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Press Statement

Training the New York Workforce: Higher Ed Commission Takes First Steps to Better System

The Commission on Higher Education, appointed by Governor Eliot Spitzer to “conduct a review of New York’s colleges and universities” and “make recommendations it deems advisable,” has issued its preliminary report. The following is the statement of Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy President and CEO Karen Schimke:

“New York has fallen behind in its ability to educate working adults to meet the needs of employers. The rate at which adults attend college has fallen by 20% over the past decade, leaving New York with one of the nation’s lowest rates of adult college attendance. That’s bad news for low-income adults and for employers who need trained and educated workers.

“The Commission should be applauded for taking the first steps to turn around the decline in adult college enrollment. The Commission would raise TAP financial aid awards for students on the independent schedule, provide more consistent funding for community colleges, provide new funding for vocational non-credit training courses, and assign responsibility for statewide workforce planning to a single entity.

“The Commission’s proposals will help working adults who aspire to a college education. But we encourage the Commission to think even more boldly as it prepares the final report. Other states have systematically modernized their higher education and adult education sectors to connect adult learners with college and labor market opportunities. The Commission’s draft report does not get us all the way there, but at least it takes the first steps needed to get underway.”

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