



## NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Fresh Look at Nevada's Community Colleges Task Force

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REPORT TO CHANCELLOR DANIEL KLAICH

SUBMITTED BY BRUCE JAMES  
TASK FORCE CHAIRMAN

August 17, 2011

Nevada Community Colleges

College of Southern Nevada

Great Basin College

Truckee Meadows Community College

Western Nevada College

## I. OVERVIEW

In June of 2010, Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Chancellor Daniel Klaich established the Fresh Look at Nevada's Community Colleges Task Force to determine if our colleges were truly aligned with the future employment and learning needs of Nevadans. While the state's four community colleges in Carson City, Elko, Las Vegas and Reno seemed to be responsive in meeting the needs of their respective communities, the larger issues are whether, as a state, we are adequately preparing our learners with the skills and knowledge that will be required by employers, and whether we have enough learners in the educational pipeline to fulfill their requirements.

By tradition, each of our community colleges operates more or less independently, following the federal and state laws, regulations and rules governing higher education. This is similar to community and junior colleges throughout the country, each of which, for the most part, has been created over the last 50 years by local communities to meet the educational needs of their citizens. For the most part, these colleges are funded by local property taxes and governed by locally elected boards, which help keep their institutions tuned to the changing requirements of their local citizens and businesses. However, in Nevada, it's different. While one of our four colleges was started and funded in part by local citizens, the colleges were collectively moved under the governance of NSHE and are funded by the legislature through the state's General Fund.

The Task Force began its work by considering state population and employment trends. In particular, it looked at where the state population will likely be in ten years, what types of jobs are likely to be available, and what level of educational attainment, including associate and baccalaureate degrees as well as vocational and technical education, will be needed to fill the available jobs. While our community colleges have

taken on many roles over the years to meet their communities' needs, the state's primary reasons for supporting the community colleges with public funds are, first, because of their importance in preparing Nevadans to obtain the first two years toward a baccalaureate degree; secondly, to prepare those who wish to enter the workforce directly with skills and abilities that are matched to employers' needs; and thirdly, as a means of working with employers to refresh those skills and abilities as workplace requirements change.

The importance of our community colleges to the economic vitality of their own communities and to the state overall cannot be overemphasized, especially as new and emerging technologies are rolled out at an ever-increasing pace. Our community colleges, under strong leadership, have carved out a critical niche in providing learning opportunities for our citizens that would not otherwise be available, and in enabling our employers to succeed and expand their enterprises. They have been responsible for raising the overall level of educational attainment for our citizens and will be critical to the state's future economic success.

This report focuses on how we can continue to evolve our community colleges to meet the needs of the next generation of learners within the resources that are likely to be available.

## II. BACKGROUND

Chancellor Daniel Klaich appointed Bruce James as chairman of the Task Force because of his background in business, public service, and higher education governance. Together, they sketched out the various backgrounds that would be needed by members of the Task Force to have an informed and balanced group (see appendix A). These included individuals from businesses who employ the colleges' graduates, K-12 leaders who prepare students for the colleges, university leaders who accept graduates for continuing higher education, and public policy leaders. The Chancellor selected and appointed 14 members, including the chairman, to form the Task Force. In addition, he appointed Dr. Magdalena Martinez, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, herself a former student of the College of Southern Nevada, to support the Task Force and be its liaison with NSHE.

Mr. James and Dr. Martinez initiated the Task Force by meeting in Washington, DC with federal education leaders and the heads of several higher education associations that are focused on community colleges. They sought an informed, macro-perspective on the nature and state of community colleges throughout the United States, national trends, challenges faced by all, best practices, and federal and private resources available to support both students and colleges.

The first formal meeting of the Task Force took place July 22, 2010 at NSHE headquarters in Reno. The Chancellor hosted and led the meeting, making certain that all understood his

charge and what resources were available from NSHE in support of the work of the Task Force.

Thereafter, the Task Force met in 11 monthly all-day sessions, rotating locations to include each of the community colleges, Nevada State College, businesses, a major hospital, a union training facility, and a high school technical academy (see appendix B). At each location, the host organization provided Task Force members a comprehensive overview of its operations and, in the case of employers, a vision of its current and future educational needs and requirements.

In addition, at each meeting, the Task Force invited local leaders as well as representatives of various state and federal organizations to share their views on subjects of interest to the Task Force. Altogether, the Task Force heard from nearly 100 individuals, who shared their views on issues ranging from programs to improve college graduation, to the emerging use of technology in teaching and learning, to private sector colleges helping us to understand how they see their roles in higher education, to community leaders sharing their views on the importance and relevance of their respective college.

At the Task Force's final meeting on June 16, 2011, members concluded that the hallmark of Nevada's community colleges has been their flexibility in meeting the ever-changing needs of citizens, communities, and employers in the state.

However, Nevada's community colleges now find themselves at a point in time when their traditional resources are not sufficient to meet the needs of learners or employers today, and are not apt to be sufficient tomorrow without serious changes. Assuming that there will be no large influx of new

money, the Task Force considered how the colleges' resources, collectively, can be better deployed, how they can work as a group to reduce costs, how they can deploy technology to create more options for learners, and how the private education sector might be engaged in ways that expand postsecondary learning opportunities. The Task Force also examined changing the state's funding formula for community colleges to put less emphasis on student enrollment numbers and more on student success. Members looked at how variable, or flexible, pricing can be used to help achieve statewide higher education goals while offering incentives for students to succeed.

The Task Force's recommendations were derived from dialogues with the administrators and faculty of the four community colleges, the communities they serve, Nevada K-12 administrators, university faculties and administrators, employers, and higher education leaders in Washington, DC and throughout the country.

### **III. OBSERVATIONS**

#### **A) The Big One**

At the Nevada 2.0 Conference in 2011, Robert Lang, UNLV Director of Brookings Mountain West, highlighted how Nevada has one of the highest average wages of any state, relative to the population's level of education.

Nevada's high wages were a function of supply and demand while the state's boom growth led the country in population growth for 15 years. However, Nevada's population growth slowed dramatically with the national recession; labor force supply and demand changed, leaving Nevada with the largest percentage of unemployed people in the nation. The outlook is for modest employment growth in the hospitality and service related industries, including construction, for the next few years.

Yet, many Nevada jobs go unfilled because our employers cannot find people with the skills, experience, and educational credentials needed for today's jobs. This mismatch has short and long term implications for the recovery of our state and for the quality of life of our citizens.

#### **B) Shortage of Trained Workers**

State officials are undertaking a serious effort to diversify Nevada's economy by attracting new businesses to the state that offer good paying job opportunities and careers. To meet the educational needs of the state's existing employers, as well as to attract new ones, we must develop strategies to measurably increase postsecondary education for Nevada's high school students. We must also offer viable educational opportunities for returning adult learners so that they can remain competitive in their job skills and be prepared for new career opportunities.

Indeed, the Task Force heard from its own members who are now expanding and locating new manufacturing facilities in other states because of their inability to find technically trained, available workers in Nevada. Most of their available jobs now require, at entry, a minimum of an associate degree or meaningful certification in an occupational or technical specialty.

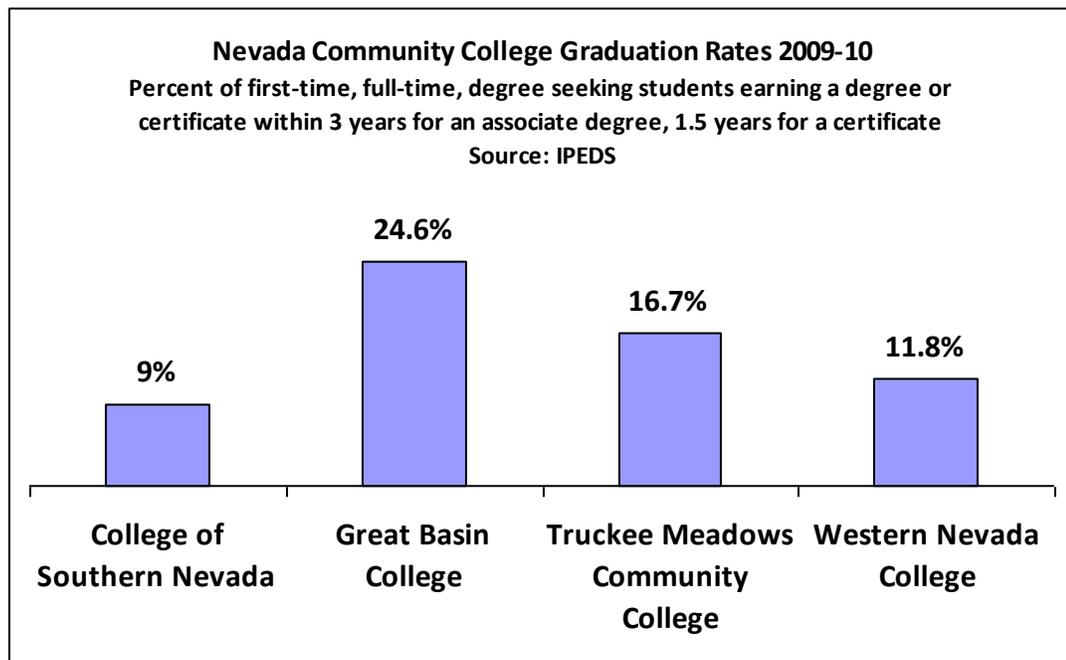
### **C) Workforce Trends**

Georgetown University researchers from the Center on Education and the Workforce recently forecasted by state and by job category, the workforce educational requirements that will be needed through 2018. In Nevada, they estimate 54 percent (or 938,000) of all jobs will require some type of college degree or meaningful certification of occupational/technical competency. Between now and 2018, considering retirements, new jobs in Nevada requiring a postsecondary degree or certificate will grow by at least 490,000. According to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, in 2009 only 30.37 percent of Nevada's adults aged 25 to 64 have a college degree. From all sources, both public and private, 12,008 Nevadans graduated from college, in state, with certificate, associate and bachelor's degrees in 2010. At this rate, we will fall short by nearly 400,000 college graduates in 2018. Graduation rates for all Nevada institutions, particularly community colleges, will have to increase significantly to keep pace with workplace demands and worker training needs.

### **D) National Emphasis on College Completion**

The U.S. Department of Education has prioritized its efforts to focus on the national problem of college-goers who do not complete their college educations. Nevada has a more serious problem in this regard than other states. For 2008-09, the community college graduation rate within three years for students who entered one of Nevada's community colleges with

the intention to pursue an associate degree or certificate, ranged from 4.5 percent to 25.5 percent. While recognizing that this may not be the whole story—some may take longer than three years, some may transfer before completion to a university, or there may be other factors—Nevada’s community colleges must do a much better job in helping students complete their degrees or certificates in a timely fashion so that they are prepared to enter the workforce in well-paying careers.



### E) Remediation

According to NSHE, for 2008-2009 at least 32 percent of students entering Nevada colleges and universities directly from high school needed subject area remediation before being prepared to take college level courses. Coupled with the remediation needs of adult learners returning to pursue a college degree, our community colleges are now devoting significant resources to remedial instruction. This impacts the colleges’ capacities to accept additional learners and help current students complete degrees and certificates.

## **F) Pathways to College**

Nevada has the lowest high school graduation rate in the country. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only half of Nevada's 9<sup>th</sup> graders will graduate from high school in a timely fashion; of those who do graduate from high school, a little over half enrolled in postsecondary education immediately after graduation.

Nevada's community colleges receive about half of those college-goers. And, of those who enter our community colleges, close to half will require some form of remediation.

The Task Force looked carefully at this situation to understand why so many high school students are uninterested in or underprepared for college. First, there is a lack of alignment in courses between Nevada's high schools and colleges; high school students earning high grades in some subject areas find themselves unprepared for the follow-on college courses. Second, there are no clear career pathways presented early enough to students to help them choose and follow an articulated path from high school through college or an advanced occupational/technical education; many do not understand the connection between education and obtaining a good job. Third, even many of the brightest and best high school students believe that neither they nor their families can afford college, and never consider the possibility of pursuing a degree or certificate; they are not aware of or do not understand the financial aid opportunities available to them.

## **G) New Technologies**

Our community colleges are usually among the first to feel the impact of technology on employers in their areas. As a group, they have a good track record of responding to employer needs by creating specialized classes and programs. This is important as the speed of technological

changes in our workplaces and in society is accelerating at an ever faster pace.

What's not as clear is whether our community colleges are adjusting their core curricula fast enough to account for these changes.

Technology is also impacting college teaching and learning allowing student flexibility with regards to time and place and allowing faculty to develop curricula and to teach from a variety of new sources. One example currently being explored for expansion in community colleges is blended or hybrid classes where courses are presented to students partially in a traditional classroom environment and partially online.

An entire new sector of higher education has grown up nearly overnight, by not only embracing technology but more importantly offering students an entirely different type of learning experience that is focused on achieving competency in a self-paced, virtual environment.

Traditional colleges, including Nevada's community colleges, have been slow to embrace technology coupled with a focus on competency based outcomes, as have non-profits such as Western Governors University and for-profits such as Phoenix, Kaplan and DeVry Universities. Smart use of technology with a focus on competency outcomes is one way Nevada can dramatically expand its postsecondary educational opportunities and improve graduation rates for both first-time and returning learners.

#### **H) Input vs. Outcome**

For the first time in a generation, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the agency which accredits Nevada's colleges and universities, has changed its accreditation standards. Formerly, they measured each college's preparation to deliver on its self-defined mission by assessing inputs such as libraries, classrooms, classroom hours, homework hours, percentage of tenured faculty, and the like. The

Commission's new accreditation process, supported by the U.S. Department of Education, asks colleges to provide data demonstrating their focus on student learning outcomes and timely degree completion.

Evidence-based course and program outcomes are now being emphasized throughout higher education, supported by accrediting agencies and the federal government.

### **I) Strategic Planning**

Nevada's 1971 State Plan for Community Colleges defined their missions as "university transfer, occupational/technical education, developmental, community service, and counseling." While the colleges have expanded their missions over the last 40 years to meet community and state expectations, Nevada does not have a focused, statewide, strategic plan for the state's community colleges which prioritizes their various missions, sets measurable goals for each, and allocates resources accordingly. In the absence of such a plan, there is no objective way to determine the level of success for each mission, each college, or the colleges as a group, in regard to the state's public education needs.

### **J) Open Access**

Most community colleges throughout the nation were founded on the principle of "open access" and continue to champion this principle today. They provide every person residing within their jurisdiction low-cost access to college courses and student services, subsidized with public funds.

In most communities outside Nevada, local community colleges are supported by local taxes and governed by locally elected boards. In Nevada, there is no local tax support--all public costs are paid by the state through the General Fund. There is no local governing body prioritizing programs and matching community wants to financial realities. Because the state pays most of the costs for new community college programs, there are only

positive financial outcomes for local communities when they persuade their college to take on a new mission or expand an existing one. NSHE needs to prioritize the offerings of community colleges to make the best use of available funds.

#### **K) State Funding Formula**

The state's cost reimbursement policy is focused on inputs--student headcounts and credit hours delivered. The more credit hours a college can generate the more money it receives from the state, regardless of the nature of the course or the outcome for the learner. There is no financial incentive offered by the state to the colleges for better student outcomes, degree and certificate completion.

#### **L) Collaboration and Cooperation**

The word "System" in NSHE may be a misnomer. The system is in reality a collection of eight separate institutions, each with its own CEO, administration, missions, course offerings, programs, priorities and goals; each competing for the same, fixed pot of resources. There is value in allowing Nevada community colleges to shape their own enterprises in order to respond flexibly and quickly to community requirements. However, there also is value in collaboration and cooperation to avoid duplication, lower costs, and improve efficiency and effectiveness. New technologies, in particular, are creating opportunities to share best practices, rationalize course offerings, improve student counseling, increase federal aid for students, consolidate back office functions, coordinate purchasing and provide outreach to rural communities.

#### **M) Tuition and Fee Strategy**

To encourage people to seek postsecondary education, the state has adopted a policy of keeping tuition and fees exceptionally low and below market price--Nevada has among the lowest student costs in the country.

Nevada also has among the lowest college-going rates in the country. The strategy of keeping tuition and fees low has not translated into higher college-going rates in Nevada.

There is an opportunity to increase overall financial resources for Nevada community colleges by selectively bringing tuition and fees to parity with the rest of the country and, at the same time, offering meaningful need-based financial aid.

#### **N) Limited Postsecondary Choices**

While we have one of the lowest college going rates in the nation, Nevada has the highest percentage of college-going students attending public higher education institutions. The state of Nevada educates more students with public funds than is the case in any other state, because of the scarcity of private sector postsecondary alternatives.

In order to meet Nevada's goal of substantially increasing the number of citizens with college degrees and meaningful postsecondary occupational/technical education, with the available public resources, the state needs to find new means to do so, including encouraging the private higher education sector to expand its capacity within the state.

## IV. TEN KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1) Create a Strategic Plan Focused on Student Learning Outcomes

NSHE, in cooperation with the state economic development authority and the college presidents, needs to create a ten-year, annually updated, *Strategic Plan for Student Learners* for the state's community colleges as a collective. The plan should set forth short-term and long-term measurable objectives, goals, strategies, plans and timetables, all focused on successful milestones and outcomes for learners. From this overall plan, each institution will be able to derive its plan meeting the new NWCCU standards.

Establish a position within NSHE with the responsibility for overseeing the creation and updating of the Strategic Plan, and with the authority to oversee its implementation in reaching statewide goals for community colleges.

### 2) Focus on Future Technology Needs

Establish an NSHE Community Colleges Technology Board, charged with creating an annual Technology Plan for the community colleges as a collective. The technology plan should focus on the best ways to use technology, especially emerging technologies, in implementing the *Strategic Plan for Learners*. The Board's annual plan should identify new technology trends and suggest ways to incorporate these into academic programs and courses. The annual technology plan should also keep faculty abreast of new and innovative ways that learners are using technology in their everyday lives and suggest what effects these technologies might have on future teaching and learning.

A suggestion is to establish a 14-person board, with three-year rotating terms (1/3 new members coming on every year), including NSHE's chief information officer, both public and private sector senior and junior faculty,

senior technology leaders from private companies headquartered both in and out of the state, an executive from a social networking firm, a technology venture capitalist, a leader from a major foundation focused on educational change, a technology writer for a national publication, a state economic development official, and a technology-savvy union official.

Bring the higher education community into further partnership with the business community by asking business leaders to organize, manage and finance the Technology Board, perhaps through a statewide alliance of Chambers of Commerce.

This plan would bring guidance to the advisory committees at each college to make certain the colleges are meeting both local and statewide needs.

### **3) Leverage Resources to Benefit Learners**

Establish Nevada Virtual College (NVC) to deliver e-courses for associate degree seeking students. As a separate entity from any existing community college, courses can be priced to students on a full-cost recovery basis. Senior faculty from each college, working as a collective, can define outcomes expected for each course as part of a degree program; NSHE can select a vendor who will develop and deliver curriculum, and engage a separate entity for student outcome assessment. The vendor would be paid as students successfully complete each course, with bonuses paid for timely degree completion. A request for proposal for such virtual learning instruction can be solicited from each of Nevada's community colleges, Nevada State College, Sierra Nevada College, Western Governors University, and carefully selected for-profit institutions. Partnering between institutions, including public-private partnering, should be encouraged in the proposal process. Implementation of NVC should not require the initial outlay of any new funds from NSHE. The award winner would assume all capital, startup, and operating costs and only be paid as each student

demonstrates successful course mastery to an independent third party chosen by NSHE.

This concept, once established, can be broadened to include upper division courses leading to bachelor's degrees, expanding the higher education capacity of the state without incurring new fixed costs.

#### **4) Create Pathways for K-16 Learners to Succeed**

NSHE needs to strengthen its partnership with K-12 in developing clearer pathways from high school, to college, to careers. This includes the articulation of high school courses with first-year college courses at all system institutions--community colleges, the state college and the universities. NSHE should develop, in partnership with K-12, supportive mentoring programs for students and their parents to demystify college planning and preparation. Most importantly, educators at every level need to inspire students to strive for education beyond high school.

The new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for K-12, now being embraced by states throughout the country, should be embraced by higher education to align college readiness. CCSS offers a framework for K-16 curriculum alignment that is worth investigating and further implementing.

Nevada should reinvigorate the established P-16 Advisory Council with clear responsibility for overseeing the integration of high school and college curriculum within clearly defined pathways for successful and timely completion of college.

#### **5) Remake Remedial Education**

Remedial education serves two constituencies: first, recent high school graduates who have not been adequately prepared for college courses; second, returning adult learners who do not have the preparation to succeed in college courses.

A significant portion of Nevada’s community colleges’ teaching resources are devoted to remedial education of students planning to enter one of the community colleges, the state college or the universities. Community colleges need to be as freed as possible from this important, but burdensome, responsibility in order to open their pipelines for more prepared students seeking college degrees.

Remedial education of recent high school graduates should return to the high schools. Articulation of high school courses with college courses will help solve this problem.

Most remedial education of returning adult learners can be contracted by NSHE to the private sector, utilizing both place-based facilities and e-learning, as appropriate, under fixed-price schedules based on successful outcomes. Consideration should be given to allowing private sector partners in this endeavor to make use of under-utilized campus facilities, particularly the summer semester, to further reduce costs.

The state should decide what, if any, subsidy it will provide for remedial education of returning learners.

Part of the assets freed from remediation should be redeployed into expanded, campus-based, general programs aimed at preparing high school students and returning learners for college success. Additionally, freed funds should be used to greatly expand professional counseling for both high school students and adults seeking to further their education, ensuring that both have clear pathways to successful learning outcomes and understand the financial aid available to them.

## **6) Implement Variable Tuition Pricing**

To protect the concept of open enrollment in Nevada’s community colleges, given the state’s limited higher education resources, community colleges should move to student tuition pricing based on the highest and

best use of teaching resources, aligned with the state's needs as defined by a strategic plan.

For instance, such a variable tuition pricing plan can price the same courses differently depending on whether the learner is a recent high school graduate or a returning adult learner; whether the learner is seeking a degree/certificate or taking ad hoc courses; or, whether the learner is a full- or part-time student.

For full-time learners, consideration should be given to pricing by the semester, rather than by the course. Acknowledge the value to both the student and the college of timely degree completion by rebating part of the tuition to encourage timely degree completion.

And, importantly, colleges should require as part of the application process, a completed FAFSA form.

## **7) Increase Meaningful Certificates**

Community colleges offer a variety of occupational and technical education programs to prepare students for jobs. These need to be more closely aligned with actual career opportunities within the state, with course and program content connected to explicit employer needs. In this regard, the Task Force recommends that each college partner closely with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR).

The successful completion of all programs should result in the award of a meaningful certificate signifying mastery of the curriculum, measured by competency examination. The existing workforce boards at each college should approve all programs leading to certificates and regularly review curriculum for relevancy. Other vocational courses and programs should be considered for elimination as obsolete.

The workforce boards at each college should work more closely with their respective foundation boards to fund their programs with scholarships, capital grants, and endowed programs.

Certificate programs at community colleges should be stackable and encourage students to aspire for later completion of degree programs.

### **8) Expand Dual High School and College Enrollment**

Expand cooperative programs that enroll prepared 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders simultaneously in both high school and college with a ten-year goal of having one-third of Nevada's 12<sup>th</sup> graders graduating at the age of 18 with a high school diploma, as well as an associate degree or certification in an occupational/technical specialty. Coupled with clear college and career paths beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, dual enrollment will help raise high school graduation rates in the state as well as substantially increase the number of college graduates in the state.

As an incentive for students to participate, the state should consider rebating tuition and fees for the program upon successful graduation with an associate degree, guaranteeing admission to baccalaureate programs at UNR, UNLV, NSC or the community colleges, and guaranteeing a scholarship that pays all or a portion of tuition and fees to the institution of their choice.

Have the college level courses delivered to dual-enrollment students by Nevada Virtual University, which will result in a substantially reduced cost. High school teachers can become on-the-ground guides and counselors to ensure student success.

### **9) Change the State Funding Formula for Community Colleges**

Re-evaluate the state funding formula for community colleges. Rather than funding community colleges for enrolled students, partially fund for the

successful completion of key milestones and courses, with incentives on a sliding scale for timely degree/certificate completion.

A revised state funding formula should encourage community colleges to enroll committed learners prepared for college work, and find ways to counsel and help students in degree and certificate completion. The ultimate winners will be our students, our community colleges, and the state overall.

### **10) Move Governance to the Source**

Nevada's community colleges could be more responsive to community needs by bringing the governance of each to the communities it serves, as is the case in most other states. The Board of Regents should consider delegating part of its authority to local governing Councils to oversee the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Learners*, to include the curriculum and technical advisory committees for all career and occupational degrees and certificates.

Each Council might have five to seven members appointed by the Board of Regents to six-year staggered terms. Members could be drawn from local business, civic, government and K-12 education leaders, and each college's foundation board.

The following section identifies goals and measurements associated with the ten key recommendations in the report.

## V. GOALS

To be meaningful, goals must be measurable. The Task Force offers the following goals for your consideration:

### 10-Year Goals

- A) Double the number of degrees, both associate and bachelor's, awarded each year
- B) Triple the number of meaningful certificates awarded each year
- C) Graduate one-third of Nevada's 12<sup>th</sup> graders at the age of 18 with a high school diploma, as well as an associate degree or certification in an occupational/technical specialty

### 5-Year Goals

- A) Double the number of declared degree seekers
- B) Triple the number of declared certificate seekers
- C) Offer half of all place-based courses as blended combinations of classroom and e-instruction

### 3-Year Goals

- A) Align certificate programs with actual career opportunities and double the number of declared certificate seekers
- B) Deliver 25 percent of all courses by e-instruction through NVC
- C) Standardize among colleges course offerings for associate degrees, with uniformly defined goals, curriculum and outcomes assessment
- D) Create statewide articulation of all high school course curriculum with first-year college curriculum; offer every Nevada 11<sup>th</sup> grader the opportunity for dual enrollment

- E) Replace remedial education at colleges with enhanced student counseling programs directing and coaching successful learning outcomes
- F) Establish variable student tuition pricing for courses and programs
- G) Change state funding formulae for colleges to reward successful milestones and timely degree/certificate completion

#### 2-Year Goals

- A) Complete strategic plan in conjunction with the Technology Board and begin implementation
- B) Complete technology plan and begin implementation
- C) Begin operations of Nevada Virtual University

#### 1-Year Goals

- A) Create NSHE position and begin strategic planning process
- B) Establish a Technology Board

## VI. Building on Success

As indicated throughout this report, Task Force members recognize and applaud the leadership of Nevada's community colleges. We acknowledge that Nevada community colleges are at the forefront of innovative and cutting-edge approaches to improve curriculum, student outcomes, teaching and learning, and partnerships with business, industry, and government to meet their workforce needs. What follows are exemplars of how Nevada institutions are building on successes and paving the way for future success.

### 1) College of Southern Nevada

Founded in 1971 and educating thousands of students a semester, the College of Southern Nevada is the state's largest and most ethnically diverse higher education institution. CSN offers more than 200 degree and certificate options in more than 130 areas of study, including 25 degree and certificate programs available entirely online.

Starting fall 2011, the College of Southern Nevada will take part in a landmark research study on the impact of simulation training in nursing education. The study, conducted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, will determine if simulated clinical experiences used as a replacement for a portion of the time spent in traditional clinical education, may better prepare nurses for the field. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing selected CSN, which educates approximately one-third of Nevada's nurses, among 10 prestigious nursing programs across the country to take part in the study. CSN will join educators at Johns Hopkins University, Florida International University, Ivy Tech Community College, Johnson County Community College, Lancaster General College, Metropolitan Community College Penn Valley, University of South Carolina, University of Southern Mississippi and Washington State University in this important study. Approximately 154 full-time CSN Associate Degree of Nursing students have volunteered to

take part in the study. The longitudinal study will end in 2013 as the CSN students starting the study this fall prepare to graduate.

Another example of CSN's partnership includes the City of Las Vegas Fire Station and CSN Instructional Center. This unique partnership combines state and local resources to efficiently generate services for students and Southern Nevada residents. The 15,400 square-foot building located on the southwest corner of the West Charleston campus houses Las Vegas Fire & Rescue Station 6, as well as 4,600 square feet of general classroom space for CSN students. Located across from Bonanza High School, the fire station also will provide learning opportunities to interested high school students through future collaboration among Las Vegas Fire & Rescue, Clark County School District and CSN officials.

## 2) Great Basin College

Great Basin College was the first community college established in the state of Nevada. The College services an area of approximately 62,000 square miles using state-of-the-art distance learning technologies. A unique program is the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree designed specifically for students who have earned an associate degree from any regionally accredited college. Students enrolled in BAS programs become "scholar practitioners," professionals with theoretical background and hands-on skills in their area of expertise. Emphases offered in the BAS program are Digital Information Technology, Instrumentation, Management Technology and Land Survey-Geomatics.

In addition, the Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science – Nursing (RN to BSN) is designed for RNs with an associate degree credential who want to continue their education in nursing while still engaged in practicing their profession. The program responds to critical shortages of nurses throughout Nevada in both clinical and administrative positions. GBC's RN to BSN program is on pace of the national trend toward bachelor's

prepared registered nurses, and ahead of the pace of other NSHE institutions. Much of the course work in BAS programs and all of the course work in the BSN is offered online or via interactive video. More than any other institution in the Nevada System of Higher Education, GBC makes use of “NevadaNET” and its own vast distance learning technological infrastructures. The existing capital infrastructure and the innovative skills of the college’s faculty, guarantee high-quality instruction for all students, including those enrolled in GBC’s BAS and BSN programs.

### 3) Truckee Meadows Community College

The TMCC Summer Bridge Program is a comprehensive and immersive approach to student success. Started in summer 2010, the program provides an intense college readiness experience primarily for new high school graduates. To be selected for this immersive college program, students must test into the program and sign a contract of participation. The Program includes two college courses, stipends, tutoring, advising and skills workshops. Early results indicate the Summer Bridge Program can have a positive impact on students’ college experience and academic outcomes. For instance, student persistence (for program participants) from fall 2010 to spring 2011 was 91percent.

Improvements continue to be made in the Summer Bridge Program. Math remediation will be provided in the Math Skills Lab at no charge for the 2011 Summer Bridge students. To assist in college expenses, students receive stipends upon participation and completion. All students are registered for a required sequence of courses to assure on-time completion. To ensure appropriate advisement and timely completion, program participants may not register for courses in their next three semesters without seeing a counselor first. Success Coaches are also key to the success of the program and meet with program participants during each semester.

While initial investment for this type of program is high (much of the support came from grants) the return is clearly evident and worthwhile when one considers timely degree or certificate completion and employability of students. Efforts are underway to address increasing the number of participants while containing costs. Funds are raised through grants, foundations and matching college dollars to support this effort to increase graduation rates.

#### 4) Western Nevada College

Over the last five years, Western Nevada College developed a program loosely modeled on the National Learning Communities initiatives. A key predictor of student success is involvement in campus activities and general college engagement. Western Nevada College promotes student engagement via a number of learning communities and cohorts. These include:

- 1) An active student government and organizational structure;
- 2) Two intercollegiate athletics programs (women's softball and men's baseball);
- 3) Academic interest communities such as the nursing and construction management clubs, the peer mentors, and the astronomical society; and
- 4) Affinity groups like the Latino, American Indian and rural student cohorts and the Veterans' Club.

The effectiveness of this method is validated by regular reports on student success rates and retention rates for these groups. People involved in any of the groups benefit from cohort success rates that are higher than the overall college average.

## VII. End Note

Over the last 20 years, Nevada has grown from a small to a middle-size state. Many of the support services for citizens have struggled to keep pace

with the growth, none more so than higher education. To ensure that Nevadans have the same educational opportunities that others enjoy, the Task Force recommends that NSHE fully engage in national initiatives with its peers from other states. For community colleges, such national initiatives include Achieving the Dream, Aspen Institute innovations, Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), and League of Innovation and efforts of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

Such participation will not only assist our institutions in providing a full range of high quality educational opportunities for students, it will elevate the national stature of Nevada and our institutions of higher education.

## APPENDIX A

### **Fresh Look at Nevada’s Community Colleges Task Force Active Members**

#### **Bruce R. James, Chairman**

Mr. James is President and CEO of Nevada New-Tech, Inc., which invests in early stage technology companies in Nevada. He served in Washington from 2002 to 2007 as Public Printer of the United States and CEO of the United States Government Printing Office. He was chairman of the Nevada Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission. He is board chairman-emeritus of Rochester Institute of Technology, his alma mater, and Sierra Nevada College. He was a founding member of the Dean’s Advisory Board at the Boyd School of Law at UNLV and a DRI Foundation board member. He has served as a commissioner of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities and as a member of the board of directors of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

#### **Brent Chamberlain**

Mr. Chamberlain recently retired from a career in the mining industry. His most recent position was that of Corporate Director of Human Resources and Health and Safety for start-up mining company. He has served in numerous professional and civic roles including, The Federal Mine Safety and Health Research Advisory Committee, the Nevada State Commission on Sports, Elko Chamber of Commerce, Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital Board, Elko Federal Credit Union Board of Directors, and Boy Scouts of America. Mr. Chamberlain has served for more than 17 years on the Great Basin College Community Advisory Board. He presented the commencement address at Great Basin College’s commencement exercises in June of 2011.

#### **Jill Derby, Ph.D.**

Dr. Derby has devoted her entire public career to advancing education. She was elected to Nevada’s Board of Regents in 1988 where she served 18 years, including three terms as Board Chair. As an extension of her higher education leadership, she has served 12 years as a Governance

Consultant with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges located in Washington D.C. In this role she leads and facilitates planning and performance reviews with higher education boards and leaders around the country. Dr. Derby received a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from U.C. Davis and taught at Western Nevada College, Lake Tahoe Community College and Sierra Nevada College before joining the Board of Regents.

**Barbara Fraser, RN**

Mrs. Fraser is a Registered Nurse, licensed in Nevada with a BSN and a MS in Health Services Administration. She serves as Director of Education at Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas where she coordinates nursing orientation and continuing education programs, the American Heart Association (AHA) training center, and student clinical experiences. She is also the system administrator for Sunrise’s online learning management system, and is a current AHA BLS instructor. She was previously Manager and Director of Emergency and Medical/Surgical/Telemetry Services.

Mrs. Fraser received the 2004 Southern Nevada March of Dimes Distinguished Nurse of the Year award and 2003 Nurse Week Far West Nursing Excellence Award/Advancing the Profession. She is a member of the Nevada State Board of Nursing Education Advisory Committee; the nursing advisory boards the College of Southern Nevada, Nevada State College and University of Southern Nevada; and a member of the Desert Sage Auxiliary of the Las Vegas Assistance League.

**Scott Huber**

Mr. Huber has taught biology at Truckee Meadows Community College since 1996. He is past Faculty Senate chair for TMCC, 2009-11, and past state board president of the Nevada Faculty Alliance 2009-11. His research interest includes clinical biology and cultural anthropology.

**Collie L. Hutter**

Mrs. Hutter is Chief Operating Officer of Click Bond, Inc. a Carson City based manufacturer of aerospace fasteners that was founded by Mrs. Hutter and her husband Charles. She is a past president of the Nevada Manufacturers Association and the Brewery Arts Center. She is currently

serving on the boards of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Carson City Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Hutter received her BS in Physics from Carnegie-Mellon University and her MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

### **Robert Jorden**

Mr. Jorden is Director of the OSHA Training Institute & Education Center at the College of Southern Nevada. He has worked in the construction industry since 1976. Since 1998, he has served as an instructor, apprenticeship coordinator, training director, and union official for construction related unions. In 2008, he was appointed Director of Training for District Council 15 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades where he supervised craft training and safety programs for members in Denver, Las Vegas, and Phoenix. Mr. Jorden has attended Saddleback Community College in Mission Viejo, CA, Marshall Community College in Huntington, WV, College of Southern Nevada, and the National Labor College in Silver Spring, MD. He is currently finishing his degree in Construction Safety and Industrial Hygiene.

### **Matthew LaBranch**

Mr. LaBranch is Senior Vice President of Manufacturing Operations for International Game Technology. He oversees world-wide support of all of IGT's manufacturing operations, supply chain, master scheduling, planning, order administration, quality assurance, manufacturing engineering, logistics and warehousing. IGT's manufacturing operations are located in both Reno and Las Vegas supported by a global supply chain. Prior to this role, he was Vice President of Materials at IGT and has been part of the IGT team for 17 years including time in IGT's Australia subsidiary. Mr. LaBranch's work experience spans 35 years in operational disciplines of planning, supply chain management, logistics and production. Under his leadership, IGT Operations has achieved significant cost reductions and greatly improved IGT's inventory management performance and manufacturing efficiency. He has been a member of the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS) for 28 years and a member of the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) for four years.

### **Pedro Martinez**

Mr. Martinez is Deputy Superintendent of the Clark County School District, overseeing the district's 357 schools and academic departments. Prior to joining CCSD, he served as the deputy superintendent of the Washoe County School District, overseeing the district's 102 schools. In Washoe County, he was at the forefront of the district's strategic plan, including the implementation of a K–12 College and Career Readiness Pathway, and school based score-cards and dashboards. Mr. Martinez led a graduation initiative which resulted in the district's high schools increasing graduation rates by an average of seven percent. Previously he served as a regional superintendent at the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). He also was the chief financial officer for CPS for six years overseeing a \$5.2 billion operating budget and a \$1 billion capital budget. Under his leadership, the district increased its financial reserves, received bond rating upgrades and implemented academic initiatives that resulted in significant student achievement and graduation gains. Before joining Chicago Public Schools, Mr. Martinez was the director of finance and technology at the Archdiocese of Chicago, and an audit manager at Deloitte & Touche and Price Waterhouse Coopers. He is a certified public accountant and holds a bachelors degree in accounting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a masters degree in business administration from DePaul University. He is a graduate of the 2009 class of The Broad Superintendents Academy.

### **Patricia Miltenberger, Ed.D.**

Dr. Miltenberger is a former college and university administrator in Nevada and California. She was a Dean and Vice President at Western Nevada College, Truckee Meadows Community College, University of Nevada, Reno, and Santa Rosa Junior College in California. She also served as interim president of Nevada State College in Henderson. Dr. Miltenberger is currently Professor Emerita at the University of Nevada, Reno and teaches part-time in the Educational Leadership department. She has served as a commissioner of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities and participated in over 40 evaluation team visits. Dr Miltenberger was recognized by the University of Nevada, Reno

with the Distinguished Service Award in 2002 and received the President's Medal in 2006.

**NSHE Staff Support:**

**Magdalena Martinez, Ph.D.**

Dr. Magdalena Martinez is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the Nevada System of Higher Education. Prior to joining the Nevada System of Higher Education, Dr. Martinez worked at the National Forum of Higher Education for the Public Good at the University of Michigan. In her role she was responsible for contributing to the research, planning and implementation of multiple national dialogues which focused on issues related to postsecondary access, equity and student success. In addition, she served as a program evaluator for a three-year, W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded leadership program to prepare individuals for the presidency at Minority Serving Institutions. The program was spearheaded by the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. Other professional experiences include serving as a community college administrator at the College of Southern Nevada and policy and management analyst at the City of Las Vegas. Dr. Martinez's interests encompass three interconnected areas focused on underrepresented students' educational experiences, the role of community colleges and persistence, and leadership and public policy to increase postsecondary access and success.

## APPENDIX B

### TASK FORCE CONTRIBUTORS

*May 19-20, 2010*

*Washington, DC*

David Baime, Vice President for Government Relations, American Association of Community Colleges  
Dr. Frank Chong, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Colleges, US

Department of Education

Dr. Michelle Cooper, President, Institute for Higher Education Policy

Jee Hang Lee, Director of Public Policy, Association of Community College Trustees

Rick Novak, Association of Governing Boards

Senator Harry Reid

Jose Rico, Deputy Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

*August 2010*

*College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas*

Patty Charlton, CSN Senior Vice President

J.T. Creedon, ASCSN Student Body President

Lucy Flores, Assemblywoman

Joyce Haldeman, CCSD Associate Superintendent

Dr. Michael Richards, CSN President

*September 2010*

*Great Basin College, Elko*

Paulette Batayola, GBC Student Body President (SGA)

Carl Diekhans, GBC President

Jack French, Elko County School District, Director of Secondary Education

Mike McFarlane, GBC Vice President for Academic Affairs

Bret Murphy, GBC Dean of Applied Science

Sara Negrete, GBC Education Department Chair & Faculty Senate Chair

Dr. Margaret Puccinelli, GBC Dean of Health Sciences & Human Resources

Vic Redding, NSHE Senior Fiscal Operations Officer

John Rice, GBC Director of Institutional Advancement & Executive Director of the GBC Foundation

Sonja Sibert, GBC Budget and Human Resources Officer  
Mark Stevens, NSHE Interim Vice Chancellor for Finance  
Nicole Volk, Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital, Director of Public Information

*October 2010*  
*Truckee Meadows Community College, Reno*

Elena Bobnova, TMCC Director of Institutional Research  
Fred Lokken, TMCC Associate Dean, TMCC WebCollege & Chair of Instructional Technology Council  
Miguel Martinez, TMCC Student  
Theresa Mrockowski, TMCC Student  
Dr. Jane Nichols, NSHE Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs  
Ted Plaggemeyer, TMCC Dean of the School of Sciences  
Delores Sanford, TMCC Vice President of Finance & Administrative Services  
Dr. Maria Sheehan, TMCC President  
Jean-Paul Torres, TMCC Senior Student Ambassador

*November 2010*  
*Western Nevada College, Carson City*

Sergio Arteaga, WNC Peer Academic Coach  
Deborah Case, WNC Director of Counseling Services  
Jason Gill, WNC Student Body President (ASWN)  
Robert C. Hooper, Northern Nevada Development Authority  
Al Jurkonis, President of American AVK  
Carol Lange, WNC Interim Vice President Academic & Student Affairs  
Carol A. Lincoln, Achieving the Dream – Senior Vice President  
Adam Loomis, WNC fourth-year student in Bachelor of Technology  
Ann Louhela, WNC Specialty Crops Institute, Director  
Dr. Carol Lucey, WNC President  
Helaine Jesse Morres, WNC Vice President Development & External Affairs  
Julia Murillo, WNC student & member of the Latino cohort program Construction Management Program  
Joe Quiroga, WNC Peer Advisor  
Lupe Ramirez, WNC Executive Assistant to Dean of Student Services  
Mike Sady, WNC Professor of Chemistry  
Marilee Swirczek, WNC Professor of English (“Wall of the Dead” Project)

*December 2010*

*Joint Apprentice & Journeyman Training Center, Las Vegas*

Crystal Abba, NSHE Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

William Anderson, DETR Chief Economist

Lleta Brown, Department of Labor Apprenticeship & Training Division, Apprenticeship Training Representative

Darren Divine, CSN Vice President of Academic Affairs

Murray Dominguez, Pipe Trades Joint Apprentice & Journeyman Training Coordinator

Dan Gouker, CSN Exec. Director of Apprenticeship Studies & Southern Nevada Workforce Development Board member

Colleen Henry, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, State Director

Dr. Mike Richards, CSN President

Frank Woodbeck, Nevada Commission on Economic Development

*January 2011*

*International Gaming Technology, Reno*

Paul Diflo, IGT Vice President and Chief Information Officer

Duke Golden, IGT Director of Production

Fred Lokken - TMCC Instructional Technologies (already listed above)

*February 2011*

*Sunrise Hospital, Las Vegas*

Minta Albietz, Sunrise Hospital, Chief Nursing Officer

Laurie Turner, Sunrise Hospital, Vice President, Quality & Medical Staff

Sylvia Young, Sunrise Hospital, CEO

*March 2011*

*WCSD Academy of Arts, Careers & Technology (AACT), Reno*

Crystal Abba, NSHE Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Linda Heiss, NSHE Director of Institutional Research

Caroline Macintosh, Lyon County School District, Superintendent  
Janis McCreary, AACT, Principal  
Pat Partridge, Western Governors University, Vice President, Marketing & Enrollment

*April 2011*

*Meeting canceled due to UNR President Milt Glick's passing*

*May 2011*

*Nevada State College, Henderson*

Dr. Lesley DiMare, NSC President  
Lynn Gillette, Sierra Nevada College  
Richard Rubsamen, Sierra Nevada College, President  
Jacqueline E. Woods, DeVry Inc., Senior Partnerships Advisor

*June 2011*

*Truckee Meadows Community College, Reno*

*July 2011*

*James' Residence, Northern Nevada*

*Additional Contributors*

Nigel Bain, Underground Mine Manager, Barrick Goldstrike Mine  
Randy Buffington, General Manager, Barrick Goldstrike Mine  
Milton Glick, Former President of University of Nevada, Reno  
Dennis Jones, President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)  
Dwight Jones, Superintendent of the Clark County School District  
John La Gatta, President of the Catamount Fund  
Brian Hall, Former Chairman of Thomson Publishing and former Chairman of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education  
Christine Haynes, Nevada System of Higher Education  
Tom Kerr, Director Human Resources, Newmont Mining  
Robert Lang, Executive Director of Brookings Mountain West Institute at UNLV  
Rick Legon, President of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Paul Lingenfelter, President of the National Association of State Higher Education Executive Officers  
David Longanecker, President of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education  
Heath Morrison, Superintendent of the Washoe County School District  
Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction for Nevada  
Louis Schack, Director, Communications and Community Affairs, Barrick Goldstrike Mine  
Neal Smatresk, President of University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Peter Smith, Senior Vice President for Academic Strategies & Development, Kaplan University, and founding president of California State University at Monterey Bay  
Frank Snyder, Former Vice Chairman of McGraw-Hill and Director of College Publishing