Advocacy Partners

Merced College faculty, Dos Palos/Oro Loma K-12 teachers support each other on education campaigns

**MERCEDE COLLEGE FACULTY ASSOCIATION (MCFA)** President Patrick Mitchell and Dos Palos Oro Loma Teachers Association (DPOLTA) President Marty Thompson understand the importance of electing quality citizens to local boards of education. Their two unions are linked by geography and by necessity, and they share resources, such as their CTA staff person, Paul Chambers. They discovered some of their school board members and trustee candidates overlap and are now working together. The Advocate asked them about the college–K-12 partnership.

We understand community college and K-12 leaders are working together and sharing information heading into the June primaries.

MITCHELL: Yes, our plans call for exchanging information about candidates and issues to help educate members about who to vote for and why. We look forward to working with our local K-12 brothers and sisters in the 2018 elections.

THOMPSON: We are sharing with our members which candidate the community college chapter endorsed, and asking them to support MCFA efforts.

**Why is it important for K-12 members to care about who is on the community college board?**

THOMPSON: We help students choose a career path, whether that is a trade school, community college or four-year college. Here in Merced, many of our students are from families that are in the low socioeconomic percentage, so the community college is a great option. They can still live at home while attending school. We need to make sure that the community college is meeting the needs of our students and is a viable option for them.

MITCHELL: The issues that affect K-12 students eventually become our issues when students come to community college after they graduate high school. We serve many of the same students at the same time, as many students take classes at the community college while they are still in high school.

**How do you support each other?**

THOMPSON: One way is by voting for college board members who understand the value of offering our students a chance to receive a college education. We need people who understand our students and the needs of the community, and who support the beliefs and values we have as K-12 educators. The college board makes decisions that determine what classes are offered, who teaches those classes, how many classes will be offered, and what the cost will be to attend the college. We want all our students to have opportunities to pursue their dreams, and we need the right people in positions to help make that happen.

MITCHELL: This is still new, but information sharing is a great start. In 2016 Merced College had serious leadership issues, and frankly, our campus was in crisis. When two of our board members drew challengers in the 2016 election, our political action committee (PAC) interviewed all the candidates, including incumbent...
The online community college proposal contains too many deal breakers

By CCA President Lynette Nyaggah

We absolutely reject the solution of setting up a separate online community college.

I KNOW ALL of you will have heard a lot about the governor’s budget proposal by now, especially the online community college and the new funding formula. Please keep in mind that the operative word here is “proposal.” When the governor presents his ideas about the budget to the public and the Legislature, they constitute a wish list. Of course, the governor has a lot of influence on the rest of the political system, but the proposal is actually the beginning of negotiations. CCA’s positions on anything that comes out of the political system are guided by our policy. Policy is driven by our commitment to the welfare of both our faculty and our students. On page 5 you can read about where we stand on the budget in general, and our views on things like the new funding formula, proposals to consolidate categoricals, and the like.

The newest proposal, to create an online community college, has generated a lot of discussion and debate. Here is what CCA thinks about the online community college.

We wholeheartedly embrace the goals of this proposal. We agree that there are many of our fellow Californians who have missed out on their opportunities for postsecondary education and training. It matters to us that there are people who could improve their lives if they could earn certificates or degrees at a community college. The target population for this separate community college is people who are in their mid-20s to mid-30s or who discontinued their education at an earlier date. We are especially concerned that nearly 50 percent of this population is Latino. So all of these goals are admirable.

However, we absolutely reject the solution of setting up a separate online community college.

There are insurmountable labor and legal problems with this proposal, not to mention practical problems. It would make the Chancellor’s Office, working with the Academic Senate, set up the Online Education Initiative (OEI). Funds were dedicated to training faculty and establishing these programs. Stringent requirements were imposed on the courses offered through the OEI and all faculty statewide who taught in OEI had to adhere to these requirements. Most of the public is unaware of the fact that community colleges have this very organized and effective delivery system for online education, so when they hear about this separate community college, they are under the impression that this is something completely new. It is our job to educate our friends, family and neighbors about how extensive our online offerings are right now.

So why not use this $120 million to work with faculty and workforce representatives to expand the online education in exactly the direction the governor and the chancellor desire?

For all these reasons, we are advocating for a solution that would take advantage of all the expertise our faculty already have. We are asking for a virtual community college that is staffed by our current faculty, that uses full-time faculty, and whose curriculum and programs are the product of dynamic faculty participation in the process. We need your help in spreading the word and contacting your legislators so that we can all make clear that there is a viable alternative to the separate online community college.
Janus v. AFSCME: What does it mean for us?
Supreme Court case threatens to silence working families’ collective voice

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME* on Feb. 26, 2018. A decision in favor of Janus would rob public-sector unions like CCA of the right to collect fair share fees. “This case threatens the freedom of real people to make a decent living,” says CCA President Lynette Nyagga.

"Unions bargain good contracts, guarantee due process rights, and help achieve secure retirements," says Nyagga. "We are blessed to have these protections that are provided by our CCA/CTA unions." It is essential, says CTA President Eric Heins, to keep educators’ collective voice strong. "Unions give us the power to speak up for our students, families and communities. Unions such as CTA use their collective voice to advocate for policies that benefit all working people — like livable wages, affordable health care and great public schools." Union members have played a critical role in building and protecting the middle class in America. They provide hardworking people economic stability for their families and give them the tools to build a good life, home and education for themselves and their children.

In an era when the courts have determined that corporations are people, *Janus v. AFSCME* could further weaken the voice of real working people. But, as Heins says, it is not in CTA's nature to let that happen. "We can't allow this, and we will not allow this. We will continue to organize and to engage our members so that we will maintain and strengthen our voice."

"We must stand together to ensure that America has an economy that works for everyone," he adds. "For 154 years, CTA has been standing up for working people, our students and the communities we serve. No court case will stop our determination and advocacy for our students and our profession."

For detailed information about *Janus*, its impact and ways to take action, visit *cta.org/janus*. And to see all that CTA has done for students and educators over the past 154 years, go to *cta.org/150*.

**The attack on working families by rigging the system**

**What is the issue?**

Over the past three years, more than 30 cases across the country have been filed that are designed to weaken unions in a variety of ways, such as attacks on payroll deductions, collective bargaining, and the collection of fair share fees.

*Janus v. AFSCME*, now before the U.S. Supreme Court, is crafted to overturn 41 years of constitutional law established in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. (*Abood* established that public-sector unions could charge all employees fair share fees for activities related to "collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment purposes"). A decision in *Janus* is expected between March and June of 2018. The current makeup of the Supreme Court makes it likely that *Abood* will be overturned and fair share fees will be ruled unconstitutional.

**Why is it happening?**

Since its founding in 1863, CTA has been steering the direction of public education in California, often setting the direction for the nation. We are the original education reformers — speaking out for students, educators and our communities to build a better California for all of us. CTA and CCA have had many successes over the past 154 years, much to the dismay of those looking to expand their own agenda and profit from public education and community colleges.

Our proven record of advocacy, our willingness to stand up to anyone, and our reputation for political power make CTA a target for anti-union forces. Make no mistake, these forces want a piece of the $76 billion spent on California’s 9 million students in public schools and community colleges. But CTA and CCA are advocates for all faculty and students. Always have been, always will be!

**PARTNERS. continued from page 1**

And then what?

**MITCHELL:** Our PAC consists of three officers and eight to 10 volunteers from different departments, full- and part-time faculty. They came up with a plan, and then ask for volunteers to help post signs, go to fundraisers. Now, with this partnership, we’ll have a system of sharing our endorsements with our K-12 colleagues.

**THOMPSON:** We applied for donations from the Merced/Mari- posa UniServ PAC fund to help our candidate. We walk door-to-door in neighborhoods on Saturdays, and get help printing door hangers and postcards that promote our candidate. We have after-school mailing parties where our members meet at a local pizza place and write short messages supporting our candidate on postcards, which are mailed out to registered voters in our community. This has been very successful for us. Not only did we get our candidate elected, but we got a longtime incumbent who did not support teachers voted off.

Any advice for those forming similar partnerships?

**MITCHELL:** It’s important for members to know no dues dollars are used for our political activities. Funds are volunteer donations, not dues dollars. Not a single penny comes out of our general fund to subsidize PAC activities for elections and Get Out The Vote (GOTV) activities.

**THOMPSON:** My advice is this: Educate your members on why we need to be involved. Take the time to meet with your members and ask for their help. Give them choices like making phone calls, writing postcards, walking districts. Find simple ways they can get involved. And finally, hard work will pay off in many ways. All you need to do is get started.
Cybersecurity: What’s the big deal?

Cybercrime is now a $3 billion business. Ransomware alone was a billion-dollar criminal business in 2016. Criminals can take advantage of technology in many ways, the most common being identify theft. One common technique scammers employ is phishing, sending false emails purporting to come from your bank or other financial institute requesting personal information. If you share this information, it can allow criminals to access to your bank and credit accounts, as well as open new accounts and destroy your credit rating.

Cybercrime can also involve botnets, computer viruses, cyberbullying, denial of service attacks and spam. Community colleges and higher education institutions are working diligently to protect employee and student data. CCA recommends you protect your personal and professional data, too. In addition to the tips at right, consider simple things you can do today.

Change Your Password Often

Experts say, “Passwords are like underwear: Change them often, keep them private, and never share them with anyone.” Consider using phrases, and include numbers and special symbols. Here are three examples of passwords — bad, better and best.

changeisgood

ChangeisGood!

Ch@ng3isGood!

Spot Fake Emails

Would your college use a gmail.com account? No. Check out the email address and logos for authenticity. Are there spelling and grammar errors? If the email content includes rewards or urgent requests or consequences, delete.

Think You’ve Been Hacked?

Disconnect from the network if an attack is suspected. Reset your passwords immediately on the affected service, and don’t reuse the password. Update and scan using the most recent version on your operating system. Consider speaking out — especially if a social media account was hacked. Most of the major online services have tools in place to help you get your account back after it has been taken over by someone. Typically, you can find your way back in by searching for “account recovery.”

Get Out

Log out or sign off of the program before you close the browser, especially if working on a financial website such as a bank. Some even recommend unplugging desktop computers.

Be Cautious in Public

Be careful when using a public wireless network, as in an airport or a hotel. It is not recommended to use personal credentials, especially to get into financial accounts.

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How the governor’s proposed budget affects community colleges

CCA leaders are working diligently with the Legislature, the governor and the Chancellor’s Office on funding for California’s community colleges. The governor continues to push for the Student Success initiative, from guided pathways to improving basic skills, and advocates for better use of transfer pathways to both public and private universities.

The governor’s proposed budget does not reflect the recent federal tax bill and the fiscal implications it will have on California’s long-term financial health. Additionally, while the economy continues to remain relatively healthy, economists are concerned that a decline in California’s economic outlook may be on the horizon.

Here are several areas of the budget you should be aware of now. Watch cca4me.org for updates.

Consolidation of Categoricals — The Chancellor’s Office is to develop a proposal for consideration with the May Revision that would consolidate categorical programs. There may be some benefits to consolidating categorical programs, especially those with reporting requirements. At the current time, these are the only categorical programs that are under discussion.

CCA will continue to monitor the consolidation of categorical programs to make sure that there is no impact on those categorical programs critical for student success, such as full-time faculty hiring, a living wage and benefits for part-time faculty, programs specifically aimed at helping students, such as Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS), and support for veterans and foster youth. These should continue to be funded separately.

Student-Focused Funding Formula is a proposed new funding formula for general-purpose apportionments that encourages access for underrepresented students by providing additional support for low-income students and the use of improving student success metrics.

The initial formula would not reduce current funding levels that districts receive, and contains the following components:

• Base Grant — Each district would receive a base grant funded on enrollment (FTES).
• Supplemental Grant — Each district would receive a supplemental grant based upon the number of low-income students enrolled — specifically, students who receive a College Promise Grant fee waiver or a Pell grant.
• Student Success Incentive Grant — CCA is opposed to performance-based funding in the third component of the funding formula. Basing funding on completion of any sort, whether it be degrees and certificates or classes, does not reflect what we know about the real cause of students having trouble reaching their goals. CCA is working with the entities involved to make our views clear, and we are looking for a more palatable alternative.

• Hold Harmless Provision — During the first year of implementation, each district would be held harmless to their 2017-18 levels of funding based on full-time equivalent students (FTES). During following years, this provision would be calculated each year using the 2017-18 per-FTES rate multiplied by the district’s new FTES.

There are some concerns by CCA negotiators about consistent funding in “out” years, those years after 2018-19, which is no hold harmless provision outlined. Many districts are very concerned about the loss of funding that would result if this formula were imposed.

The funding formula proposal assumes that approximately 50 percent of funding is distributed as the base grant, 25 percent as part of a supplemental grant, and 25 percent as part of the student success incentive grant.

The governor proposes that community colleges incorporate the goals of Vision for Success, a strategic plan to improve student success adopted by the CCC Board of Governors. The proposal retains the requirements that colleges spend 50 percent of their unrestricted revenues funding on classroom instruction, and try to reach the goal of 75 percent full-time faculty.

Online Community College — Gov. Brown’s budget sets aside $120 million to create a new online community college program geared
toward working adults. The initial focus of content will be in vocational training, career advancement opportunities, and reservations, as they have traditionally urged that funds go current online offerings and on-campus programs, as well as siphoning of full-time equivalent students. CCA has also raised questions about the online college faculty. Would the employer be? Would the faculty meet minimum qualifications? Would the faculty even live in California? Would they do their teaching out of state or even outside the country? Would they have the right to belong to the union?

Concerns have also been raised regarding competition with current online offerings and on-campus programs, as well as siphoning of full-time equivalent students. CCA has also raised concerns about the online college faculty. Who would the employer be? Would the faculty meet minimum qualifications? Would the faculty even live in California? Would they do their teaching out of state or even outside the country? Would they have the right to belong to the union?

Three proposals are under consideration by the Board of Governors:

- **Option 1**: Use an existing campus that will deliver its online courses statewide.
- **Option 2**: An existing community college district will host a group of colleges that agree to work on FLOW taught by faculty from the participating colleges.
- **Option 3**: Create a new community college district focusing on online learning that will operate under the Chancellor’s Office — a break from other colleges that have their own local boards and districts.
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CCA Winter Conference — Fabulous, Interesting and Enlightening

First-time Grievance Academy, California Leadership Academy Are Excellent Opportunities to Learn, Network

Est practices on social media, advanced bargaining strategies and equity in the classroom were among the many workshops members took at the CCA Winter Conference Feb. 9-11 at the LAX Hyatt Regency in Los Angeles. The theme of this family-friendly conference was “Bargaining and Representation: The Building Blocks of a Strong Union.”

Dozens of members did not participate in conference sessions, instead taking part in the California Leadership Academy or the first-ever CCA Grievance Academy.

Focusing on strengthening local chapter capacity, CCA’s Grievance Academy provided a working knowledge of members’ contractual rights and responsibilities. "I’m relatively new to handling grievances, but I learned that other institutions are dealing with many of the same issues and problems we are, and we were able to learn various techniques to find resolutions to conflicts,” said Isabel Stierle, Kern CCD/CCA. “We evaluated our own contract language to understand what areas might need some improvement.”

What did she learn? “Faculty are not eligible for support from a union attorney until they have been a member for at least 30 days prior to an incident — the analogy given was that of someone not having car insurance at the time of an accident. This ‘aha’ moment motivated us to introduce this concept at new faculty seminars; to identify situations new faculty need to be aware of and how CCA membership can give added security and support.”

Tony Anderson, Hartnell College Faculty Association, said the entire experience was an "aha" moment. "I learned to identify the difference between a grievance and a complaint … and what might need to be negotiated in the future. And now my advice to members is: Do your homework. Let’s make sure your grievance is based on my advice to members is: Do your homework. Let’s make sure your grievance is based on well as colleagues from other colleges. You’ve always got help. You just need to ask.”

The California Leadership Academy (CLA) prepares faculty for any leadership position at the local, state and national levels. Members brush up on public speaking skills, discuss stewardship, get pointers for effective meetings, and discuss threats and opportunities facing community colleges.

Jill Pfeiffer, Rio Hondo College Faculty Association, said the CLA is a great way to "build a relationship network that you can later rely on for support and advice." She has also attended CTA State Council and better understands how NEA, CTA and CCA work together on issues facing public education.

“Community colleges nationwide are successful because of the majority part-time faculty,” she noted. “On my campus, our union is the only organization that represents and speaks for our 600 part-time teachers, as opposed to the 200 full-time teachers. If we (that means you and me) don’t speak up, we will continue to be ignored while we are rushing from campus to campus trying to make a living without job security or health benefits.”

California Leadership Academy attendees Stephanie Martin-Ward and Kathleen Branfyte-Gutierrez, Merced College FA; Jill Pfeiffer, Rio Hondo College FA; Joe Farrelly, Sierra College FA; Ricardo Aguilar, San Joaquin Delta College TA; Anthony Villarreal, Monterey Peninsula College TA; and Krista Warren and Susan Pynes, MiraCosta College Academic Associate Faculty.

The Kern CCD chapter sent quite the contingent to the CCA Grievance Academy. They include (seated) Robert Boyles, Tom Greenwood and Isabel Stierle, and (standing) Michael Harvath, Pam Boyles and Joe Slovacek.

“The work that is being done is truly inspiring,” she said. “I can honestly say the work we do for faculty, for our students, and for public education in general is crucial, especially now. Organize, organize, and organize some more at your local. Faculty, get engaged and be alert to how corporate forces are attempting to ‘defund and defang unions’ like ours. Such attempts will hurt not only working conditions for faculty but learning conditions for our students.”

Susan Pynes, MiraCosta College Academic Associate Faculty, has also attended CTA State Council and was impressed by how issues were dealt with. “I attended the Adult, Alternative and Career Technical Education committee, where there was good discussion about dual enrollment,” she said.

What was her CLA “aha!” moment? “The formulation and practice of an ‘elevator speech’ to explain quickly and concisely the reasons why people should participate in my local union, and why we believe what we do.” Based on this experience, her advice to members is to be involved and be informed.

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