

Patrick Mitchell
CCA Board of Directors, District B
Report on CTA Issues Conference
January 20-22, 2017

I recently attended the CTA Issues Conference in Las Vegas. It was my first time attending this conference. I attended the following workshops:

1. Rural Issues Breakout – “What Unionism Means in Our Rural Chapters”, presented by Tamara Conry and Dan Koen. This was one of four breakout sessions targeting specific groups of faculty, the others being urban, ESP, and COE. (I felt there should have been a Higher Ed Issues Breakout during this time.) Nevertheless, it was a good workshop presenting ideas about how local chapters in rural areas can engage their communities, mainly using social media.
2. Sacramento Scene, presented by Estelle Lemieux. This workshop gave an overview of education-related bills and their status in Sacramento, and also presented a summary of the Governor’s proposed budget.
3. Social Media – New Tools or Total Game Changer for Advocacy and Organizing? presented by Stacy Begin and Christian Lozano. This workshop gave an overview on how to make appropriate use of different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. One important theme of the presentation was that you need to be familiar with your audience, and what your goals are, before deciding what to post on social media. These ideas will be useful both in my work with my local chapter as well as an editor on the CCA Facebook page.
4. Balancing Your Act, presented by Nancy Hofrock and Barbara Smith. This workshop is worthwhile for anyone who leads a busy life and feels that they may need to adjust their priorities. It involves putting rocks of different sizes and colors into a jar, the rocks representing different obligations in our lives (work, family, friends, etc.) Two rocks in the jar represent one’s heart and one’s “inner core”, and as other rocks are added to the jar, it is important to be able to find the heart and the inner core. Some might find this workshop a little “touchy-feely”, but I really enjoyed it; it was a nice way to wrap up the weekend.

My biggest critique of this conference overall is that I did not find that much of it pertained to Higher Ed. In particular, there really should have been a Higher Ed. Breakout Session to run parallel with the breakout sessions for Rural, Urban, ESP, and COE.

I also recommend that CCA start purchasing a vendor table at CTA state conferences – it would be a great way to get our name out there and educate our K-12 colleagues on what we do (and the fact that we exist).