

# Golden Slate

October 2009

The Official Newsletter of the California Agricultural Teachers' Association

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## Deadlines

### Copy Due in Elk Grove

November 23, 2009 ..... January 2010  
 March 22, 2010 ..... May 2010

### Issue Date

Articles should be e-mailed to [cata@calagteachers.org](mailto:cata@calagteachers.org).

If you cannot submit the article electronically, please be sure your material is typed, double-spaced. Advertisements, graphics and forms must be camera-ready. ☼

## Sacramento Scene

### Career Tech on Hold; Feds Push Evaluation by Test

By Jim Aschwanden, CATA Executive Director

As this edition of the *GOLDEN SLATE* goes to print, the final days of this legislative session are grinding to a halt. We are now headed to "interim session," also known as "fundraising season" — that most joyous time of year for most career politicians. In any event, the final bell rang on September 11, with the next session set to begin in January. Christmas break comes early in Sacramento.

Looking back over this session, one could surmise that the California State Legislature ran pretty much true to form — almost nothing happened, and what did happen happened very slowly. No substantive action on the most pressing issues of the day, another huge budget deficit about to be "discovered," a sordid sex scandal revealed, and the Education Coalition smashing down every career technical education (CTE) bill in sight. Oh well (yawn), just another year in paradise.

#### Career Technical Education

Yes folks, our wonderful friends in the Education Coalition (California Teachers Association in particular) succeeded in holding the most important CTE bill — SB 381 — in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, despite some very heavy lifting from Sena-

tor Steinberg and others. Officially, the bill is not dead — just held over in committee, presumably to be picked up during the next session in January.

The survival rate of held bills is not high, but Senate leadership and a strong contingent of Assembly members have vowed to work through the interim session to convince the Speaker's Office staff to allow this bill to go to the Assembly floor. We'll see what happens....

The most revealing aspect of this fight has been the utter and complete unwillingness of CTA to allow any meaningful legislation supportive of CTE to see the light of day. If anything, this battle has completely and unequivocally established CTA's position as the greatest single threat to the

(Continued on page 2)

# Officers' Corner

## What's in It for Me? Why Am I Here...?

By Larry Wright, CATA State President

I am sure that most of us have at different times looked at things and thought about the title of this article. What do I get out of this activity, conference, staff meeting, regional meeting and such? Well that came to my mind when I attended (by choice) the CTSO Advisor Training that took place August 3-5, 2009 in Sacramento.

The correspondence that I received about this CTSO training stated "Congratulations and welcome to the first annual California CTSO Advisor Training!" As I read on, I found that I had been selected by my State Advisor and that I was one of 180 teachers statewide to have the chance to participate in this event. There were 30 teachers from each of the Career and Technical Student

Organizations (CTSO) in California (Cal-HOSA, DECA, FBLA, FHA-HERO, FFA and SkillsUSA). The Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento was the site of the CTSO training. The facilities are excellent for these types of events.

There were some tasks that needed to be completed by participants before the confer-

ence started. Everyone was asked to complete an "Insights" personality evaluation and return it to the coordinator by July 20, 2009. The completion of this survey would allow the Insights team to make sure that each person who completed their evaluation would receive a personalized training guide/profile. This Insights Discovery pro-

file is based on the individual's response to the Insights Preference Evaluator. In addition to the "Insights" evaluation, we were also asked to complete a survey to be used by another presenter as part of their presentation. Having completed both tasks, I was eager to see how both would

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Sacramento Scene

### Career Tech on Hold; Feds Push Evaluation by Test

*(Continued from page 1)*

continued existence of CTE in our high schools. CTA simply does not want any resources, energy or time devoted to CTE, as those programs are seen as "competing" for dollars that could be available for salary and benefit negotiations. The desires and needs of students in California just don't matter — and neither do your programs. At your local level, your CTA peers may not have the same viewpoint, but to the CTA governmental affairs staff in Sacramento, legislation supporting CTE is dead meat. That message has been clearly delivered this session.

As we move forward, I would hope that those of you who are members of CTA would take advantage of any opportunity to share your thoughts with state CTA leadership, and take appropriate action that might influence their performance in Sacramento.

#### 'Race to the Top'

In other news, we have been following the "Race to the Top" initiative being promoted by the federal Department of Edu-

cation, and I'm beginning to wonder if a more appropriate moniker would be the "Race Off of the Cliff."

Basing an analysis of the entire net worth of educational performance in this country on standardized test scores seems almost bizarre to me, and I wonder if any of the policy wonks promoting this stuff have taken a basic course in education analysis and assessment.

The most meaningful and realistic assessment practices include a far wider range of tools and activities than simply taking a pencil and paper test, while the least meaningful and least revealing methods of assessing performance are the very tools being promoted within this initiative. While most informed educators realize the severe limitations of standardized exams and scores in measuring true growth and performance of all students, we have defaulted to their use for one simple reason — they are cheap to administer. It may be a lousy way of measuring performance, but at least it's cheap.

That's one hell of a rationale for justifying this testing insanity, and basing teacher performance on such flimsy criteria is even a bigger travesty. Wish these folks would GetREAL.

#### Thanks

On a positive note, I would like to thank all of the CATA members who made our annual CATA Summer Conference such a success. The reorganized schedule seemed to be more user-friendly, and we certainly intend to keep refining our committee structure to allow for greater dialogue and participation among members. We really do read all of the comments and suggestions that you make on the evaluation form, and we will be doing our best to implement the changes that you would like to see in the future. I would again like to thank the Cal Poly faculty and staff for all that they do to make us feel welcome — we simply could not do this without them.

Finally, I would encourage you to continue to focus on doing the great things that you do with students, and don't let

the silliness in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. get you down. Hard work, determination and dedication will ultimately overcome shallowness and stupidity (how many administrators have you outlasted?), so just keep moving forward. Time and reality are on our side!

Hope your year is off to a great start. See you down the road. ☘

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# Officers' Corner

## What's in It for Me? Why Am I Here...?

(Continued from page 2)  
be implemented at the conference.

The theme of this three-day CTSO training was "Empowering Teachers To Develop Leaders Through Career Technical Student Organizations."

### Day One: Insights

Day one was the Insights Discovery program. According to the information we received, *"The origins of personality theory can be traced back to fifth century BC, when Hippocrates identified four distinct energies exhibited by different people. Research suggests that a good understanding of self, both strengths and weaknesses, enables individuals to develop effective strategies for interaction and can help them to better respond to the demands of their environment."*

As I listened to that comment, I got a flashback to the past CATA summer conference. Remember the keynote speaker on Monday morning? OK, for you "memory-challenged" folks, his name was Mark Mayfield, a past National FFA Officer from Kansas. He did a quick evaluation of CATA members and we all found out that we were one of four types — Jerk, Wimp, Nerd or Mouth.

The Insights Discovery program told us that we were colors — four in fact — Blue, Green, Yellow and Red. These colors told us of our traits in dealing with others, events and issues that might present themselves to us and our students. We were to use this profile activity to identify the areas in which we could develop and take action, share the information with others, ask for feedback from them and find ways to work together on things.

### Day Two

Day two was a day that had Jim Aschwanden as the keynote and he set the day just right as he always does — thanks, Jim for your words. The rest of the day consisted of

three rounds of workshops: Sue Coupland on fundraising, Steve Paasch on Parliamentary Procedure and Your Chapter, and Carl Schmidt with his program on Extending the Classroom. We had three one-hour breakouts with each of the presenters. Thank you to all of the

classroom and CTSO programs.

The rest of the day had us again in workshops with three breakout sessions. The sessions were as follows: Kris Elliott on Training Chapter Officers, Dory Griffin on Communication, and Mike Mederos did a

use in my classes and with my officer team this year. Chuck also provided some ideas that we might put to use and some personal thoughts from his experiences.

### Attendees

The following is a list of all the FFA Advisors who attended this First Annual California CTSO Advisor Training:

Isaac Robles, Matt Moreno, Mary Kerr, Gary Garcia, Bruce Campbell, Kim Dieter, Marlene Hepner, Richard Goodding, Samantha Silva, Tony Herron, Debbie Benson, Felicia Rush, Janelle Smith, Jane Reycht, Robin Olsen, Virginia Dwyer, Barbara Borklund-Tuyen, Shannon Clark, Stacy Kastler, Bill Stevens, Kris Elliott and me, Larry Wright.

Finally, I take this time to thank Mrs. Angela Mayfield, who coordinated this entire activity. Angela and her staff did such a wonderful job with this training and I for one hope that this type of activity will be continued.

So, what's in for me? Why am I here? In my case, I got a chance to interact with other organizations, their advisors and to see just what we can do to help each other through good times and hard times. I have been an FFA advisor for a while, so I went to find some new things that I might try with my program and my officer team. We ask our students to become lifelong learners, and this was a way to demonstrate our own willingness to grow. We all need to remember that there is a plethora of things we can accomplish when we open ourselves to opportunities. Don't pass up an opportunity to learn how to make your career more exciting, fun and rewarding — it's well worth the effort! ❁

**We all need to remember that there is a plethora of things we can accomplish when we open ourselves to opportunities. Don't pass up an opportunity to learn how to make your career more exciting, fun and rewarding...**

presenters and a big thank you to Brother Paasch, who did a great job.

The afternoon workshops were as follows: Marsha Daves on Chapter Management and Theresa Hagelbarger on Growing the Chapter. Again, the presenters did a very good job of providing timely information.

After dinner there were meetings by CTSO subject matter. For us "aggies," Bob Heuvel provided information from the California State Department of Education and the Agricultural Education Division. That evening, we all got together to discuss issues and to talk to each other about our student organizations. All of the CTSOs have a lot in common and we need to work with those groups on our local levels if they are available at our school.

### Day Three

Day three keynote speaker Amy Gallimore, director of leadership at TRI, kept us smiling and reminded us of the need to see and keep humor in our lives, including the

session on Partnering with Industry.

The breakouts were very informative — thanks to everyone for their efforts. Kris and Mike in particular did a great job of providing very useful and timely information.

Following lunch we once again met by CTSOs and Chuck Parker gave us a Pig Personality Profile. Thanks, Mr. Parker for this profile, which I plan to



# Officers' Corner

## The Delta Experience

By Jake Dunn, CATA State Secretary

Nervous about what was about to happen. The best conference I have ever been to! An investment by our state Department of Education. A tough pill to swallow. Pumped up about my job and how I can teach. These are all thoughts that I had before and after my DELTA experience.

I looked on a few years ago as Mr. Mooney sang the praises of the DELTA conference. I felt that I had missed the boat and that something big was happening. I had reasons, excuses and other plans that kept me from attending in previous years. Frankly, I was afraid of the unknown. This past spring when Mr. Mooney announced that the DELTA conference would be held in California, I jumped at the opportunity. I have always looked up to Mr. Mooney, and felt that if he, a veteran teacher, could have taken so much from this conference, then I too could try to reap the benefits of the DELTA experience. I am not the only one who I heard say that if it impressed Hugh, it had to be good, and Mr. Mooney along with all of the other people

### Delta — Not Your Typical Conference

- ✓Delta Conference really makes you look inside yourself, examine your educational philosophies, and determine how you can become a better teacher.
- ✓Delta makes you take a second look at what you do in the classroom and how it is affecting your students' learning.
- ✓Delta sharpens your teaching skills and provides tools to engage students, so you work smarter not harder and therefore teach more effectively to every student.
- ✓Delta is not a conference; it is an experience!

who came together to make DELTA happen this summer did not disappoint!

With apprehension I awaited my drive to Fresno for the conference in July. We had met a few of the participants at CATA conference, we had been given homework, and we had been given only enough information to salivate and aggravate over. I remember sitting in the ag building watching as folks who were attending the conference

filed in. I was impressed with the diversity of faces I saw. There were new teachers, veteran teachers and tweeners all in one room. There were people who I did not know, people I admired, and people who would help me see new ways to reach my students.

### New Approaches

The DELTA conference brought us all together in Fresno, it made us get out of our comfort zone, it made me make new friends, and most important, it made me look at what I do in my classroom in a new way. For the first time I was told you are not doing that right, you can do better, your students deserve more. Then we were told how to do it right and better and make it real for our kids. Most of the precepts of the DELTA conference were not earth shattering, but the combination and the simplicity that they were made me

have a severe AH HAH!

I only hope that this conference can come back to California so the rest of you can see what I am talking about. We as agriculture educators already do a tremendous amount above what most other teachers do, so I know that going to a week-long conference away from family is not the top of your list, but this one is worth it!

### Strategies Work

Now that school has started, I am incorporating the strategies and they work: my kids are responding, having fun and learning... I have books from the conference that I am actually reading, notes I took that I actually have looked back upon to use in my classroom. DELTA gave me tools to take some of the stress off of me and put it on the kids, raise their expectations and my own. Is it a lot of work? Yes, but that is what we are paid to do. If there is a better way to do our job, don't we owe it to our kids to use it?

In the meantime, keep doing what you do because it does matter. When the opportunity comes to attend a DELTA conference, jump on board, and hold on for a great ride.

Thanks to the state staff and all who had a hand in this year's conference! ✂

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### Delta Conference — Thoughts to Ponder

- ✓If the information you are teaching is important, then it is worth the time.
- ✓Content is never more important than your relationship with your students.
- ✓What is important is how well the students learn, not how well the teachers teach.
- ✓Testing is not the goal; learning is.
- ✓Weakness — fixing prevents failure; strengths — building leads to success.
- ✓Talent is a recurring pattern.
- ✓Do not follow the path of others; leave a path for others to follow.
- ✓Small, seemingly insignificant, continuous improvement can have a lasting impact.

# Teacher Educator News

## CSU, Chico Update

By Sarah DeForest, Director of Advancement, College of Agriculture

The fall semester is in full swing at California State University, Chico and brings with it some exciting changes on the Chico State campus. Meanwhile, we are still celebrating the accomplishments of the previous year.

### New Faculty

*Dr. Eric Houk* was hired as an associate professor and program lead in agriculture business. He completed his Ph.D. in 2003 at Colorado State University in resource and environmental economics, agriculture production and finance. Prior to that, he received his M.S. in ag economics at the University of Idaho in 2000, preceded by a B.S. in economics at Frostburg State University in Maryland in 1997. Houk comes to us from California State University, Stanislaus, where he was an associate professor in natural resource and environmental economics.

*Dr. Jacob Brimlow* joins us as an assistant professor in agriculture business. Brimlow is a Chico State graduate, having obtained his B.A. in economics in 1998. He went on to earn both his M.A. in economics and Ph.D. in environmental and resource economics at North Carolina State University. Brimlow's research interests include the effects of voluntary, conservation-related land use restrictions on the market value of productive farmland. He grew up in Humboldt County, surrounded by the timber industry and Northern California agriculture.

### New Outreach and Recruitment Team

While budget cuts prevent us from hiring a new outreach coordinator to replace Shannon Douglass, who went to work for the Pathways to the PCA program in May, we are fortunate to have a dynamic duo of lecturers who will continue to reach out to prospective students, as well as their families and teachers. *Dr. Mollie Aschenbrenner* and *Audrey Denney* will share outreach duties for the College of Agriculture. Aschenbrenner will de-

### Upcoming Events at CSU, Chico

October 10: Hall of Honor Reception  
October 10-11: Sierra Oro Farm Trail Passport Weekend  
October 17-18: Northern Exposure Beef Jackpot Show  
November 6: Prospective Student Fall Tours and Ag Teacher In-Service  
November 14: Prospective Student Fall Tours  
January 29: Chico State Ag Alumni Reunion at Red Bluff Bull & Gelding Sale  
January 30: Swine Education Day  
February 3: Colusa Alumni Breakfast  
February 13: Sheep and Goat Education Day  
February 20: Beef Day  
March 13: CSU, Chico/Butte College FFA Field Day  
April 24-25: Circle of Champions Jackpot Show  
June 14: Superior Ag Golf Classic

velop a leadership course to teach and train student ag ambassadors, while Denney will work out of the outreach office to coordinate travel and recruitment activities.

Prospective students can continue to call (800) 774-1644 or e-mail [AgOutreach@csuchico.edu](mailto:AgOutreach@csuchico.edu) with questions about admissions, scholarships and advising.

### New Event for Prospective Students

Fall Tours will replace Opportunity Day this semester as our premier outreach event. Prospective high school juniors and seniors can sign up to attend with their families or ag teachers on either November 6 or November 14. Tours will be given of campus and the University Farm, in addition to an online application workshop. The event on Friday, November 6, will include an ag teacher in-service for teachers to attend during student tours.

For more information or to sign up, please contact the Outreach Office at (800) 774-1644 or by e-mail at [AgOutreach@csuchico.edu](mailto:AgOutreach@csuchico.edu).

### New Rec Center

Students returning to campus this fall were greeted by a beautiful site: the newly constructed 109,000 square-foot Wildcat Recreation Center. The Associated Students-owned

facility includes a three-court gym, 15,000 square-foot fitness facility, climbing wall, indoor running track, multipurpose rooms, and a recreational pool and spa. Students can join at no additional fee, as their membership is paid through an existing Student Union Fee, which is part of their tuition and fees.

### Recent Accomplishments

**Van Peer Wins Associated Students Seat** — Senior agriscience and education major *Erin Van Peer* won a competitive race for executive vice president of the Associated Students this past spring, beating the incumbent. Van Peer's win is the second time in as many years that an agriculture student has been elected to an executive office; agribusiness major *Jesse Eller* just completed his term as Associated Students president.

**Chico State Sweeps Food Marketing Competition** — Chico State's Food Marketing Teams won both the international and domestic divisions of the Western Collegiate Food Marketing Competition in Anaheim, Calif., April 18-19. The teams, coached by *Dr. Baohui Song* and *Stephanie Horton*, also had first-place finishes for best PowerPoint presentation.

The Domestic Team—con-

sisting of *Haley Hunt*, *Jillian Kehoe* and *Natalie Schallberger*—outshone the competition with its idea for organic ice cream produced at the Chico State Dairy, CHIC-O.

The International Team—consisting of *Sam Cooley*, *Kevin Donnelly* and *Rebecca Hein*—placed on top with its idea for selling California-grown organic rice to China.

All students were judged on the market analysis, competitive analysis, financials and presentation of their products.

**Livestock Judging Team Competes Nationally** — The 2009 Livestock Judging Team consistently placed in the top 10 at competitions around the country this year. The team placed second overall at the Arizona National Livestock Show, 10th at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, seventh at the San Antonio Stock Show, and seventh at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

The team will hit the road again during the fall semester and wrap up its season at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky in November. The team consists of *Janell Rice*, *Haley Hunt*, *Sarah Hanks*, *Simmie Stayer*, *Rex Mendonza*, *Matt Reed*, *Brendan Close* and coach *Clay Carlson*.

**Sierra Nevada Continues to Invest in Chico State** — Sierra Nevada Brewing Company donated \$88,000 for the purchase of a new smokehouse and vacuum filler to expand the sausage-making capacity at the University Farm Meats Laboratory. In addition to providing Sierra Nevada's restaurant with a popular menu item, the new equipment will enhance the teaching capacity of the University Farm Meats Lab. ☼

## Fresno State: Working on Our Temper

By Dr. Steven Rocca and Dr. Rosco Vaughn, California State University, Fresno

How do you define the word “temper”? For many of us it is a state of feeling or a frame of mind. It can be a proneness to anger that we need to control. Or for the agricultural mechanics teacher, temper also means to harden by reheating and cooling. Along that same line, temper can also be defined as making something or someone stronger and more resilient through hardship.

This word probably best describes the atmosphere at Fresno State this fall. Many faculty and staff are frustrated and perhaps even angry about mandated furloughs and accompanying decreases in pay. Students are upset over fewer class offerings and increased fees.

### Trying Times

However, from these trying times we hope to eventually emerge as a stronger and more resilient institution. So this academic year begins with the challenge of maintaining positive attitudes in the face of some very difficult times for higher education, public education, and the entire state of California.

With all this gloom and doom we see and hear each day, it's difficult to notice the positive things that are happening on our campus to tell you about. But after putting on our rose-colored glasses and convincing ourselves that our glass is indeed half full, we discovered there were some great things happening at Fresno State that you should know about.

### Record Enrollments

One of the most exciting pieces of recent news came as a pleasant surprise to us. Even with shortened admission deadlines and tougher standards that were implemented this fall for our incoming students, we were very pleased to find that enrollments in our department and program have reached record levels. Presently we have approximately 130 students majoring in agricultural education and another 23 studying agricultural communications. As a department, we have over 580 students now majoring in animal science and agricultural education.

This is definitely great news for our department faculty, especially when we had first feared the changes in our admission procedures might cause a decrease in numbers. This information bodes well for our future supply of graduates and new teachers entering the profession in the years to come.

We would like to continue the growth we have experienced into the coming years, but to do so we really need your help. With our current financial struggles has come an effort to reduce the number of students being accepted into the California State University system. This means it is going to be more difficult for students to get admitted to Fresno State in the future. So, given this information, we are going to need the assistance of secondary and community college instructors even more to help get your students on the right path to admission at Fresno State.

The most important thing you can do is to stress to your students the importance of submitting applications, transcripts, test scores, etc. by the deadlines. We are no longer able to help students who do not apply on time or do not meet all admission requirements.

Make sure students meet with their guidance counselors to ensure they have all the required coursework by the end of the spring semester. It looks like students will no longer be able to take courses during the summer before they arrive at Fresno State to complete admission requirements like in years past.

As always, the faculty and outreach staff in our college are here to help

your students with the application process. If you have students who need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact Dr. Steven Rocca at (559) 278-5088 [srocca@csufresno.edu](mailto:srocca@csufresno.edu) or our outreach counselor, Desi Molyneux, at (559) 278-5377 [dmolyneux@csufresno.edu](mailto:dmolyneux@csufresno.edu).

### Jordan Family Donation

Another positive item to mention comes from the generosity of one of our donors. This past spring we were extremely happy to hear of a \$29.4 million donation to our college. In recognition of this transformational gift, our institution has honored the donors by naming our college after them, so our college is now officially known as the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.

There is a long story behind this donation, but here is the short version. The Jordans are not alumni, but rather learned

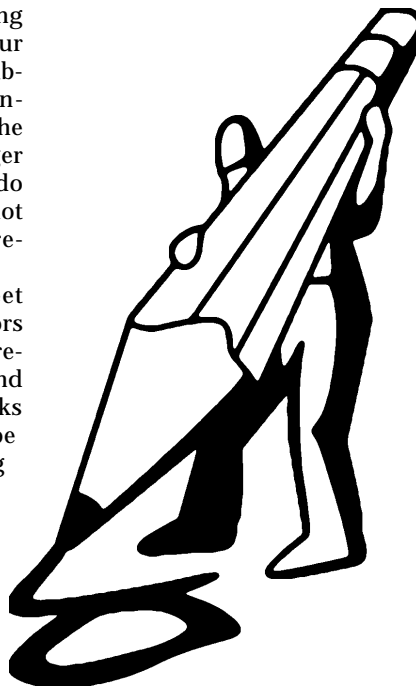
all about the college and its fantastic students from Bob Glim, professor emeritus at Fresno State.

Over the years, the Glims shared their passion for Fresno State and its student-grown farm products with the Jordan family at various motor home rallies. The Jordans became supporters of the college and in 1995 made a commitment to provide scholarship funds for agriculture students even though they had never visited our campus. The Jordan endowment grew over the years to help six to seven students with scholarships annually.

This recent gift will do much more than provide scholarships; these funds will have a huge impact on our college, giving us the ability to improve on existing facilities and add a new agriculture building in the future. These improvements will allow us to continue to move forward and improve our college, even during a time when such progress wouldn't normally be possible. We are very pleased and appreciative of the Jordan family gift.

### Challenges Ahead

As we look to the future, we foresee many challenges for our students and faculty, but these challenges are also providing opportunities to temper ourselves to attain the desired qualities of hardness, elasticity and workability we need to succeed in these difficult times. We wish you all the best as you work to do the same at your respective institutions and please let us know if we can assist you as you guide your students toward their educational and career goals. ❁



# Resources Available

## Agriculture Biology and Earth Science Curriculum

By Angela Mayfield

California has set the pace for states nationwide in the effort to incorporate agriculture biology and earth science courses in the agriculture education continuum. While many states are currently “exploring” the options for receiving college preparatory credit for agriculture courses, California has established a strong example of academically rigorous and relevant coursework in these areas.

### **Tremendous Effort**

This has not come without its challenges, however, and one must acknowledge the tremendous effort on the part of California agriculture teachers over the past decade to develop and modify labs which meet the state standards for biology and earth science, while providing practical career technical education in agriculture.

The countless hours put in by agriculture teachers often goes unrecognized; however, the return is hard to miss as students in agriculture biology and agriculture earth science

courses have begun to outpace their general education counterparts in many schools across the state.

### **Lab Manual**

Recognizing a need for curriculum support for teachers of these college preparatory agriculture courses, California State University, Fresno, with funding by a grant from the California Department of Education, set forth to compile a lab manual for agriculture biology and earth science teachers. Teachers from across the state identified labs they had discovered or written, and sub-

mitted these for inclusion in the lab manuals.

Approximately 150 labs have been carefully reviewed, edited in a simple, easy-to-read format, and aligned with agriculture, biology and earth science standards. The labs were selected with the extremely busy agriculture teacher with limited time and budget in mind. A majority of the labs require minimal supplies, most of which can be purchased at a local grocery or drug store. A few advanced labs were included that require specific supplies which can be ordered

through a lab supply company.

The labs have been organized so that you can quickly flip to the standard area you are covering, select from several lab options, copy and begin! In addition to great labs, you will find text and online resources, as well as a sample year plan for both courses.

**How can you get your hands on a copy of these lab manuals?** Attend a free workshop at your Regional Road Show and receive a hard copy of the manuals! The labs will also be available online at [www.calaged.org](http://www.calaged.org) by November. ☘

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# News and Views

## What Do They Think?

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, California Department of Education

It seems like just yesterday that I made the decision to leave the classroom and accept a position as a regional supervisor. I have many responsibilities now that I am in my third year. I so look forward to the phone ringing. The best part of my day is when a teacher calls for some advice.

These calls allow me to reflect on my experience as a teacher. I think that since I became a member of the state staff I have improved my listening skills. That may be because when I get those calls I do not have several students or even teachers in the background who also want to get my attention. Now there are just the three walls of my 9,216 square-inch cubicle waiting with me for the phone to ring.

### Advisory Committee Key

I try to listen to the teacher's concern and get as much perspective as I can before I often ask them all the same question: "What does your Advisory Committee think?"

Obviously every high school agriculture education program in California has an Agriculture Education Advisory Committee. After all, when the programs submit the annual application for Agricultural Vocational Education Incentive Grant funding, they check that they meet Quality Criteria six.

### Quality Criteria

Because programs state that they will meet Quality Criteria six, we know that they do the following:

1. The Advisory Committee is operational and reflects the committee membership as outlined in the "Agricultural Education Advisory Committee Manual."
2. The Agricultural Advisory Committee meets at least twice each year (three times if applying for criteria 12 funding).
3. The Agricultural Advisory Committee has assisted in the development or revision of the following components of the

Comprehensive Program Plan, as evidenced in the Agriculture Advisory Committee minutes:

- Job Market Description
- Total Program Goals and Objectives
- Course Subject Matter Outlines
- 5-Year Facility/Equipment Plan
- Graduate Follow Up
- Targeted Occupations
- Program Description – courses, SAE, FFA
- Program Completion Standards
- Current Year Budget
- List of Active Placement Sites

### Community Opinion

It has occurred to me that some in our profession lose sight of the role of advisory committees. An advisory committee or group provides advice without governing responsibility. They support the program's activities by providing information, resources, prestige or influence. They should provide the opinion of the community where your program is located. Though many of you may value my opinion, what really matters is what your community thinks.

With these difficult financial times facing our schools, an effective advisory committee will provide the best opportunity

*(Continued on page 13)*

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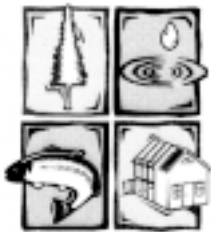


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## There's More to Learning Than Just 'Doing'

By Steven Rocca, CATA Post-Secondary Division Secretary, Assistant Professor, Agricultural Education, CSU, Fresno

Since its inception, agricultural education has been based on a "hands-on" or "learn by doing" approach. This model has definitely served us well and continues to be a common philosophical thread for those of us in the profession. Numerous variations of the hands-on approach to teaching and learning have been created over the years, including problem-based learning, inquiry learning, discovery learning, experiential learning and the list goes on.

Rufus Stimson, referred to by many as the "Father of Agricultural Education," created one of the early "learn by doing" techniques with his "Project Method" of teaching agriculture in 1908 at Smith's School of Agriculture in Massachusetts. The "Project" still lives on today in its modern form as Supervised Agricultural Experience projects, which provide our students with valuable hands-on learning opportunities.

### Changes

Over 100 years have passed though since Stimson's cre-

**One thing should remain the same: our commitment to providing students with quality hands-on experiences with real-world applications.**

ation of the "Project Method" and with it have come many changes in agricultural education in California and across our nation.

Just in the last two decades, reforms in education and pressure for higher student perfor-

mance on standardized tests have had a huge impact on the secondary agriculture curriculum.

It is not uncommon to see high school agriculture programs teaching far more courses traditionally thought of as "academic" courses rather than the vocational courses that once dominated our curriculum.

But no matter if you believe this change in our curricular focus is the best for agricultural education and our students or not, one thing should remain the same: our commitment to providing students with quality hands-on experiences with real-world applications.

### 'Hands-on Learning'?

With that being said, I ask you to consider this: how many times can you remember a lab, demonstration or excursion to the school farm or greenhouse that ended just as the bell rang, allowing you just enough time to clean up, but far short of the time necessary to ask your students to reflect on what they learned that day? Is this true hands-on learning?

What about the student who shows a lamb or hog at the county fair? He or she picked it out, fed it as you told them, practiced showmanship as instructed, showed it and sold it at the auction. Is this a good example of hands-on learning?

I would challenge you to

think about each scenario a bit more before answering. You see, the term "hands-on" education tends to lead us to believe that as long as students are doing or touching something, than they must be learning.

Unfortunately, I believe this is a poor simplification of the hands-on approach.

Let's look at what you can do to provide your students with the most effective and beneficial hands-on learning opportunities.

### Kolb's Model

Hands-on or experiential learning gets its roots from the work of the educational philosopher, John Dewey.

Dewey would inspire many others to develop their own theories about experiential learning, one of those being David Kolb, who developed his "Model of Experiential Learning" in 1975.

Kolb's model begins with an individual having some type of concrete experience, or "doing."

This is followed by the second step where the student steps back from the experience, observes it and then reflects on it.

Based on his or her observations and reflections, the student completes the third step by thinking and then forming generalizations or principles about what he or she learned from the experience.

In the final step the student applies their generalizations or principles to a new experience to see if they hold true. This leads to another concrete experience thus beginning the cycle again.

(Continued on page 14)

## What Do They Think?

(Continued from page 8)

to continue to cause program improvement. If when a board is faced with making difficult decisions the only voice board members hear fighting to improve opportunities for students in the agriculture program is the teacher, your program may be in trouble.

### Committee Makeup

When developing or updating your advisory committee, reflect on the following that can be found in the Agriculture Education Advisory Committee Manual:

- ✓ Are the members of your advisory committee your friends? You want to avoid friends because they often will not be as objective in terms of your performance.
- ✓ Do you have successful agriculturists on your committee?
- ✓ Do they have recent, successful, first-hand and practical experience in the field of agriculture?
- ✓ Are they truly interested in the agriculture program?
- ✓ Are they also involved with other organizations and service groups in the community?
- ✓ Do they have frequent dealings with the department? If they do, they may have some conflict of interest with some decisions being made.
- ✓ Do they recognize the time required being a member and are they willing to serve on the committee?

I am happy to provide teachers with my opinion when asked. However, what is really important is what the perception is of your program in your community. Does the community take ownership of your program? Programs that are truly embraced by the community where they are located are doing just fine during these difficult times.

It is the community's program. What do they think? ☼



## There's More to Learning Than Just 'Doing'

*(Continued from page 13)*

### **Include Time**

Kolb's model offers educators a process to follow to help ensure that students have effective experiential learning experiences.

We all know that it takes a great deal of time to prepare for a big laboratory activity or to get that market lamb to the county fair.

So, we really need to fully utilize these activities and squeeze every teaching and learning opportunity possible out of these experiences for the benefit of our students.

The next time you plan an agriscience lab activity, trip to the school farm or even an SAE visit, try modifying your routine to include time for all four phases of the experiential

learning model I've mentioned.

### **Challenge Students to Think**

After your students finish the "experience," challenge them to think about what it is that they have just learned. Discuss it with them or have them write down some of the things they discovered through their experience.

Next, have them design another experiment or develop a new plan for an experience that will allow them to see if their beliefs are indeed correct.

### **Benefits**

I admit using these experiential learning methods does take more preparation time and requires greater patience and student guidance, but you just

have to consider the benefits to be convinced.

Experiential learning techniques allow students to use multiple senses that can increase retention of what is learned.

Multiple teaching and learning techniques can be integrated to maximize creativity and student engagement. The process of discovering knowledge and solutions builds student competence and confidence.

And possibly most important for teachers, if students are actively engaged in learning, they have a greater stake in the outcome of their learning and are less likely to become a discipline problem. ❁

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# News and Views

## 2009 Conference Award Winners



*Outstanding Young Teacher: Shay Williams-Hopper, Tulare High School. Presenting the award is CATA State President Jim Shanks.*



*Outstanding Teacher: Don Wilson Memorial Award: Darlene Gilles, Madera South High School. Presenting the award is CATA State President Jim Shanks.*

# News and Views

## 2009 Conference Award Winners



**Outstanding Single Person Secondary Program:** Buena Park High School: Jessica Weisbart and Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Education Program State Winner.



**Outstanding 2-3 Person Secondary Program:** Nevada Union High School: Karen Henderson and Jim Drew (not pictured: Katie Alling).



**Outstanding Large Secondary Program:** Hanford High School: Sam Rodriguez, Kris Elliott, Connie Soares, Cortney Bell, Susan Moran, Dennis Mann, Lilly Pimentel, Brian Combes.

# News and Views

## 2009 Conference Award Winners



**Outstanding Small Community College Program:** Shasta College: Leimone Waite, Trena Kimler-Richards and John Livingston (not pictured: Ken Nolte).



**Outstanding Large Community College Program:** Modesto Junior College: John Mendes, Steve Amador, Dale Pollard, Bill Hobby, Don Borges, Mike Morales, Dr. Karen Walters Dunlap, Mark Anglin (not pictured: David Baggett, Marlies Boyd, Gail Brumley, Todd Conrado, Bill Hobby, Julie Haynes) and Outstanding Community College Program State Winner.



**Teacher of Excellence Winners:** Guillermo Guerra, Jerry Delsol, Pam Brem, Rhonda Fuller, Jennifer Terpstra, Dennis Mann, Chris McCraw, Steve Amador, Kevin Woodard (not pictured: George Wold).

# News and Views

## 2009 Conference Award Winners



*2009 CATA Hall of Fame Inductees: Gino Farinelli, Larry Rathbun, Lloyd Doster, Clayton Oilar and Ralph Loya.*



*2009 Retiring Teachers: Mark Bender, George Kreutz, Dennis Mann, Gary Martin, Ted Kimbler, David Mattrocce, Richard Harris, Joe Terra, Jerry Clark, James Bompreszi (not pictured: David Frattalone, Doug Bell, Chistine Dickson, Don Lopez, Roger Dickson, Jim Isbell, Ron Nishinaka).*



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October 21-24 .....	National FFA Convention .....	Indianapolis
November 7 .....	Cotton State Finals .....	CSU Fresno
November 14 .....	San Joaquin Region Meeting .....	Lemoore
November 14 .....	Central Region Meeting .....	Turlock
November 18-21 .....	National NAAE Convention .....	Nashville, TN
December 3-4 .....	New Professionals Conference .....	Fresno
December 3 - 5 .....	Community College Midwinter Institute .....	Coalinga/Harris Ranch
December 11 .....	Superior Region Meeting .....	Lincoln
January 14-15 .....	Winter Governing Board .....	Galt
January 28-29 .....	Student Teacher Conclave .....	Davis
January 30 .....	Natural Resources State Finals .....	Reedley College
February 6 .....	Winter State Finals - Citrus, Tree & Vine Pruning .....	CSU Fresno
February 20 .....	Superior Region Meeting .....	Oroville
February 22 .....	South Coast Region Meeting .....	San Luis Obispo
February 27 .....	Central Region Meeting .....	Stockton
February 27 .....	San Joaquin Region Meeting .....	Bakersfield
March 27 .....	North Coast Region Meeting .....	Ukiah
April 10 .....	Southern Region Meeting .....	Pomona
April 17 .....	CSU Fresno Field Day .....	CSU Fresno
April 17-20 .....	State FFA Leadership Conference .....	Fresno
April 21-24 .....	NAAE Region I Meeting .....	Great Falls, Montana
May 1 .....	State FFA Judging Finals .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 19 .....	Executive Committee Meeting .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 20 .....	Pre-Conference Governing Board .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 20-24 .....	CATA Summer Conference .....	Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 24 .....	Governing Board Summer Retreat .....	San Luis Obispo