

Now, More Than Ever, Our Voice Matters

From **Cindy Grutzik, Karen Lafferty, & Pia Wong**
CCTE Spring 2017 Conference Co-Chairs

Greetings from the SPAN (Spring Policy Action Network) Planning Group. Our purpose here is to share plans for CCTE's move to Sacramento for Spring 2017 and communicate our vision for this new style of conference.

CCTE has decided to change the venue for its Spring Conference to Sacramento beginning Spring 2017, March 30th and 31st. There are four main reasons for this change. First, we want to position CCTE as an expert voice in teacher education policy at the state level. This move allows CCTE to become a stronger advocate for our candidates, faculty, and institutions, and aligns with our mission of being "active toward advancing research, practice, and policy for quality teaching."

We also want to energize our membership by offering a new kind of meeting—a Spring Policy Action Network (SPAN)—that features legislative visits, California-based education research, a CTC document workshop, and opportunities for networking with colleagues and policymakers.

Additionally, we want to build the annual San Diego Fall conference into CCTE's primary scholarly conference, with the traditional structure of keynote(s), research and best practice sessions, policy sessions, SIG meetings, poster session, and an awards luncheon.

Finally, it is important for CCTE to be a good steward of membership dues by offering a second annual meeting that is more affordable and brings resources to the organization.

In May 2016 the CCTE membership received a survey about these proposed changes. We would like to thank the 97 people who took the time to respond. Their responses and thoughtful comments have guided our work. A majority of respondents (72.2%) support the move, with 53.1% seeing it as an exciting opportunity. We also recognized from survey comments the need to balance membership interests in networking with meetings with affiliate groups and opportunities to both present and learn from research. Respondents to the survey communicated explicitly about their desire to maintain a balance between current conference practices that make CCTE such a special event, and excitement about charting new directions. As the Planning Group, we recognize the value in offering a mix of opportunities for members. The Spring 2017 Conference has been planned taking into account the thoughtful feedback offered by CCTE membership. Conference evaluations will be an important venue for providing ongoing input and preferences.

Considering this conference's focus on policy, people asked about how CCTE will support members' advocacy skills. The Planning Group is exploring a range of options—from existing online modules used by national organizations to informational speakers and opportunities for mock legislative conversations. Our intent is to provide members with many avenues to build their capacity in this arena, and to do it in a way that is relevant, collaborative, and productive. We will be doing this in part in regional policy groups which match combinations of State Senate edistricts, as you will see in the tentative program and on the registration form. There were also logistical questions about whether legislators or their staff would be available to meet during the conference. We are working with a coordinator in planning such visits.

In response to comments about the structure of the conference, we have revised the draft schedule to allow more time for networking as well as Thursday options for those who do not wish to engage in legislative visits. On Friday afternoon we plan to introduce roundtables along with presentations and posters as a way for researchers to engage in conversation about their work. The proposal deadline is January 31 (see accompanying call for proposals).

We also heard from members with pragmatic concerns about attendance and fees. One consideration is that this new style of conference eliminates the Saturday meeting and thus an extra night's hotel stay, which was mentioned as a benefit. Also, with meals included in the conference registration fee, participants will find this a more affordable meeting. And the meeting is scheduled to allow arrival on Thursday morning and departure on Friday afternoon, resulting in just a one-night hotel stay.

Although people said they are sad to leave San José, in general they recognized the potential in moving to Sacramento to take advantage of partnerships with organizations and programs like CTA, CFT, BTSA, CDE, and the CTC, as well as access to legislators, lobbyists, and other policy-makers. One recommendation was for a legislative reception, a suggestion we are actively pursuing.

Once again, the Planning Group appreciates the time CCTE members took to make constructive comments and suggestions as we look to make this change. Look for further updates and previews in the Winter and Spring issues of *CCNews* and come join us in Sacramento next March. Use the accompanying registration form to get on board early.

Although certain elements are now set, such as the move to Sacramento, we continue to solicit feedback from the membership and are working closely with the CCTE Board of Directors and the CCTE Policy Committee to make sure the Spring 2017 SPAN Conference represents the very best CCTE has to offer in improving education at every level in California.

While further details will be shared in the Winter issue of *CCNews* due out around December 1, this formal announcement of the Spring Conference includes the tentative program, registration form, and call for proposals.