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## LETTER: Strengthening Guam's future through career, technical education

By Marivic C. Schrage  
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The Guam Community College campus in Mangilao is shown in this PDN file photo.

PDN file photo



As we celebrate National Career and Technical Education Month, it is

essential to recognize the significant role career and technical education plays in shaping Guam's future workforce.

In an era of rapid technological advancement, equipping students with both technical expertise and essential soft skills is key to driving sustainable economic growth and ensuring long-term prosperity.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 projects that by 2030, global technological, economic, and demographic shifts will create 170 million new jobs while displacing 92 million—resulting in a net gain of 78 million jobs.

Fields such as big data, FinTech, AI and machine learning, software development, and cybersecurity are expected to see significant growth, driven by digital expansion, AI advancements, and evolving information technologies.

To meet these demands, the report emphasizes the need for hard skills like AI proficiency, big data analytics, cybersecurity, and technological literacy — critical competencies that open doors to high-paying jobs and contribute to a thriving economy.

Equally critical, according to the report, are soft skills such as creative thinking, adaptability, resilience, curiosity, leadership, social influence, and analytical reasoning.

In 2019, the governor announced efforts to invite Google to establish operations on Guam. However, to attract major tech companies and diversify the island's economy beyond tourism, we must first prioritize educational attainment.

The 2020 Census reveals that only 25% of Guam's population aged 25 and older hold a college degree — significantly below the national average.

Global tech companies prioritize regions with a highly skilled workforce, making it essential for Guam to invest in education and workforce development, particularly in computer science and technology.

While mastering technical skills in fields like AI, cybersecurity, and software development may be challenging — especially for students whose aptitudes lie outside these areas — the development of soft skills such as adaptability, critical thinking, and leadership can be integrated into any subject at any grade level.

By fostering these essential competencies across all disciplines, we can better prepare students for an evolving job market and position Guam for long-term economic growth.

## **Guam ACTE Summit 2025: A call to action**

We urge Guam's government, business, and military leaders to actively engage in critical discussions at the Guam Association for Career and Technical Education Summit 2025 on Feb. 28 at the University of Guam and March 1 at JFK High School.

The insights gained from these events can serve as a blueprint for strengthening Guam's career and technical education, equipping our workforce for the jobs of the future, driving sustainable economic growth, and positioning Guam as a hub for emerging industries.

- Friday, Feb. 28: Panel discussion at UOG. Industry and military leaders will explore the theme "Education and the Workforce Economy," discussing strategies to align education with 22nd Century workforce needs.
- Saturday, March 1: Professional development at JFK High School. Presenters will cover topics such as AI, sustainability, career academies, project-based learning, and innovation in

engineering education.

- Let's Talk networking event at JFK High School: A one-on-one conversation between educators and industry leaders from the airline, automotive, banking, hospitality, telecommunications, medical, and military sectors.

For more information about the summit, email [guamacte@gmail.com](mailto:guamacte@gmail.com).

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