Let's Get to Work!

Dear friends,

Just two weeks ago, I joined more than 1,000 participants for the 31st Annual Emerging Issues Forum, FutureWork. Our goal? To map an immediate, practical plan to win the global battle for good future jobs. The diverse perspectives of participants converged around a clear sense of urgency: the time for all of us to go to work on ensuring a successful jobs future is right now.

When it comes to preparing future workers and driving job creation,
FutureWork participants set the following priorities for North Carolina’s best options:

1. Develop a comprehensive plan to increase education system equity, so every person, irrespective of where they live in the state, is able to gain emerging skills and talents.

2. Greatly expand the availability of project-based learning opportunities to help students better connect learning to real-world applications.

3. Turn the challenges of technology into an opportunity by launching a robust, statewide “Enhanced Career Pathways” public-private initiative that helps individuals connect their interests and skills to work opportunities over the course of their lifetimes.

(Read more about these priorities and how they were developed [here](#).)

We didn’t stop there. On Day Two of the Forum, participants joined in sector-focused “leadership hackathons” to apply these strategies to Banking/Finance, Education, Energy, Healthcare, and Government/Smart Communities. Each hackathon yielded strategic priorities tailored for the sector, depicted in the chart below. You can find more about these sector-focused priorities on our website.

By the end of our time together:

*More than 9 out of 10 participants agreed that the FutureWork*
conversation included the right mix of diverse perspectives; 
more than 8 out of 10 thought we landed 
on the right, strategic priorities for NC; 
and more than 7 out of 10 believed the people of NC would 
work together to implement the priorities identified.

In the weeks ahead, I’ll have much more news to share with you as the Institute for Emerging Issues launches a full slate of post-Forum efforts with the hundreds of Forum participants who have already pledged to join us. As a first step, we’ll soon convene regional FutureWork sessions in all eight North Carolina prosperity zones (map). If you did not participate in the Forum but would like to help lead the regional conversations, please sign up here.

There’s no time to waste. Many citizens, companies and communities in our state are already struggling with the two megatrends — accelerating automation and shifting demography — addressed during the Forum. The future of work is here, and current strains of disruptions will grow more seismic over the stretch of the coming years.

The challenges will be significant, but not insurmountable. The 2016 FutureWork Forum proved the incredible passion and commitment of North Carolinians whenever big challenges loom. I am grateful for those leaders in business, government, education, and nonprofits from all across the state who brought to the room their diverse perspectives, engaging our speakers and each other in lively critical exchanges in Raleigh. I am equally grateful for the thousands more across the state who actively participated in the Forum on UNC-TV’s new North Carolina Channel or via livestream, taking our live polls and flooding us with hard-hitting questions via app and Twitter. As a Forum keynoter who lives outside the state remarked, “I just have never seen anything like this anywhere else in the country!”

He hasn’t seen anything yet.

Just wait until he sees us go to work.

Warmly,

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