta, and Pearson.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Inbox Health

Industry Focus

Communications (Media Design)

Priority Area(s)

2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Undergrad & grad Communications students (20–35 Yr 1; 35–50 Yr 2)

Project Stage

Planning

Southern Connecticut State University

AI and Quantum Microcredential Program

Project Summary

Southern Connecticut State University's Office of Workforce and Lifelong Learning, in partnership with Nucor Wire Products, New Haven Public Schools, and MATCH (Manufacturing And Technical Community Hub), will deliver a noncredit, stackable AI and quantum microcredential program for high school students and opportunity youth ages 16–24. The four-course sequence culminates in a public symposium where learners present AI-enabled solutions to Connecticut manufacturers, projected to enroll 20 learners with a sustained cohort of 20 per year thereafter. The program prioritizes equity by centering learners underrepresented in advanced manufacturing and emerging technology fields.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Nucor Wire Products, New Haven Public Schools, MATCH

Industry Focus

Manufacturing (Quantum)

Priority Area(s)

3: Secondary Pathways

Target Learner Population

High school students & opportunity youth, ages 16–24 (20/yr)

Project Stage

Planning



Sacred Heart University

AI TalentBridge: Connecticut's Industry-Driven AI Workforce Network

Project Summary

Sacred Heart University, in partnership with iQ4 Corporation, the Cybersecurity Workforce Alliance, and employer partner Odyssey Re, proposes AI TalentBridge, an industry-driven workforce model built around AI microcredentials, employer-sponsored challenge projects, and an eight-week virtual pre-apprenticeship. The program targets SHU undergraduate and graduate students in cybersecurity, computer science, and applied AI, with roughly 40 students per year earning noncredit badges through existing coursework and about 15 per year completing the full pre-apprenticeship. The virtual pre-apprenticeship serves as the core work-based learning experience, with learners solving real organizational problems in AI-enabled operations and responsible AI under faculty and industry mentorship.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

iQ4 Corporation, Cybersecurity Workforce Alliance, Odyssey Re

Industry Focus

Cybersecurity / Technology (AI workforce)

Priority Area(s)

2: Industry-Aligned Programs; 4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

SHU undergrad/grad students in cybersecurity, CS & applied AI (~40/yr badges)

Project Stage

Planning

Sacred Heart University



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

AI Leadership and Organizational Transformation (LOT) Lab

Project Summary

Sacred Heart University, partnering with United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut, Spooner House, Operation Hope, and the Jack Welch College's Center for Nonprofits, will launch the AI Leadership and Organizational Transformation (LOT) Lab, a work-based learning experience embedded in the 3-credit MGT370 Global Leadership course. Students will work directly with nonprofit organizations on AI adoption and organizational transformation projects, projected to serve 25-30 learners during the grant period. Offered for-credit, the Lab is designed to seed a stackable AI Leadership badge and certificate.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

United Way Coastal & Western CT, Spooner House, Jack Welch College Center for Nonprofits

Industry Focus

Nonprofit Sector / AI Leadership

Priority Area(s)

4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

Undergraduate business students in MGT370 (30–40 learners)

Project Stage

Planning



UNIVERSITY OF
BRIDGEPORT

The University of Bridgeport

Graduate Certificate in AI Leadership, Governance, and Management

Project Summary

The University of Bridgeport, in partnership with Sikorsky Aircraft Company, Times Microwave Systems, EdMyst, and the Child & Family Guidance Center, is developing a credit-bearing, stackable Graduate Certificate in AI Leadership, Governance & Management embedded within its Master of Science in Technology Management program. The three-course sequence addresses the management-side talent gap by preparing working professionals to lead AI adoption and govern its responsible use, co-designed with industry partners. During the grant period, the project will deliver applied AI workshop modules, employer convenings, and digital learning assets designed to engage Connecticut's industry, nonprofit, and government professionals while building a sustainable enrollment pipeline toward a long-term target of 20–30 certificate learners per year.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Sikorsky Aircraft, Times Microwave Systems, EdMyst, Child & Family Guidance Center

Industry Focus

Cross-sector durable skills (AI leadership & governance)

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upskilling; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Working professionals across industry, nonprofit, and government sectors (20–30/yr)

Project Stage

Active – Year 1

The University of Connecticut



AI for Systems Engineering: Graduate Certificate for Manufacturing Supply Chain

Project Summary

The University of Connecticut College of Engineering, in partnership with lead employer Pratt & Whitney/RTX and supply-chain support from ConnStep, will launch AI for Systems Engineering, a new 12-credit, credit-bearing graduate certificate. The certificate prepares incumbent engineers to apply AI across manufacturing supply chains for automation, autonomy, and resilience, using aerospace manufacturing as its primary testbed. It is expected to serve 20–25 learners during the grant period, scaling to 40–60 per year afterward, and stacks into UConn's Advanced Systems Engineering certificate and Master of Engineering programs.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Pratt & Whitney/RTX, ConnStep

Industry Focus

Advanced Manufacturing / Aerospace Supply Chain

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upskilling; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Incumbent engineers & technical professionals (20–25, scaling to 40–60/yr)

Project Stage

Planning

The University of Hartford

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

AI in Business Pathways: Building Connecticut's Career-Ready Talent Pipeline

Project Summary

The Barney School of Business at the University of Hartford, in partnership with work-based learning partners Berkley Financial Specialists, Synchrony Bank, and Hartford Steam Boiler (a Munich Re company), will launch a three-pillar AI in Business Learning Pathway. Pillar One embeds AI-enhanced modules across undergraduate courses and is expected to serve 150–250 undergraduate learners. Pillar Two provides industry-sponsored Applied Business Experience projects, engaging an additional 20–30 learners in hands-on, real-world AI applications. Pillar Three is a four-course, credit-bearing AI in Business Graduate Certificate expected to serve 15–25 post-baccalaureate learners.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Berkley Financial Specialists, Synchrony Bank, Hartford Steam Boiler (Munich Re)

Industry Focus

Business / Financial Services & Insurance

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upskilling; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs; 4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

undergraduate and graduate students and industry/community partners
(150–250 undergrad; 15–25 grad)

Project Stage

Planning



The University of New Haven

AI for Cybersecurity Concentration

Project Summary

The University of New Haven, through its Connecticut Institute of Technology and lead industry partner Travelers, will implement a four-course (12-credit) AI for Cybersecurity concentration within its for-credit Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity. Learners will take three AI-focused core courses plus a 120-hour, for-credit capstone in which teams solve real problems using anonymized Travelers data, supervised jointly by faculty and Travelers subject-matter experts. Students will also earn stackable, noncredit micro-credentials through Riipen and IBM SkillsBuild, with the program designed to produce about 20 learners.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Travelers

Industry Focus

Cybersecurity / Insurance & Financial Services

Priority Area(s)

1: Reskilling/Upstreaming; 2: Industry-Aligned Programs; 4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

Undergraduate BS in Cybersecurity students (~20 learners)

Project Stage

Planning



The University of Saint Joseph

Employer-Aligned AI Pathway

Project Summary

The University of Saint Joseph, partnering with CGI and VRSim, will launch several employer-aligned applied AI initiatives, including a new AI Applications course, stackable AI micro-credentials, an Applied AI for Business Certificate, and an expanded CGI-sponsored capstone experience. USJ also projects four to six paid summer 2027 internships, some fully funded by CGI and others supported through a 50% wage match from VRSim, that will prepare students for AI-enabled software delivery, business analysis, automation, healthcare IT, and immersive training roles. Together, these credit-bearing pathways and related internship opportunities are anticipated to serve 50-70 distinct learners.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

CGI, VRSim

Industry Focus

Information Technology / Software

Priority Area(s)

2: Industry-Aligned Programs; 4: Work-Based Learning

Target Learner Population

Undergraduate students across business & IT programs (50–70 learners)

Project Stage

Planning

Western Connecticut State University



AI-Ready Nursing Simulation Pathway

Project Summary

Western Connecticut State University, in partnership with Northwell Health's Danbury Hospital and technical advisor AI Techlife USA Inc., proposes the AI-Ready Nursing Simulation Pathway, integrating two for-credit courses with a noncredit, eight-week Applied Generative AI Certificate. Through shared healthcare-focused simulation cases, learners will build clinical-judgment, privacy, and responsible-AI skills for new-nurse patient prioritization and transition-to-practice readiness. WestConn anticipates serving 25–30 unduplicated learners, including up to 10 certificate participants and roughly 10 nursing-focused learners, using only simulated, faculty-approved materials.

Project Details

Business Partner(s)

Northwell Health – Danbury Hospital, AI Techlife USA

Industry Focus

Healthcare (Nursing)

Priority Area(s)

2: Industry-Aligned Programs

Target Learner Population

Undergraduate nursing students (25–30 learners)

Project Stage

Planning