

Brown University Public Affairs Conference
March 13, 1997

Good evening. I would like to welcome you to the panel discussion "The World of Work in the 21st Century: Finding Tomorrow's Workers. It is a pleasure for me to moderate such a panel.

This afternoon you heard Professor Goldin share her perspectives about the work environment and the economy, about how they are different from the past and how they are the same. Tonight, we'd like to turn to concerns about the present and the future workplace, and to the ongoing debate about the disconnect between the needs of employers and the skills of workers. Our panel is well equipped to discuss this issue.

First speaking will be Bob Lerman, Director of the Human Resources Programs at the Urban Institute. Bob is currently on leave from American University, where he served as professor and chairman of the Department of Economics from 1989 to 1995. He has published numerous articles, papers, book reviews and books, including What Works in Youth Employment Policy? How to Help Young

Workers from Poor Families (1985). Bob serves on numerous advisory boards focused on youth, education and training.

Next is Henry Kelly who is the assistant director for technology at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The office provides policy direction for federal applied research and development programs and coordinates technology programs with other federal organizations. Prior to joining the OSTP, Kelly directed a number of projects at the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment on topics including energy, the environment, and economic policy.

We will also hear from Mark Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy. Mark created the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, which provides technical assistance and professional development in support of school reform in districts and states. He chairs the research committee of the National Skills Standards Board, leading the design of the national occupational skill standards system. Together with Ray Marshall, he wrote Thinking for a Living: Education and the Wealth of Nations, selected by Business Week as one of the ten best books of 1992.

Finally, we will hear from Jim Burge, former corporate vice president and director of government affairs, human resources, at Motorola. Jim has recently retired after 38 years of service. Over the last decade, he has had public policy responsibility for Motorola's human resource issues. He now serves on the board of directors of the National Association of Manufacturer's Partnership for a Smarter Workforce and on the National Skills Standard Board.

In the way of housekeeping, each of our panelists will speak individually for about 10 minutes, to be followed by discussion among them. After they've been challenged by each other, I'd like to open it up to a broader discussion with the audience. There are many issues that will be addressed here tonight, but, hopefully, we won't be here too late into the evening.

As you listen to each of our distinguished speakers, you will hear much "food for thought." I would, however, like to throw out three key issues for you and them to contemplate:

- o How has employer demand for workers and worker skills changed with the rapidly increasing need to develop new products--by some account the average product in some industries is only 18 months old?

- o What can this country do to provide a supply of workers that are capable of meeting the needs of increasingly competitive U.S. and world markets?**
- o How have companies responded to these issues of supply and demand in the real world?**