



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**California Community Colleges Board of Governors Creates Task Force to Improve Workforce Education and Promote Job Creation**

*SACRAMENTO, Calif.* – Seeking to make community college workforce education even more responsive to the state's economy, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors today established a task force to develop policies that will prepare more students for existing high value jobs and promote job creation with workforce training that sparks small business development and lures out-of-state business investment in key industry sectors.

"The Board of Governors is committed to improving our students' employment prospects and growing the state's economy," said Manuel Baca, president of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors. "The California Community Colleges has served as an economic springboard for many Californians and it must enact smart and thoughtful policies in the future for it to continue in that role and I look forward to hearing the recommendations the task force develops."

The [Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy](#) will be comprised of representatives from the California Community Colleges, business community, labor groups, public agencies involved in workforce training, K-12 policy, and community based organizations.

"Community colleges serve as the workforce training engines behind California's regional economies," said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. "The task force commissioned today will meet with industry leaders, college faculty and staff, elected officials, and other important members of the community to determine what our college system must do to help us achieve the best for our students and state."

The task force will conduct its work in three separate phases. The first phase, set to begin this December, will involve holding meetings with community college practitioners to surface strategies and prioritize workforce training policies and practices that engender flexibility to respond to the changing labor market, regional responsiveness, partnership with industry, and ensure student degrees, certificates, credentials, and coursework are universally honored by colleges and have value to employers.

The second phase will start in February 2015 and involve town hall meetings in regions across the state with elected officials and leaders from business, economic development agencies, K-12, labor, and other community organizations to vet and build on ideas and practices that bring stronger alignment between community colleges and key industry sectors. The town hall meetings will include interactive discussions focused on how the community college system can act as a catalyst for growth in California's regional economies.

The final phase involves meetings of the full task force itself. Members will deliberate over information and issues

identified at the regional meetings and develop a set of recommendations by the end of summer 2015, which will be proposed for adoption by the Board of Governors.

Throughout the spring, the broader community would be invited to respond to the draft recommendations via the task force's website.

The task force will build upon other initiatives that the California Community Colleges has undertaken to increase individual and regional economic competitiveness by providing the state's workforce with relevant skills and quality credentials that match employer needs and fuel a stronger economy.

In August, the California Community Colleges [announced](#) a goal of increasing student completions by nearly 250,000 statewide to help meet the needs of the labor market and to ensure more Californians have access to higher education.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office [Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy](#) framework and the [Student Success Initiative](#) provide 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.

Furthermore, studies show that the labor market is increasingly demanding a more skilled workforce. Whereas in the 1970s 28 percent of jobs required more than a high school education, by 2020 it is estimated that 65 percent of job openings in the United States will require some postsecondary education or training.

To see the calendar of events for the task force, go to:

<http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/StrongWorkforce/Events.aspx>.

*The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 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/>.*

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