

Testimony of Dr. MacGregor Stephenson to the Senate Business and Commerce Committee

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ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Texas community colleges play a critical role in the development of workforce training programs in the state of Texas. In order to provide the highest level of training for local workforce efforts, community colleges rely heavily on local industry representatives and Workforce Development Boards to identify potential workforce training needs. Once industry and/or community leaders have identified new training requirements, community college faculty then work with industry representatives to develop the necessary curriculum to meet the expectations and skills required for the new jobs. As time passes, the community colleges continually work with industry and community advisory boards for each workforce program to ensure that the training curriculum maintains the necessary flexibility to meet changing workforce needs.

Should the level of training required rise to the level of a certificate or Associate's Degree program, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the proposals to ensure that the institution proposing the program certifies that the program meets the mandatory criteria necessary for the establishment of a new certificate or degree program. These criteria focus on workforce demand, inclusion of industry representatives, curricular alignment with state standards, and adequacy of funding.

As the community colleges are the most closely aligned institutions to workforce training needs, as these needs shift over time, and jobs change or are eliminated, workforce training, certificates and degrees are also revised or eliminated. This high level of responsiveness to changing workforce needs is one of the most dominant characteristics of community colleges and one of which it can be most proud.

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD WORKFORCE EFFORTS

Perkins Basic Grants

The Higher Education Coordinating Board has a wide range of responsibilities for the development of workforce training efforts across the state. Through the Federal Title I Carl D. Perkins Grant program, the state of Texas allocates approximately \$23 million in what are called Perkins Basic Grants to the public community, state and technical colleges based upon enrollments of Pell Grant recipients with a declared intent to major in career and technical fields. These funds are used by the institutions to support the

provision of career and technical education program within these institutions to meet workforce training and education needs.

One of the best examples of the use of Perkins Basic Grant funding is from the Dallas County Community College District El Centro Campus. The institution has created a 45 bed simulation training center which provides very realistic training for students in virtually all applied health fields from nursing to cardiac cath technicians to lab techs. These high tech centers provide one of the best practical training grounds for future healthcare workers. Every health professional that they train spends some time in the simulation centers, cutting down on the learning curve and anxiety that students face when they enter an actual clinical site with live patients.

Perkins State Leadership Grants

Through Perkins Title I funds, the Coordinating Board also provides funding for projects which can have a positive statewide impact on students in career and technical programs. Each year the Coordinating Board identifies specific types of projects which will be considered for funding. These are competitive grants which are reviewed by Coordinating Board staff with final approval of funded programs provided by the Coordinating Board. Two examples of specific efforts that will link students to careers are Career Pathways to Student Success and Skill Standards-Based Curriculum Development Project.

Tarrant County College District's "Career Pathways to Student Success"

Award Amount: \$227,200

The project will provide workshops to bring secondary and postsecondary faculty together to complete the identification of the Career Clusters and develop or revise the Programs of Study associated within a segment of the energy industry. The outcome of this effort will ease the transitions for students as they move from secondary to post-secondary education and ensure that students in Texas experience an aligned curriculum, with increased opportunities for articulated credit as developed in the career pathways.

The second priority of this project is to develop course standards and curriculum outlines for the courses developed in the career foundation core of Energy Career Cluster projects. The national knowledge and skills identified in the National Career Cluster model will be vetted by Texas business and industry partners. The skills developed by the Governors Skill Standards Board will also be incorporated into this priority.

The project will lead to a curriculum that has been developed with input from business and industry. The priorities outlined include achievable goals with measurable outcomes. The implementation of a successful career cluster system requires alignment of all stakeholders- secondary institutions, post-secondary institutions (community,

state and technical colleges and universities) and perhaps most importantly, business and industry.

Del Mar College's "Skill Standards-Based Curriculum Development Project"

Award amount: \$64,837

The goal of the "Skill Standards Based Curriculum Development" project is to promote the role, awareness and adoption of skills standards among Texas community and technical colleges. Colleges are selected on a competitive basis according to the state wide need to support the Governor's Industry Cluster Initiative. Project categories are Types I, II, and III. Each Project Type has a specific maximum payment amount that can be earned by the participating institution. Specifically these amounts are: Project Type I - \$6,000; Project II - \$20,000, and Project III - \$2,000. Payment to a participating institution is predicated upon the timely completion and submission of specific deliverables to the TSSB program administrator and TSSB technical staff for review. Project deliverables are completed in three phases and payments to institutions are made by the SSBCD project's host institution (Del Mar College) upon certification of completion (with supporting documents) by the TSSB program administrator to the SSBCD project director. The project methodology is as follows:

1. TSSB staff will evaluate and certify to the project director the completion of deliverables by applicants, e.g. skills matrix, syllabi, course outline, sample course materials etc.
2. Participating institutions will submit to the SSBCD project director deliverable documentation for quarterly reporting, e.g. advisory board minutes, DACUM meeting minutes, etc.
3. Project Recognition will be made to those institutions successfully completing all their stated deliverables required as by their proposal application. Institutions will be recognized at the fall TACTE conference for their Project Type Recognition.

Texas Science Technology Engineering and Math Challenge Scholarship Program

This program was passed by the Texas Legislature in FY 2011. In order to implement the program, the Coordinating Board worked with the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TG) which committed \$25 million to support the program.

On March 23, 2012, to the TG Board expanded that commitment to three years and authorized the Coordinating Board to receive \$8.5 million in June to begin the program. The Coordinating Board published a Request for Application and notified the public community and technical colleges of the program.

The purpose of the program is to increase the number of students graduating in STEM fields and completing STEM training. The program will award grants to qualifying community and technical colleges that provide education and training in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math and related fields.

The public community and technical colleges will provide scholarships to qualifying students in an amount not to exceed \$2,500 annually, for a maximum of two years. The public community and technical colleges may begin making TSTEM scholarship awards beginning as early as this summer, with the majority beginning in fall 2012.

Finally the commissioner has asked that we find additional ways to inform students of the needs of industry beyond those that are clearly articulated in workforce training, certification and degree programs. To that end, we are working to identify what information might most benefit students in academic disciplines with regard to the knowledge, skills and abilities valued by industry and employers.