



PRESS RELEASE

August 19, 2015

Contact: Paige Marlatt Dorr

Office: 916.327.5356

Cell: 916.601.8005

Office email: pdorr@cccco.edu

**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 Aug. 25 and in San Francisco on Aug. 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>.

###