

April 3, 2017

Members of the California State Assembly Committee on Higher Education
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 957 (Levine): Higher Education Regional Workforce Coordination – SUPPORT

Higher Education Committee Members:

On behalf of the **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC)**, an organization whose purpose is to raise standards of living for the residents of L.A. County by increasing economic opportunity and regional prosperity, I am writing *in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 957* (Levine), titled: “Higher Education Regional Workforce Coordination.”

As the L.A. region’s economic development leadership organization, the LAEDC envisions a regional, industry-responsive and demand-driven talent development system here in L.A. and Orange counties (as well as across all of California’s economic regions) that is:

- **F**uture forward, so that we’re developing the region’s supply of talent for the economy of the tomorrow, not of yesterday;
- **A**daptive, so that we’re responding to the needs of the industries in which our region has productive advantages in real-time, especially as the momentum of labor market change [outside of our talent systems and institutions] accelerates;
- **S**calable, so that we’re activating sensible “systems change” across all our systems, from the workforce boards, to our community colleges, to our CSU campuses; and
- **T**otal and complete, so that there is functional integration across all of our region’s talent development systems and institutions.

By aligning higher education pathways with regional industry demands, AB 957 is a prudent first-step. The bill directs CSUs and UCs to align higher education institutions with regional workforce demands, and includes a reporting requirement for the campuses to track and report on efforts to increase the number of industry/labor demand-driven degrees, or describe the barriers to addressing those demands. This will help ensure that UC and CSU institutions are better positioned to deliver the requisite supply of talent needed to meet the future labor needs of their respective regional economies and “demand” industries.

Already the state’s community college and workforce systems are preparing for the rapid and pronounced labor market shifts brought on by the economy’s transition from its more labor-intensive, 20th century roots to the more capital-intensive (less labor dense) information age of today, where information technologies, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality are changing the nature of work, the need for labor, and the rewards that work now earns. In particular, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires education institutions to meaningfully interface with regional employers and workforce development boards to develop, align and deploy career development pathways in livable wage occupations. And under the state’s Strong Workforce initiative, a similar industry-driven mandate applies for community colleges, though it does not include UC and CSU participation.

AB 957 fixes this gap by inducing CSU and UC participation, and in so doing, advancing the regional objectives of inter-system coordination of *all* levels of education, training, and career technical programs. For these important reasons, the LAEDC strongly supports AB 957, and I urge you to sign this bill.

Sincerely,



David Flaks
President & COO
LAEDC