

- Greetings, Chairwoman Mitchell, vice chair Nielsen and senators. Thank you for the opportunity for letting me discuss this very important proposal that will help level the playing field for millions of Californians.
- Let me begin by saying that there is a troubling chasm in the world of work today, and it threatens our hopes of strengthening the middle class.
- Millions of Californians find themselves isolated because they are struggling to tread water in the workplace. This is felt most acutely by adult workers who feel stranded without new skills.
- These are the people who are left out of the conversation when we -- in this building and in college and university settings -- engage in well-intended discussions about California's Master Plan.
- Stranded workers, who have been historically marginalized by traditional institutional education, must be given an equal opportunity to put themselves – and our economy – on a path toward greater prosperity and financial security.
- More than 2.5 million Californians ages 25 to 34 find themselves at a career plateau because they lack the educational opportunities needed for economic mobility.
- The makeup of this population is 49 percent Latino, 31 percent white, nine percent Asian and seven percent African American. Another 6.2 million adults between 35 and 65 are in a similar situation.

- The proposed online community college will break down the higher education barriers and institutional biases that limit learning options for all of California's diverse population.
- It will be competency based.
- It will recognize and give credit for prior learning and demonstrated mastery.
- It will not be tied to a traditional academic calendar. Learning can begin as soon as the student is ready.
- It will be fully supported with tutoring, tech support, advisement, and financial aid.
- It will bring faculty, employers and organized labor partners into the design process in a way that optimizes work-based learning and employment outcomes for students.
- Providing a flexible and affordable fully online option for working adults to obtain short-term certificates corrects a glaring injustice.
- Within two years, 65 percent of jobs in the United States will require at least a college credential, according to estimates by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. There is a disproportionate number of high school graduates in the workforce who are currently employed but not advancing in their careers.
- Emerging technologies on the horizon, such as artificial intelligence, the rise of the gig economy and automation, are changing the future of work and the skills needed to succeed.

- To be clear, we are not looking to cannibalize the enrollment of our current 114 colleges. We are focused on innovation and equity and providing options for working learners who cannot attend our colleges.
- Too often, these workers turn to for-profit institutions that often leave them without quality credentials and saddled with debt. More than 90,000 Californians take courses online at for-profit institutions.
- You will hear from those who do not agree with the approach that the governor and our governing board are taking.
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- They will say that we are trying to privatize or corporatize education.
- That we are trying to side-step collective bargaining.
- And, most disappointingly of all, that this population is incapable of learning online.
- Nothing could be further from the truth. We are focused on providing quality, public, affordable education to an underserved group that can and does learn online.
- With regard to the efficacy of online education, it is instructive to look at the success of our faculty in improving success rates in our traditional online courses.
- In 2006 there was a 12 percent difference in success rates between face-to-face online instruction in our system. Today it is less than 5 percent.

- Another myth that you will undoubtedly hear, is that our Online Education Initiative is best suited to serve the population we will be discussing today. That is simply not the case.
- Our Online Education Initiative is focused on traditional undergraduate, transfer level courses that are tied to the academic calendar. The initiative has accomplished much but after six years, yet it has not scaled to the point that it offers a degree program.
- We need our online education initiative to succeed. Giving it this new challenge will set it back from its original mission, which needs to be fulfilled for the benefit of our degree and transfer seeking students.
- We recognize that there is not one silver bullet that will deal with all of the challenges that we're facing in the current work force and with the wave of changes that are coming. But my hope is that you will engage in designing a solution that can help 2.5 million Californians gain new skills and credentials, and the jobs of tomorrow.