

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING

SELECT SUB COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS

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Steamfitters Union, 420 Hall, 14420 Townsend Road, Philadelphia PA 19154

Written Testimony by

**Carol J. de Fries, Vice President of Workforce and Economic Innovation for
Community College of Philadelphia**

Good morning:

My name is Carol J. de Fries, and I am the Vice President of Workforce and Economic Innovation at Community College of Philadelphia. I wish to thank the subcommittee chairs on Technical Education and Career Readiness, the Honorable Seth M. Grove and the Honorable Patrick J. Harkins; as well as all committee members for this opportunity to present this testimony today. I also want to recognize the Honorable James R. Roebuck Jr., the Minority Chair of the Education Committee, who is a member of the College's Board of Trustees.

Joining me today is Dr. Pamela Carter, Dean of the Division of Business and Technology. I thank Chairman Saylor, Democratic Chairman Roebuck, and all members of the House Committee on Education for this opportunity to discuss the importance of technical education and career readiness.

Community College of Philadelphia annually enrolls more than 28,000 students in credit and noncredit courses, and has had more than 685,000 individuals embark on their path to possibilities since 1965. Our Main Campus is located in the Spring Garden section of Philadelphia, and regional centers serve the neighborhoods in the West, Northwest, and Northeast sections of town. The College has a longstanding record of producing students who are career ready and who are focused on career and technical education.

Across our three academic divisions – Health, Liberal Studies, and Business & Technology, along with our new Division of Workforce and Economic Innovation, the College offers more than 70 degree, certificates, and non-credit national certification programming and workforce development training. In 2015, Community College conferred more than 2000 associate degrees and proficiency certificates. More than 80% of recent graduates currently are working in Philadelphia, and nearly 95% of them are working within the metropolitan area.

Our technical and career-oriented programs serve Pennsylvania's high-impact, robust industries. Many students in the automotive technology program actually receive job offers before they earn their

proficiency certificate. The College recently launched a scholarship that provides auto tech students an incentive to remain in college and obtain a workplace credential prior to employment. These credentials are a passport to gainful employment, providing students with access to entry-level jobs and valuable work experience as they continue to pursue their degrees. The Culinary Arts proficiency certificate stacks into a degree program, as does the Accounting, Computer Programming and Computer Systems Certificates, the biomedical equipment technology program and the patient service representative certificate program.

With a projected job growth rate of 29 percent over the next six years, the College introduced a new Ophthalmic Technician program with Salus University to meet market demand. The first class of the Ophthalmic Technician Program will operate this Fall as a dual location program at Community College of Philadelphia's Northwest Regional Center, located at 1300 W. Godfrey Avenue, and The Eye Institute of Salus University, located next door. This is a gateway to a better life for Community College of Philadelphia students like Tania Ortiz, a 22-year-old single mom who works as a receptionist at an optical store. With the population aging and the need for eye care professionals on the rise, Tania views this program as a springboard to a livable wage job. Nearly 200 Philadelphians signed up to attend an initial information session when the program launched.

Meanwhile, long-established career and professional programs, such as Nursing and Dental Hygiene, have provided escalators to the middle class for years.

In addition to the wide variety of offerings on the academic side, the College has placed an increased emphasis on workforce and career readiness by establishing a division of Workforce and Economic Innovation. This division runs programs specifically tasked with creating workforce pipelines in strategic industry clusters for high priority occupations which do not require degrees. This includes programs such as dental assistants, pharmacy technicians, and certified nursing assistants. In addition, the College will be launching later this fall three programs in advanced manufacturing – welding, CNC Precision Machining at the new Benjamin Franklin High School Center for Advanced Manufacturing, and electro-mechanical/mechatronics technology on its main campus. The creation of these programs, and the historic agreement with the School District of Philadelphia, came in direct response to the Mayor's Manufacturing Task Force issued in 2013, which called for an expansion of technical training opportunities provided by the College that are aligned to the needs of the manufacturing sector.

Supported by a grant from the Job Opportunity Investment Network (JOIN), the College established an Advanced Manufacturing Committee to assist in the development of the program curriculum. Members of this committee included participants from the Manufacturing Alliance of Philadelphia (MAP), Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center (DVIRC), Philadelphia Works, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), Philadelphia Academies, and employers PTR Baler, Philly Shipyard, First Quality, and Windle Mechanical Systems. With input from employers, the College has created programs that meet their needs and allow students to receive industry certifications in each technical area. Becoming a provider of advanced manufacturing technical skills training will position Community College of Philadelphia as a resource for producing qualified workers that will sustain the growth of manufacturing in the region.

The College is also a participant in the Collegiate Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development, a non-profit organization that is a partnership of Drexel University and the community colleges in Philadelphia, Delaware County, Bucks County, Montgomery County and Camden County. The combined strengths of the five community colleges, which emphasize advanced technical training, and Drexel, which offers advanced education, creates a unique education and training model. Recently, CCWED launched a Gas Distribution Pipeline Mechanic Introduction Program, developed with PECO, PGW, and several other employers. Community College of Philadelphia is working on launching the program this spring.

In addition to the programs above, the College is exploring other opportunities in the region to address workforce needs. Community College of Philadelphia is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia's Education and Talent Action Team (ETAT). Through partnerships with educators, employers and civic organizations, ETAT provides the opportunity to put forth a pro-growth education agenda that promotes accessible career pathways and increased education to ensure Greater Philadelphia benefits from an educated and skilled workforce, creating a competitive advantage for the region. ETAT supports innovative efforts to address current and future workforce demands; advocates for policies and investments that provide and enhance access to post-high school training; and tells the story of what makes Greater Philadelphia an attractive place to learn, work and engage.

Finally, Community College of Philadelphia is also a partner with the City of Philadelphia in its newly created Workforce Steering Committee, and corresponding sub-committees. In particular, the work of this group is focusing on developing industry partnerships and pipelines, and working with employers to map career paths and trainings in at least three of the following sectors: Manufacturing, Healthcare, Early childhood education, Hospitality, Customer service/retail, Information Technology, and the Public sector. The City hopes to become a model employer, looking at ways that it can make career pipelines in its Departments, create pathways for seasonal workers to move into full time employment, and review its requirements to determine ways that experience and training programs can meet position qualifications. In addition, the College is working with the Mayor's Office of Education, the School District of Philadelphia, and many other partners on a Career and Technical Education working group designed to help align CTE efforts from middle school, through the College and beyond. We are also participants with the Mayor's Office of Education on a workforce pipeline strategy regarding early childhood education and the expanding pre-kindergarten slots that will be opening in the City.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide a snapshot of the many efforts currently underway at the College and hope to continue working with you and the State on other programs that will help Pennsylvanians be career ready and able to earn family sustaining wages.