



## DOING WHAT MATTERS FOR JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

Division of Workforce and Economic Development

### In this eAlert you'll find:

- » Strong Workforce Town Hall Showcases New Steps to Close Skills Gap in California
- » Press Release: Community Colleges Task Force on Workforce Education Recommends Important Changes to Increase California Competitiveness and Job Creation

Regards,

**Van Ton-Quinlivan, Vice Chancellor**

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### Strong Workforce Town Hall Showcases New Steps to Close Skills Gap in California



California Community Colleges Chancellor Dr. Brice Harris presents the recommendations created by a task force to close California's skills gap. (Photo Credit: John Guenther)

The following coverage was [written by CAFWD](#):

"Our clients are looking for a skilled workforce. The skills gap must be closed."

Those words by JP Morgan Chase's Robert Lagace kicked off the unveiling of 25 recommendations by the [California Community College Board of Governors Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy](#) at a meeting at Los Angeles Trade Technical College near downtown. A similar briefing will be held in [San Francisco on Thursday](#).

JP Morgan Chase sponsored the [Strong Workforce Town Hall Series](#) that was held throughout California earlier this year.

How big of a challenge is a trained workforce to California's employers?

Pete Dietrich, senior vice president for transmission and distribution from Southern California Edison told attendees Edison needs to hire 200 qualified electrical workers every year but can't find them all in California.

"Right now the union hall benches are empty of qualified linemen and we have had to go outside of California to try to identify and recruit qualified workers," he told the audience, adding that the Community Colleges have a key role to play to address this workforce shortage.

[Chancellor Brice Harris](#) explained each of the 25 recommendations to the audience ([You can read them here](#)).

The recommendations include seven main areas of emphasis:

- how to improve student success
- better define and promote career pathways that students can follow
- measuring data and outcomes
- streamline curriculum changes while being more responsive to labor market demands
- identifying and recruiting more Career Technical Education (CTE) full-time faculty
- improving regional coordination
- funding for career technical education

"We need a stronger, more robust workforce for our region," said Kish Rajan, president of the Southern California Leadership Council told the audience. "The Community Colleges play a key role in that work."

Lest you think this is just a California problem, it isn't.

Robin Boggs, U.S. corporate citizenship lead for Accenture, told the audience "employers nationally face challenges finding qualified people."

She cited a poll of employers that found 46 percent say they can't find qualified workers and 51 percent of companies will pay for more training to address the problem.

The task force recommendations will be turned into policy and presented to the Board of Governors in November. Chancellor Harris told business leaders that he would continue to need their help.

"Business and industry must stay connected with us so that we can align our training programs with industry needs," Harris said.

He also indicated that the community colleges are identifying things they can do better. "I'll admit to you that our curriculum approval process is too slow," he said. "We are working on that right now."

California's community colleges have a strong career technical education mission which, with added emphasis and prioritization, are well positioned to close the skills gap. The Task Force is composed of 26 people, half from inside the system and half from around the state. It identified very quickly that for many of the workforce challenges facing California there is not a "one size fits all" solution.

For instance, given the regional nature of California's economy, what works in an urban area may not work well in a less populated part of the state.

"The skills gap needs varying widely in the regions," said [Van Ton-Quinlivan](#), the vice chancellor for workforce and economic development for the Community Colleges and a nationally recognized thought leader on workforce issues.

She also reminded the town hall why creating better CTE programs is so important.

"Career Technical Education grads earn on average \$66,000 annually five years after they have been trained," she said. "That makes CTE a very powerful policy tool as a way to lift Californians out of poverty."

The [California Economic Summit](#), which will be held in Ontario, California on [November 12 and 13](#) has again designated workforce as a key issue in its efforts to improve middle class job creation in California. The latest challenge that grows by the day is that one million middle skills jobs in California must be filled.

The Community Colleges play a key role in meeting that demand.

"If we don't get it right in California, not only California but the country stands to lose its global competitiveness," said Chancellor Harris.



## CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

### PRESS RELEASE

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### **Community Colleges Task Force on Workforce Education Recommends Important Changes to Increase California Competitiveness and Job Creation**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- A California Community Colleges task force has put forth 25 recommendations to strengthen workforce education throughout the 113-college system with the goal of closing the skills gap that employers say is a barrier to filling existing jobs and fueling job creation.

The [Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy](#) is comprised of representatives from community colleges, the business community, labor groups, public agencies involved in workforce training, K-12 policymakers, and community-based organizations. It was commissioned to address California's anticipated shortage of 1 million skilled workers with industry-valued middle-skill degrees, certificates, and credentials.

"These recommendations, if approved by the Board of Governors, will allow community colleges to build on their longstanding success educating California's workforce and provide our economy with a more responsive framework for meeting industry needs and getting students into good paying jobs," said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. "I want to thank the task force members for their vision and their work developing this comprehensive plan."

Key recommendations of the task force call on the college system to:

- Revise career technical education (CTE) curriculum approval processes to ensure that instructional programs keep pace with industry needs.
- Increase the pool of qualified CTE instructors through hiring practices and consider options for meeting minimum qualifications to better integrate experienced industry professionals into instructional programs.

- Expand partnerships with employers to increase student work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships and internships that provide real workplace experience.
- Strengthen students' career planning, work readiness, employability and technology skills as they build their occupation-specific skills.
  - Establish a sustained, supplemental funding source to increase community college capacity to create, adapt and maintain quality CTE courses and programs responsive to regional labor market needs.

"To ensure that Career Technical Education courses keep pace with the increasing demand for middle skill jobs we need funding targeted to support these programs, which have higher start-up and operational costs," said Sunita Cooke, chair of the task force and president/superintendent of MiraCosta Community College District.

The task force held 14 regional college and faculty meetings with more than 700 participants in addition to six town hall meetings held across the state that attracted 500 participants who depend on the community colleges for workforce training. Final town hall meetings summarizing all 25 recommendations will be held in Los Angeles on August 25 and in San Francisco on August 27.

To read the full set of recommendations, please go to <http://bit.ly/1pCGOM>. The recommendations will go to the Board of Governors as an information item at its September 2015 meeting, and the board will consider taking action on the recommendations in November.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office [Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy](#) framework and the [Student Success Initiative](#) provided the foundation to launch this task force and have also been working to increase workforce and economic competitiveness. These measures are necessary in light of statistics indicating that there will be 6.3 million job openings in California through 2020, of which 2 million jobs will require a post-secondary certificate or associate degree.

*The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.*



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