

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

WWW.SDBJ.COM

JULY 24 - 30, 2006

\$2.00

Keeping California's edge — the growing demand for highly educated workers

Luckily, the college-age population is growing faster than at any time since the 1970s

If industry and innovation are the engines that keep California at the leading edge of the global economy, then a highly educated work force is the fuel that keeps the engine running.

A report released by the California Business Roundtable and the Campaign for College Opportunity by Cal State Sacramento economist Robert Fountain estimates that California will need 3.2 million additional highly educated workers in the coming years.

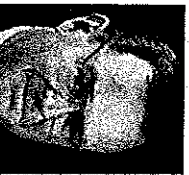
But, without increased attention on higher education, California will run short on fuel.

The state ranks as the sixth largest economy in the world, and much of this economic success has been driven by its work force.

In fact, California's population has been among the top 10 in the world in terms of the number of people with postsecondary education.

This has been due in great part to the

1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, which promises a place in college for every eligible student who seeks it.



OPINION

Bill Hauck

However, if California fails to provide the work force that industry demands, our position as a global leader will suffer.

California's higher education system needs our help to keep pace with the demand for educated workers.



OPINION

Abdi Soltani

According to Fountain's report, "Keeping California's Edge," the number of new jobs requiring college degrees, combined with the retiring college-educated baby boomers, is daunting

equal to the population of San Francisco. San Jose and San Diego combined. Luckily, the college-age population is growing faster than at any time since the 1970s. By renewing our commitment to educating this population, we can avoid seeing our economic edge slip through

our fingers.

The fact is, in the next 15 years, employers will need an increasingly larger percentage of their work force to have college degrees. The Fountain study found that only one in four of today's jobs require a college degree, but through 2022, one in three new jobs will require college degrees.

Some industries will be hit harder than others by this growing demand, but none is exempt.

Education, health care and professional services are the three industry sectors that will generate the most demand for highly educated workers, while three other sectors — finance, manufacturing and information — also face significant economic impacts from these workers. As a business leader or owner, you have a lot at stake in ensuring that the next generation of Californians seeks and receives a college education.

So what should we do as Californians to ensure that we will continue to enjoy our economic leadership not only in the United States, but also throughout the world?

Maintaining this position — and our competitive edge — will require a sustained focus on higher education by policy-makers, educators and business

leaders.

A bipartisan group of state lawmakers is working with the Campaign for College Opportunity to find solutions.

California will have to increase state investment in higher education, make more efficient use of existing resources, and develop a long-term fee and financial aid policy so families can plan for their college costs.

Ask your legislator to prepare our state work force and plan for California's college future. Your state representatives can join the Campaign for College Opportunity in signing the pledge to ensure that the next generation of Californians has the chance to go to college.

The state has a unique window of opportunity to prepare a work force that will meet the future demand for educated workers.

When California created its Master Plan in 1960, it was looking to the future of our state. It is time we renew this commitment, look forward, and prepare the state for a prosperous future.

Bill Hauck is president of the California Business Roundtable and a member of the California State University Board of Trustees. Abdi Soltani is executive director of the Campaign for College Opportunity.