

DAS President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees for November 13, 2012

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Thank you Mr. President, and good evening trustees, chancellor, district administration center staff, college presidents, colleagues and members of the public.

From practically every corner and constituency of the education and business communities we are hearing the same message repeatedly, and it is this: there is an urgent need to focus on developing and utilizing resources to help students move beyond the 3Rs and embrace the 4Cs—Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity—the 21st century skills cited by industry as keys to innovation and invention in an increasingly challenging global economy.¹

Given the amount of attention that is being focused on job development, employment statistics and the need to reclaim America's lead in "wage parity, productivity and technological innovation,"² the role that community colleges can play in addressing our workforce development challenges has become increasingly important and central to these discussions at every level.

Even though the Bureau of Labor Statistics tells us that more than 10 million Americans do not have a job, the Institute for a Competitive Workforce at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that there are more than three million jobs that employers can't fill -- today, and every month since February 2011.

We are experiencing what is referred to as a "skills gap." "College students are not graduating with the essential 21st-century 'Deeper Learning' skills, such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning and ability to effectively communicate and work in teams, which are prerequisites for a successful workforce in today's global market." So says William Kirwan, Chancellor of the University System of Maryland in a recent publication "Help Wanted 2012"³.

It is suggested that even in what have been formerly known as craftsman positions, a critical factor in job security and advancement is the ability to use computers effectively. For these reasons and more, it was especially meaningful to experience the Manufacturing Reshoring conference at Laney College on October 27th. Developed in collaboration with the Haas Technical Education Centers, Laney's conference highlighted the importance of computer technology skills for the latest manufacturing jobs, skills training and continuing education.

On that Saturday I was fortunate to be able to attend two of the three breakout sessions. "The Hybrid Learning Model" focused on showing how using a mix of in-person training & online tools can help create a better-trained manufacturing workforce. We saw demonstrations of virtual online environments and course content that supplemented classroom instruction by providing "hands on" experiences in the digital domain.

The second breakout, "Preparing the Underprepared Student," addressed using contextualized lessons in manufacturing to help teach basic skills, thereby effectively integrating two of our three mission critical foci, Career Technical Education and foundation skills.

Last week, the third of these mission critical foci, transfer and degree completion, received a big boost when a recent report cited in the Chronicle of Higher Education provided evidence that completion of an Associate's degree significantly increases the likelihood that a student will go on to complete a Bachelor's degree.⁴

These national and global forces make it increasingly incumbent upon Peralta faculty and staff to revise, expand and enhance the methodologies we use to support student success so that our graduates will be well prepared to demonstrate the 21st century professional skills that are in such high demand.

With the receipt of several grants supporting workforce development and Career Technical Education, it is abundantly clear that the Peralta Colleges are exhibiting the potential to be on the cutting edge of delivering what it takes to help students succeed in school, in the workplace and in life. Those of my colleagues whose hard work resulted in these successes deserve every commendation and celebration they receive and more.

That concludes my report for tonight. Thank you for receiving it.

¹ For more information, visit <http://www.p21.org/overview>

² *Help Wanted 2012: Addressing the Skills Gap*, Institute for a Competitive Workforce, September 2012, p. 7. Available for download from <http://icw.uschamber.com/publication/help-wanted-2012-addressing-skills-gap>.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 16

⁴ Katherine Mangan, "Community-College Degree Often Smooths the Path to a B.A., Report Says." Last modified November 8, 2012. http://chronicle.com/article/article-content/135616/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+chronicle%2Fnews+%28The+Chronicle%3A+Top+Stories%29&utm_content=Google+Reader