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**Testimony Provided by
Nicole Rice, Policy Director | Government Relations
to the Assembly Select Committee on the Master Plan
for Higher Education in California**

**Informational Hearing: ENSURING THE MASTER PLAN MEETS
CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE NEEDS**

November 1, 2017

Good Afternoon, my name is Nicole Rice and I am the Policy Director for Workforce Development at the California Manufacturers and Technology Association (CMTA).

I want to start out by saying “thank you” to Chairman Berman for holding this hearing and to all the Assembly Members in attendance for joining us today to discuss how the higher education system can better help meet the workforce needs of California’s industries.

I’d like to make this disclaimer before I begin ... I will be speaking in broad themes and bold colors, recognizing that there are exceptions to these observations and many great, industry-relevant programs and collaborations operating throughout the state.

In reviewing the current Master Plan, it was apparent that the document mainly serves to delineate the roles and responsibilities within the higher education system. As outlined, the Plan acknowledges and respects the differing missions of the three levels of higher education with the Community Colleges focused largely on workforce development and life skills, the California State University (CSU) targeting polytechnic education and training and the University of California (UC) focused on scholarship and research.

However, over the years, these delineations have blurred and the standard for educational success and excellence has exclusively become the UC A-G requirements with the two lower levels of higher education striving to emulate UC, even though by its own admission, it does not have a workforce mission. This has influenced the focus of both Community Colleges in terms of prioritizing 2x2 transfers and CSU in terms of their admissions criteria now mirroring UC. Instead, we should reinvigorate and respect the differing missions of each level of our public, higher education systems.

Otherwise, the middle skills pipeline will continue to be at a deficit and industries like Advanced Manufacturing will continue to struggle to find candidates to fill our positions for middle-skilled workers.

Here is why that reality is problematic for manufacturers...

Manufacturing has been identified by several state entities as a priority or emerging industry in every region of the state! Yet, the need for industrial-trained workers is at a tipping point as the generation responsible for building the world we know is retiring at an accelerated rate and the pipeline remains dry.

As the global marketplace demands greater innovation and technological aptitude, we need a reliable pipeline of highly-trained individuals to meet not only our future needs, but our current ones as well.

Recently, an informal survey of over 100 HR professionals in the Advance Manufacturing and Distribution/Logistics fields was conducted by the Rod Hoover, Manager of Human Resources for California Steel Industries to corroborate the difficulties found in filling positions such as machinists, welders and electrical and mechanical technicians.

Here's is a sampling of what was said:

- Candidates have never done anything manual – like working on a car; mowing the yard; cleaning a house; building Ikea furniture.
- They have no mechanical aptitude, poor math and problem solving skills and can't read a tape measure.
- Candidates don't show up on time for the interview, if they show up at all. And, if they don't show, they don't call, email or text to let someone know.
- During interviews, applicants don't have good interpersonal skills – can't give the elevator pitch about themselves – don't make eye contact; don't shake hands; use casual communication style like "Hey Dude" or "Bro."
- If hired and on the job, they have difficulty working an 8 hour day and staying on task.
- They don't work well with other employees with different perspectives and don't manage disappointment or criticism well.
- And, often take offense when given direction to perform job correctly – a know-it-all mentality.

Most if not all of these behavior traits can be addressed in the training and leadership provided through CTE programs. If the goal of the educational experience is to prepare students for the world of work, these examples I've just provide prove that there is an important piece missing in that experience.

CMTA looks forward to working with all of you closely to address the skills gap and develop a sustainable system.

Thank you.