

DAS President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees for April 9, 2013
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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.

One recurring theme in these reports to you is the changing expectations of potential employees in the emerging global marketplace. You've heard my comments about the increasing importance of computer literacy for student success, the need for curriculum re-design that fully embraces educational technology, the effect of automation and robotics on the prospect of full employment, and the realization that "[M]any of the new jobs require skills that jobseekers do not have"ⁱ. Tonight I will add one more factor to this evolving equation, the growing need for professionals with competency in languages other than English.

Most recently, we've seen evidence of increased attention to this need amongst educators in the K-12 system and higher, e.g., a recently published (2013) strategy paper from the Center for Digital Education entitled "*Graduating Globally Competitive Workers: Language Learning gives students an advantage in today's workforce*"ⁱⁱ. A link to the site where you can download this report will be included in the written version of my report. The [Center for Digital Education] report is based on a survey of over 100 leaders in K-12 and over 100 in higher education. These leaders "were asked whether training in a second language and multiculturalism was needed to remain globally competitive."

The report states, "[A]n overly resounding 97 percent of K-12 and 96% of higher education respondents agreed with the statement." Despite that almost universal agreement (at least among those respondents) we are aware that language learning in the United States has been on the decline for at least two decades and probably longer. In this nation of immigrants, it is estimated that approximately 8 in 10 Americans speak only English. Contrast this with the fact that "200 million children in China are studying English, and every educated child in India learns English." Added together, those numbers are greater than the entire population of the United States.

The most obvious implication of this disparity in multicultural language competency is reflected in a 2011 Forbes Insights survey finding that 1 in 3 "American firms would be more likely to fill more or significantly more key positions with foreigners" by 2013. At the same time, we are hearing more in the news about resistance to the use of H1 visas and the fear that foreign nationals are displacing American workers. That fear and resistance might be lessened by a greater awareness of the global need for workers to have multicultural language competency skills and the dire need for American schools to develop and expand effective language learning programs throughout the K-20 educational system.

Fortunately, if we have the will, it is abundantly clear that advances in technology advances make it easier and more efficient to provide these programs. Of course, that requires an infrastructure and sufficient mobile technology resources to support student learning anywhere and at any time. These needs will make increasing demands on our information technology systems and will require additional funding. There is much more that can and needs to be said about this topic. That will be saved for a future report, part 2 and possibly part 3, yet to come.

That concludes my report for tonight. I appreciate your attention to these comments.

ⁱ <http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/bulletin/world-unemployment-rate-on-the-rise/10767?tag=search-river>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.centerdigitaled.com/paper/Graduating-Globally-Competitive-Workers.html>