

**THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL TO CAREER PLAN**  
**A RESPONSE BY**  
**THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

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## ABSTRACT

The California School-to-Career Plan was developed with funding under the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994. Under this Act local regional partnerships will develop their own plans to carry out the mandates of the School-to-Career state plan.

As local plans are being developed, based on the broad principles in the state plan, it is important that local academic senates 1) be knowledgeable about the general School-to-Career plan, 2) take part (through the state Academic Senate) in directing state policies which will be developed by a California School-to-Career Advisory Council and its committees, and 3) be involved in the implementation policies on the local level.

In order to help local senates reach these goals, the Academic Senate presents here an analysis, with recommendations to local senates, based on the California School-to-Career Plan which has been developed over the past year by a Governor-appointed Task Force. Local senates should be aware that, as it is implemented, School-to-Career provisions could have a profound effect on community colleges, including the following:

1. California currently receives approximately \$1.3 billion in federal workforce training funds. These funds may be redirected to be administered by the School-to-Career programs.
2. The School-to-Career plan requires community colleges to enter into partnerships with business, labor, and other educational segments to carry out the plan.
3. The plan envisions a curriculum that integrates academic and vocational subjects for **all students**. While the plan sees business as an important part of the entire plan, it is given a particularly important role in development of the new curriculum. In the past, in some contract education agreements, we have seen Title 5 curriculum provisions described as "barriers" to creating business-appropriate courses. Faculty must not let their primacy rights to develop curriculum be abridged.
4. The School-to-Career plan authorizes waivers of state and federal laws and regulations that could be seen as barriers to implementation. We need to be aware of this provision so that waivers are not abused. We hope that AB 1725 is not seen as an impediment, for example, to implementation of the plan! Other concerns involve privacy act provisions, waivers of labor-related laws, elimination of the Education Code and Title 5 curriculum regulations.
5. The role of California's four-year public institutions in the implementation of the plan also needs input and involvement of community college faculty. Since we are concerned about transfer and articulation, we should participate in planning the implementation plan for transfer and articulation between the three educational systems.
6. The Plan envisions a system of career pathways and state mandated certificates. We must be concerned about how this system impacts our students as they enter from high school or re-enter as adult learners and as they transfer to four-year colleges.

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges sees some important benefits from the plan's implementation, but we feel also that local senates must be aware of the broad implications for community colleges in the plan's implementation to help inform

faculty to begin a dialog about the plan is the purpose of this paper.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The California Community College system has been involved in workforce training from its inception. One of the three major charges to community colleges in the California Master Plan for Higher Education is to provide vocational education to the citizens of California. Therefore, it is appropriate to propose that the faculty of community colleges should play a major role in California's plans for complying with the requirements of federal workforce training legislation. However, this has not been the case. This paper is intended to serve both as a wake up call to the faculty and as notice to the state's workforce planners that the faculty of the California Community Colleges are the expert practitioners in the field they are proposing to change.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act was signed into law by President Clinton in May of 1994. It is one of several bills passed to address workforce training. (Appendices 1 and 2 summarize and compare these legislative acts.) The state of California received an implementation grant to design a system for our state, called the *California School-to-Career Plan*. (See Appendix 3.) This paper is a response specifically to that plan, including direct quotations with page and section citations.

Development of the plan began with Governor Wilson selecting the Employment Development Department (EDD) to take the lead role in forming an "Interagency Partnership Group" with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges. A Task Force appointed by the governor has overseen the production of the plan. (Only one faculty member, a high school teacher, was appointed to the Task Force. See Appendix 4 for the Task Force membership list.) The effort began in the summer of 1994 with the formation of six work groups which developed background papers on issues related to workforce training and the School-to-Work act. These work groups initially had no faculty appointed by the Academic Senate. Only at the insistence of the president, Regina Stanback-Stroud, were community college faculty added to the work groups--and then only after more than half the work had been accomplished. The governor's Task Force reviewed the background papers and then, to write the first draft of the plan, employed an outside writing group which included Dan Weiler of Berman & Weiler, authors of the Commission on Innovation's *Choosing the Future* document. The draft plan was reviewed by Resource Groups consisting of the major stakeholders in workforce education, of which the Academic Senate was one. These reviews took place in August of 1994 and were followed by a period of public hearings and comment in September. These hearings generally dedicated 30 minutes of an 8 hour day for public testimony. The original time line was designed to culminate with a final plan submitted to the federal government in November of 1994.

The plan did not receive wide support and lacked the formal approval of the state agencies involved, such as the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. It became clear from federal review of similar proposals that such consensus and approval would be needed if California's plan was to be funded. The next several months saw continual

revisions of time lines for approval of the plan, three more drafts developed, additional public hearings (not necessarily coinciding with the availability of the most current draft), bills written on the topic in the state legislature, and review by state agencies and boards. The review process was particularly frustrating because of seemingly constant changes in the draft plan. The fall session of the Academic Senate reviewed the October 1994 draft, and the spring session reviewed the March 1995 draft. Several resolutions were passed. (See Appendix 4.) The final state plan was submitted in April of 1995 (Appendix 3), and the final Implementation Grant Application was sent in June of 1995 (Appendix 5). A 30-day comment period began on June 19, 1995. Dollars totaling \$86 million are available to the states in grants for fiscal year 1995. California was expecting to receive \$120 million over the next five years. The application was denied by the Department of Labor in August, 1995. However, California continues to seek at least some funding to implement its School-to-Career plan.

The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities act has many laudable goals. Reduction of administrative costs, local partnerships between business and education, and the integration of academic and vocational instruction are among those which the Academic Senate has supported. However, California's School-to-Career Plan falls short of reaching those goals in many ways. The sections which follow describe those limitations, suggest strategies to fill the gaps, and focus primarily on the next step: implementation.

### **REFORM: EDUCATIONAL OR ECONOMIC?**

The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act calls for major reform. But for whose benefit is that reform intended? Are the changes to provide a better education for California's citizens so that they can succeed both in their careers, personally, and as members of society? Or are the efforts solely to provide a better trained workforce for California's businesses? Are the students the consumers or are they merely "widgets" in a production line to appease the demands of industry?

Of course, the answer is that the reform should benefit both students and industry. A plan that equips students with educational tools with which they can participate in the workforce and society at large benefits the student, the industry in need of a qualified workforce, and the economic health of the state. The balance necessary to achieve such benefits seems to be missing from California's plan. True, the plan proposes to "certify that students have mastered the core skills and knowledge they will need to lead full and productive lives" (IIC1). The shortcoming is that the plan does not back up that claim with strategies which are student centered. The plan shows:

- X lack of support for special populations such as gender equity and displaced homemakers
- X no plan for dealing with those who do not meet the rigid certificate timetable
- X insufficient recognition of the role of counseling and guidance in career choices
- X no input from the expert practitioners--the faculty
- X no input from students in governance or evaluating program effectiveness

To achieve these mutual benefits, much remains to be done. Faculty and student leaders should keep those mutual benefits in their sights both for the development of state

standards and oversight and for local partnership planning. Both industry and education have the opportunity to work together. Business has often felt that the need for trained workers has not been met by the educational system. Education has sometimes felt that business wants students only to acquire technical skills of immediate utility rather than a broad-based education of the whole person. The plan must respect these sometimes disparate goals and build mutual interests. To the extent that faculty and students are not involved in the implementation of School-to-Career, little hope exists that these mutual interests will even be identified much less addressed.

School-to-Career is not a panacea for California's many problems. Difficulties in educating today's population and the problems in meeting the needs for a skilled, productive workforce are also based on such societal issues as economic decline, domestic violence, and racism, to name a few. The plan must acknowledge these realities and not set up expectations which are unrealistic, such as, ". . . every student will have the opportunity to learn fundamental skills and habits of mind that are the foundation for successful careers and full participation in our pluralistic society . . ." (VB1). Such comments are compelling, but they tend to obscure the fact that we are still going to need provisions for students who do not meet these expectations. Although the plan recognizes that "some students will need special accommodation and support to succeed" (p. 15), no specific strategies are mentioned. If the implementation of School-to-Career does not require such "accommodation" as a mandated feature, the vision will blur to ugly reality.

The current educational system has entrenched interests which stand in the way of reform and are not addressed by the plan. Barriers to transforming education from teacher-centered to learner-centered must be removed. Such barriers include traditional grading, class seat time, fifty minute classes, and the need for uniform progress to be transformed to individual progress. Learner-centered systems require that students are active participants in governance and evaluation. We would do well to make the students partners in implementing School-to-Career.

## **CAREER DECISIONS BASED ON COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE**

In discussing design elements of School-to-Career, the plan enumerates four phases for student progress: Career Pathways (VIA1), Foundation Skills (VIA2), Career Entry (VIA3), and Advanced (VIA4). The latter three phases culminate in a certificate of that name. This pattern of career decision-making and training raises several concerns.

"Career Path" connotes a narrow, limited future and raises the specter of tracking. Although that is not the stated purpose of the plan, it may well be the outcome. (See the sections of this paper on Tracking and also on Curriculum Appropriate to Each Phase.) The phrase "Career Exploration" is a more accurate reflection of the process students should be following in their adolescent years. Exploration connotes discovery, experimentation and informed choices.

This process should begin in elementary grades with an initial phase of "Career Awareness" with stated goals and outcomes. This principle is mentioned in the plan, "pathways begin in elementary school with general awareness of the world of work" (VIA1). However, failure to include Career Awareness in the Design Elements section is a

major flaw. This phase of the program should certainly be required in local implementation.

The plan states, "By about the eleventh grade, students select career or program majors . . . ." (VIA1). This specificity of major and age is inconsistent with what educators have learned of student development. First, students develop at tremendously different rates. Particularly students at the ages of 14 and 15 (10th and 11th grades) show extreme variation in readiness. Second, when students do begin to define their career goals, they do so only in the most general of terms. A young person may identify a direction to write, to work with his or her hands, to be fascinated by science--but rarely anything more specific. Third, such refining of career goals requires the identification of a student's interests and abilities. Such a process is only effective if it is shepherded by a professional trained in career guidance and counseling. Fourth, such winnowing of career options is more effective if the student is directly exposed to those in the occupation and the work environment itself. The current plan offers little recognition of these realities. By 10th grade, most students are ready only to identify their general areas of interest and competence and need to be assessed and counseled to make determinations and choices. If career guidance and counseling by faculty professionals is not a mandated component of implementation, School-to-Career will just be another tracking mechanism which may limit a student's option to pursue further education and acquire greater skills.

The plan also includes the expectation that the Foundation Skills Certificate will be acquired by the end of the 10th grade. Again, students develop at different rates, and many will not be able to pass the envisioned state test and "master this foundation early, by about age 16" (p. 14). In fact, the kind of competencies talked about in this certificate are those that we in community colleges are currently providing to learners. Thus, the skill level floor may be inappropriate. As educators, we must challenge the unrealistic expectation that "by about the tenth grade, all students will be expected to master the common core of academic reasoning and interpersonal skills they will need to lead full and productive lives in the 21st century" (p. 15).

The "Career Entry" phase of the program is at best inconsistent rhetoric. The plan asserts that acquiring such a certificate will "assure employers that a student is prepared for career-entry employment" (p. 26). Judging from the level of skills described, "career entry" would translate to being a stock clerk as entry to the "business career path" and emptying bed pans as entry to the "health services career path." With no further substance than provided in this plan, a Career Entry Certificate may be no more than a method to place a stamp of approval on students leaving school for such dead-end jobs instead of careers.

What then would be the appropriate steps to take in achieving career selection and training? As the student approaches young adulthood--and age 16 is not unrealistic--we need to assess their interests, abilities and skills. We need to have trained professional counselors to interpret those assessment results and assist students both in making career choices and in taking the steps necessary to acquire those foundation skills if they have not been mastered by age 16. The School-to-Career implementation phase must require support services that help evaluate and guide students to achieve mastery.

As faculty leaders become involved in School-to-Career local partnerships, they will need to

seek a more realistic approach to the phases of career choice and education such as that outlined below:

#### Career Awareness

- X elementary grades
- X exposure to occupational clusters
- X expansion of career options
- X establishing role models

#### Foundation Skills Acquisition

- X ongoing from elementary grades
- X competencies and assessment mechanisms developed by faculty
- X skills assessed at an age dictated by development
- X interpreted by professional counselors
- X referral to support network if needed

#### Career Exploration

- X at age dictated by development
- X interests and abilities appropriately assessed
- X interpreted by professional counselors
- X continued expansion of career options
  - exposure to role models in the professions
  - exposure to the workplace environment
- X integrated and flexible curriculum developed by faculty with industry input
- X acquisition of general workplace competencies
- X acquisition of competencies in a broad occupational cluster
- X degree awarded by high school

#### Advanced Mastery

- X post-secondary education and training
- X specific to career/occupation
- X standards set jointly by industry and faculty
- X integrated and flexible curriculum developed by faculty with industry input
- X degrees and certificates awarded by community college
- X may lead to transfer to four-year institution

## TRACKING

Do California schools track students into career paths without expanding their horizons and fostering the development of interests and abilities in a wide variety of careers? If we were to use the “outcome measures” criteria of School-to-Career, the conclusion could be affirmative. The diversity in occupations, particularly “high-skill, high-wage” careers, does not reflect that of the general population. The Governor’s plan condemns tracking in stating, “One of the most critical components of local proposals will be the specific assurances by the local partnerships (in terms of resources, responsibilities, and processes) that show that their proposed systems will not result in tracking, and will be

available to every student, including those with special needs” (p. 41). However, embedded in the plan are elements which may well produce tracking.

For populations which are or have been historically under represented in high education, high skill and high wage jobs have been provided with “assurances” for some time. Allow us at least the latitude to assert a healthy scepticism that such assurances will have not any more effect than in the past. It is interesting to note that it was within the power of the governor to require, through accountability and specific outcome measures, that tracking would be avoided. However, the section on Accountability speaks only of “evidence of what students know and can do” (p. 35). If there is to be a greater commitment to the avoidance of tracking, the System Evaluation and Accountability Committee must have members with skills and abilities in measuring the disproportionate impact on under represented groups. It would seem reasonable and economically sound that the state with the greatest diversity in its population would place much more emphasis on assuring that federal workforce training funds are expended in ways which facilitate the participation of that diverse population in the workforce. Furthermore, specific outcome measures on achieving diversity would be added to the accountability requirements for local partnerships. If this accountability system is to be compelling, failure to meet state standards for diversity should result in the withholding of funding.

The avoidance of tracking is not a passive activity. One of the dangers of tracking is that the student’s goals and objectives are often determined by others--often on the basis of unrelated indicators such as gender, race, and economic conditions. To open the eyes of students to career possibilities beyond their experience takes a systematic plan including such strategies as establishing relationships with role models in the community who have similar backgrounds to that of the student but have succeeded in a non-traditional occupation.

Tracking is often the result of a program of study which, once begun, allows little opportunity for change of goal. There is a need at all levels of education for a flexible curriculum. (See the section of this paper on Curricula Appropriate to Each Phase.) School-to-Career is virtually silent on the need for flexible curricula. According to the governor’s plan, “the California Department of Education already has developed career pathway models and curriculum standards for selected occupational clusters” (VIA1). Do these models incorporate curricula which are sufficiently flexible to readily allow for changes between occupational clusters? One charge to the Educational Issues and Practices Committee should be to conduct such an evaluation. The use of flexible curricula should be a requirement for funding of local partnerships.

The term “flexible curricula” here specifically refers to a series of articulated courses and worksite learning experiences in an occupational cluster which are sufficiently grounded in principle and practice to allow students to move to another occupational cluster without repeating course work in those same areas of principle and practice. For example, students in a health cluster might take an American History course with added units on the development of medicine and public health. However, the basic tenets of American History and political institutions would be sufficiently covered to allow the student to shift to the physical sciences and engineering cluster without retaking American History. (The students would, however, not have the advantage of enhanced units in history of science.)

## **ACCESS**

The Academic Senate concerns involve two areas: 1) financial aid and 2) certificates. The senate is concerned that although School-to-Career involves students going into the workforce, it does not address the financial needs of community college students who face economic barriers to full participation. Secondly, certificates, as presented in the plan, will not and should not serve as an entrance requirement for admission to community colleges.

The open admissions policy of community colleges should not be affected by School-to-Career. Although the School-to-Career plan does not address the Master Plan for Higher Education, local faculty senates should continue to monitor the open access mission for compliance. The other segments of public education have issues under School-to-Career with which the Academic Senate may wish to be involved: 1) high school faculty must address, under School-to-Career, the status of the high school diploma, 2) all segments must consider the status of certificates to out-of-state institutions who expect students' qualifications to be based on the high school diploma, and 3) community college faculty must work with our colleagues in the four-year institutions on issues of articulation and transfer. (See the section of this paper on Articulation.) Serious consideration needs to be given to the pathways and certificates under School-to-Career which appear to have the effect of exit tests which can serve to either track or trap students although it is certainly not the stated intention of the plan. The Academic Senate should take a leadership role on the Educational Issues and Practices Committee. The Senate recognizes the significant role the students at all three levels should play on the Education Issues and Practices Committee as described on page 29.

## **CURRICULUM**

Implementation of School-to-Career will take significant curriculum revision. The nature of those changes will depend on the goals of each phase of the program. In addition, each phase of the program will require clear *standards*, implementation *guidelines*, extensive *training* and technical assistance, accepted *assessment* and outcome measures, and thorough *articulation* among the segments. These are all matters to which curriculum is central. As a result, these activities will not be successful without the complete involvement of the faculty. For community colleges, such involvement in curriculum is mandated by AB1725 which has been encoded in Title 5. The current plan overlooks many important issues which, if ignored when the plan is implemented, will hinder the accomplishment of the goals of School-to-Career. This section will highlight those deficiencies and present appropriate recommendations to address them. As School-to-Career is implemented through local partnerships, which must include community colleges, local faculty senate would do well to assert the primary role of faculty in such curriculum areas.

### **Curriculum Appropriate to Each Phase**

In discussing design elements of School-to-Career, the plan enumerates four phases for student progress: Career Pathways (VIA1), Foundation Skills (VIA2), Career Entry (VIA3), and Advanced (VIA4). As discussed in the above section of this paper on Career Decisions Based on Counseling and Guidance, the phases of the program would be better implemented as:

- X Career Awareness
- X Foundation Skill Acquisition
- X Career Exploration
- X Advanced Mastery

What follows is a brief overview of the curriculum issues which might be encouraged at each of these steps. The Academic Senate should work with the Educational Issues and Practices Committee to more fully elaborate the process and pedagogy at each step.

*Career Awareness* requires a curriculum which exposes the student to the real-life applications of foundation skills and the careers which utilize them. Much attention should be paid to the development of students' innate abilities and to the broadening of their occupational interests through such mechanisms as role models and mentors. This phase of the student's education includes continuing instruction in foundation skills.

This view of Career Awareness is in sharp contrast to that presented in the plan as Career Majors which "provide choices of specific sequences of courses and worksite learning experiences so that students acquire foundations of academic knowledge and skills for broad occupational areas or industries" (VIA1).

*Foundation Skills Acquisition* begins in the elementary grades and continues through high school to the point at which the student is ready to be assessed in both basic skills and career interests. This phase of the student's education culminates in the demonstration, through assessment and guidance, that the foundation skills have been mastered. The student has also been counseled and is ready to examine career options more specifically.

Although the plan states that tracking must be avoided, failure to specify effective strategies or accountability measures to avoid tracking (such as role models and mentoring) in these early phases of the program is evident. Many students are not ready to choose career paths in the 10th grade but rather require assessment and guidance to determine when that transition should occur. That assessment may well result in referral to a curriculum more appropriately designed to meet the student's needs, such as ESL, learning or developmentally disabled, and other curricula for special populations. While section V of the plan mentions that "some students will need special accommodation and support to succeed" in a timely manner, the lack of specific strategies weakens the plan. These strategies are essential as the plan is translated into action. Academic senates must make this a priority as they participate in local partnership planning. (See the section of this paper on Tracking.)

The *Career Exploration* phase requires a curriculum which teaches the subject matter (math, English, the arts, sciences, humanities, languages, and so forth) in a context which is relevant to the occupational cluster. (See page 17 in the plan, Accelerating the Pace of Reform.) For example, math in an Allied Health occupational cluster might teach topics such as dosage calculations or population vector analysis for disease propagation. It is essential to the exploration process that the curriculum include both school-based and work-based experiences. Students will be able to make more informed career choices by direct exposure to the activities of those in that occupational cluster. A central feature should be acquisition of the SCANS competencies (Secretary's Commission on Acquiring

Necessary Skills). In addition to this integration of general and applied education, the curriculum must be flexible enough to allow students to readily move from one occupational cluster to another.

The "Career Major" phase of the existing plan is much too directive. Students in the 11th grade are often not ready to "select career or program majors" (VIA1). This phase should emphasize exposure to occupational clusters--including the workplace--sufficient to clarify students interests and abilities. When actually put in place, this phase should *culminate* in students whose high school education and training prepare them for transition to further training, or higher education to achieve a high-skill, high-wage career.

The "Career Major" phase of the plan again proposes to avoid tracking. "These program majors, or career clusters, will eliminate tracking since they will serve students with a broad range of higher education and career goals and will allow for easy movement and choice between career clusters, majors and programs" (VA2). However, the major barriers to freely chosen career paths are not addressed: 1) expanding students' own sense of the scope of their options and 2) designing a *curriculum* which is flexible enough to allow movement from one occupational cluster to another without the need to repeat course work. Such a curriculum is not now the standard. For example, students routinely must repeat many topics if they change from "business math" to "college-bound math." The hallmarks of Career Exploration must be expansion of career options within a flexible curriculum.

The third phase, leading to *Advanced Certificates and Degrees*, as discussed adequately in the plan, will require curricula which address the workforce training needs of industry, the student's needs for self-improvement and fulfillment, and society's need for an educated citizenry. The components of that curricula must utilize effective faculty-generated pedagogy which is learner-based. The foundation for such curricula will be the integrated approach to academic and vocational instruction. The curricula must have effective mechanisms for incorporating both school-based and work-based education. The curricula will lead to certificates and degrees which are awarded by community colleges but which are based on standards which are mutually developed by industry and faculty and are accepted by industry state wide for job entry.

The current plan emphasizes the importance of business and labor particularly in the Advanced Certificates and Degrees phase of the program. The plan will "propose ways for secondary and postsecondary institutions, business and organized labor to collaborate and identify the restructuring or creation of new programs . . ." (VIA4). However, the plan is not sufficiently student-centered. Implementation will not be effective unless students perceive that the program is directly to their benefit. The Academic Senate and students must work with the Advisory Council to assure the inclusion of a significant accountability measure for student satisfaction. Actions plans must incorporate student feedback with proven techniques such as quality circles.

While the plan does emphasize the importance of cooperation among business, labor, and educational segments, delineation of roles is not addressed. To be effective in practice, all entities must be involved in ways appropriate to their expertise and responsibilities. For example, achieving advanced certificates and degrees will require adoption of standards,

development of curricula, assessment of outcomes, and awarding of the degrees and certificates. Appropriate involvement would be 1) all parties mutually develop standards which are industry-accepted, 2) faculty, with significant input from industry, develop curricula and assessment mechanisms to achieve those standards, and 3) community colleges award the degrees and certificates.

### **Retraining and Reentry**

In several places the plan points out the importance of lifelong learning. Indeed, one of the major educational hurdles facing California is the provision of effective adult education. The need for providing the hard-core unemployed with job skills and the continuing pressure for retraining of the existing workforce are not adequately addressed in the plan. *Retraining and reentry* constitute a separate, final phase of workforce training. Special intake mechanisms, referral systems, and redesigned curricula will be needed. Implementation must include such a "fifth phase" in the requirements for funding local partnerships.

### **STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATES**

The importance of the philosophy of *state standards and local implementation*, which has served California education well for some time, is nowhere more important than in the development of standards for certificates. The state plan calls for the Foundation Skills Certificate to be based on a "portfolio of performance-based academic work and successfully completing a comprehensive, objective academic-based statewide examination" (VIA2). Further, the plan states in regard to foundation skills, "this new level of assessment is properly a State role, and will encompass a performance-based State testing program using objective, academic-based examinations" (VIA5). The historical ineffectiveness of such statewide testing leaves most educators skeptical of the success of this new initiative. Furthermore, the balance between "portfolio" and "objective exam" is left uncertain. Implementation should certainly leave portfolio evaluation to local faculty. Any statewide exam will go the way of other such attempts without strong faculty involvement and an opportunity to learn from past efforts.

The Career Entry and Advanced Certificates are proposed in the plan to use state standards with local evaluation and award provisions. However, the plan calls for "*industry-developed and approved* skills standards" and "curricula which industry has helped to develop or approve" (VIA5). For such standards and curricula to work in practice, faculty and industry must be partners in this process. Initially, industry and faculty will need to cooperatively evaluate current skill requirements in the workplace. Such skill profiles will serve as the basis for developing state level competencies for each occupation. Local faculty in appropriate disciplines will then adapt existing and develop new curricula to teach these competencies. Industry will review the curricula and provide feed back to faculty, particularly on worksite-based instruction. Local faculty will develop appropriate assessment material, including portfolio and work-based evaluations, with involvement and site testing by industry. Only through such cooperative ventures will effective curricula be developed and implemented.

### **ARTICULATION**

The state plan emphasizes the need for articulation, saying “. . . it will be necessary to reexamine current course approval procedures for admission to the University of California and the California State Universities. This review of college admission requirements is a key element in achieving greater articulation between education segments . . . ” (VA2). The plan assigns this role to the Education Issues and Practices Committee (VIA). Universities are also included in local partnerships, in part to “ensure articulation” (VIB).

The status of articulation among the higher education segments in California may be conservatively described as incomplete and ineffective. To assume that a “seat at the table” will “ensure articulation” is highly optimistic. Accountability of local partnerships must include as an outcome measure the successful articulation of newly designed courses. Such articulation is clearly a faculty task. Past history indicates that considerable time and effort will be required to accomplish this task.

## **TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The plan calls for “providing technical assistance and services to employers and others” (IVD), “launching a major, statewide technical assistance and staff development effort” (VB2), that “demonstration sites will have important responsibilities to provide technical assistance to other sites, to act as mentors, and to begin to bring California's School-to-Career system to scale” (VB2), and that “the State will provide technical assistance and policy incentives to permit all localities to implement School-to-Career systems” (VC). Only towards the end of the plan are the *topics* of technical assistance mentioned. “Areas of technical advice and assistance may include partnership formation; engaging business and labor; school restructuring; development of integrated [academic and vocational curricula?]; articulation among segments; leveraging and redirecting resources; setting performance-based standards; system evaluation; use of labor market information; professional development for classroom practitioners; guidance and counseling; or many other specific areas of system development and operation” (VIC4) and “technical assistance at the State level to be available to employers to demonstrate why and how they can participate” (VIE2). Oversight for technical assistance is to be provided by the Advisory Council. Finally, “technical assistance will be provided to potential bidders, to ensure that local partnerships fully understand the purposes of the subgrants and the State's expectations” (VIIB).

The only direct impact on faculty appears to be in the general area of “development of integrated academic and vocational curriculum” and “professional development for classroom practitioners.” Several other areas will be in need of training and staff development. Those in the business sector who provide worksite learning experiences must be trained in how to do so. Instructors who provide the classroom component will need workplace knowledge through on-site training. The widespread use of integrated curricula will necessitate the training of the many instructors who will make use of it. Reforms of this magnitude will require retooling the teacher education programs in the four-year segments. This too will require training. An effectively run School-to-Career system cannot neglect these faculty training issues--and the considerable financial resources needed to accomplish them!

## **ASSESSMENT**

According to the plan, assessment of foundation skills will consist of “a performance-based State testing program using objective, academic-based examinations.” Certification will be based on “a multi-level, performance-based evaluation system which offers employers and higher education institutions evidence of what students know and can do. Development of this system to evaluate individual student performance is the central objective of the Student Assessment and Certification Committee . . . ”

The plan recognizes that “this shift to system performance-based accountability will not happen quickly. Therefore, the Advisory Council will establish a System Evaluation and Accountability Committee. This Committee will coordinate carefully with the Student Assessment and Certification Committee to evolve a broader statewide system of accountability. This Committee will be composed, at the minimum, of the following: experts on testing and performance assessment, representatives from California's education assessment program, local school and community college assessment experts and other faculty, and representatives from business and industry.” Such involvement of faculty in partnership with the private sector is essential to the success of the program both at the state *and local* levels.

## **BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT**

Despite the fact that the effects of California's recession have lasted longer than those of the rest of the nation, “the long term outlook (i.e., ten years) is one of strong potential growth” ( p. 9 ). Education is seen as a major component in that growth--but not education as usual. Business and education in concert with their constituencies must cooperate and collaborate on the development and evaluation of an integrated and flexible curriculum. Such a curriculum will form both the foundation and the building blocks for technical and professional level certificates and degrees. These certificates and degrees must be based on standards which are industry accepted, appropriate and achievable, and developed mutually with discipline specific faculty. They must include a solid foundation of the basic critical thinking and problem solving skills needed for lifelong, transportable learning. If properly developed, administered and evaluated, all will benefit from this system, but all have responsibilities to assure its success.

The plan directs the Advisory Council to establish a committee to “encourage and organize employer and labor participation.” The Employer and Labor Involvement Committee will be charged with recruitment of employer participation, development of promotional materials and technical assistance, the creation of state and local policies that make available paid and unpaid training worksites, working with chambers of commerce and trade associations, providing financial and non-financial incentives to employers that might include tax credits, and the training of supervisors.

Larger companies and businesses should be encouraged to provide job site training programs that are broad enough to be applicable to many businesses, large and small. The plan encourages business to join the partnership. It would seem appropriate to have a greater commitment of business in the proposed partnerships. If the workforce training from California's schools is to directly benefit both the student/employee and the business

employer, then it would be appropriate to have specific economic and training involvement by business as a required component for local partnerships to receive implementation grants.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Governance of such an ambitious and far-reaching program is certain to be complex. The description of the proposed Advisory Council which will address this complexity seems vague and contradictory. It is alternately described as “a high-level collaborative body” and as “advisory” (p. 38). It is not identified as a decision making body. The Task Force is so uncertain about the functions of the Advisory Council that it will be reviewed during the first two years.

As a continuation of California’s AB1725 shared governance model, the School-to-Career Advisory Council should encourage student and faculty participation both on the state committees advising the council and on the governance bodies of local partnerships. We expect that the chancellor of the California Community Colleges will include the Academic Senate as the source of faculty to serve on the council (draft grant application, page 77).

We recognize, by necessity, the School-to-Career plan already submitted to the federal government is general in many areas. For example, details need to be incorporated to assure services to special populations. Another issue to be addressed is the nature of provisions to be made for students who do not receive certificates on the time line stated in the plan. In developing local partnerships, it is essential that faculty as well as students work on implementation of the plan at the local level. Another unresolved issue is the relationship between the Advisory Council and its committees to the governing boards of K12 districts, Community Colleges, the California State University and the University of California. The community college faculty and students must be involved in policy development and implementation.

## **WAIVERS**

One aspect that raised many questions during the discussion of the School-to-Career plan was that of waiving state and federal regulations in order to promote business opportunities for students in their work experience. For example, the plan mentions on page 8 that reasons for the business downturn include “environmental laws and regulations severely affecting resource-based industries.” The implication here would seem to be that without these regulations business would be better. The Employer and Labor Involvement Committee will be “providing non-financial incentives which simplify demands on participating employers or amendment or waiver of some workplace rules and regulations which may impose unnecessary employer costs or limits on student worksite participation” (p. 34). Concerns here include child labor laws and worker compensation laws.

Faculty are particular concerned that waivers under School-to-Career could lead to the elimination of the Education Code and AB1725--which are based on sound educational principles to ensure the integrity of the educational system--if these are seen as barriers to School-to-Career implementation. Another concern is that Title 5 curriculum review procedures, already seen as a barrier by some contract education providers, could also be

waived. A concern particularly addressed by community colleges is the possible loss of the protections of the 1974 right-to-privacy act. The Academic Senate has, over the past few years, opposed waivers--particularly those relating to provisions of AB1725--and is concerned that the use of waivers could be abused. We urge local faculty senates to be aware of the possible jeopardy to the integrity of educational programs and curricula loss of rights due to proposed waivers.

Waivers present a serious threat to long-fought and hard-won protections of faculty and student rights. Some existing statutory and regulatory requirements will need to be changed to fully implement School-to-Career. However, rather than using waivers, such barriers should be removed using existing review processes. If the impact of such changes are uncertain, board and legislative actions should make use of sunset clauses and require follow-up and evaluation processes.

## **FUNDING**

Another concern regarding School-to-Career is that of funding. The issues are 1) that state funding be adequate to support the program, particularly the extensive academic planning and training that will be needed, 2) that School-to-Career state funding does not take away from our already financially impoverished educational system, 3) that funding to support the needs of special populations--now obtained through categorical funding--is sufficiently maintained to meet the needs of those populations, 4) that business and industry, which stand to benefit so much from School-to-Career implementation, will contribute substantially to its funding, and 5) that faculty should be aware that School-to-Career will incorporate approximately \$1.3 billion in annual federal and state funding currently being used for work force training.

Faculty should be aware that under School-to-Career (implementation grant application, pages 82ff) categorical funds are seen as "inherent barriers to new and flexible uses of resources...." It is proposed that local partnerships "whenever possible incorporate these [categorical] funds into larger school to career systems . . ." Faculty should recognize that there are pros and cons to the elimination of categorical funds and should examine local planning very carefully.

## **CONCLUSION**

The School-to-Career reform has the potential for much positive change in California. However, such change will not be effective unless all affected parties are involved in its development and implementation. The development phase of the plan has now concluded, and the involvement of faculty and students has been sadly lacking. Faculty and students should be integral members of task forces and planning committees rather than relegated to testifying at public hearings.

Will the School-to-Career plan go the way of so many other such plans which were developed in isolation? Will it merely be a glossy product that California leaders trot out to Washington but cannot implement? (Remember the Commission on Innovation's *Choosing the Future*.) California still has a chance to realize the noble goals of the 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act. However, putting the plan into action will be effective

only if the expert practitioners (faculty), the primary clients (students), and the major customers of work force training (business and labor) work together shoulder-to-shoulder.