



### October 2012

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Regards,  
**Van Ton-Quinlivan, Vice Chancellor**  
 CCCCO Division of Workforce and Economic Development



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### Dr. Brice Harris Named New Chancellor

All of you will have heard by now that Dr. Brice Harris was named our system's new chancellor ([read press release](#)). Please join me in welcoming him when he starts on November 6th.

### Let's Keep the Conversations Going

With over a half dozen [Critical Conversations](#) under my belt, I am seeing even more dots that we can connect to strengthen our system for students and employers, even with budget challenges. Let's keep the conversations going.

- Incoming Board of Governor Chair Manuel Baca and Mt. San Antonio Community College President Bill Scroggins were interviewed about the importance of our workforce mission. [View video](#)
- Many of you offered to submit stories of successes and challenges as a way to help others. Go to [doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu](http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu) and click the feedback button on the side (of any page) to share.



- I am hoping many of you will be at [CCCAOE's October Conference](#) themed Doing What MATTERS

for Jobs and the Economy. I plan to take the opportunity during my comments to thank all our peers who have contributed to us making tremendous strides made over the last year. In addition, my Division is co-sponsoring four breakouts, one on each of the quadrants of the framework.

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## Talent Development Solution

A [Talent Development Solution: Exploring Business Drivers and Returns in Learn and Earn Partnerships](#), examines the potential of "Learn and Earn" models -- an approach that connects employers and education providers to give companies the skilled workers they need to compete, while helping individual Americans earn a postsecondary degree, marketable credentials, and a brighter economic future.

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## NY Times Columnist Thomas Friedman's "New Rules" Article

NY Times columnist Thomas Friedman added to our conversation when he wrote, "[New Rules](#)." This was the #1 most emailed article on September 8, 2102. Enjoy!



I JUST arrived in Shanghai, but I'm thinking about Estonia and wondering about something Presidents Clinton and Obama have been saying.

Wired magazine reported last week that public schools in Estonia are establishing a program for teaching first graders — and kids in all other grades — how to do computer programming. Wired said that the curriculum was created “because of the difficulty Estonian companies face in hiring programmers. Estonia has a burgeoning tech industry thanks in part to the success of Skype, which was developed in Estonia in 2003.”

The news from Estonia prompted The Guardian newspaper of London to publish an online poll asking its readers: “Children aged 7 to 16 are being given the opportunity to learn how to code in schools in Estonia, should U.K. school children be taught programming as part of their school day?” It’s fascinating to read about all this while visiting Shanghai, whose public school system in 2010 beat the rest of the world in math, science and reading in the global PISA exam of 15-year-olds. Will the Chinese respond by teaching programming to preschoolers?

All of this made me think Obama should stop using the phrase — first minted by Bill Clinton in 1992 — that if you just “work hard and play by the rules” you should expect that the American system will deliver you a decent life and a chance for your children to have a better one. That mantra really resonates with me and, I am sure, with many voters. There is just one problem: It’s out of date.

The truth is, if you want a decent job that will lead to a decent life today *you* have to work harder, regularly reinvent yourself, obtain at least some form of postsecondary education, make sure that you’re engaged in lifelong learning and play by the rules. That’s not a bumper sticker, but we terribly mislead people by saying otherwise.

Why? Because when Clinton first employed his phrase in 1992, the Internet was just emerging, virtually no one had e-mail and the cold war was just ending. In other words, we were still living in a closed system, a world of walls, which were just starting to come down. It was a world before Nafta and the full merger of globalization and the information technology revolution, a world in which unions and blue-collar manufacturing were still relatively strong, and where America could still write a lot of the rules that people played by.

That world is gone. It is now a more open system. Technology and globalization are wiping out lower-skilled jobs faster, while steadily raising the skill level required for new jobs. More than ever now, lifelong learning is the key to getting into, and staying in, the middle class.

There is a quote attributed to the futurist Alvin Toffler that captures this new reality: In the future “illiteracy will not be defined by those who cannot read and write, but by those who cannot learn and relearn.” Any form of standing still is deadly.

I covered the Republican convention, and I was impressed in watching my Times colleagues at how much their jobs have changed. Here's what a reporter does in a typical day: report, file for the Web edition, file for The International Herald Tribune, tweet, update for the Web edition, report more, track other people's tweets, do a Web-video spot and then write the story for the print paper. You want to be a Times reporter today? That's your day. *You have to work harder and smarter and develop new skills faster.*

**Van Ton-Quinlivan, the vice chancellor for work force and economic development at the California Community Colleges System, explained to me the four basic skill sets out there today. The first are people who are “ready now.” That’s people with exactly the right skills an employer is looking for at the right time. Employers will give the local labor market and schools the first chance at providing those people, but if they are not available they’ll go the “shortest distance to find them,” she said, and today that could be anywhere in the world. Companies who can’t find “ready now” will look for “ready soon,” people who, with limited training and on-the-job experience, can fit right in. If they can’t find those, some will hire “work ready.” These are people with two or four years of postsecondary education who can be trained, but companies have shrinking budgets for that now and want public schools to do it. Last are the growing legions of the “far from ready,” people who dropped out or have only a high school diploma. Their prospects for a decent job are small, even if they are ready to “work hard and play by the rules.”**

Which is why if we ever get another stimulus it has to focus, in part, on getting more people more education. The unemployment rate today is 4.1 percent for people with four years of college, 6.6 percent for those with two years, 8.8 percent for high school graduates, and 12.0 percent for dropouts.

That's why I prefer the new mantra floated by Clinton at the Democratic convention, (which Obama has tried to fund): “We have to prepare more Americans for the new jobs that are being created in a world fueled by new technology. That’s why investments in our people” — in more community colleges, Pell grants and vocational-training classes — “are more important than ever.”