



November 4, 2015

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President

CA Community Colleges

Board of Governors

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Dear President Baum,

On behalf of the CA Economic Summit—and the Workforce and Advanced Manufacturing Action Teams, in particular—please accept our enthusiastic endorsement of the recommendations of the Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy.

Since the first Economic Summit in 2012, this coalition of public, private and civic sector leaders have assertively advocated for a more strategic alignment of California's educational resources with the learning needs of students and the workforce needs of employers. The Summit has prioritized helping Californians develop the skills, knowledge and abilities to obtain employment that lead to wages above the minimum wage and have career potential.

The Summit supported the creation of the Task Force. Regional Summit partners, including Valley Vision, the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group hosted town hall meetings to help set the reform agenda.

The Summit was represented on the Task Force by Jim Mayer, President and CEO of California Forward; and, Mike Dozier, the Executive Director of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

Members of the Action Team, such as Rebecca Miller with SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West, provided expert input for the group's consideration. And the Action Team commented on the draft recommendations.

We believe the recommendations are a valuable roadmap for maturing, scaling and aligning the career technical education capacities of community colleges to the extraordinary challenges of Californians who need skilled employment to lift themselves and their families above the minimum wage and out of poverty. In turn, the recommendations also are critical to developing the workforce required for resilient regional economies, which are the foundation of vibrant communities and generate the financial basis for essential public services.

In particular, we believe the recommendations will move the colleges toward better partnerships with employers, help to motivate students and develop effective instruction, make better use of existing and new funding for CTE and begin a continuous improvement process to sustain alignment among programs, curricula and the workplace.

We urge the Board of Governors to accept these recommendations and commit to enacting and implementing them with vigor.

While the recommendations were unanimously approved by the Task Force, extraordinary leadership will be required by all of the internal and external partners to build new capacities within the colleges and evolve traditional practices, forge meaningful collaborations among the colleges and with employers, and make difficult resource choices.

The Board of Governors is in a unique position to champion these recommendations and to keep all of these partners focused on fulfilling the promise of community colleges to open minds and doors for those Californians who are seeking a path to self-sufficiency.

Between the time we write this letter and the Board's formal consideration of the Task Force's recommendations on November 16, we will be meeting for the 2015 Summit in Ontario. At that Summit, the Action Team will determine how our members can help to mature and support enactment of the recommendations— administratively, through regulations or legislation, or through the state budget process. Please do not hesitate to tell us how we can be helpful in this regard.

We also will be exploring how to support implementation of all of the recommendations in our communities. In particular, we will commit to giving life and energy to the recommendation for regional leadership to organize in support of the public-private partnerships that are essential for community colleges and other public training programs to effectively prepare students for meaningful employment. We will report the results of the Summit to the Board, and would welcome your guidance to make sure we are aligned in strategy and spirit on fulfilling the promise of community colleges.

Please accept our endorsement of the recommendations on behalf of the Economic Summit and our Action Teams.

Sincerely,



Alma Salazar
Co-Lead, Workforce Action Team
Vice President of Education and Workforce Economic
Development, Los Angeles Area Chamber of
Commerce



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Executive Director, Center for a New California

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