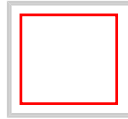


President's Monthly Message (archived)

- updated **February 4, 2006**



<**Learn more** about the CCA President, Carolyn Inmon, [here](#).

## State of the Union Speech February 4, 2006

My name is Carolyn Inmon and I am proud to be a community college faculty member. I am proud to be part of the most complex, interesting, diverse and important segment of the California public educational system.

I love the statement: *the mission of the community college is to prevent the permanent underclass*. We are the miracle workers! We are there for *Non traditional* students. We are there for *1st generation* college students. We are there for students *new* to this country, and we are there for students who need a second chance.

On November 7, we helped preserve that system. Thank you for your help. The governor declared war on us and tried to make teachers, firefighters, and nurses Public Enemy #1. CTA polling showed that we are still the most trusted professions in our society. The governor didn't understand that. And he didn't understand how powerful CTA was and, as a result we handed him a monumental defeat.

But, make no mistake about it -- that was only the beginning. Public education is still under attack and we are fighting for our very existence. We are at war!

The state of the union is that we have battles at the local, state and national levels.

**Let's take a look at the battles at the local level.**

### **Local Battle # 1 – Poverty:**

Do you sometimes feel a disconnect? You hear on the news that the governor's budget is the best ever but your administrative bargaining team is pleading poverty. We can't afford fringe benefits or retiree benefits because we're poor. We have to lay off teachers because we're poor. We can't afford raises because the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is making us poor. The poverty ploys and the layoff scare tactics are surfacing everywhere.

We can fight this battle because we have a very strong weapon – truth.

**Truth #1:** The statewide beginning balance this school year was \$665 million dollars -- \$30 million more than last year. They put \$30 million in the piggy bank last year. We are not poor.

**Truth #2:** In the last ten years faculty salaries have increased by **31%**. This sounds great until you realize that management salaries during the same period have gone up **65%**.

**Truth #3:** For the current year, there was a 9% increase in community college funding - one of the highest increases in history. The governors proposed budget for next year has an **11%** increase --- the highest increase ever! That's 20% in two years. We are not poor!

**Truth #4:** The governor's budget proposes \$130 million dollars for equalization. This brings all districts up to the 90th percentile. In the past the under-funded districts have been able to claim they couldn't afford raises. They will no longer be able to claim they have less money.

**Truth #5:** GASB originally was expected to require prefunding of retiree benefits for the working life of the employee. In its final form it doesn't do that. It only requires that liabilities be calculated and actuarial reports be done. Most of these reports are incomplete because they don't factor in the impact of Medicare. Districts are using scare tactics and incomplete actuarial reports to plead poverty when no such claim should be made. They are using GASB as an excuse.

Poverty is a pretense and you can fight this pretend poverty with the weapon of truth.

### **Local Battle #2 – Lawyers:**

An obscene amount of district money is being spent on lawyers. Let me give you some examples which must remain anonymous. District A spent over \$400,000 dollars to terminate one faculty member. District B spent \$350,000 dollars to lay off three faculty and then rescinded the layoffs. District C spent over \$1.2 million dollars on their lawyer for layoffs and bargaining, an amount that would have given the faculty everything they asked for -- with a lot left over.

Throughout the state lawyers seem to be engaging in The Big Stall – stretching out bargaining. Do you think that perhaps it could be to maximize their financial gain?

**Let's take a look at the battles at the state level.**

### **State Battle #1 -- Coordinated Bargaining:**

The Community College League of California (CCLC) has created a collective bargaining data base for community colleges. The League charges \$4,000 to each district to have access. 91% of districts have signed up and now have the ability to compare and coordinate their bargaining strategies statewide. Faculty requested access. The answer was no. If you think the district has your best interests at heart, then this example alone should convince you otherwise.

### **State Battle #2 -- Student Fees and Access:**

A recent study from the system office makes it perfectly clear that when fees go up student population goes down. Close to 200,000 potential students are missing because fees went up over 136% in four-years. CCA/CTA policy is for no-fees and open access. The battle to keep fees down is one of our most important battles.

### **State Battle #3 -- Hidden Tidal Wave:**

Hidden Tidal Wave is the phenomena that at least 750,000 18-24 year olds, with no high school diplomas, "*may be in need of our services.*" Now there is an understatement.

We have always had dropouts but the numbers are growing. In addition we have students who will finish their class work but not receive a diploma because of the CAHSEE. I thought that meant Casey at the bat. But, it means the California High School Exit Exam. It is estimated that over 100,000 high school seniors will fail this year. Each year an additional 50,000-100,000 students will join the ranks of non high school graduates.

This lack of high school graduation is an enormous societal problem. Is our system part of the solution? Do we have the resources to expand our mission even further? At present, we are the most under funded system in California. Perhaps a coming battle is to demand adequate funding if we accept large numbers of new students.

**Let's take a look at battles at the national level.**

### **National Battle #1 -- Student Growth:**

Community college is experiencing incredible growth nationally. In 1996 there were 1.39 million students in community college. By 2007 the number will have skyrocketed to 6.16 million students, almost 5 times as many students in only 8 years.

California will have 2.5 million students. Translation: 40% of the students in the United States who will attend community college will do so in California. We are the largest system of higher education in the world. This is an enormous and awesome challenge!

### **National Battle #2 -- Part Time Faculty:**

In 1993 the percentage of community college faculty that was part-time was 65%. By 2002 the figure had risen to 69%.

In California we have over 39,000 part-time faculty. 75/25 compliance continues to decline. Today, only 61% of the classes are taught by full time faculty. It is a real battle to obtain more full-time faculty positions. The scariest thing is that many of the people that attend meetings at the Chancellor's Office think there is nothing wrong with having 40% of the classes taught by part-timers. Only your state faculty leaders disagree. And we fight every week for you. We are clear that we have a STAFFING CRISIS.

Administrators continue to balance the budget on the backs of part-timers and they are balancing the out of class workload on the backs of the full-timers.

Other part-time battles include:

- Fringe benefits: The amount of \$1 million dollars provided by the state for fringe benefits is so stressed that only 17 cents of every dollar promised is paid.
- Office hours: Only 63 cents of every dollar for office hours is paid by the state.

The Budget workgroup of the system office asked for money to right these wrongs and the

governor ignored our requests.

### **National Battle #3 -- The National Commission for Higher Education:**

The Commission on the Future for Higher Education has been established under the leadership of U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings – the principal architect of “No Child Left Behind”. It contains some dangerous ideas:

The first is accountability. Spellings will focus on a concern that she has had for some time: the lack of solid information about what colleges are not doing well. Now, there's a negative goal. She had a similar concern with K-12 and now they have over accountability and over testing. Are we next? *Is creeping accountability* coming our direction? We must be careful of Student Learning Outcomes and make sure they don't turn on us. We must fight to avoid the danger of narrow, mindless outcome assessment.

The second danger has to do with financing: The federal government accounts for less than 10% of spending for K-12 but they are responsible for 1/3 of the spending in higher education. Spellings believes this funding means that *“the federal government has every right to examine academe more closely.”* Higher education in the United States is great because of our decentralization, innovation and independence. Danger now exists that federal funding will come with strong strings attached.

The third thing I fear has to do with educating for the economy: Spellings has stated that *“The things that people study really have to be focused on the needs of the economy and we're not really doing that right now.”* Sounds innocent on the surface but we must not lose that which makes life worth working for including a well-rounded fine arts and humanities education in order to prepare students to work.

Secretary Spellings is making college presidents nervous and she should be making us nervous as well.

### **National Battle #4 – Retirement:**

Did you know that Goldie Hawn turned 60? So did Dollie Parton, Cher, George Bush, Bill Clinton, and Donald Trump. In fact each day 8,000 of the oldest baby boomers turn 60. There are 78 million of them. Perhaps that's why retirement specialists are in a panic! And, they're after your retirement.

Whether you have been a faculty member for 4-years or 40-years, the attack on pensions is your battle. Critics are out to abolish your Defined Benefit pension which means the amount of income established as you retire is guaranteed as long as you live. They would replace it with defined contributions which are not guaranteed. Pensions are totally at the will of the investment market. While some will do very well under this system, many will not. When the money contributed to your account runs out, your income will stop. I wish you a long and happy life. And I hope you don't run out of money. Don't forget we take less salary to get this benefit. We paid for it. It isn't a gift.

New faculty – it affects you because one of the major perks of academe – a healthy and permanent

pension – is in danger. Mature faculty – it affects us because if this is passed less money will come into the system which may destabilize it.

### **National Battle #5 -- Academic Freedom:**

Bestselling author, David Horowitz, has written a book entitled *The Professors*. A reviewer states that Horowitz “*reveals a shocking and perverse culture of academics that are poisoning the minds of today's college students.*” The Inside Flap is even better. “*Coming to a Campus near You: Terrorists, racists, and communists. You know them as professors. And far from being harmless, they spew violent anti-Americanism, preach anti-Semitism, and cheer on the killing of American soldiers. All the while collecting tax-dollars and tuition to indoctrinate our children.*” The linkage of tax-dollars and terrorist teachers spells possible doom for academic freedom and funding as we know them.

### **In Conclusion:**

We are embattled to be sure.

Critics are trying to demonize us, silence us, and take away our retirement, our independence and our academic freedom.

Administrators are pretending to be poor – except for their salaries and those of their lawyers – and are creating a statewide data base to destroy us.

Legislators are abandoning the dream of a free college education and ignoring the abuse of part-time faculty.

Public education is fighting for its life and you and I are the soldiers.

The answer is in the word UNION which means to be unified. It is time to work together and we have our work cut out for us. We must stay united:

- Nurses, firefighters, and teachers.
- The Academic Senate and the unions
- Part-time and full-time professors
- Younger and mature professors
- Strong locals and CCA
- CCA and our parent organizations – CTA with its 335,000 members and NEA with its 2.8 million members.

We are stronger than ever and we are more united than ever. And we need to be to win the war.

**Any questions? Call the CCA office at 916/726-4207.**

