

Cal Council  
A Story of Continuity and Change

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The late Jim Stone, who was my doctoral advisor at the University of California, Berkeley, played a major role in the early development of the California Council on the Education of Teachers, or “Cal Council” as it has always been known by its members. As he recalled for me in a 1995 *CCNews* interview:

In 1945 the State Superintendent of Public Instruction had called a meeting to bring together all the public and private colleges to talk about the coming crisis—a shortage of teachers. I wasn't at that ‘crisis meeting,’ but I was at the second meeting and have attended every meeting since.

I mention Jim Stone at the beginning of this article not only because of his long-term commitment to Cal Council (he served at various times as president, executive director, and editor of *Teacher Education Quarterly*), but also because his involvement, when coupled with mine, covers the whole span of this organization's existence. Just as Jim could reach back in his memories and talk about the beginnings of Cal Council, I can reach back and talk about a time when some of the founders of the organization were still active. During the fall 1995 conference in San

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Diego, Cal Council celebrated its 50th anniversary. Remarkably, 12 of the past presidents of the Council were in attendance at the celebratory banquet, with golden-voiced Dennis Tierney, himself a former president, acting as master of ceremonies. The celebration was an event that highlighted, in a moving way, the continuity and vitality of an organization that has effectively served California teacher education and teacher educators for 50 years, a period that has now grown to 70.

I am grateful to the editors and editorial board of *Issues in Teacher Education* for inviting past presidents of Cal Council like me to write about the experiences we had during our terms of office. This undertaking acknowledges the journal's respect for the organization that sponsors it, and it underscores the importance for the teacher education profession to recognize and value the professional organizations that animate and support it.

### Memories of Conferences Past

I began attending Cal Council conferences on a regular basis in fall 1979, my first year as a teacher educator in California. The conference was held at the picturesque Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park—the last time we had a conference in that locale. I remember that Wilson Riles, then California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, arrived in a limousine to deliver the opening keynote address and then stayed for the entire conference. I also remember meeting teacher educators from other institutions whom I would subsequently work with over many years. Several qualities attracted me to Cal Council from the outset. For one thing, unlike most other professional organizations, Cal Council held conferences twice a year—fall and spring—enhancing opportunities delegates from member institutions to develop and sustain close professional relationships. The semi-annual conferences also enabled delegates to stay informed about California policy matters that affect teacher education; to meet and confer with others who shared similar work-related issues; to benefit from significant professional development offerings (e.g., presentations from important scholars and policy makers; workshops on practical issues; interactive sessions). The opportunities to stay current with teacher education issues and research were further enhanced by the Council's professional journal (a second journal was added later), which was mailed to each delegate.

Like other Cal Council delegates, I looked forward to the semi-annual conferences. The Council offered a stable format that was easy to remember and plan around: pre-conference activities (associate-group meetings and a legislative review session) on Thursday morning; featured speakers and

various sessions on Thursday afternoon and all day Friday; banquets on Thursday evening (with another featured speaker) and Friday noon (with Council awards); and Saturday morning sessions that, to the chagrin of Council leadership, were often not well attended. The multi-day format provided many opportunities for teacher educators from the same or different institutions to come together to share ideas, concerns, and plans.

During my early years of conference attendance, delegates would gather after the Thursday banquet for a lively party in the president's hotel suite. (One of the "perks" of being president was the privilege of paying for all of the food and drink!). Following the party, many delegates would head for a local nightclub—e.g., Mercedes Room in San Diego or Mission Ranch in Carmel—for further socializing. A cultural shift occurred sometime in the late 1980s: a popular pre-banquet cocktail hour was initiated—and remains to this day—taking much of the thunder from the President's reception. Also, most delegates preferred to retire earlier rather than devote the late evening to partying. The post-banquet tradition was replaced, over time, by an informal sing-along, with guitar accompaniment and songs composed for and by Cal Council delegates.

Another Cal Council tradition that emerged in the 1990s and continues today, though in a less organized way, was the Friday evening dinner. After sessions ended late Friday afternoon, delegates were on their own for dinner. Joe Galbo of California State University, Stanislaus, a director and later vice-president, began organizing Friday dinners at restaurants he had selected for their gourmet quality. This specific practice—the gourmet dinner version—came to an end with Joe's untimely death in 1995.

After several years of attending conferences, I was elected to the Board of Directors of Cal Council, where I served from 1985 to 1988. A few years later (1990), I was elected vice-president, which segued into two-year terms as president and past president.

In the remaining paragraphs of this article I will:

1. Discuss some significant Cal Council events that occurred during and around my presidency and show how these fit into the ongoing development of the Council;
2. Identify the primary functions that have defined Cal Council's work since its early days and explain how these functions—which I have called themes—have changed in scope and importance over the years while remaining essential features of the Council to this day;
3. Discuss Cal Council's future, suggesting some changes it might consider if it is to remain strong.

### My Presidency of Cal Council (1992-1994)

When I assumed the presidency of Cal Council, the organization was recovering from serious financial constraints. State cutbacks had reduced conference attendance; and the Council's budget, eroded in part by our own profligacy, was in disrepair. To save airfares, the important January meeting of the Board of Directors had been scaled back, the president and vice-president meeting separately with northern and southern California delegates. The summer meeting (also important for getting organized for the year) had been eliminated. Fortunately, by the time I became president, the Council's financial shape (though not the state's) had improved; and we were able to have full board meetings in January and summer. We were also fortunate to have David Wampler, a former Council president, as our new but highly experienced executive secretary.

#### *CCNews*

Cal Council directors had long recognized the importance of having fuller and more regular communication with delegates between conferences. Seeking to address this need, I started *CCNews*, the first issue appearing before the fall conference in 1992. Executive secretary Dave Wampler and the conference chairs agreed to contribute regular columns, as did various committee chairs and Board member John McLevie, who was from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Much of the credit for producing and maintaining *CCNews* belonged to then *Teacher Education Quarterly* editor Alan Jones, who included the newsletter in periodic journal mailings to delegates, thus eliminating the otherwise-prohibitive costs of postage. Through the collaborative efforts of many, we were able to put together and disseminate four issues of *CCNews* the first year, a schedule we maintained during my terms as president and past-president. By that time (1995) *CCNews* had been incorporated into the regular budget of the Council. My term as editor ended in 1996; subsequent editors were appointed by the president. I must say that it pleases me a great deal to see how informative, attractive (with fine color photos), and well-laid-out *CCNews* (now entirely online) has become. It is a far cry from the simple 4- to 8-page newsletter I used to submit to Alan on a floppy disk.

One feature of *CCNews* I took particular pride in was the series of interviews Carol Barnes of California State University, Fullerton, and I conducted with former Cal Council luminaries. Beginning with Jim Stone, the series continued with Jim Cuisick (former executive director and later president), Clare Pelton (first public school teacher to serve as Cal Council president), Dennis Tierney (past president), and Dave Wampler

(former president and then executive director). Carol and I were able to shine a spotlight on these individuals who contributed so much to the organization and whose reflections provide fascinating insights into the operations of the Council over time. These published interviews—and the early issues of the *CCNews* in general—were a useful resource for me as I prepared this article.

### ***Mail Balloting***

Another Cal Council initiative that was implemented during my term as president was mail balloting. Proposed by the Nominations and Elections Committee in spring of 1993 in response to federal voting requirements for non-profit organizations, the concept was approved by the Board of Directors in summer of 1993 and by the Delegate Assembly that fall. It was implemented with the spring 1994 elections. Previously, all balloting had taken place in person at the spring conference, reducing the number of delegates who were able to vote. With the introduction of balloting by mail, participation in elections increased sharply.

### ***Five-Year Plan***

During the early months of my presidency, I initiated a five-year plan, modeled on similar Cal Council plans developed in the 1970s and 1980s. A high-powered committee of Council veterans under the leadership of Michele Stimac of Pepperdine University took on the task of creating goals to guide the Council's future growth and identifying activities under each goal. Developed in 1992-1993, the plan was approved by the Board of Directors (summer 1993) and the Delegate Assembly (fall 1993). While the Five Year Plan was never fully implemented as envisioned, it did highlight goals and activities that were considered important at the time. Several of the ideas in the report foreshadowed—perhaps even helped to inspire—initiatives undertaken or further developed during my presidency and brought to fruition in later years. One goal, for example (“create a community of teacher educators”), spoke about “increasing collaboration with other teacher education organizations.” A second goal (“influence policy on teacher education”) called for a “public policy committee” and the development of “policy positions and papers” to be presented to policy makers. Yet another goal (“foster scholarship in teacher education”) recommended continued support for *Teacher Education Quarterly* and the Committee on Research and encouraged “new-scholar presentations and the sharing of dissertations concerned with teacher education.” Let me review some of these initiatives as they evolved during my term as president.

### ***New Emphasis on Policy***

In its earliest years, Cal Council brought together teacher educators, deans, legislators, and Education Department personnel to help plan and even write legislation affecting the education of teachers. The recommendations of this group often found their way into law. This process ceased around 1965 after the Council severed its connection with the State Department of Education, which had been its primary source of funding, and became an autonomous organization of college- and university-based teacher educators. For many years following this separation, the Council showed a reluctance to involve itself in state policy matters. This attitude gradually shifted; and the spring before I became president, the Council established an Ad Hoc Committee on Policy. As reported in the "State of the Council" report (*CCNews*, Spring-Summer 1993), its function was "'to identify major policy issues in teacher education,' . . . 'monitor current policy issues as they emerge' in Sacramento and advise the Council how it should respond.'" Consistent with Goal 3 of the 5-year Plan, the Ad Hoc Committee identified activities "whereby CCET members can become more aware of and involved in teacher education public policy." The activities included hosting policy forums, developing policy research and position papers, and offering public policy training seminars. This new determination to be actively involved in teacher education policy led the Council to establish a permanent policy committee in spring of 1995, during my term as past president.

Policy sessions (usually part of the Delegate Assembly) have become such a prominent feature of Cal Council conferences in recent years that many delegates probably do not realize that taking such an active role in state and federal policy issues was not the norm 20 years ago.

### ***Growing Emphasis on Scholarship and Research***

In 1988, in an effort to more actively support scholarship, especially among junior faculty members, the Council established the Committee on Research. Its function was to solicit and review applications for research and best-practice presentations at the semi-annual conferences. Through agreement with *Teacher Education Quarterly*, high-quality papers were accepted for publication in that journal. The Committee ultimately evolved into northern and southern branches, as the number of applications grew and formal peer review became increasingly important for academics. I served as the first chair of the Committee on Research, followed by June Elia (Holy Names, 1991-1994), who in turn passed on the responsibility to Joe Galbo (CSU Stanislaus) in 1994. My presidency marked a period of continuing growth in the scope and importance of research presentations at the conferences, a trend

that continues up to the present day. The recent conference in San Jose (spring 2014) included 12 refereed research/best-practice sessions and 20 refereed poster presentations.

### ***Towards a Merger with CACTE and SCATE***

Cal Council conferences have always provided a venue where associated professional groups would meet—groups such as the CSU education deans, teacher educators from private colleges and universities (now known as ICCUCET), professors of special education and bilingual education, and others. Two such groups—the California Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (CACTE) and State of California Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE)—stood out because they, like Cal Council, represented teacher education broadly and because they were state affiliates of national associations. For many years CACTE had taken responsibility for offering a session at each conference informing delegates of ongoing legislation and CTC actions. From my earliest years at Cal Council, there were efforts to bring these three organizations into closer association and collaboration. In 1985, the organizations began jointly sponsoring fall conferences, a practice that continued, with a one year interruption, right up to the merger of the three in 2001.

During my presidency, I worked deliberately to enhance collaboration, meeting with CACTE and SCATE officers during the fall 1992 conference and again in February 1993 at the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) conference in Los Angeles. The 5-Year Plan, as previously noted, called for “increasing collaboration with other teacher education organizations.” The late fall edition of *CCNews* reported that “specific plans for collaborations, including possible representation of CACTE and SCATE of Cal Council’s Board of Directors” would be drawn up over the next three months. The Board of Directors reviewed this proposal at its January and spring meetings, but approval was delayed based on legal issues involving the national associations.

Following my presidency, I served on President Grace Grant’s Inter-organizational Task Force to further efforts to merge the three organizations. The merger was completed after my active involvement in the effort had ended. One reservation I had about full merger of the organizations came from my concern that SCATE and CACTE would lose some of the vitality and unique resources they brought to the teacher education profession in California. SCATE, for instance, had individual (rather than institutional) memberships, allowing it to reach out to teacher educators who were not Cal Council delegates, including those who did not work in colleges and universities, and bring different voices to the professional mix. In retrospect, I do believe my concerns were justified: SCATE and

CACTE ceased to exist as independent professional organizations for California teacher educators, and not all of their previous members and activities have been maintained by the merged California Council on Teacher Education. On the positive side, the merger has clearly succeeded in creating a more powerful and recognizable voice for teacher education in the state and has also encouraged greater involvement of the national associations—Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) and American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)—in California issues and policy. Overall, I am pleased that I played a positive role in the movement that led to the present, totally integrated Cal Council, which I believe effectively serves teacher educators in California.

### ***Some Challenges***

Several education-related issues in California during my presidency presented significant challenges to teacher educators and educators in general. The state was grappling with huge budget deficits—sound familiar?—which led to wrenching cutbacks in resources for schools and public institutions of higher education. Moreover, we were dealing with policy initiatives such as a school voucher proposal that, had it been passed by voters, would have decimated funding for public education; a new accreditation board, whose effects were unknown; a law (the Bergeson bill) prescribing the reform of teacher education; and B/CLAD legislation that called for serious modification of existing teacher credential programs. Despite these external, statewide challenges, the years of my presidency were largely tranquil and without serious challenges within the organization. California colleges and universities continued to renew their memberships in Cal Council, an indication of the regard they held for the organization and perhaps the value they saw in maintaining professional relationships with other institutions during hard times.

### **Cal Council Themes**

In examining the work of Cal Council over the decades, I have thought about the specific functions it has performed in serving the needs of its constituency, California teacher educators. I have identified six of these functions, which I think of as overlapping themes that essentially define the organization and its work. These are: communication, networking, professional development, service, policy, and the social. Let me describe briefly how Cal Council has operated over the years as viewed through the lenses of these themes.

**Communication**

During its early days, Cal Council leaders communicated with the delegates—and they with each other—primarily through written information sent by mail (e.g., conference announcement, board meetings) and through direct verbal interaction at the conferences). Over the years, communication advanced mightily. *CCNews*, disseminated quarterly, represented a more systematic and comprehensive way for the Council to communicate with its members, though initially it too depended on the U.S. mail for delivery. With the advent of e-mail and later the development of a website, the Council and its delegates (and others associated with it) were able to communicate more quickly, effectively, and inexpensively. The growth of cell phone use enhanced communication, making it easier for Council committee members to interact easily and immediately with each other. Clearly, the rapid growth of inter-organizational communication over the years has enabled Cal Council to more efficiently serve the needs of its members and to become a more effective professional organization overall.

**Networking**

Networking can, I suppose, be regarded as just a facet of communication; but I see it as more. To me networking means people—delegates and others—coming together deliberately to share information and ideas and to work collaboratively to address mutual problems. Cal Council conferences have always offered opportunities for such networking. Indeed, the initial meeting of the Council brought teacher educators, deans, K-12 representatives, as well as Department of Education personnel and legislators together in an effort to address an immediate problem: the impending shortage of teachers. Delegates often, I believe, come to conferences for the explicit purpose of networking with colleagues over shared issues of concern.

**Professional Development**

This is perhaps the single most important theme of the six. It concerns the way that Cal Council has functioned over the years to address this ongoing need of its delegates and other teacher educators. Several levels of professional development are included within this theme—*receptive*, *interactive*, and *active*. The Council has been involved in all three. Teacher educators who attend conference sessions in which a noted speaker or an expert panel is presenting information and insights on significant policy developments, research findings, pedagogical or curriculum initiatives, and the like—common features of Cal Council conferences—are engaged in receptive professional development. If these individuals read

articles in one of the Council's two journals, they are similarly involved as receptive receivers of the information. If in addition to attending a session or reading an article, the teacher educators engage in deliberate discussion with others about the ideas offered in the session or article, they are involved in what I call interactive professional development. Many conference sessions and special interest group (SIG) meetings are set up to facilitate such interaction. Cal Council also offers opportunities for active professional development: It invites teacher educators to make presentations at conference sessions, poster sessions, and SIG meetings. It also invites them to submit articles to its journals.

Over the decades, Cal Council has made enormous progress in serving the professional development needs of teacher educators. The significant expansion in the number and variety of conference sessions—including the relatively recent development of special interest groups (O.K.—so 1995 is not “relatively recent” for many delegates!) and poster sessions—as well as the increased capacity and reputation of the Council's two journals, clearly demonstrate its commitment to provide high-quality professional development services for the teacher education profession. I believe it has been highly successful in this undertaking.

### **Service**

While some would reject service as a critical function of the organization—how can one argue, they might say, that the organization exists to provide service opportunities for its members?—still, anyone familiar with the operation of Cal Council is likely to agree that such service stands out as an important feature—or theme—of the organization. Cal Council offers manifold opportunities for its delegates to serve on one of its standing committees—conference committees, the Policy Committee, the Committee on Research, the Elections Committee—or ad hoc committees. They can take on leadership roles in one of the eight special interest groups or stand for election to the Board of Directors or one of the officer position. Service to Cal Council provides opportunities for delegates to be directly involved with significant issues facing teacher educators in California. Those of us on the Board asked ourselves: *What themes and sessions should we include in our semi-annual conferences? What policy positions should we put before delegates for their consideration? How can we push for more attention to the arts in the K-12 curriculum? How should we reach out to legislators, parents, and other educators to improve education in California?* Not, strictly speaking, networking nor professional development, service to Cal Council provides a little of both and much more. Veteran delegates clearly recognize this and readily comment on how much their service to the Council has contributed to their professional lives.

### ***Policy***

As mentioned earlier in this article, Cal Council, primarily through its conferences, has always provided opportunities for teacher educators to learn about and even get involved with current policy initiatives of the CTC, the state legislature, or the federal government. Early in the 1990s, the Council began to take a more active role in this work, as it considered ways to influence rather than just learn about policy. Delegate Assembly sessions came to be devoted to crafting and approving policy statements on important—and often controversial—issues. For a time, the Council even had its own lobbyist (though that is an expensive proposition for an organization like ours). When asked in 1995 whether Cal Council should be involved in policy issues, Jim Stone answered emphatically:

Hey, like it or not, we're in the public; we're into politics. The public schools are into politics. To put our head in the sand and think that's not our business, it's a quick death. We've got to be politically active. Unless we stay active, we're not going to find our place in the sun. I think that's absolutely crucial. (*CCNews*, Winter 1995)

I am pleased to see Jim's wish become true. At this stage in the Council's history one would have to say that policy analysis and action comprise an important part of its perceived role.

### ***The Social***

If you were to ask a veteran member of Cal Council what the organization means to her or him, you are likely to hear accounts—often lively—of the good times he or she had with friends and fellow teacher educators at Cal Council conferences. For some, perhaps, identifying socializing as an important component of the organization's *raison d'être* might seem a bit frivolous. One can just hear a dean or department chair saying to a delegate: "I pay to send you to a professional conference, and all you can talk about is the great time you had partying and socializing with other delegates. How can I justify the expense?" And yet, I would argue, the personal bonds one develops with fellow delegates, the sense of belonging to a community of shared professional interests, can go a long way in helping one deal effectively with the ongoing vicissitudes of professional life.

Dennis Tierney, in a column written for the first issue of *CCNews*, captured the sentiment well:

Beyond these professional rewards, CCET conferences have provided many of us with enduring friendships nurtured by our biannual gatherings. Fun Runs, dancing at the Mission Ranch, Presidential receptions,

and restaurant explorations with colleagues, new and old, have provided many of us with memories beyond measure and sent us back to our respective campuses enriched in mind and spirit.

Jim Stone reflected a similar sentiment in his 1995 interview, providing a moving response that speaks to both networking and socializing themes. Asked, “As you look back on your long association with Cal Council, what has been most gratifying to you?” Jim responded:

Oh, the people. You know, the problems remain the same; but it’s the people you get to know—people that you respect, that you get ideas from; people that you can talk to to confirm some of the things that you are thinking about. I like getting to know people in other institutions that have a different context and see things a little bit differently. That’s always what makes it a go. And that’s the thing I remember. Some of those old friends I remember so dearly—I just wish they were all still around. (*CCNews*, Issue No. 11, Winter 1995)

In looking at the importance of the social component of Cal Council over the years, I would have to say that it has diminished somewhat as conferences have grown larger. (Conference attendance averages over 200 in recent years; I can remember conferences in the past with fewer than 80 attendees.) The increased day-to-day pressures of professional life in colleges and universities have, I believe, also contributed to a decrease in socializing at conferences. Many teacher educators have difficulty getting away for the entire multi-day conference. Some have responsibilities at the conference that keep them “on task” and leave little opportunity for serious socializing. Nevertheless, though perhaps less pervasive than it once was, socializing with professional colleagues still exists as a continuing—and justifiable—feature of Cal Council conferences.

### ***Continuity and Change***

These six functions, which I have identified as primary themes of Cal Council’s work, have characterized the operations of the organization practically from its inception. Over the years the themes have shifted in size and importance. For instance, as conferences have grown larger, Cal Council has been able to offer significantly more sessions devoted to research. Policy sessions, an important emphasis of early conferences, waned for a time; but the emphasis has returned strongly in the last 15 years. Clearly, Cal Council has thrived during changing times because it has multiple functions that serve the interest of its delegates and of teacher educators generally, and because it has been flexible in its ability to respond to the changing needs of its constituency.

### The Future

The one serious concern I have for the future of Cal Council is financial. I would like to see the organization increase its reserves so that it can respond adequately to a serious emergency—e.g., the collapse of a scheduled conference or the withdrawal of institutional membership by state-supported universities. Beyond being able to respond to fiscal emergencies, the Council needs greater revenues to support basic (and not inexpensive) organizational expenses: the costs of maintaining two journals, the (currently modest) salary of the executive director, technology costs, etc. This is not an easy undertaking—finding new sources of income or enhancing existing sources—but is one I believe the Council should pursue if it is to maintain its effectiveness in the years to come.

I have one other suggestion to make: Cal Council should continue efforts to expand its membership. Many teacher educators at colleges and universities are not institutional delegates or individual members, and they do not participate in Council activities. This is unfortunate. Besides reaching out to urge them to become members beyond their institution's delegate allotment (which can be done), the Council might consider offering associate membership at a reduced rate. Associate members would not receive the journals and could not vote or hold office; but they would receive *CCNews* and e-mails sent to the membership. The Council should also continue its efforts to recruit new members from teacher educators who work in schools, county and district offices, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment centers, etc. Here, too, those who choose not to commit to regular membership or whose institutions are unable to join Cal Council can be offered individual associate membership.

Overall, I see Cal Council as a strong professional organization, one that will continue to develop and thrive in future years because it is flexibly organized and thus well equipped to respond to new and different demands in the profession and in the society as a whole. Its organizational nimbleness should serve it well in an unpredictable, rapidly changing world of the future.

### Conclusion

I loved the old Cal Council—the intimacy of a small conference that met twice a year; the warmth and laughter of old friends coming together; the sharing of ideas, plans, and concerns, along with personal information. I miss that. However, the new Cal Council is a larger, stronger, better organized, and more sustaining professional organization. It has shown a remarkable ability to grow and change over the years in the face of new challenges and new possibilities; and it will, I believe, continue

to demonstrate the resilience and substance that make it a first-rate professional organization. On a personal note, I deeply appreciate the richness Cal Council has brought to my life as a teacher educator for more than 35 years.