

Doing What Matters and Getting it Right
By Craig Justice, CCCCIO Past President
September 20, 2015

The recommendations of the *California Community Colleges Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation and a Strong Economy* were presented to the Board of Governors (BOG) of the California Community Colleges (CCC) at its September 2015 meeting. Known as the “Strong Workforce Task Force,” its report frames the big-picture challenge as follows: there is a projected shortfall or “jobs gap” in middle skill-level positions in California. Community colleges will help close this gap through focused Career Technical Education (CTE) and Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) training efforts and expanding career pathways. There are 25 Task Force recommendations in seven categories or “issues areas”: *Student Success* (2 recommendations), *Career Pathways* (1), *Workforce Data and Outcomes* (3), *Curriculum* (6), *CTE Faculty* (4), *Regional Coordination* (5), and *Funding* (4). The BOG is expected to adopt the recommendations at its November 2015 meeting.

The Task Force recommendations provide the framework for “*what*” we need to do. The next step is to decide “*how* do we plan to do it?” Based on experience with the 2012 Student Success Task Force Recommendations, we can expect work groups to be formed around the seven issues areas to design and recommend the programmatic operational guidelines and Title 5 and Education Code changes. The CCC 2016-2017 Budget Request asks for \$200 million to fund the Strong Workforce Recommendations. I expect that the funding will be packaged in a new categorical plan for CTE/EWD/Strong Workforce Student Success along the lines of the Student Success and Support Plan (SSSP) and the Student Equity Plan (SEP). While there was much interest in looking for innovative ways to fund CTE/EWD—such as differential FTES funding and performance based funding—the FTES-based growth model emerged intact and the grants method of funding was all but ruled out due to widespread “grant fatigue.” I sensed that

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from the CCCCO's perspective, our system is expert at managing categorical programs and most of them are all but permanent. We should know by the end of Spring 2016 how funding will be rolled out.

In whatever form the funds arrive, the initiative will be transformative. The CTE effort in California flows from the Chancellor's Office Division of Workforce and Economic Development through its signature initiative called *Doing What Matters (DWM) for Jobs and the Economy* and then out to the regions, the colleges, and the business communities. The *DWM* Team consists of hundreds of highly trained specialists (usually grant-funded employees of local community colleges) who fan out throughout the state carrying out a wide array of duties, frequently interacting with college faculty, CTE Deans, and CIOs. *DWM* Team members include state-wide "Sector Navigators" (SNs) and regional "Deputy Sector Navigators" (DSNs) who are charged with working with college faculty and businesses within their sectors. Many regions also have Centers of Excellence (CoE) for Labor Market Information whose mission is to provide labor market data within the region, thus guiding new program and training development. Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) and many others provide help to colleges as they manage CTE funds and plans. The *DWM* initiative interfaces with colleges largely through the seven Regional Consortia across the state. The Regional Consortia exert a number of regulatory and resource allocation powers. Colleges must get approval from the Regional Consortium to start a new program, for example. "Enhanced CTE" funding was allocated this year through the Regional Consortia using criteria managed by the Consortia that awarded funds on a competitive basis.

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There's much more to the *DWM* initiative. To learn more about the structure and mission of the EWD and *DWM* program, see *2015 Economic and Workforce Development Program Annual Report California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*, located at http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/FlipBooks/2015-EWD/2015_EWDReport_4-14-2015.pdf. This report has been distributed as a pdf to all CIOs in preparation for the CCCCIO Fall Meetings.

Let's take a pulse check on the current state of the *DWM* initiatives. A year ago I observed that "the [DWM] initiative is both a part of our system and "apart from" our system, and that which is apart from our system is generating some institutional frictions that get readily noticed." [News & Views, November 2014] Many CIOs expressed frustration with those specific practices of *Doing What Matters* involving integration and coordination with the colleges. The roles of the *DWM* Team members, communication with the colleges, integration with strategic planning, curriculum development, and new program development were unclear. Also, many CIOs felt that the regions have been defined without CIO input and are often too large to serve all colleges well. Additionally, several CIOs felt that many *DWM* decisions have been top-down directives lacking input from the colleges or CIOs. The governance structure of the Regional Consortia has been criticized for not integrating effectively with college structures that must conform to accreditation best practices. Some regions are large and diverse, and the sector emphases may not meet the needs of colleges in all parts of the region. Regional emphasis on a small number of key high demand, high wage sectors may work well in one area in a region but not in another that needs programs in lower-priority sectors locally. Moreover, the emphasis on funding high-risk new programs in emerging industries whose enrollments are untested may

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neglect existing programs in flat demand, good/high wage fields that are not growing. These programs need new funds too. The decision to make room for new programs (thus de-funding some existing programs) does not happen overnight and often can only be remedied through program revitalization efforts that can be very costly. *More* funding is needed for these programs, not less. These frustrations were published in “CTE-Strong Economy Regional Conversations with CIOs,” Spring 2015 and may be found at CCCCIO.org under “Resources.”

The Task Force was made aware of these frustrations and made five recommendations having to do with regional coordination issues, including reducing duplication and fragmentation of efforts, enhancing the alignment of CTE frameworks with governance and reporting structures of the colleges, and developing effective regional partnerships. Regional communication and coordination requires a stream of high quality, reliable data to inform colleges and businesses about jobs gaps in the region and a well-funded public outreach campaign to promote career development and direct students to the needed jobs in the region.

A significant amount of progress has been made over the past year. SNs and DSNs have participated in curriculum training, they are aware of CIO concerns, and the *DWM* Team is engaged and committed to addressing the issues with CIOs constructively. The stage is set for CIO conversations with our *DWM* colleagues that can significantly shape the way in which the recommendations related to regional coordination are implemented. With the support of CCCCO Vice Chancellors Pamela Walker and Van Ton-Quinlivan, each CIO and *DWM* Team member attending the Fall 2015 Conference will have an opportunity to guide the conversation further. At the Regional break-out session on Thursday morning, October 29th, we will discuss matters that concern CIOs with Sector Navigators, Deputy Sector Navigators, Chairs of the

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Regional Consortia, and Directors of the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Information. At the same time, they can share with CIOs their thoughts about regional coordination and the challenges of interacting with the colleges. I'm looking forward to this "CIO Conversation with the DWM Team—A Pulse Check" opportunity. I feel the same today as I did a year ago: *"Our CIOs are already 'doing what matters,' and could do more with additional resources and tools. When the CTE/EWD Task Force makes its recommendations, and when the Legislature and Governor pass legislation to implement the recommendations, let's be sure that CIOs are given the tools and resources to do the job. In other words, let's join together as a system to do what matters and do it right."* [News & Views, November 2014]

If funding and staffing for these EWD/CTE/DWM alignment and coordination efforts materialize, CIOs and the CTE deans who report to them will finally have the resources they need to attract students, improve program delivery, and meet industry job needs. Now that's a needle moved!