



Texas Commission on Community College Finance
Written Testimony Incorporating Industry Needs to Address Workforce Shortage
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Chairman Hunt, Members of the Legislature, and Commissioners:

On behalf of the Greater Houston Partnership, a regional chamber of commerce and economic development organization serving the 12-county greater Houston region, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony encouraging the incorporation of business input to develop workforce alignment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated and exacerbated a shift already taking place in the Texas economy and workforce. This shift intensifies two primary challenges companies have been facing over the years: 1) many employers cannot find diverse skilled workers in an already tight labor market; and 2) many people lack the education, skills, and credentials needed to compete for these jobs.

Without the available talent and a skilled workforce, Texas will not be able to adequately attract and compete for business expansion and economic development. Recent studies indicate over 60% of jobs require some postsecondary education, but only 48% of adults in Texas have a postsecondary credential.^{1,2} Additionally, according to a national educational non-profit, Texas continues to trail educational enrollment over the last decade.³ This level of educational attainment is unsustainable for the business community to be successful and for the growing Texas economy.

However, community colleges are uniquely positioned to provide an accessible and affordable pathway to solve many of these workforce and industry needs. The Commission should continue seeking opportunities for community colleges to collaborate with businesses ensuring the educational programming offer is aligned to the workforce needs of the region.

The Greater Houston Partnership believes the findings and recommendations from the Texas Commission on Community College Finance are critical for improving education and addressing workforce needs. This is a major step in aligning efforts needed to improve our state through the to development of a diverse, world class workforce Texas needs to compete globally, and to have sustained long-term growth.

¹ Carnevale, A.P., Smith N., and Strohl J. (June 2013). *Recovery: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2020*. Georgetown Public Policy Institute.

² Lumina Foundation, *A Stronger Nation 2021 Texas Report*. Sample: U.S. residents, ages 25-64. Credentials included: graduate or professional degrees, bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, certificates, industry-recognized certifications.

³ National Student Clearinghouse, "Current Term Enrollment Estimates", <https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/>.