State Leaders Showing Interest in Career Technical Education
By Matt Patton, CATA Executive Director

As the legislative process ramps up in Sacramento, Career Technical Education (CTE) is in vogue and supported by a bipartisan multitude of legislators. Both the Governor’s budget released in January and proposed Assembly bills have targeted specific funding for CTE and staffing. Leaders in the state capital are seeing the need for students to have choices in their path to college and career readiness. The devil is in the details, as they say, and the negotiations and amendments that come in the following months will determine if this increased interest and funding for CTE will result in positive change for students and CTE programs across the state of California.

Our message continues to be that this funding is desperately needed, but without the criteria and accountability to ensure that the money is directed to high-quality CTE programs and is used to support Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSO’s), then little change or growth will occur. It is essential that this money be tied to quality program criteria and be used to deliver industry relevant technical skills and the soft jobs skills learned in leadership development that the current workforce demands.

Perkins
The federal Perkins Basic State Grant was increased $75 million for a total funding proposal of $1.2 billion. This $75 million increase does not fully restore the cuts to Perkins that have been imposed recently, but this is a positive sign moving forward. This federal funding will mean additional money at the state level for CTE programs. The exact dollar amount coming to California will be released in May.

California Budget
The Governor’s budget contains $6.3 billion in Proposition 98 funding. The K–12 funding per student will increase from $11,165 in 2017–2018 to $11,628 in 2018–2019. This is an increase of $463 or 4.1%. Almost $5 billion will go to K–12 education, $1.2 billion will go to the Community College system and $193 million is allocated for the California State Preschool Program.

Governor Brown’s budget has prioritized the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF),
Sandwiches and Attitudes
By Robin Grundmeyer, CATA President

It is hard to believe that almost 12 months ago I was standing in front of our organization closing out the CATA Summer Conference. In the closing remarks, I spoke about a blog post that I had read by Mark Manson. The premise of the blog, called “7 Strange Questions That Help You Find Your Life Purpose,” is about finding your true purpose. I had specifically focused on question number one of the blog, “What is your favorite flavor of $t*$t sandwich and does it come with an olive?”

To quote the blog by Mason: “Everything involves sacrifice. Everything includes some sort of cost. Nothing is pleasurable or uplifting all of the time. So the question becomes: what struggle or sacrifice are you willing to tolerate? Ultimately, choose your ATTITUDE like you do your clothing.”

Sacramento Scene

State Leaders Showing Interest in Career Technical Education

(Continued from page 1) Recruitment of special education teachers, district support, and CTE.

The Ag Incentive Grant (AIG) is set to be funded at the status quo of $4.123 million. The Governor’s CTE proposal is $200 million in ongoing state funding for K–12 aligned with Regional Workforce Plans. This money would be distributed through the Chancellor’s office based on the following formula: 1/3 local job projections, 1/3 local unemployment rates, and 1/3 average daily attendance (ADA) of students in the area. Additionally, the plan budgets $12 million for Workforce Pathway coordinators hired by the local consortia of each community college district.

Assembly Bill 1743

This bipartisan bill led by Assembly Member Patrick O’Donnell from the Long Beach area was designed to be an extension of the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) but has since been amended to be ongoing funding of $500 million per year for CTE. The money would be allotted via a competitive grant based on CTEIG requirements. This CTE legislation also allocates $12 million to provide regional career technical education coordinators to support local education agencies (LEA). These coordinators would be hired by select county offices of education across the state.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Elections for Superintendent of Public Instruction will occur and barring a run-off, the new superintendent will be named in June.

Two names have surfaced as front runners: Tony Thurmond and Marshall Tuck.

Mr. Thurmond is an Assembly member from the Richmond area and is endorsed by the California Teachers Association (CTA).

Tuck hails from the Los Angeles area and was a charter school executive and administrator of independently run schools. Marshall ran against incumbent Tom Torlakson in the previous election and narrowly lost.

Regional Supervisors

The Agricultural Education delivery model is in serious jeopardy, currently the Superior Region Ag Education Consultant position is vacant, and with two more impending retirements, the possibility of being reduced to three supervisors statewide could be a reality in less than one year’s time. Currently the California Department of Education (CDE) does not allot any state funds to support staffing positions in Ag Education. There is a history of alarming decline in CTE staff support at the Department of Education over the last 40 years. At one point 186 people worked in CTE. That number is now at a record-low of 25. CDE claims that these staffing reductions are a direct result of reductions of Perkins funding. With an increase in federal funding this year, we will see if those statements are just rhetoric or will essential positions be reinstated?

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what determines our ability to stick with something we care about is our ability to handle the rough patches and ride out the inevitable rotten days.”

The CATA has had some rough patches; we knew at the end of the conference that there would surely be more.

The sandwich analogy was to encourage the membership to consider those sandwiches we had eaten over the past year and those that would be served to us throughout the coming year. Are the occasional sandwiches worth it?

Lots of Sandwiches

The fact of the matter is this year I have eaten quite a few of the sandwiches that I spoke about at our closing session. Sandwiches were artfully designed and served to me by students who did not make grades to attend a judging trip that was paid for months in advance.

My favorite sandwiches of all, are those prepared by the rare-but-overwhelming lunatic brides. To be brutally honest, I have even made a few sandwiches on my own! I have eaten every one of these sandwiches, some more willingly than others... but at least I have selected the flavor of my sandwiches.

Through it all, it would be considered reasonable for a person to have become bitter, angry, or even discouraged. That's where our attitude comes in. Our attitudes determine how we perceive things, how we deal with situations, and potentially the outcome. Is our attitude where it should be to help us when we get handed a sandwich?

we be more cognizant of how our daily attitude influences those around us?

Seven Choices

So, what are the secrets or tips that Dr. Toler shares in his book? He states that there are seven choices you can make that have the power to transform your life.

• Choose Hope - Believe that it will all work out.
• Choose Humility - Don’t take yourself too seriously.
• Choose Gratitude - Count your blessings.
• Choose Generosity - Give more than you take.
• Choose Compassion - Be kind to everyone you meet.
• Choose Joy - Celebrate life.
• Choose Perseverance - Keep going no matter what.

It would not be realistic to think that we would be great at accomplishing all of the items on the list above. If that were the case, there would not be a multitude of self-help books and leadership books. I do believe that as we close out this school year and begin the process of decompressing and preparing for another year, we could pick one or two elements to make a priority for the new year.

The school year is coming to an end, and the struggle is real! To all of you fabulous, fantastic, and hard-working teachers and professors, choose perseverance. See you in June at the CATA Summer Conference!
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Welcome Deanne Meyer to Agricultural Education!

By Lynn Martindale, Agricultural Education Teacher Supervisor/Lecturer
University of California, Davis, School of Education

We are excited to welcome Deanne Meyer as the Master Advisor to the undergraduate program of Agricultural and Environmental Education. What does this really mean? It means that the students in the major will have representation in the department and in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CA&ES). In the past, Dr. Cary Trexler and myself advised the students in the major. We are in the School of Education, not in CA&ES, and so we were not part of many of the decisions that went on in CA&ES.

Who is Deanne Meyer? Deanne was raised in Santa Rosa and was introduced to agriculture through the FFA. She refers to herself as a “blue jacket kid.” While in FFA, she raised lambs, participated on the livestock and meats judging teams, as well as the Farm Records team. Deanne also received her American Degree.

Dr. Meyer is a UC Davis graduate in Animal Science and received her Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Florida, Gainesville. She is an Extension Agent, Livestock Waste Management Specialist. Dr. Meyer’s research interest is the analyses of production, collection, storage, transportation and utilization of manure management waste stream(s) on dairies.

We are excited to have Dr. Meyer as part of the Ag Ed Team at UC Davis.

Reflection Shows Teaching Philosophy Evolves over Time

By Craig Davidson, Highland High School

I have recently been considering the next step in my career as an agriculture educator. As such, I was asked to write my “story” of my teaching experience. Being that I have taught for quite some time, limiting myself to just two pages was a daunting task — deleting experiences and stories that didn’t matter as much. Perhaps they did, perhaps someone would see some value. In either case, I reflected on my life — my life as an immigrant chasing the American Dream and quickly came to realize how blessed we are, I have been, to have been given the opportunities afforded to me.

My teaching partner and I hope that this inspires you to think about where you have come from and be thankful for the careers and lives we have, regardless of how tough or unfair certain aspects may be. I am proud to be a Scottish American!

New Adventure

August 13, 1994: I was born again. My life as I knew it had ended and I was beginning a new adventure in the Land of the Free. The country I was later to call “home.”

The country that was later to provide opportunities and experiences I never fathomed before. The country that would give me a wife and birth to two amazing little girls. The country I would live out the rest of my time on Earth.

This journey started as a decision to move that brought about fear and uncertainty. However, because of this risk, I find myself today in the industry I feel I was meant to be a part of.

I remember like it was yesterday. I was leaving the home I had known my whole life, my mum had sold everything, and before I knew it I was waving goodbye to my dad as we drove away. Mixed emotions filled me as I was excited to go to the land of Bay Watch babes, movie celebrities, palm trees, and the sun, yet at the same time I was devastated to leave my family and friends behind. Everything I knew, everything I perceived, was about to quickly change.

My dad, the local town Solicitor, and my mum, a local nurse, were no strangers to hard work. They taught me at a young age that if I want something, I must work for it. The experience I had on my family farm led me to find my place in the agriculture program at my new American high school.

Scottish Studies

Shortly after high school, I moved back to Scotland and studied at the Scottish Agricultural College.

However, there were very few opportunities to learn by doing, and most of the classes were lecture-based with very few field trips to local farms. I had a difficult time connecting with my peers, I was unmotivated to go to classes, and in the end, I couldn’t transfer to Fresno State fast enough.

It was during that time in Scotland that I realized what I did, but more importantly what I did not want to do. I knew that if I was to be an effective teacher, I must provide incentives for students to enroll, stay engaged, and find their place in the agriculture industry. I also knew I needed to develop personal relationships with my students in order to provide relevancy, hands-on experiences, and fun in my classes.

The FFA motto of “learning to do, doing to learn…” became the basis for what I wanted my teaching style to be, in order to maximize students’ interest. I sought to provide students with FFA opportunities that would

(Continued on page 6)
More Than a Job

Being an agriculture teacher is more than a job. It is a lifestyle in which a culture exists to motivate, encourage, and ignite a passion in young people’s lives. Having a connection with an agriculture teacher is a mentorship opportunity for students who many times have no other reason to come to school.

With the changes that we are seeing in the world—population growth, food security, immigration, and climate change, among others, agriculture teachers have a heavier task than ever of making this generation of future leaders ready to take on the issues of tomorrow. The challenges we face as an industry can be met only by educated and hardworking individuals who can step up to the plate.

Through my 13 years of teaching, I have encountered many students who were brought up with no background in agriculture or students who were raised in unfathomable conditions who later went on to work in agriculture. Each year, several students enter the program in their third or fourth year of high school and quickly tell me how they regret not being a part of the program for all four years. This is why I teach agriculture: to inspire and motivate students who will, in turn, change the world.

I have faced many challenges over my tenure, including bureaucratic politics, budgets, classroom management, programmatic struggles, and administrative policies. However, when looking back, each obstacle I was forced to overcome made me a better, more experienced educator. I have also earned many accolades over the years which one would consider “successful” (whatever that means).

What’s Next?

Jump forward to January 26, 2018, I find myself considering the next move. Do I continue in the same mode for the next 25 years? Or do I challenge myself to impact the world on a much greater scale?

At the end of the day, I can hang my hat and be proud of the accomplishments I have made, and the opportunities I have taken which I would not have had if I stayed in Scotland. However; American values teach me to never settle—always strive for something better and bigger than ourselves.

Status quo is something I have never conformed to, so when faced with the decision of staying where I know is comfortable and familiar, or taking on the challenge of the Ph.D. program in order to change the lives of university students and the public alike, the latter is the chance worth taking.

Reflection and Growth a Constant Progression

I recently started looking for Ph.D. programs. During the application process, they ask for a personal statement to address teaching philosophies. Never one to do more work than is required, I decided to use my philosophy that I first wrote for Dr. Vaughn’s class during my bachelor’s. Before I just copied and pasted the paper, I figured I should probably look over the paper as I am a notorious BS-er and a miss-speller, and terrible at grammar. As I did so, I was shocked at how my perception of principles and theories.

Originally I thought understanding came best from action; this was from my personal experience as a student and a beginning teacher. I believed and still do that learn by doing is the best way to instruct a student. Understanding comes through actual practice and application of principles and theories.

The complete educational experience will incorporate a three-prong approach: hands-on classroom instruction, supervised educational experience, and interactive communication development.

With hands-on classroom instruction, lessons will be engaging and meaningful to each student. Supervised educational experience will reflect classroom learning and be directed toward each individual’s career and educational choices. Interactive communication will provide students an opportunity to refine and practice the life and employability skills one needs to succeed.

I now realize I was missing one (Continued on page 7)
Do It for the Culture
By Dane White, Central Region President, Galt High School

With summer on deck and a presumed blink of an eye before the new school year begins (honestly, where does summer go?), it may be the single time where we get to sit quietly, reflect and assess our strengths and shortcomings in order to develop meaningful pivots for our programs.

One area that I find consumes much of my brain power during these think sessions is the notion of culture. A set of attitudes, behavioral norms and customs of a group, culture can be mindfully shaped by interested parties and I have found doing so has yielded a number of critical dividends for our program at Galt High.

‘Everything Speaks’
This topic first came to mind years ago when I was learning how to be a classroom teacher. Engrossed by Quantum Learning, I found a portion of the book really stuck with me: “...everything that takes place in the classroom sends a message, but only students can decide what the message is and what it means to them. Knowledge of everything speaks means we view the classroom and all that’s in it with consideration of what message it sends (DePorter, Reardon, & Singer-Nourie, 1999).”

As a profession that extends learning far outside the confines of our classrooms, then that same idea of everything speaks — we have many of those keys already in place. However, it’s the fine-tuning that happens on the local level that counts most in the execution and maintenance of culture.

Where Are We Now
First we can each analyze where our cultures are now. We could use student focus groups, online survey tools, and external researchers to help quantify our program’s values and culture, but each of those are fairly extensive undertakings. Instead, one useful device is the photo test: take a look at the pictures on your chapter’s social media accounts, photos of students showing each species at the fair or competing in field days or participating in events. Everything speaks.

Reflection Shows Teaching Philosophy Evolves over Time

(Continued from page 6)

vital component to a student’s education — connection. When I address connection, I do so as a motivator. A student who is hooked, invested, or motivated will learn more than a student who is not, regardless of the instructional strategy used. I came to this understanding early in my career.

Home Visits
My second year of teaching I incorporated something I heard about in my master’s courses at Cal Poly and that was home visits. I found that this home visit increased the student and family involvement while bolstering our program. In class, I noticed that I had an easier time with management as the students and I had a stronger connection. I know that students perform better when I have had a home visit with them. This connection I have with my students is why I have been as successful as I have as a teacher. In fact, teaching became more rewarding and I started to push myself in other areas of development.

My teaching experience has built and developed my desire to pursue a graduate degree, because of its importance. When I think about my job and its importance to my students and our society, I become concerned for those who do not have the opportunity to have an educational experience like the students do in our programs. I think how much more prepared would those students be if they experienced half of what our students do?

I look back at my post-secondary education and I realize that my understanding and approach to teaching stemmed from those experiences. How much more important of a job did my professors have to prepare, support, and mentor me?

Making an Impact
I know that I want to be a teacher educator and help guide and build the path that agriculture education will take in the next few decades. I want to help prepare the next generation of educators so that my impact will be greater than that of one high school.

I am at a point in my career and life to where if I were to continue my education, now would be the time. I have the drive and determination to work and get the job done. I am open minded, flexible, and willing to learn.

At the same time, I bring to the table a unique perspective and life experiences, both in and out of the agriculture industry. I have a passion for teaching and for agriculture. I believe a firm foundation is the best to build upon. Educating future educators is essential to agriculture’s and our nation’s future. As a teacher educator, I can help prepare that foundation.
News and Views

Do It for the Culture

(Continued from page 5)

of welcome. This is more than hosting a start of the year BBQ or setting up recruitment tables at middle schools (though these can be helpful devices for executing the culture). A culture of welcome implies that each person will be valued for their individual selves and will have a place at the table.

Don’t get me wrong — every BEHAVIOR is not welcome and sometimes we have to work extra hard to correct the bad habits of our students. But we all know that as constant works in progress, students are more than capable of rising above their bad behaviors and really shining.

Recently I saw a teacher post on Facebook: “Only send us the good ones!” And as much as I identify with the frustrations that come with working alongside challenging students, I had to wonder what message was being sent about how welcome every student (and their associated families) was in that program.

Is it solely a place for the student who came out of the womb clutching a blue ribbon and a straight A report card? Or will other students (even those who require a bit more work) be given the chance to shine? Everything speaks.

Suggestions

A culture of welcome based on authentic appreciation for all students is relatively easy to implement. Suggestions include:

• Speak to every student every day and look them in the eye while doing so.
• Notice when a student was absent and follow up with them after to ensure they are doing okay.
• Send postcards home for students who are generous, give their maximum effort, improve their work in your class, demonstrate growth, are respectful, etc.
• Create Outstanding Aggie awards in your program that recognize and feature off-the-radar students who are emblematic of the culture you hope to create. Use this to honor the behind-the-scenes workers and kind-hearted quiet kids who don’t always make the headlines.
• Get observed by a trusted colleague who will be forthright with you. Ask them to observe you teach and acquire feedback about how well you model understanding, respect, and appreciation for all students.
• Eliminate programmatic norms that pigeonhole students. Our most enthusiastic welders also can be our most effective ag leadership students when their other skills and interests are welcomed.
• Develop systems that create equity of opportunity. Maybe some students need scholarship assistance to attend leadership conferences or won’t write an application as beautifully in English if it’s their second language.
• Engage all parents by offering activities that suit their interests and areas of expertise rather than solely the tried-and-true activity series that may leave some out.
• Have older students eat lunch in ag classrooms to create a safe, welcoming space for younger students who might not have an easy place to go at that time.
• Add value to the larger school by running lunchtime activities, etc. This can allow a broader cross-section of students to be exposed to and interact with your program.

Limitless Possibilities

Once the culture of welcome has been established there are limitless possibilities for additional cultural pillars.

When students are in the door and feel a part of the crew it’s easy to then implement a culture of high expectations, a culture of kindness, a culture of excellence — AND students will become the standard bearers of the new culture.

I’ve seen locally how our students greet strangers, use their manners, and go out of their way to shake hands with everyone they meet. They feel welcome and, in valuing that cultural norm, extend that same feeling to others without even consciously knowing they do so. They enforce the culture and the gatekeepers for behavioral expectations and norms.

This year during soccer season, our goalkeeper, Maico, started the hashtag #doitfortheculture. It permeated the work of the boys each practice and game, because they recognized that their small actions on and off the field were both emblematic of and a contribution to Galt High’s culture. They recognize that the norms of the place are influenced by what they do and that they are stewards of the values of our program.

This summer as I sit on my porch and reflect on the year, I will be grateful to work in a place where we have actively shaped the culture hope that all of us throughout the state can do the same.

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Vision 2030 Offers Way to Plan for Future of Ag Teaching

By Erin Gorter, CATA Secretary

My husband and I bought our first home together three years ago. We were elated to finally be home owners. Although we had heard our parents and friends discuss the discomforts of home ownership, we really did not believe them. Turns out, they were right! Owning a home is hard! The constant battle with the poison oak in our yard (the only thing I grow well), tree trimming, water leaks, broken appliances (water heater, fridge, and dishwasher...so far), changing fixtures, updating flooring...the list goes on and it is definitely a vicious cycle. But, as I sit here on a glorious 80-degree day on the coast, I am thankful for the home we have, even with all of its quirks and needs and projects and broken things.

To cope, my husband and I have become quite good at identifying lists of what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and prioritizing the order in which things need to be done. It keeps us focused and nothing can ever get too far out of shape (except for the poison oak, which does give the yard a nice woody vibe).

Planning for Future

CATA has held its own version of planning for the future since 2012 with the Vision 2030 initiative. This process has allowed the members of our profession to identify areas of opportunity and weakness as well as strategically plan and implement items of action to improve our profession.

I think Vision 2030 has been a meticulously run machine that has aided our greatest assets—our students. We have been able to create new rigorous curriculum, streamlined processes, and enhanced the programmatic areas which we, as members, found room to grow in. Vision 2030 has been a savior to our profession and it will continue to be such in the future.

New Cycle

We are about to embark on a new cycle of Vision 2030. For some of you, it will be a repeat of a process you had the chance to participate in before. Other newer teachers have never had the opportunity to participate.

From this collaboration, our veteran and novice teachers will have the ability to share new, refreshed insights on where our profession has been and where we need to go. I look forward to all of our members taking the opportunity to participate in the Vision 2030 breakout during our upcoming state CATA Conference. There, we will have the opportunity to share our own insights on where we see our profession headed as we begin to prepare for our next implementation of the Vision 2030 cycle.

Looking for Leaders

Before we are able to come together and discuss the issues of our profession in June, we need some individuals to step up. CATA is looking for two individuals to help guide the collaboration process in June; one to serve as the primary chair, and one to serve as co-chair.

For the individuals who take on this leadership role in our profession, it will be their time to help continue the legacy of the Vision 2030 initiative and the powerful purpose it serves.

My ag teacher used to always tell us: “You only get out of it what you put into it.” I remind my husband of this when we are working around the house, when we would probably rather not be, because it will be nice to sit down at the end of the day and enjoy our home, reflecting on what we have accomplished.

This is the time for our membership to put in the time and thought to help shape the outcomes of the future of our profession. Vision 2030 needs all of you, so please take the opportunity to play a positive role in the continuation of this cycle of foresight and action.

FFA Giving Away 450 CalAg License Plates

The California FFA is giving away FREE California ag license plates to the first 450 to submit a completed application.

Here is what you need to do:

• Complete the Reg. 17 application. Please note: we will only accept completed applications for a sequential California Agricultural (CalAG) plate. Applications for personalized or other special interest applications will not be accepted.

• Once the application is completed, print and mail it to the California FFA, P.O. Box 460, Galt, CA 95632.

• Applications will be forwarded to the Department of Motor Vehicles with payment. Plate owner is responsible for annual renewal fees.

• Special Interest License Plate Application (Reg. 17) is at https://www.calaged.org/docs/reg17.pdf

Thanks to all of you who helped launch the first-ever California Agricultural License Plate! Your efforts are greatly appreciated.
Retreat with Purpose

By Rosemary Cummings, CATA Treasurer

Each summer we pack up the van and head out on a multi-day adventure to plan, play, and gear up for a new year—which is hard to even think about in the midst of March field day madness. With that said, thinking about the word “retreat” takes on a whole new meaning, like to withdraw and run away (quickly). But looking ahead to a less-demanding schedule, I challenge you to invest the time to plan and conduct a retreat with purpose, for your staff and students, in order to pay dividends in the coming year.

Key Components

I’m not a self-proclaimed retreat expert, but I do find much value in the process, so I have identified key components for you to visit when planning your upcoming retreats.

Owl (Teacher) Retreat Prior

Prior to the student retreat, I find it critical to meet as a staff to revisit our purpose as educators, create annual goals, and determine who will take the lead to accomplish the goals. The retreat should include all the key retreat components as the student retreat which creates engagement, ownership, and defined targets to work towards as a team.

At the conclusion of the owl retreat, it is important to find a way to include the owls’ significant others to make them feel valued as a stakeholder of your program. This can look different for each department: dinner out at a local hot spot, night at the shooting range, wine and design night for the artists in the department.

The venue and activity are secondary to the goal of inclusiveness. Just as we encourage our students to include those who feel left out, we must model the same behavior.

Plan with Purpose

Every activity and event should have an overarching purpose that is identified. Questioning an activity’s purpose will help bring value in all that you do as an organization.

For example, what is the purpose of a movie night? Is it simply to watch a movie or should each student be challenged with implementing the moral of the movie into their lives? As a result, the movie becomes more meaningful and can create a culture of self-awareness.

The movie Remember the Titans, for instance, has a core message of inclusiveness and acceptance.

This message can be celebrated by recognizing students for demonstrating such behavior.

Location Determination

Be sure to choose an environment that will support your desire for purpose.

For example, if the purpose of the retreat is to focus on education, maybe choose a location where students can take a tour of an agriculture operation.

Or if the focus is team building, consider attending a local ropes course or recreation area.

Regardless of the location, make sure it provides an environment for collaboration.

Make it Matter

Incorporate an activity that will allow students to take ownership by sharing their story.

For example, have students bring three personal items to share and explain why those items have value to them.

This is a great opportunity for your leaders to share their core values and everyone will grow as a result.

Eliminate Distractions

For your retreat to be successful, students must be engaged in the moment and not distracted by the outside world via electronic devices.

I recommend communicating with the parents directly, and sharing with them the rationale behind the no-device rule and give them your phone number in case they need to reach their child. Most all parents welcome the structure.

Fuel Their Minds by Feeding Their Stomachs

FOOD is a critical ingredient to retreating with purpose. I recommend each student bring their favorite snack item to share with everyone.

In addition, you can make a team building activity out of the meals. Purposefully place officers in pairs and assign them a meal to plan, shop, and cook.

On the way to the retreat location, we stop at a local market, and give each partnership cash to fund their meal.

Awards can be given for the most creative meal choice, excellent taste, presentation, or simply the best chef’s award.

In addition, you can create team building activities out of food preparation. You can construct personal pizzas in a blind partnership, which works on communication skills and team building.

Food ideas are limitless, but critical because no one wants to work hungry.

Remain Focused on Your Purpose

Remember that the overall goal of a retreat is to build a foundation for the success of your organization. When done correctly, retreats can provide a powerful environment to build relationships, make decisions, increase officer engagement, and inspiration for your leadership to make a positive impact for the upcoming year.

However, for this to happen, you must take the time to plan a meaningful agenda, communicate the expectation, include all the stakeholders, gather all supplies, and share responsibilities.

If your chapter participates in the National Chapter Award program, it is helpful to align your goals to the outlined categories in the application.

Keep the Purpose by Following Up on All Decisions

To ensure the success of the chapter’s goals, post them in each classroom for all students to see. This helps keep the goals in the forefront of your organization and makes follow-up easier when you see them on the wall every day.

A mid-year retreat (over winter break) is a great time to follow up on all decisions made and revisit the purposefulness of those decisions. It is also a wonderful time to just enjoy each other before the craziness of the spring semester begins.

Happy Retreating with Purpose.
Has Anything Changed in the Past 10 Years?

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, Department of Education

Nearly 10 years ago I wrote an article for the Golden Slate that started with the following:

“As I prepare this article there is a 6.5% unemployment rate, the past year the stock market has fluctuated in a 6,000 point range, and I feel good about paying $2.89 a gallon for diesel. Our Governor has just announced that he plans to cut education by 4.2%, increase sales tax by one and a half percent, and cut my pay by 5%. These are just proposals. By the time the Golden Slate goes to print we will all better know what the Legislature votes to implement. One thing is for certain, times will be tough. Will your program survive?”

What has changed since 2008? The unemployment rate is down. Though still volatile, the stock market is double what it was, and I would be happy to find diesel at $2.89, but can’t. We have had an increase in fuel taxes to fix our roads even though the current fuel taxes were for the same purpose.

Our Governor released a budget in January that had some positives for CTE and Agriculture Education, though we know that it is not important what is in the proposed budget in January, but the approved budget in June. We expect that the budget will include additional funding for our programs, but will need to wait to see in what form that additional funding is allocated to our programs.

Greater Role for Local Control

I have no better crystal ball today than I had in 2008. Given the changes in school funding, local control has a greater role today than 10 years ago. The quality criteria used for the Agricultural Career Technical Education Incentive Grant continues to be the most functional program accountability measure used to measure the function of a program.

It is far from perfect, but as shown in what I wrote 10 years ago, this tool helps measure if students are engaged in the three-circle model.

Incentive Grant Checklist

Over the years there has been a focus on the importance of program improvement and the value of effective advisory committees. Annually, an “Incentive Grant Checklist” is completed for your program.

Based on a three-year rotation, it is completed by the teacher(s), advisory committee, or the regional supervisor.

Some important areas on the checklist include:

• Every student is given a grade based upon participation in leadership activities.
• Student participation in Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) is part of the grading criteria for every agriculture student in the program.
• Students with SAE projects are visited by their agriculture teacher at least twice per year as documented by department records.

• The Advisory Committee is operational and reflects the committee membership as outlined in the “Agricultural Education Advisory Committee Manual.”

Checklist Review

There will be meetings in the coming months to review and make recommendations to change the Incentive Grant Checklist.

As we discuss the change of this document, I hope we remember that the purpose is to improve programs. We do not need to make it easy to check off the criteria, but confirm that the criteria is what will lead to engaging our students at higher levels in programs that can change their lives.

If it was easy, everyone would be an agriculture teacher!
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News and Views

Nicole Morris Wins
FFA State Star Advisor Award

By Keara McVicker, Bakersfield-Highland FFA
Student Reporter 2018 FFA Press Corp Team

On Monday, April 23, 2018, Nicole Morris was recognized as the Star Advisor at the 90th California FFA Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California. More than 7,000 students cheered as Morris accepted her award.

This year’s Star Advisor is Mrs. Nicole Morris from the Central Catholic FFA Chapter, part of the Central Region. Morris has spearheaded the start of the Central Catholic FFA program and molded the agriculture department into a thriving and growing community. Morris faced many challenges as she started a brand new program, working tirelessly to ensure funding and support for the chapter, raising $320,000 in her first two years.

“Mama Mo serves as a formative leader and advisor. She has quadrupled our chapter size, inspired officer teams, and most importantly, gone out of her way to ensure that every student finds a home and family in the FFA,” said the Central Catholic students.

The California Star Advisor Award recognizes advisors who are extremely active within their programs. Candidates are judged based on statements from students, community members and teachers, chapter banquets, coaching teams, and more. Regional finalists had the opportunity to move on to the California FFA Leadership Conference to be recognized.

Nicole Morris

FFA Alumni Hunting for More

By Isaiah Gallegos, Patterson FFA, Student Reporter 2018 FFA Press Corp Team

On Monday afternoon, April 23, 2018, the FFA Alumni met to discuss the future and certain concerns dealing with the FFA Alumni program. The eight members came together and discussed ways to reach out and get more alumni to come and show support for the California FFA Organization.

The alumni talked about how they must be able to get the alumni program off the ground and be able to make the program more stable and united. They are attempting to gather a list of alumni from both California and National FFA. It is challenging. Since 1997, there has been a computer-generated way of being able to track past members. However, before 1997, it is quite difficult for the alumni to be tracked.

The alumni stated that there is also a misconception that one has to be a past FFA member to be an alumni. As the discussions continued about the FFA Alumni organization bylaws, they discussed that there must be a need for a parent of a current student, teacher, and a past state officer in order for there to have an alumni chapter council. A future goal for the FFA Alumni is to focus on the Alumni chapter’s council.

The alumni group’s expectation for this program is to serve FFA in any way possible and bring the best results for the organization. Sue Sweetman, alumnus, stated, “It doesn’t matter what you do; when you leave here nothing will prepare you more for what you’re going to do than being in that blue jacket.”

Alumni came from all different backgrounds, schools, generations, and career paths, but they all share a commonality of returning to show their support and appreciation to California FFA.
2018 CATA Proposed Conference Agenda

Sunday, June 24
9:00 to 11:00 Executive Committee Meeting
11:00 to 2:30 Governing Board
2:30 to 5:00 New Teacher Mtg
3:00 to 5:00 FFA Adult Board Mtg
3:15 Secondary Division Executive Committee Meeting
3:15 Post Secondary Council Meeting
3:30 CATA Scholarship Judging
4:00 CRAECP Meeting
4:45 Pre-conference Registration Meeting
5:00 to 7:00 Welcome Reception & Conference Registration - OH Unit Arboretum

Monday, June 25
7:00 to 7:45 Registration PAC - Harman Hall
7:50 Opening Session PAC
• New Teacher Introductions
• Introduction of State Officer Applicants
• Teacher of Teachers (Gold)
• Keynote Speaker: Dr. Adolph Brown
10:00 Late Registration - Room 10-241
10:00 Regional Meetings
11:30 Alumni Luncheons
1:00 Post-Secondary Division Meeting
Following above meeting
• Student Activities
• Inservice
• Curriculum
• Visioning Committee

Tuesday, June 26
8:00 Post-Secondary Statewide Advisory Committee
8:15 Central Region Motherlode Community College Meeting
8:15 to 9:45 Professional Sessions
• CRAECP Student Certifications
• Survivor — How to Manage Livestock Projects and Still Love Your Job
• CATIP Mentor Orientation — Session A
• CATIP Credential Candidate Orientation — Session A
• Know It, Grow It
• Building Relationships and Your Program through Visits to the Home
• iCEV
• Set Sail with NGSS
• Work-Based Learning — Connecting Students to Careers
• Ag Mech
• CAPCA
9:30 Post Secondary Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting
10:00 General Assembly
• Greetings: California FFA Foundation
• State Supervisor’s Report
• Community College Report
• Executive Director’s Report

(Continued on page 19)
2018 CATA Proposed Conference Agenda

(Continued from page 18)

10:00 Post Secondary DPR PCA Curriculum Meeting
12:00 Post Secondary Division Meeting & Luncheon
12:00 FFA Advisory Committee Meeting
12:00 to 2:45 Farm & Idea Show
1:00 North Coast Ag Pathway Meeting
1:00 to 3:00 CATIP Yr 2 Presentations
2:45 Curricular Code General Meeting
3:00 2018-19 Section Presidents Meeting
3:00 to 3:50 Curricular Code Mtgs.
  • Rotation #1
4:00 to 4:50 Curricular Code Mtgs.
  • Rotation #2
5:15 Softball, Cornhole, etc. at Sports Complex on Campus
5:30 Children’s Games - Sports Complex
6:30 Family BBQ - Sports Complex

Wednesday, June 27

6:30 5K Run
7:00 Prayer Breakfast
7:00 Post Secondary Council Breakfast Meeting
7:45 Curricular Code Contest Chairs Meeting
9:00 General Assembly
  • Retiring Teachers
  • Hall of Fame Presentation
  • CATA Service Certificates
  • Teacher of Teachers(Silver & Bronze)
  • National FFA Report
  • Nomination Speeches
  • Division Reports
12:00 20+/Past Presidents/Retiring Teachers/Hall of Fame Luncheon
1:30 Professional Sessions
  • CATIP Mentor Orientation - Session B
  • CATIP Credential Candidate Orientation - Session B

• Engaging Diverse Students: How to Bring Everyone into the Ag Family!
• Mix It Up: How to Incorporate Leadership Mixers in Your Science Classroom
• iCEV Basics
• Extreme Makeover NGSS Edition
• Chemistry & Agriscience Labs
• Technology Solutions in Agriculture
• Ag Mech
• National Resources and Making ffa.org Work for Me
• Trends in Ag Education and Mechanized Ag Careers/Industry
• NAAE
5:00 Banquet Child Care Begins
5:30 Pre-Banquet Social
6:00 Banquet

Thursday, June 28

7:30 CATIP Meeting
8:15 Regional Meetings
10:15 General Assembly
  • Speaker: Dennis Donahue
  • Honorary American Farmers
  • Recreation Awards
  • Membership Awards
  • Idea Show Awards
  • Farm Show Report
  • Election Results
  • Officer Installation
12:00 CATA 2018–19 Governing Board Planning Session

Nutrients For Life Foundation

Rick Phillips
rick.phillips@simplot.com
www.nutrientsforlife.org
Golden Slate

The Official Newsletter of the California Agricultural Teachers’ Association

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Change Service Requested

CATA Calendar of Events 2017–2018

May 5...........................................................................State FFA Judging Finals                      .Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23–24..................................................................Student Teacher Conclave                    .Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 24......................................................................Executive Committee Meeting                 .Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 24......................................................................Pre-Conference Governing Board               .Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 24–28.................................................................. CATA Summer Conference                     .Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 28....................................................................... Governing Board Summer Retreat              .Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

2018 Idea Show: Farm Shop – Building 9
Tuesday, June 26

Enter your great teaching ideas in this year’s Idea Show at CATA Summer Conference. There are 11 areas to enter:

1. Ag Production/Processing & Products 7.  FFA Operations
2. Ag Mechanics
3. Ornamental Horticulture
4. Natural Resources/Rural Recreation/Forestry
5. Ag Science/Farm Labs
6. Departmental Operations
7. FFA Operations
8. SAE
9. Working with Support Groups (i.e. Ag Advisory, Ag Boosters, etc.)
10. Floral Design
11. Ag Business

Bring your entries to the Farm Shop (Building 09) on the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus between 7:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Remember, a lot of demos and class activities are based on handouts or displays. All of these would make great entries for the Idea Show. You can’t win if you don’t enter!

Monetary awards for first through third places in each area are:
• First: $20  • Second: $15  • Third: $10

The entry selected as the overall outstanding idea is awarded an additional $50 cash prize.

See you with your entries at Summer Conference!