Imagine it’s 2013 and your college has just received a “Show Cause” sanction from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). “Show Cause” is the lowest rung of the ladder for a college seeking to reaffirm its accreditation, and if the college can’t address whatever problems were outlined in the “Show Cause” order, it loses accreditation.

That was the situation at the College of the Sequoias in Visalia. To their credit, the district and COS President Stan Carrisoza worked with faculty leaders to bring in consultants, rather than fight the sanction. In a few short months, leaders in the College of the Sequoias Teachers Association (COSTA) worked with the district to reimagine the entire governance structure.

The new structure provides “an extraordinary new governance process that radically changes the voice faculty have on our campus in committees and governance structures,” said David Hurst, COSTA president. “While everyone pitched in, faculty played a shining role on all committees and wrote the reports that, along with a successful site visit, moved us to full accreditation.”

“It is not a perfect system, but faculty have much larger voice now than before,” he added. And it was not easy.

At the time, faculty had been working without a contract since 2009, and an unfair bargaining complaint was wending its way through the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) process. There was turmoil within the college administration, and working relationships with management were at an all-time low. The decision to trust district officials was not an easy choice.

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Together We Can Do More

By CCA President Lynette Nyaggah

Once upon a time — long, long ago in 1994 — my colleague Mahlon Woirhaye approached me in our Division gathering area at my college, Rio Hondo, and said, “How would you like to go to a CCA conference?” Naturally, I asked, “What’s CCA?” He was our CCA Board member at the time, and he explained that it was our community college union. So my answer was, ”Sure, I’ll go.” And the rest is history.

For those of you who wonder what CCA is and who your local chapter is — I understand. I’ve been there. And it took me years of serving on the CCA Board and CTA State Council to really understand the structure of our unions. It’s a challenge to keep up with everything when you fill every waking hour with the work you do for students and with your family and personal responsibilities. But your involvement is really important, whether you serve in a leadership position or you just volunteer to bring the ice for meetings. We need you. Look for the announcements of membership meetings and listen to the Representative Council members for your departments when they report.

Your involvement is even more important now that the U.S. Supreme Court has granted review of Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the next in the lineup of Fair Share cases.

What is Janus v. AFSCME? It is the culmination of decades of attacks by those who see unions as a threat, because unions protect regular working people and the middle class. Their goal with Janus (as it was in Friedrichs v. CTA) is no secret: They want to use the Supreme Court to take away the powerful voice of unions in speaking up for democracy and our communities, and in our case, faculty and students in the community colleges. Unions have played a critical role in building and protecting the middle class in America, especially here in California. They provide hardworking people economic stability, and give them the tools to build a good life, home and education for their families.

Sadly, Janus has the potential of forcing the “right to work for less” on the entire public sector in one fell swoop. So we are asking you to get to know each other — chapter leaders and members. Research has shown that when union leaders or members have just one contact with a new faculty member, part-time or full-time, the new faculty member will join and remain in the union. That’s why it’s so important to have face-to-face communication with each other.

Last year, we in CCA focused our membership outreach on signing up new members at five selected campuses, and we were very successful, gaining over 1,000 new members. So, as we begin this academic year, we would like to encourage you to continue with new faculty outreach. In addition, we encourage you to reach out to both your CTA K-12 partners and your County Labor Council, so that as we weather the current attacks on unions, we can support one another. CTA holds Regional Leadership Conferences each fall and has other specialized conferences through the year. Your chapter president or designee is welcome to attend the Service Center Council meetings, where you can get to know the other local leaders.

If you are a chapter president and need to know the time and place of your Service Center Council meeting, email me at president@cca4me.org and I will get that information to you.

As an added bonus, some amazing Board of Trustees candidates have been recruited at Service Center Council meetings, including one of the trustees at my college, Rio Hondo. As for the Labor Council, quite a few of our chapters have already joined and will testify to the benefits of being part of the large labor movement.

As we fight for our future, we can garner strength from getting to know one another, relying on our partners, and educating the public about what unions have done and continue to do for America. Sometimes we hear complaints that it’s not fair that public employee unions get benefits that other workers don’t. That is so true — everyone should have the power to negotiate for better salaries, working conditions and pensions. It was not fair for private companies to deprive their employees of unions, and we should support new campaigns to unionize.

Our answer to those who want to eliminate unions should be — never!
FOR TOO LONG there have been discussions of rehire or seniority rights for part-time faculty. An adjunct could teach 20 years or more, then suddenly lose a job for no reason. Adjuncts have had few if any protections and no job security. That’s not good for the part-time faculty, obviously, but it has also hurt students who need access to faculty, and need to know whether they can continue taking courses with those part-time faculty as they plan their future course schedule.

Two bills enacted last year, AB 1690 and SB 1379, require community colleges to negotiate rehire rights for part-time faculty, and establish minimum standards regarding their terms of re-employment preference. Thanks to this legislation, part-time faculty are starting to get the rights and protections they deserve.

Adam Wetsman, Rio Hondo College Faculty Association bargaining chair, sees the legislation as important “to help increase the professionalization of part-timers,” and he is pleased that Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss was “willing to listen and understood the importance of the issue. We quickly reached an agreement on this.”

He noted that part of the challenge is that so many complex details are involved, such as class availability, absence due to pregnancy, and the definition of part-time. The Rio Hondo agreement states that a part-time faculty member who has taught four of the last six semesters will be put on the rehire list.

“We decided, as a long-term process, to start with the basics and refine things as needed,” he said. “We can go back and negotiate as details we hadn’t considered before pop up. We probably won’t know about those for a few years.”

As complex as the discussions are, Wetsman sees the legislation as an effective balance between the needs of part-time faculty members and community college flexibility.

Besides seniority, the minimum standards established by SB 1379 include the number of courses taught, evaluations, and the willingness and expertise of part-time faculty to take on specific classes or assignments.

Rehiring Rights for Part-Timers

Students need access to part-time faculty, and part-time faculty need protections.

Rio Hondo College Faculty Association Bargaining Chair Adam Wetsman and Rio Hondo President Teresa Dreyfuss sign the negotiated agreement giving part-time faculty rehire rights. Courtesy photo

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Advocates Are Everywhere — Winners

Congratulations to Phyllis Hall, Long Beach City College Faculty Association, and Josie Malik, San Joaquin Delta College Teachers Association. They are winners in the first-ever CCA Advocates Are Everywhere photo contest. Last spring, we asked members to take their favorite edition of the Advocate on their summer journeys.

Malik took her grandchildren to visit Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty while on a visit to New Jersey and New York City. Hall took her Advocate to summer trainings she attended; this was at the CCA/CTA Presidents Conference.

QUICK TIPS to Improve Your Cellphone and Digital Photography

By Terry Ng

A FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPHER once said, “The best camera is the one that’s with you.” If you’re reading this article, chances are you own a cellphone, and that is the ultimate go-everywhere pocket camera.

If you haven’t yet discovered your mobile phone as a camera, then now is the time to do it. With the following quick tips, you can improve your digital camera or cellphone camera photography skills.

1 Embrace the light!
Good light creates good photos. It’d be great, but we can’t always shoot outside. When you do, make sure not to shoot into the sun, which causes shadows on faces. Inside, shoot as close as possible to the window (if during the day). Don’t get between your subject and the light source, lest you cast a shadow on your subject. Whenever possible, have the light come from above, and shoot your subject from above.

(Photograph credit: Zack Arias, dedpxl.com)

2 Zoom in with your feet, not your fingers.
Don’t use the zoom on your mobile phone camera. Zoom with your feet and fill the frame. Zooming on your cellphone camera causes a huge loss in image quality, making your photos grainy and pixilated. Instead, use your feet to walk closer to your subject. Then fill the frame of the photo with your subject to remove any background distractions — unless, of course, the background is important for your photo. And remember, waste not! For most photography, especially on social media, viewers want to see faces. There is no need to show a person except from the waist up, also called a medium shot.

3 Use the rule of thirds.
The rule of thirds is one of the most basic photographic compositional techniques. Divide an image into nine equally spaced sections, and align the most interesting subjects along the intersections. Many modern mobile phone cameras have a feature called “grids” that will help you with this technique. You’ll find it in Settings — Photo/Camera, depending upon your cellphone. Turn it on if you have it available, and give it a try!

4 Edit your photos before you post or tweet.
You want to share your best photos, so consider editing them before you share — even if it’s simply cropping the photo to reveal your subject’s smiling face. There are many ways to edit your photos. Most cellphones have some type of editing function where you’ll be able to adjust contrast, saturation and lighting to create that perfect picture. There are great apps to download, too, like VSCOcam, ProCamera, Google Snapseed, and Adobe Photoshop Express. Some social media platforms, such as Instagram, have photo editing functionality.
Member Engagement, continued from page 1

and adjunct faculty. Stephens sends a welcome email to everyone that lays out the benefits of joining the faculty association. Then he gets a little help from his friends, as division reps, who pass out printed materials, and his colleague Christina Bolin, who “does the nuts and bolts work,” he said. “She’s awesome.”

Humor is important for those initial contacts. “I’m seasoned, a good term for old, don’t you think? So I don’t take things too seriously. We meet, enjoy our time, and respect each other’s views and sense of humor. It’s mutually ridiculous if we don’t get along.”

SOCCDFA members are diverse politically, he said, from right-wing to left-wing with a “majority in the middle.” “But we’re all here for the same purpose, to help students and provide a quality community college education. So let’s be smart about it.”

Stephens sees strength in numbers as a strong point for unionism. “Faculty need to ‘act locally’ exercising the power of the faculty association at each local college, and ‘think globally’ about what it means statewide and nationally,” he said.

As faculty and instructors, “we are givers. That’s the concept of being a teacher. Now, consider that concept in a larger group and consider the impact we can make as a whole. That means it’s not about what’s in it for me. We think as a we.”

What does that mean in real life? Making sure students have the resources and opportunities to succeed. That means quality faculty. “We’re the wealthiest college district in the state, and this district can treat part-timers better. For a school to not spend resources on students and faculty when they’ve got it is crazy.”

“We’re all in the education profession, employees of the same college. Joining the FA embeds you in the teaching profession and everything connected with it,” added Stephens, who is also Academic Senate president-elect and sits on the chapter’s bargaining team. “As a cohesive group of professionals, we have power and we have choices about where we spend it, be it influencing laws, enhancing our stand in bargaining, and making sure our students get what they need to succeed.”

Josh Muller (with psychology majors and student aides Alexis Guizar, Tulare, and Kyle Jones, Exeter) served as an accreditation standards committee chair.

ACCJC must butt out of the bargaining process

UNTIL A FEW months ago, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) seemed to have carte blanche in interfering with the collective bargaining process, going so far as to tell community colleges to cut summer pay for faculty. A legal settlement reached in August between ACCJC and the California Federation of Teachers is forcing the agency to stop violating its own rules and the rule of law.

CTA’s letter of support during the legal process noted ACCJC’s “arrogance and vindictiveness” in dealing with community colleges, and observed that faculty senates and CCA chapters had passed resolutions of no confidence in ACCJC. The letter outlined the lengths ACCJC went to in finding the College of the Sequoias in “substantial non-compliance” in 2012 by citing deficiencies that ACCJC itself acknowledged had been cured years earlier.

“As union advocates, we’ve been concerned for years with ACCJC interfering in the collective bargaining arena. We’ve told them time and again to keep their nose out of our business,” said CCA President Lynette Nyagah. “This settlement gives voice and power to college faculty — as professional educators and as negotiations advocates.”

ACCJC has agreed to NOT interfere in the collective bargaining process. AACJC also agreed to:

• No longer require student learning outcomes (SLOs) to be used as a component of faculty evaluation.
• Adopt a policy to ensure at least three active-duty faculty members are assigned to each college evaluation team.
• Allow a two-year extension for “good cause” for a college to comply with accreditation standards for which it has been found deficient.
• Refrain from directing colleges what specific steps must be taken to achieve financial stability.
• Strengthen conflict of interest safeguards for commissioners and evaluation team members.

Barbara Benez, the controversial president of the commission that for four years has tried to revoke accreditation for City College of San Francisco, retired in June.

OCTOBER 2017
CCA Stands Up for Students

CCA leaders were dismayed by the decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which impacts some 60,000 of our community college students. Faculty will continue to educate all who come to our community colleges, work with policymakers and the Chancellor’s Office to make dreams of a better life come true, and share resources on our website.

California lawmakers dedicated $30 million to defending and educating our state’s estimated 200,000 Dreamers so they can stay in the only country they’ve ever known. Specifically, $7 million in financial aid will be provided for Dreamers who are California community college students, and $3 million for CSU and UC students. The rest of the funding will go toward immigration legal services under the One California program, which provides naturalization, legal and educational services to the state’s immigrant population.

Get resources (such as the posters shown above) and more at cta.org/ForAllStudents.
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CCA, through CTA and the National Education Association, provides a plethora of grant opportunities for college faculty, full- and part-time, to accomplish their professional and advocacy goals. CCA leaders and members are encouraged to use all resources available, especially CCA member engagement grants, to do more outreach and organizing with their members and communities. Various grants are available for those collaborating with K-12 colleagues, as well.

“Too few community college faculty take advantage of the excellent resources available,” says CCA President Lynette Nyaggh. To help remedy that, here is a glimpse of what your union has to offer.

→ Institute for Teaching (IFT)
One of CCA/CTAs best-kept secrets is the Institute for Teaching. College of the Desert Faculty Association member Douglas Redman highly recommends that CCA faculty apply for IFT grants. “It was a great experience,” he said. CODFA received a $5,000 grant for a “Front Clip Training Module” project back in 2011. The grant provided for the purchase of a front-end clip from a late-model vehicle through an auto recycler. Students built it into a training module that was used by every automotive instructor at COD. By building their own training module, both teachers and students learned “how everything works.”

“Our grant allowed our advanced automotive electrical classes to perform lab activities on a live vehicle,” Redman said. “What made this so effective was the ease with which the instructor could put in real-world bugs and then train the students. They learned voltage-drop testing, searched for opens and shorts, and diagnosed a myriad of other body, electrical and power train malfunctions. This grant was done 100 percent by our adjunct, Julius Varga — he’s one of our best!”

COD’s Advanced Transportation Technologies degree program curriculum focuses on the new electronic technologies used in light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles. The program has special emphasis on the hybrid and alternate fuel vehicles being introduced by the major manufacturers. Students can earn an associate degree and a certificate of achievement in Automotive Alternate Fuels.

The IFT online application link goes live in mid-January 2018. The deadline to apply is April 30, 2018.

IFT Think Tanks
Think Tanks are for those who want to “shake up the conversation,” says IFT Executive Director Dick Gale. “A Think Tank brings the voice of the practitioner into the union and is for faculty who are excellent in their profession, big-picture people, and not otherwise involved in the union.”

Mike Flores, North Orange County Community College, has attended the Moreno Valley Think Tank, and MiraCosta College Academic Associate Faculty members have attended the San Diego Think Tank.

If you or anyone you know might be interested, contact Dick Gale at dgale@cta.org.

→ CTA Awards, Grants and Scholarships
CTA offers many awards to recognize faculty, instructors and members of the community who promote public education. Efforts that might garner such awards would be effective communications by and for local chapters, excellence in public education media coverage, and efforts to promote the development of programs for the advancement and protection of human and civil rights within CCA.

CTA also has various scholarships and grants, including scholarships for community college members and dependent children of members, and the GLBT Safety in Schools Grant and Scholarship Program in Honor of Guy DeRosa.

→ NEA Grants
The NEA Foundation offers Learning & Leadership and Student Achievement grants, which are open to higher education and community college educators who are NEA members.

Learning & Leadership Grants: Faculty frequently need outside resources to engage in meaningful professional development due to limited district funding. NEA’s Learning & Leadership Grants support:

- Individuals to participate in high-quality professional development like summer institutes, conferences, seminars, travel abroad programs, or action research.
- Groups to fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson plan development, and mentoring experiences for faculty or staff.

Preference is given to proposals that incorporate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) or global competence in their projects.

Student Achievement Grants: For faculty who need outside funding for classroom resources, these grants are intended to help faculty take the lead on a wide range of projects to improve student learning at all grade levels. 

→ Where to Find Resources
CCA Grants
CCA4me.org/grants.asp
Institute for Teaching
teacherdrivencchange.org
CTA Awards, Grants and Scholarships
CTA.org/awards
CTA.org/scholarships
NEA Foundation
neafoundation.org/for-educators