Budget, Bills, Education Department Turnover

By Matt Patton, CATA Executive Director

2019–2020 California State Budget

Governor Newsom’s first budget is robust with plans to pay down budgetary debts, prepare for leaner economic times, stabilize California’s pension liabilities, and improve the state’s emergency capabilities. The budget attempts to achieve these lofty goals with a budget increase of nearly $8 billion compared to last year. An additional investment of $13.6 billion is directed to debt repayment and reserve deposits to the Rainy Day Fund to protect against the projected economic downturn.

The 2019–2020 budget proposes a $3 billion contribution to the California State Teachers’ Retirement System, also known as CalSTRS. This one-time General Fund payment is intended to reduce long-term liabilities for employers.

The Governor’s education plan prioritizes his cradle-to-career strategy with a proposed $2.9 billion increase to K–12 schools and community colleges for 2019–2020. It is projected that K–12 per pupil spending will be almost $5,000 higher than it was seven years ago. Mr. Newsom’s education plans focus on early childhood development, allocating $125 million in non-Proposition 98 funding to expand State Preschool and $750 million to improve kindergarten infrastructure to offer more all-day classes.

Additionally, both the California State University system and the University of California system are allocated hundreds of millions of dollars in ongoing funding to reduce the need for continued fee hikes to college students. If the budget passes as written, the CSU system will receive $300 million annually and the UC system will get $240 million every year.

Career Technical Education (CTE) is also represented well in the current budget with a replication of the $300 million in ongoing funding divided between K–12 Strong Work Force (SWF) Grants and the Career Technical Education Incentive Grants (CTEIG). The roll-out of the K–12 SWF money is a work in progress and we will see how

(Continued on page 2)
the selection committee allocates money in the seven community college districts across the state this year. The Ag Incentive Grant is once again in the budget at the same level as last year’s allocation.

Potential Legislation Relevant to Ag Education
- **Assembly Bill 1303 (AB 1303)**
  Assembly Member Patrick O’Donnell from District 70 continues to be a champion for CTE. AB 1303 would allocate $450 million to ongoing funding to CTEIG, distributed via the California Department of Education (CDE).

  The bill would reduce the required dollar match to a 1 to 1 ratio. To obtain the increased funding this bill would terminate the appropriation for the K–12 component of the Strong Workforce Program after the 2018–19 fiscal year.

  CATA will continue to work with O’Donnell and the education committee to ensure accountability for all CTE funds. Language in statute that regulates the distribution and oversight of CTE funds is essential to ensure funding goes to high quality programs.

- **Assembly Bill 1586 (AB 1586)**
  AB 1586 was introduced by Assembly Member Ash Karla and if passed would prohibit California students grades 1–12 from performing a dissection in private or public schools.

  If adopted, the bill would require “the use of video recordings, three-dimensional models, films, books, interactive simulation software, computers, and assessments of knowledge to provide an alternate avenue for obtaining the knowledge” of anatomy.

  CATA is opposed to this legislation and is working with industry and other educational organizations to defeat the bill.

- **House Bill 1770 (HR 1770)**
  At the federal level, Representative Michael McCaul from Texas introduced HR 1770.

  The bill would reduce the required dollar match to a 1 to 1 ratio. To obtain the increased funding this bill would terminate the appropriation for the K–12 component of the Strong Workforce Program after the 2018–19 fiscal year.

  CATA will continue to work with O’Donnell and the education committee to ensure accountability for all CTE funds. Language in statute that regulates the distribution and oversight of CTE funds is essential to ensure funding goes to high quality programs.

California Department of Education

There have been many changes in the leadership at the California Department of Education (CDE) since the beginning of the year.

- Former Assembly Member Tony Thurmond was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction in a come-from-

  behind win. Mr. Thurmond appointed Lupita Cortez-Alcalá as Chief Deputy of Public Instruction.

  Both Thurmond and Cortez-Alcalá have been personally invited by the FFA state officers to attend the California State FFA Leadership Conference and Mrs. Cortez-Alcalá has RSVP’d.

- Catalina Cifuentes replaced Dr. Tom Adams managing the branch of CDE that oversees Ag Education.

- Additionally, Donna Wyatt, director of the Career and College Division, has left CDE and her position is currently vacant.

- Charles Parker has replaced Dr. McCabe as the director of the Ag Education and Family Services unit.

  All of this is to say that every level of leadership from Ag education to the Superintendent of Public Instruction has changed in the last three months.

  With the notable exception of Mr. Parker, the leadership at CDE has had minimal exposure to agricultural education and it becomes imperative that we showcase the structure and value that agricultural education brings to nearly 90,000 FFA students in California.

Continue to Serve Students

With funding levels at all-time highs for CTE and a total change in the leadership of the CDE, it is now more important than ever for agricultural education to continue to serve students and maintain high quality programs.

We have been touted as the model of what is possible in Career Technical Education and we must continue to prove that we are worthy of that moniker. An increase in resources brings out groups eager to push us aside and capitalize on the availability of funding.

We must not become complacent in an era of plenty. Now more than ever we must be diligent in our values as educators and steadfast in an uncompromising level of expectation for ourselves, our programs, and the students we serve.
Beyond the Degree

By Megan Silcott, Lecturer, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

There is a book called *Tipping Point*, written by Malcolm Gladwell. Its tag line is “How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference.” As a high school educator, you have access to being the tipping point in your students’ lives. From road trips to field days to lunch hours with those who consider your classroom home, you have an opportunity to promote learning beyond the walls of your high school campus.

Your position as an educator didn’t come easily. You put in the hours, effort and financial commitment to chase the requirements.

But do you voice your educational journey? Have you shared about your college experience and the road to achieving your undergraduate degree? Your master’s degree?

What about all the extras along the way like clubs, service and philanthropy activities, minors and areas of expertise you added beyond your major coursework?

**Five Laps**

I did five laps at Cal Poly. My choice to stay a super year helped me wrap up three minors, practice my love for ballet, participate and lead in Western Bonanza, Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow and work my way through school.

People often say you should find a way to stay in college, so I did and it worked to my advantage. I met lifelong friends in agribusiness courses. I may not have ever understood their passion for data and marketing. I met students from all walks of life and diverse majors who loved art and applied that to the dance studio and stage.

And then there was Bonanza. Western Bonanza is one of those rare programs where you learn what it’s like to be on the other side of the ring, entry desk and, to be honest, the end of a shovel, too. Bonanza teaches some students how to literally work hard, side by side with people you may have met just weeks prior to the grand event.

**Rich Experiences**

Point being, all those networks, experiences and memories shape decisions I make today. And if I had only lived education through the standard classrooms, my life would look very different and not nearly as rich with cultural experiences, travel locations or friendships.

Maybe you were able to transfer into a university, graduate in four years straight, or maybe you’re on lap seven. Whatever your story is, students would benefit from hearing more about how you spent your time in college.

Share how you invested time to enrich others while building community, networks and relationships. While many students get to travel with you up and down the state and across the country, all students need to hear a message loud and clear: Higher education isn’t just a degree; there is so much more available to them.

**Outside the Classroom**

All community colleges and universities offer chances to engage students outside the classroom. From salsa dancing clubs to language programs, study abroad, enterprises, internships and leadership opportunities, students need to be told early and often there is more to chase than a degree on its own.

**Captive Audience**

But how do you instill a hunger for more? You share. Your voice is needed. I hope you can grasp the impact of your words and experiences. They make for relatable and true inspirational messages. No experience is too small or too grand an achievement to share how it shaped you.

**Bottom Line**

You just don’t know what words will carry on and who might actually be hearing them. So you share. The depth of doing so takes students beyond the degree.

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Teacher Educator News

**Ag Teachers Need to Collaborate with Their Colleagues**

By Marc Reyburn, Escondido High School, Southern Region Reporter

The agriculture program is a versatile program that exposes students to a wide array of new skills, learning opportunities, and memorable experiences. Every student should have the opportunity to be a part of the agriculture experience. As many of you know, raising animals and planting crops are just a part of the agriculture program. There is so much more that agriculture teaches students, which needs to be shared throughout the community.

Collaboration will not only help support and promote the program, but also will provide equity and access for all students. Therefore, collaborating with other teachers and staff on campus plays a vital role in the success of an agriculture department and in the individual success of students.

**Support from Teachers**

When teachers know the programs that are out there for students, they are more likely to promote it with their students. Oftentimes, students are afraid to try new things, teachers can help bridge the difference between the fear of the unknown and the courage to try something new. It is important to have teacher buy-in to increase student buy-in for the success and growth of the program.

Teachers can be your biggest advocates and support of your agriculture program.

Teachers also can help support in other ways. For example, collaborating with the Special Education Department can be a huge asset. Collaborating with a teacher or two from the Special Education Department can provide much-needed support to not only the agriculture teacher, but to every student within the classroom.

Special education teachers may give guidance and support to understand a variety of learning disabilities.

For example, students with challenges ranging from behavior issues to learning disabilities can increase the difficulties within the classroom.

Special education teachers also can assist agriculture teachers in modifying assignments, breaking down step-by-step directions and/or even help to create graphic organizers with students. Within a classroom, students with IEPs are eager to

(Continued on page 4)
What Will It Be Like to Have Only One Job?

By Hugh Mooney, Consultant, California Department of Education

I am optimistic that by the time you read this there will six regional supervisors. If there are not, then everything went to “hell” and I am not a happy camper.

Most of you know that the California Department of Education (CDE) has not filled agricultural education vacancies as they have occurred during the past three years.

In September 2016, the Superior Region vacancy was created. In June 2018, the Southern Region Supervisor retired. In December 2018, the State FFA Advisor retired and in January 2019, Charles Parker began as the State FFA Advisor, which created a vacancy in the San Joaquin Region. Though we have six regions, we have three regional supervisors. Not ideal in meeting the needs of students and teachers.

Filling In

In all six regions, we have teachers and teacher educators who are helping fill in the gaps to provide services. Without the willingness of many to help, the interruption of service to students and teachers would be much worse.

At your schools, you are all familiar with the term “other duties as assigned.”

Technically that is what is happening here at the department, though some of us have these extra duties because we volunteered.

As many of you know, I have been working with two region officer teams for the past two years.

Last week is what I have come to refer to as “Hell Week” because on Wednesday and Thursday the Superior Region contests, Region Meeting, and State Degree Ceremony occurred. On Friday and Saturday, the North Coast Region contests, Region Meeting, and State Degree Ceremony occurred.

I feel bad for the officer teams because they have so little time to interact with the region supervisor to prepare for the region activities.

The same is true about the level of support provided to teachers in the region. Students and teachers deserve better.

Bureaucratic Obstacles

Bureaucracies like the Department of Education have many obstacles to getting things done in a timely manner.

Following the retirement of Jack Havens, the open position was posted in the summer.

One challenge was that no current agriculture teacher who would apply to be on the Education Programs Consultant job list (Education Programs Consultant is the official title for the Region Supervisor in the department) would be approved.

That required that we open our positions to Education Program Assistants (EPA). Teachers could get approved on the EPA hiring list.

By the time we got that done, the interviews were in late October or early November for a job that closed on July 3.

A person was identified for the Southern Region position,

(Continued on page 5)

Ag Teachers Need to Collaborate with Their Colleagues

(Continued from page 3)

learn, but unfortunately have obstacles in their way.

In addition, many students without IEPs often struggle with their academics. Collaboration amongst teachers can open up a pathway of team teaching.

Team Teaching

Team teaching is when a general education teacher, such as an agriculture teacher and a special education teacher, are joined together to teach one class together. Both teachers teach the class, supporting each other and supporting the students who would need modifications or additional supports.

In my team-taught agriculture class, collaboration has been a huge success, not only for the students, but for the teacher as well. Because of the complexity of the agriculture program, it helps to have an ally by your side to help alleviate some of the load.

The special education teacher can assist working outside of the classroom hours to help students to participate in leadership activities, judging teams, speaking teams, etc. Memorization plays a huge role in the competitions and many students struggle with being able to memorize or recall information.

Also important is having the special ed teacher work with students with their animals to make sure the students have the knowledge and are processing the information correctly.

For instance, a student with a processing disorder may struggle with showmanship with rabbits and poultry, because the student must memorize about 30 steps in order to present his/her animal to the judge.

In contrast, a student showing a larger animal does not have to memorize as many steps to show his/her animal.

These are just some points that prove how valuable collaboration is with colleagues.

Key to Success

Collaboration is the key to any successful program, but crucial to the agriculture program. These are just some of the many benefits to collaboration.

In the beginning, it may be a bit rough and may require extra time, but in the long run, collaboration will help alleviate some of the hard work and stress of running an agriculture program.
but the CDE could not provide a written offer of employment so that the candidate could have their district release them from their contract mid-year.

Nobody has signed a contract to become a region supervisor from that interview.

The CDE does not allow a person to sign a contract until they are within 60 days of their start date. In late April, we should have one person signed.

Optimism
I apologize if this article is negative. I am actually very optimistic that in July I will have only one job.

Two other openings closed in March and interviews were held in April.

Hopefully by the State FFA Conference, we will have announced the three people who will join the state staff and become regional supervisors.

What Do We Have?
I am not sure what is different in 2019 from 2018. Since the Superior Region vacancy was created, we do have a new Superintendent of Public Instruction. We have a new CATA Executive Director. We have a new State FFA Advisor.

We still have a profession that puts students first.

What Will It Be Like to Have Only One Job?
Our students and teachers deserve it. I will be among the happy people if we are back to full staff.

For those of you who know me, I likely do not have a reputation as being optimistic.

I can assure you that for the first time in three years, I feel optimistic that we will have six regional supervisors.

When you read this, if we do not have six regional supervisors, don’t talk to me because I will not be a happy man.

In all six regions, we have teachers and teacher educators who are helping fill in the gaps to provide services. Without the willingness of many to help, the interruption of service to students and teachers would be much worse.

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Teachers Perceive Social Media

1. Teachers’ Networks Are Unique: Professional social media use by California secondary agriculture teachers is widespread and use habits are unique to each individual. Most teachers are engaging primarily in YouTube, Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram, with an average of 2.5 hours of use per week for professional purposes.

2. Teachers Perceive Social Media to Be More Useful than School-Sponsored Professional Learning: Teachers in the study found their use of social media for professional purposes to be more useful than their school-sponsored professional learning. This is not surprising when you consider much of school-sponsored professional learning is not content specific and often not presented in a way where teachers see relevance to their classrooms.

3. Social Media Use Declines as Age and Years Teaching Increases: New teachers, those who have completed three or fewer years, use social media the most minutes per week and perceive it to have the most usefulness compared to other career stages. As teachers move through career stages, their patterns of use and perceived usefulness of social media decrease and their perception of school-sponsored professional learning increases but never exceeds social media.

4. Social Media Use Is an Indicator of Positive Attitudes Toward Lifelong Learning: Much of the content-specific professional learning agriculture teachers engage in is by choice. Those who attended a greater number of content-specific professional learning days also had high perceived usefulness of their social media for professional purposes, and reported a higher number of minutes of use per week.

5. Teachers Are Mostly Consuming and Not Contributing: While professional social media use is widespread in teachers, the results of the study suggest that teachers are mostly consuming and interacting with content others have made. This is in contrast to starting their own conversations, publicly reflecting, and sharing content they created.

Professional Learning

Over the years I have come to appreciate CATA’s commitment to the professional growth of its teachers. There are a myriad of opportunities available to teachers at all career stages through section, region, and state CATA meetings and conferences.

While these are worthwhile and effective activities, as a teacher it is important to include professional learning as part of our daily routine. Based on my findings, teachers are reaching out to their online network to engage in professional learning on a regular basis.

So what’s next? Our online networks can be a source of resources and place of reflection and support in between times when we meet with fellow agriculture teachers face-to-face. If you are reading this article feeling like social media is not doing much for you, here are a few questions to consider:

• People. Who is in your network? Do they challenge your thinking, expose you to new ideas, encourage you to share? If not, reach out to other agriculture teachers for suggestions of what Facebook groups or Twitter chats to participate in, Pinterest boards to follow, and people or hashtags to follow.

• Spaces. What platforms are you engaged in? Which platforms have the most usefulness for you? Which spaces should get more or less of your time?

• Tools. What tools do you get from your network? How are you experimenting with the tools you find? What tools do you need to be more effective for your students?

Individual Preferences

If someone at the CUE conference had not challenged my thinking on Twitter, I might still be thinking Twitter is a waste of time. While certainly I do see value in Twitter, it is not a platform I dedicate most of my time to. It is important to acknowledge that each teacher has their own learning objectives and preferences when it comes to social media.

As you continue to build and refine your online network, I encourage you to go beyond just consuming information. While there is a lot to be learned from gathering information online, sharing in online spaces provides you an opportunity to help others and also gives you opportunity to get feedback and connect with others who may have additional resources you could benefit from.

Reference/Further Reading

How Can You Make California School Dashboard Work for Your Program?

By Jessi Cardoso, Central Valley High School, Ceres

Whether you have just started teaching or been in the profession for years, we have all heard stories about the “pendulum of education” and how it continues to swing. Some ag teachers disregard changes in education policy as a passing fad. I have heard teachers say, “In a couple years, this will change again,” making education policy changes seem unimportant and not worth understanding.

Actions like this could put you and your program at a serious disadvantage when it comes to cashing in on funding.

Let this article serve as your quick reference guide to the California School Dashboard and how you can capitalize on accountability factors to benefit your chapter.

Overview of California School Dashboard

In 2017, the California State Board of Education and Department of Education announced the change from the Academic Performance Index (API) to California School Dashboard (CSD).

The Dashboard is made up of reports that show school performance on six state indicators and five local indicators.

Performance Measures

This new accountability system uses six performance measures determined by yearly reporting from schools. Individually they are:

- Academic Indicator (Grade 11 results on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Future state measures will include performance on the California Science Test.)
- Career/College Readiness (includes Grade 11 assessment results);
- English Learner Progress;
- Graduation Rate;
- Suspension Rate;
- Chronic Absenteeism.

Local Indicators

There also are five local indicators related to school culture, which are:

- Basic Services and School Conditions (Priority 1);
- Implementation of State Academic Standards (Priority 2);
- Parent Engagement (Priority 3);
- Local Climate Survey (Priority 6);
- Access to a Broad Course of Study (Priority 7).

Student Achievement is Priority 4, also a state indicator measured by absenteeism and graduation rate.

Color Gauge

Performance on each of the factors is indicated using colors on a gauge. Blue indicates the highest performance or achievement, red is the worst. Local Control

(Continued on page 7)
How Can You Make California School Dashboard Work for Your Program?

(Continued from page 6)

and Accountability Plan (LCAP) funds are directly connected to increases in performance and success in these factors.

The biggest concern for ag departments around the state is understanding what factors you have the most control over and how you can use your district and administration’s drive to improve their scores to increase funding for your program.

Let’s look into some factors that we are already doing in our programs that we can fine tune to increase dashboard scores.

College/ Career Readiness

This is the most obvious section with which we have the most control. Eight measures are evaluated in this category, not all of which are relevant to ag education.

The ones that we can really use to our advantage are:
• Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathway Completion;
• College Credit Courses (Dual Enrollment); and
• University of California (UC) A–G Completion.

Just like any other educational jargon, each have sub-categories and additional requirements to be marked as “met.” But here in the Dashboard, we reign supreme.

CTE Pathway

CTE Pathway completers are defined by the California Department of Education for Dashboard purposes as graduating seniors who have passed a CTE capstone course with a C- or better.

You may have your site administrators asking much more about your ag pathways and asking what your capstone courses are… or you might not. If that is the case, someone is making that decision for you.

I recently found out that our district and site administration designated our pathways and capstone classes for the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and Dashboard without any of our input. Having to reverse those choices is much more difficult than being involved in the first place.

If you don’t know what your district has designated as your pathways (not necessarily what you share with parents or use in your department), you could be caught in the same situation.

Dual Enrollment

Hopefully, you already have a direct connection to your local community and junior colleges. If not, I would encourage you to approach your Ag Department dean about dual enrollment.

The K–12 Strong Workforce Program is providing money and encouragement to community colleges to develop partnerships with feeder schools.

It will also directly benefit the Dashboard score for college credit courses.

In our department, we have two teachers who went through the process to be adjunct faculty and teach dual enrollment classes.

UC A–G Completion

The last factor on which we can really maximize our effect is UC a–g completion. This means that a student must score at least a C- or better in a–g courses.

Most, if not all, ag departments around the state have a–g approved classes.

If you have not pursued getting UC approved for some of your courses, I encourage you to look into it. In many cases, if you are modeling your course after an approved course at another school (or it is aligned with our statewide courses), it is a relatively simple process to get approved. If you already have that course approved at another school in your district, even better!

Funding Connection

Ultimately, all these things are components of your programs already or easily implementable. They are directly connected to the amount of LCAP funds your school receives and, by trickle-down effect, your program.

We even have parts of our program in place that address the local indicators related to parent engagement and school climate. If you are not actively pursuing these opportunities, I guarantee there is another program on your campus that will be.

You can choose to hunker down, ignoring the school operating around you, or you can approach your administration to find out what its priorities are, get involved in local LCAP committees, and learn how to make this swing in education procedure work for you.

For more information on the California School Dashboard, visit https://www.caschooldashboard.org.
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In 2017, Dr. Roger Hanagriff, Texas A&M University Kingsville, conducted a study of students enrolled in agricultural education in California. The study centered on the engagement of students in experiential learning, or Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE).

**SAE Type**
California has a higher engagement in entrepreneur SAEs with 45% of student involvement in this area compared to the national average of 30%.

**47-Million Income Values from SAE Involvement**
A typical program in California has students earning $141,544 in SAE related income, which statewide is estimated to be over $47 million in total value.

**SAE Investments in Operating Expenses**
The direct investment value of $60,908 per program and state estimate of over $20 million in direct spending from SAE activities are values that support local economies.

**5.3% Community Service Activities**

**16.7% FFA Activities**

**78% SAE Projects**

**16% Other Areas of Interest**

**10% Power, Structure, and Technology**

**30% Plant**

**44% Animal Science**

**Students' Time Invested**
California students in agricultural education averaged over 65 hours spent in experiential learning activities outside of the traditional classroom.
How Sparsholt College Cultivates Atypical Students

By Karlin Ruth, Florin High School
(See the January Golden Slate for Part 1 of this article.)

Sparsholt College is located on a 300-acre production farm that includes dairy, swine, equine, fishery and forestry units. The farm produces cereal crops for feed, dairy and hay for horses. The dairy operation consists of 100 cows and produces milk products for student consumption at the college.

There are courses of study that are particular to United Kingdom sport and habitat, such as the Game and Wildlife courses. These courses offer certification pathways for game preserve and hunting, as well as research opportunities for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

One area of focus for degree students is integrated pest management.

This intersects with the Game and Wildlife course as students research ways to protect the health of wildlife that live in the vicinity of the college farm.

**Gamekeepers Course**

A niche course that is particular to the UK and particularly connected to job placement opportunities for Sparsholt students is the Gamekeepers course. Students have the unique opportunity to work with the seeker herd (wild deer herd) on the grounds of the college.

Deer were introduced for hunting in County Hampshire more than 200 years ago and a vibrant industry of game reserves, hunting clubs and gamekeepers has grown up and is part of the fabric of life in the UK.

**Prized Skills**

Skills taught at Sparsholt that are highly prized by UK employers in the Game and Habitat sector include:

- **Diversification:** determining which animals are to be culled and which are to be sustained for breeding and herd health.
- **Culling:** students train with advanced laser technology that records where the animal would have been hit and if the kill was humane and successful.
- **Field dressing and butchering:** provided as part of the fee for hunters at game preserves.

**Forestry Course**

The Forestry Course at the college proudly maintains one tree from each of the 28 types of trees grown in England. Students gain intensive research experience with all species of trees used in the UK forestry industry.

Practical application of academic study prepares students for employment as conservation advisors or forest management professionals through study of type of growth, rate of growth, tree climbing, tree felling and a unique rescue course.

This rescue course is a departure from what is offered at other agricultural colleges in the UK and serves to increase industry demand for Sparsholt graduates.

**Individualized Instruction**

All courses at Sparsholt are differentiated to offer opportunities for students with exceptionalities. In the UK, secondary students are not provided with an IEP or 504 plan to address individual skills and needs so that students can access the general curriculum.

But just as U.S. agriculture educators differentiate instruction, instructors at Sparsholt find that all students can access and benefit from career-readiness skills.

To this end, Sparsholt offers Level 1 certification programs (Continued on page 16)
How Sparsholt College Cultivates Atypical Students

(Continued from page 15)

for all students regardless of their completion of General Certificate of Secondary Education qualifying exams.

Certificate Programs

Certificated Programs are designed to help students become proficient at skills recognized as industry standards for employment. Certificates can be acquired in areas as varied as Tractor Driving, Shooting, Fishing, and Aquatic Habitat Management.

There is a thriving market in the UK for fish tanks. City dwellers often live in small flats (or apartments) where fish are the pet of choice. Fish owners will pay well to have their tanks managed and maintained by a trained professional. As a result of this demand, water quality monitoring, and tank management are highly prized career paths for students at Sparsholt.

Students studying at Levels 1 and 2 create a tank for their final exams rather than taking written assessments. These Level 1 and 2 students care for the animals and plants in an industry-standard fish tank and demonstrate their understanding of maintaining the water quality and overall health of the tank environment.

Chance to Excel

Sparsholt Farm Manager Graham Boyt reports that the certification courses “gives those students who struggle with traditional academic courses the chance to excel.”

“Our most involved and productive students are those who have difficulties with academics,” Boyt observes.

Young Farmers Club

Although secondary-level agriculture students in the UK do not have many of the traditional high school experiences of U.S. ag students, such as membership in the FFA, there is another similarity between the U.S. and UK schools.

In the UK, many ag students join the Young Farmers Club, where they participate in leadership workshops, debate competitions, and showing animals at county fairs across the UK. Of course, being 16- to 18-year-olds, the Young Farmers Club is more than a professional development group.

“Mostly, students join the Young Farmers for the social interaction,” concedes Boyt.

College for All

As with agriculture education in the United States, Sparsholt caters to all students: those who are interested in the business of agriculture, those who have the drive and desire to attend a university, and those who have a passion for learning that often lies hidden in a typical educational environment.

As with Tom Hosten (the student in Part 1 of this article), Boyt says that “99 percent of our students believed that their end career would be as a machine operator. Only about 50 percent will end up doing that work. The other 49 percent end up with a career and the pride of knowing that they are students, no matter what their exam scores say.”

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2019 CATA Draft Conference Agenda

Agriskills 2019
Sunday, June 23 - Morning Session
Sunday, June 23 - Afternoon Session
Thursday, June 27 - Afternoon Session

Sunday, June 23
8:00 to 11:00 CATIP Meeting
9:00 to 11:00 Executive Committee Meeting
11:00 to 2:30 Governing Board
2:00 to 3:00 University / Community College Deans’ Meeting
2:30 to 5:00 New Teacher Meeting
3:00 to 5:00 FFA Adult Board Meeting
3:15 Secondary Division Executive Committee Meeting
3:15 Post Secondary Council Meeting
3:30 CATA Scholarship Judging
4:00 CRAECPC Meeting
4:45 Pre-Conference Registration Meeting
5:00 to 7:00 Welcome Reception & Conference Registration - Oppenheimer Family Equine Center

Monday, June 24
7:00 to 7:45 Registration PAC - Miossi Hall
7:50 Opening Session PAC
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

1:00 Secondary Division Meeting
• K–12 Strong Workforce
• Field Days
1:45 Operations & Secondary Divisions Committee Meetings
• Budget & Audit
• Student Activities
• Nominations, Bylaws & Professional Awards
• Curriculum
1:45 Farm/Idea Show Meeting
2:45 Joint Division Meeting - Panel Discussion
5:30 Chico State Alumni Social
6:30 Conference Reception - Hosted by CSU, Fresno
7:00 Bowling

Tuesday, June 25
6:00 Zumba at Embassy Suites
8:00 Post Secondary Statewide Advisory Committee
8:15 to 9:45 Professional Sessions
• CATIP New Credential Candidates
• CATIP New Mentors
• CRAECPC Student Certifications
• Project Based Learning-Advanced Floral
• Know It, Grow It (Part 2) - Vazquez
• Activities for Large Chapters
• Elevate Ag Education
• National FFA-Ben Meyer
• Developing Male Leadership in a Chapter
• Engaging Your Animal Science Students
• NGSS Lesson Plans
• Using Your District’s Student Management System on the School Farm
• Vision 2030-Teacher Wellness & Retention
• Vision 2030-Teacher Preparation
• Vision 2030-Curriculum
• Vision 2030-Industry Certification
10:00 General Assembly
• Greetings - Calif FFA Fdn
• Greetings - CAFFA Officers
• National FFA - Mark Poeschl
• National FFA - Ben Meyer
• State Supervisor’s Report
• Community College Report
• Executive Director’s Report

(Continued on page 19)
Idea Show Sucks... when you don’t participate! The greatest value to me as an instructor are the interactions I have had with other educators who teach my subjects. Whether it’s commiserating over common gripes, sharing anecdotes of successes, and abridged versions of our failures, all these interactions leave one with plenty to process. But without fail, these interactions spark ideas, small and grand! 

Idea Show is our extension of that process.

Teachers bring in their ideas to share with their peers and in turn be inspired by others. If you are a new teacher looking to make a connection with your peers, bring in an idea. You might be “a pup,” but I guarantee that you have ideas worthy to be shared!

Our battle-hardened cadre of veteran teachers have a wealth of experience and knowledge, but if one doesn’t share with others those lessons learned from those experiences, that knowledge is lost. So it’s with great sincerity that I thank those of you who regularly contribute to Idea Show. You make us all better through the efforts.

For those who have yet to share, it’s a great time to drop the tired lame excuses and do what we all do on the daily: Get off your ass and make it happen!
CATA Calendar of Activities 2018–2019

May 4. .................................................................State FFA Judging Finals........................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
May 21–25. ...............................................................NAAE Region 1 Conference................................................................. Alaska
June 23. ................................................................Executive Committee Meeting .................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23. ................................................................Pre-Conference Governing Board ...................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 23–27. .................................................................CATA Summer Conference ..................................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
June 27. ................................................................Governing Board Summer Retreat ............................... Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

2019 Idea Show: Farm Shop – Building 9
Tuesday, June 25

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
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!