

# (Ed)irections

The Newsletter for the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

SPRING 2009

## IN THIS ISSUE:

(Ed)irector's Message:  
Prof. Steven Lee

(Ed)ean's Message:  
Prof. Ruth Fassinger

(Ed)igest  
Leadership, Change,  
and the Future of  
Community Colleges,  
Prof. Jim Riggs

Teaching with Fire:  
Poetry that Sustains  
the Courage to Teach,  
Book Review, Prof.  
Dennis Sayers

(Ed)ialogues  
Prof. Jim Riggs  
(Interviewed by  
Steve Graham)

Steve Graham  
(Interviewed by  
Prof. Steven Lee)

(Ed)evelopments:  
News & Information

(Ed)istinctions:  
Faculty Activities  
& Accomplishments

(Ed)esk: Publication  
Information



## (Ed)irector's Message

**PROF. STEVEN LEE**

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present to you the first electronic newsletter of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at California State University, Stanislaus. I hope the newsletter will provide an opportunity for the readers to develop a greater understanding of our program, as well as appreciate the various academic activities occurring in and around the program. I am honored to be serving as the Director of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at California State University, Stanislaus.

By now, many of you know that the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at California State University, Stanislaus received full approval from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

last year. We are the smallest CSU to have earned this distinction. This could not have come about without the tireless dedication and commitment of a fine cadre of professors, administrators, staff, and community and educational leaders, who envisioned that CSU Stanislaus—despite its size-- could make a huge impact in public education through the doctoral program. We are just as proud that we admitted some of the brightest and most dedicated students into our first cohort in fall 2008. And, our program ranks near the top in terms of enrollment for the first cohort. They come from all walks of life but embrace a common goal and interest—dedicated to serving elementary, secondary, and college students at the highest intellectual level possible. In this inaugural issue you will be meeting some of our professors and a student in the Doctoral Program.

While we will hold the distinction, for some time to come, of being the “smallest” CSU to offer the Doctoral Program, our vision is anything but small. We envision making our program more accessible through innovative curriculum and delivery methods, enhancing the development of a community of scholars at CSU, Stanislaus, and contributing to the development of the standard for doctoral education—locally and nationally. Currently, we have 17 core faculty who are nationally and internationally acclaimed scholars in their respective fields. Within the next couple of years, the program anticipates the addition of four tenure-line professors—to be recruited across the country. Augmenting the core faculty are more than a dozen affiliated faculty within the university and several

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educational leaders from various schools and colleges in Central Valley. The program will host academic colloquia and faculty development workshops for faculty, students, and the public throughout the year.

As we expand our personnel and fiscal resources, it is my hope that we can provide to the friends of the Doctoral Program a newsletter that not only informs but serves as a forum for discussing various educational issues. To this end, we will exert our highest level of commitment to ensure that we are successful in what we venture out to do. If you have a news-worthy item that you wish to share, please send it to [edd@csustan.edu](mailto:edd@csustan.edu). In the meantime, I wish to express my appreciation to the staff at Communications and Public Affairs office for their assistance in producing this newsletter. Most of all, I am indebted to the fine professors, students, staff, and friends who had the tenacity to make this program offering possible at California State University, Stanislaus. I look to you for continued support and guidance for the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at CSU, Stanislaus. Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Steven Lee**  
*Director and Professor*

# (Ed)ean's Message

**PROF. RUTH FASSINGER**



Dear Ed.D. Community:

I am so pleased to see the launch of our Ed.D. program electronic newsletter. Many thanks to Director Steven Lee, and to all of those who contributed to this first issue. I trust that you will find this an interesting read, and that you will find yourselves motivated to send in news, articles, and suggestions for future issues. We welcome and need your active participation to make this newsletter an enduring success.

When I began my own doctoral program in psychology many years ago as a 30-year-old adult, I found myself very impatient to learn what I needed to learn in order to get out and do what I wanted to do. I had “been around the block” a few times, and, while I wanted intellectual challenge, I didn’t have much tolerance for knowledge that seemed utterly disconnected from experience. Luckily, I had superb mentors who helped me find the connections between what I was learning and my own experi-

ence. As a result, I ended up on a professional path that I neither expected nor imagined that I could travel—a path that I cherish, with a professional identity that is fulfilling.

It is my fervent hope that this kind of professional growth happens for the students involved in our Ed.D. program. The program is designed to provide exactly the kind of integration I so desperately wanted all those years ago as a busy adult learner who brought experiences, opinions, and well-formed ideas into my professional training. Our program here at CSU Stanislaus emphasizes the connection between knowledge and experience, theory and practice, scholarship and practical strategies. We want our students to experience immediate gratification – to be able to take what they are learning into the positions they currently hold and enhance their work on a day-to-day basis.

I also hope that the faculty and community members associated with the Ed.D. program experience similar professional growth. As educators, we are, first and foremost, LEARNERS, and we all benefit from the mutual exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences. My wish for all of us is that we live in a state of perpetual excitement about learning, and that our Ed.D. program becomes a place of constant intellectual renewal. Have a successful and exciting spring semester!

# LEADERSHIP, CHANGE AND THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES



Dr. Jim Riggs

Professor of Community College Education

**For years community colleges have focused on stability, incremental growth and short-term survival strategies, which have led to an institutional culture deeply resistant to change. The current way community colleges function with their outdated management practices and outmoded delivery systems will not work, if they want their institutions to become major democratizing forces and economic engines in a rapidly evolving future.**

Strong, capable leadership will be required to bring about this greatly needed change. However, fewer and fewer well prepared individuals are entering into community college administration, while seasoned administrators are retiring at an alarming rate. In response to the lack of strong qualified candidates, colleges have increasingly resorted to problematical hiring practices resulting in the appointment of weak administrators incapable of leading transformation. While there aren't any quick solutions for solving the growing deficit of qualified administrators, there are several steps colleges can take to help address the problem.

The mantra we continuously heard throughout this year's political campaigns was the need for change—a term that has become synonymous with a better future and the avenue to prosperity. Nowhere does the change narrative ring louder and truer than at the community college. Many of us who have spent our careers in community colleges realize that our institutions, like our local, state and federal governments, must undergo significant change in order to stay viable in the future. However, just like our government and political leaders, there is a very large gap between what community college leaders say they need to do to prepare their colleges for the future, and what actually is done. Clearly, it is time for us to get beyond all the rhetoric and begin to act.

The current way community colleges function, with their roots grounded in outdated Weberian management practices, outmoded instructional delivery systems, and archaic approaches to student and institutional support services, simply will not work for institutions that are charged with serving as major democratizing forces and economic engines for a changing population, a changing world and a rapidly evolving future. As leaders, we need to think differently about our colleges, how they operate, and in general, the whole purpose for their existence. If community colleges don't start changing soon, they are likely to slide into insignificance.

These changes must be purposeful, well planned, and strongly executed by capable leaders. There are large issues that will

require not only new actions and organizations, but also a new way of thinking about how best to lead the community college into the future. But where will the new leadership come from to shepherd this transformation? From all indications, fewer and fewer well prepared individuals are available and willing to enter into community college administration, while seasoned administrators at all levels are retiring and leaving at an alarming rate.

Over the past several years a number of reports have been published addressing the growing shortage of community college leaders. A study published in 2001 by the American Association of Community Colleges indicated that nearly half of the community college presidents at that time planned to be retired by 2007 (Shultz, 2001). According to Chris Duree (2008) who led a large study at Iowa State University on the community college presidency this past year, over three quarters of community college presidents surveyed plan to retire by 2012. Vacant president positions are most often filled by either other presidents or those holding chief instructional officers (CIOs) positions. Duree and his research colleagues found that the average age for CIOs is about the same as presidents. CIOs are likely to retire at the same rate as their bosses. With the two pools of applicants that have historically filled most of the vacant president positions shrinking, and the number of president vacancies on the rise, community colleges will have an increasingly difficult time finding well qualified candidates to fill their executive leadership positions.

The problem only gets worse when we look at the front end of the career ladder for community college leaders. It is no secret that the career ladder into community college administration and onto the presidency is a rigid one. Although there are some exceptions, anyone who wants to become a community college president should plan on spending time as a community college faculty member, faculty leader, dean and CIO before they will be considered competitive for a president position. Along the way, they develop a portfolio of important experiences, gain complex leadership and management skills, and establish valuable networks and contacts. Moving on the career path toward a college presidency can take several years and require a great deal of personal sacrifice. On top of all this, a doctorate degree must be earned from a reputable institution, generally while working full-time and raising a family.

A recent study completed by The American Council on Education (2008) reported that community colleges are hiring fewer full-time faculty, and those that are hired are older than their counterparts in the past. One of the concerns raised in the ACE study was that these new faculty members

will not have the time during their shorter careers to move through the traditional leadership ranks. So we have problems at both ends of the leadership continuum, with too few qualified individuals entering onto the community college administrative career ladder, and large numbers at or near the top of the career ladder leaving.

Some initiatives have been implemented to help address the shortage of community college leaders. Locally, California State University, Stanislaus has offered a post graduate certificate program in Community College Leadership and currently offers a community college leadership specialization as part of their new Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership. On a national basis, the American Association of Community Colleges, through its Leading Forward initiative, has been working very hard for years to bring this issue to the forefront.

It is difficult to pin down just why fewer people are entering into a career path of community college administration. Because most studies done on community college leadership focus primarily on the college presidency, they fall short of helping us better understand why so few are entering the community college administrative career path, or why many choose to exit this career path early. It cannot simply be that we are hiring fewer young full-time faculty.

There are several important areas that need to be explored regarding how community colleges can improve both the quantity and quality of available leaders at all levels. These include developing a better understanding of ways to support up and coming administrators, as they move through the leadership pipeline; developing alternatives to the traditionally rigid career paths for those who want to become community college administrators or advance as administrators; and improving organizational practices for selecting administrators. We also need to do a better job of inventorying and incorporating best practices that already exist in professional development for new administrators.

I do know that a large (and often unspoken) part of the problem has been caused by an unfair and pervasive devaluing of the important contributions made by mid-level administrators. Too few people outside of community college administrative circles really understand the enormous contributions outstanding mid-level administrators make to the successful operations of their colleges. While strong presidential leadership is a critical component to the long-term success of a college, the deans, vice presidents and other mid-level administrators are the ones who have the greatest impact on the actual operations, organizational priorities, and how the



**“OVER THREE QUARTERS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS SURVEYED PLAN TO RETIRE BY 2012.”**

college really functions. The quality of the academic environment, meaningfulness of services for students, and support for the faculty are all driven by dedicated individuals in mid-level leadership positions and not out of the president’s office. We need to do a better job of supporting our deans, vice presidents and directors if we want to make any progress in transforming our colleges.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

Community colleges are relatively unburdened by external regulations and oversight, when compared to our public school colleagues who face layers of mandates and political interference. Community colleges have considerable freedom regarding what programs to offer, how to offer the programs, how they organize themselves, and how they measure success. So why haven’t community colleges taken control of their future, and transformed their organizations?

Richard Alfred from the Center for the Study of Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan addressed this question in a series of articles a few years ago. He stated that the community colleges have a wolf at their door, and that wolf is the college themselves, with their current organizational structures, outdated systems of delivery and cultures of entitlement. He also pointed out that our colleges resist change in many ways—looking to small solutions to try and solve large problems – choosing to muddle through tough times and only using tactics that only get them through from one crisis to the next (Alfred, 2003a & 2003b). We have allowed our colleges to develop into institutions of complacency that reward status quo thinking—where stability, organizational homeostasis and self-limiting bureaucracy are clearly valued over risk taking and transformational change.

One of the ways that community colleges can breakout of this dilemma is to place a greater emphasis on the critical role and responsibility leaders have in strengthening the academic culture of the college. If advancing a strong academic culture is to happen in any meaningful way, it will need to be at the core of every leadership action. Too often administrators find themselves bogged down in operational minutiae, where it is easy to lose sight of the real purpose and goals for the community college. Allocating resources and balancing budgets, resolving personnel and student problems, shepherding paperwork through the system, and preparing reports are part of the daily life for administrators. These important functions need to be viewed not as distractions but as essential actions in advancing the academic culture. Too many leaders, new and experienced, miss this important connection. Creating a strong academic culture and maintaining a strong operational and fiscal environment are not mutually exclusive activities; they are absolutely mutually inclusive and mutually supporting. On a sustainable basis, one cannot successfully happen without the other.

## WHO IS GETTING HIRED?

If there is a shortage of strongly qualified applicants, then how are community colleges filling critical leadership positions? Will there be individuals willing to take on leadership roles at the community college? The short answer is yes. Are these individuals ready to deal with the complexities of leadership during this time of organizational transformation and change? Too often the short and long answer is no.

In response to the lack of capable and qualified candidates, community colleges have increasingly resorted to a number of problematical hiring practices – too often hiring for the here and now, and not for the future. Change is threatening and there are many veto points within the organization where forces for change can be effectively halted. Too often, our hiring practices allow for potential new leaders who are change agents to be devalued and passed over, under the guise of “not being a good fit.”

Below are a few traps that colleges can find themselves in when filling vacant administrative positions.

## THE INTERIM APPOINTMENT

An alarming trend over the past decade has been to replace administrative vacancies with a succession of interim appointments. Individuals who take these interim appointments range from well-meaning retired administrators, to faculty who want to “tryout” being a dean, or deans who want to “tryout” being a vice president, and so on. Unfortunately, this approach to filling administrative vacancies has caused what many faculty members and others inside the college cynically label as the “dean or vice president for a semester” syndrome. While this method of filling vacancies can help an interim administrator to earn a little more money, or get a respite from a burnout teaching position, it too often allows for a foot in the door for under prepared and weak leaders. There are numerous examples where hiring committees, vice presidents and presidents have permitted a weak interim administrator to move into the permanent position, to the detriment of the institution.

Interim administrators are generally reluctant to take the bold actions necessary to move the organization forward, causing critical projects to be placed on hold. Those in interim positions who wish to obtain the position on a permanent basis may try to please everyone, which means maintaining the status quo and creating a pile of clean up work for the persons who follow them.

## THE JOB HOPPER

We all know them. They have flashy academic credentials, excellent interview skills and a real knack for convincing interviewing committees that this is the college where they really want to work. But a review of their job history shows a pattern of hopping from job to job every year or two, often into lateral positions. These individuals rarely relocate to the college service area, or at best, only live there on an itinerant basis, and almost always fail to integrate into the community.

There are clear stages of maturation leaders go through in new positions, and even the brightest administrator is likely to take two or three years to become fully productive. It takes time to establish a level of trust between a new administrator and the rest of the college community before they can work together to effectively move the organization forward. Networking with local school districts and establishing relationships with community leaders does not happen when someone stays in a position for a short period of time. Hiring individuals who have a track record of moving from job to job too often leads to departmental stagnation, frustration among the faculty and staff, and distrust from key community partners.

## THE INTERNAL “SAFE” CANDIDATE

These people are usually dedicated employees but unfortunately lack the real qualifications and skills for the position. They are non-threatening and considered a safe hire because they know how we do things around here. They represent the antithesis to change and transformation and once they get into their new leadership positions, they rarely leave.

Pressure to hire the safe internal candidate can come from several different places in the organization. As a board member once told me while lobbying for an internal candidate, “it is better for us to hire the devil we know than the devil we don’t know.” I just remarked that we are in the process of hiring leaders not devils. Certainly, internal candidates need to be given full consideration as all candidates must. The point is, only the best and fully qualified candidate should be hired, not the least threatening.

## THE RETIREMENT SPIKER

As the growing numbers of college leaders reach the end of their long careers in education, they naturally begin to plan for retirement. A few of them choose to look for positions where they can substantially increase their annual income for a couple of years, which in turn substantially increases their retirement earnings. This is usually done by moving from small or medium sized colleges into executive positions in

larger college districts. Since the retirement spiker only plans to be in the position for a short period of time, they focus mostly on short-term strategies that can get them through a couple of years—effectively placing their institutions in holding patterns. When executive leaders fail to become personally vested in the long-term future of their college, employees become disconnected, the institution declines and valuable opportunities are missed.

## SETTING THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Dramatic changes for community colleges are inevitable. If community colleges don't take charge of their own futures and reinvent themselves, they will become shaped and reinvented by strong external social, political and economic forces. State legislatures, accreditation committees, state and federal education officials, four year institutions, local business leaders, and voters are strong forces that are on the verge of taking control of the future of community colleges, just as they have done with the public schools. We need to stop blaming the lack of funding, lack of qualified applicants, board members, unions, state education offices, past practices and so on. Most importantly, we cannot afford another decade of rhetoric and finger pointing when it comes to developing new dynamic leaders who will lead the transformation of our community colleges.

## ADDRESSING THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

While there aren't any quick fixes or one-time solutions for solving the growing deficit of qualified administrators, there are several steps colleges can take to address the problem. Below are a few suggestions.

- Create a year-long administrator internship program. This will give new and prospective college leaders an opportunity to develop important administrative skills before they take on full blown administrative assignments.
- Develop and implement a meaningful professional development program for all leaders at the college. This should be a personalized and ongoing program which focuses on the long-term development of each leader.
- Provide financial support and release time for current and future college leaders to complete a doctorate in educational leadership or comparable program. Ed.D. programs are now available at a number of California State University campuses including CSU Stanislaus, as well as a handful of high quality private universities in the state includ-

ing the University of the Pacific, the University of Southern California and the University of San Francisco.

- Encourage and assist all college leaders to keep abreast of important trends, research and best practices in community college education. This can be done in a number of different ways including making journal articles and books on community college leadership readily available, and allowing time to read and discuss the articles and books. Also encourage college leaders to become actively engaged in scholarly activities including research, publishing, and making conference presentations.
- Hold regularly scheduled roundtable discussions for all college leaders on a wide variety of leadership topics. Several important issues should be covered including effective leadership skills development, important trends affecting community colleges, and promising practices in teaching and learning. The use of case studies, a series of guest speakers, and participant led discussions are just a few of the ways this could be approached.
- Provide financial support for memberships in professional associations and attendance at regional and state meetings. Leaders at all levels need to be involved in professional associations and attend conferences, not just the senior administration.
- Avoid the use of interim appointments for administrative vacancies except under specific circumstances and only for short periods of time. Colleges need to have a clear policy that prohibits any person serving in an interim position from being considered for the position on a permanent basis. Colleges should also avoid using their own employees in interim positions. This can cause a number of problems including an unwanted domino effect of other leadership vacancies, as colleges scramble to fill the temporary vacancies initially caused by the first interim appointment.
- Develop clear plans for the succession of college leaders and how the college will replace them. College leaders generally know who is likely to be retiring or who may be looking for another position. While turnover in administration cannot be fully predicted, colleges must do a better job anticipating vacancies and filling vacancies in a shorter period of time. Even though it may be a bit sensitive with some administrators, colleges should not wait until a person leaves before starting the replacement process.
- Insist on commitments from finalists for all your leadership positions, that they will become actively involved in the community. Even though public community colleges in California cannot require employees to live within their district, colleges can insist that all their leaders become involved in the local community. This means being available to represent the



college at evening and weekend events. If your college is located in a rural area, it is very important that all senior administrators make their full-time residence in the local community. I have seen numerous administrators falter because they failed to gain the trust of the area residents and the college staff, simply because they were not willing to become full-time members of the community.

- Contract with a reputable firm that specializes in community college administrative searches to help recruit qualified candidates, and conduct thorough background and reference checks on finalists. While this is commonly done for president and chancellor positions, it also needs to be done for dean and vice president level positions. Even though this service is costly, it actually can save thousands of dollars in lost productivity and missed opportunities, potential legal expenses and other problems associated with poor and uninformed hiring decisions and poor leadership.
- Reorganize the college structure to create greater interaction and responsibility among administrators across the organization. Restructuring the organization where all administrators have some responsibility for some aspects of instructional, student services and administrative services will create more diverse career paths and more opportunities for a greater number of administrators to move into high levels of leadership.

Most important of all, create an institutional culture that values innovation and transformation, where every college employee knows that she or he has a responsibility to be a leader of change. Strong leadership and transformational change cannot be voluntary or optional – it is a necessity for the survival of tomorrow’s community colleges.

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# BOOK REVIEW

Intrator, S.M. and Scribner, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Teaching with fire: Poetry that sustains the courage to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Reviewed by Dennis Sayers, Ed.D.

Professor, Teacher Education



There is a short poem that I have revisited over the years, as semesters end. It may be brief, but it sustains me as an educator. “Learning the Bicycle” is by Wyatt Prunty (1989), a poet from Tennessee who since 1990 has directed the prestigious Sewanee Writers’ Conference at the University of the South, in Tennessee. Prunty is a southern writer (notice the rhymes in lines 2 and 4) with an international following, and in this poem he is writing about a fatherly moment.

## **Learning the Bicycle**

*for Heather*

The older children pedal past  
Stable as little gyros, spinning hard  
To supper, bath, and bed, until at last  
We also quit, silent and tired  
Beside the darkening yard where trees  
Now shadow up instead of down.  
Their predictable lengths can only tease  
Her as, head lowered, she walks her bike alone  
Somewhere between her wanting to ride  
And her certainty she will always fall.  
Tomorrow, though I will run behind,  
Arms out to catch her, she’ll tilt then balance wide  
Of my reach, till distance makes her small,  
Smaller, beyond the place I stop and know  
That to teach her I had to follow  
And when she learned I had to let her go.

After all, aren’t parents a child’s first teachers? At the end of each course, as I “let go” the future teachers or the graduate degree candidates I have taught, this poem reminds me of the trust that my

students have invested in me as they discovered the knowledge and skills that would help them balance their lives as professionals and as life-long scholars.

*Teaching with fire: Poetry that sustains the courage to teach* (2003) is a book filled with verse that educators return to for solace, sustenance and renewal. Edited by Sam M. Intrator and Megan Scribner, the book is a compilation of poetry nominated by school people from all corners of our multifaceted profession, each responding to a call for a poem that really mattered to them. The book consists of eighty-eight poems accompanied by brief commentaries from each educator offering a rationale for their selection. It is organized into eight sections that evoke the gamut of challenges our profession faces: Hearing the Call, Cherishing the Work, On the Edge, Holding On, In the Moment, Making Contact, The Fire of Teaching, and Daring to Lead.

The poems are authored by writers of international renown, including William Butler Yeats, Pablo Neruda and Derek Wolcott; American authors of enduring fame, such as Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman; and contemporary poets, among them Nikki Giovanni and Marge Piercy, with two poems by the Central Valley author, Fresno-born Gary Soto. The volume concludes with a wide-ranging essay by Sam Intrator, “Tending the Fire: The Utility of Poetry in a Teacher’s Life.”

Theresa Gill, a middle school teacher in Ceres, California and a graduate of the Masters Program in Curriculum and Instruction at California State University–Stanislaus, chose “Poem Against the First Grade,” in which George Venn writes about Alex, his pre-schooler son, and his emerging language skills. At one point Venn writes, using a few of the boy’s earnest attempts at pronunciation, “Thumping the piano keys / like a mudpie chef, / he goes wild with words / at the wittle wooden arms inside, / a hundred Pinoschios to singsong.” The poet continues with a conversation between “Ax,” as his family has learned to call him, and his sister:

Now this language isn’t taught in first grade.

Alicia, his tister, knows this fact.



... "Ax," she says,

"that's not right." She's been among giants  
who wipe off the dialect of backberry jam,  
then pour hot wax on each bright mistake.  
I hope for a bad seal on Ax and tister,  
Encourage the mold of joyous error  
That proper sad giants, armed to the ears  
With pencils and rules, all forgot.

Gill, in her commentary, linked the poem to her own teaching practice, writing that "Jumbling words, language and art together can be joyful work ... Venn's poem remains with me as a constant reminder to savor the play of language and to encourage 'joyful error.'"

As I read and re-read the poems in *Teaching with Fire*, I cannot help but think of Prof. Armin Schulz, the distinguished CSU-Stanislaus educator who retired recently after a long and productive career at this university. A connoisseur and indeed a champion of children's and young adult literature and its transformative potential, he is well known for reading poetry as his opening words before classes, meetings, workshops and conferences here in California and across the country, with the aim of helping his students and colleagues gain the focus and insight they need before engaging the task before them.

Both *Teaching with Fire* and Prof. Schulz's career exemplify the importance of literature and, by extension, of all the visual and performing arts, for nourishing the professional life of educators. And if the arts can sustain educators in the often arduous labors of calling forth their students' potential, doesn't it follow that students at all levels of schooling can fuel their striving for learning through a curriculum infused with the arts? Savoring these poems and reflecting upon Prof. Schulz's legacy brings vividly to mind the momentous and defining challenge we all face in keeping the arts at the center of learning and of advocating for sustained, well-articulated arts education in our pre-schools and schools, community colleges and universities.

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Note: To hear the poet introduce and read "Learning the Bicycle," visit <http://www.prx.org/pieces/17431-learning-the-bicycle-by-wyatt-prunty>

# (Ed)ialogues

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JIM RIGGS

by Steve Graham

**Professor Jim Riggs is a core faculty in the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at CSU Stanislaus. He previously served as President of Columbia College in the Yosemite Community College District. Professor Riggs joined the program faculty in 2008.**

### **Can you tell me what brought you to CSU Stanislaus?**

As the president of Columbia College from 1997 to 2007, I saw first hand how difficult it was to fill community college administrator positions with individuals who had the leadership skills capable of moving the college forward. In an effort to develop new leaders, I became involved as a part-time instructor in the CSU Stanislaus Community College Leadership Certificate Program. This program was offered from 2002 to 2006. Then three years ago I started working with the College of Education faculty on the development of the doctoral program and wrote much of the curriculum for the community college leadership specialization courses. By joining the faculty this fall on a full-time basis and teaching in the new doctoral program, I now have an even greater opportunity to help prepare the next generation of leaders for our community colleges.

The growing deficit of qualified administrators in our community colleges comes at a time when we desperately need strong transformational leaders. Our colleges must undergo tremendous change over the next three to five years in order to remain a viable part of the postsecondary education landscape in California and the nation. Fortunately, the new doctoral program has a strong focus on transformational leadership skill development.

### **What are the major obstacles you see facing new educational leaders?**

New leaders need to be aware of the rigid career path that exists for community college administrators and plan accordingly. This means earning a doctorate in educational leadership from a reputable institution, obtaining a wide variety of leadership experiences and learning how to effectively negotiate complex organizational environments. Leaders must also develop a strong understanding of the learning process and what it takes to develop and sustain a strong



academic culture. New leaders and those who wish to move up in community college leadership may need to be willing to relocate to where the job opportunities are, even possibly to another state.

I believe the largest obstacle facing many of our educational leaders (new and experienced) is their own inability to get past the daily grind of management in order to develop new possibilities and innovative programs for their departments, divisions and colleges. The lack of resources, aging facilities, changing student populations, uncertain economic conditions, and the like have always been challenges for college leaders. Unfortunately, too few leaders know how to strategically convert the myriad of challenges facing them into opportunities to reshape and advance their colleges. The key for our leaders is to have the ability to effectively deal with these issues and at the same time have the energy and vision to move their colleges forward into a new direction.

### **What recommendations would you have for students who want to get into the field of educational leadership?**

In addition to what I stated above, it is important for those considering a career in community college leadership to obtain some teaching experience at the community college level (preferably on a full-time basis) and to take advantage of faculty leadership opportunities at their colleges. I also advise that anyone who wants to

become a leader to find a strong role model and mentor they can work with for several years.

**How do you see the doctorate program playing a part in the solution to the challenges faced by today’s educational leaders?**

The courses in the doctoral program are designed to bring together the best in research, educational theory and instructional practices to solve real problems and challenges in the college and school environment. There is a heavy emphasis throughout the doctoral program on applied fieldwork, applied research, project development and mentoring. Another important and unique feature of the Ed.D. program is the blending of leadership development and the study of pedagogy.

In addition, the program was specifically designed around the educational leadership needs of our area school districts and community colleges. The doctoral program format makes it very accessible to our local educational leaders and, when compared to private universities, offered at a reasonable cost.

**What course(s) will you be teaching in the program and how does it fit in with the overall goals of the doctorate program?**

For the first cohort I will be teaching a variety of foundation courses including Policy Design in Education; Social and Philosophical Issues in Education; and Applied Research and Data Driven

Decision Making. In addition, I will be teaching several of the community college specialization courses starting in January 2010. I anticipate that after the first couple of years, most of my time will be taken up by teaching the community college specialization courses and working with students on the development of their dissertations.

**Is there anything else that needs to be covered that I missed?**

In addition to teaching I am planning to implement a variety of applied research and scholarly activities. I am currently working on a series of articles that focus on stages of development and skills acquisition for community college leaders at each of the levels on the career ladder. In addition, I plan to continue my work with rural education and rural community development.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE GRAHAM

by Prof. Steven Lee

**Mr. Steve Graham is a first-year student in the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at CSU, Stanislaus. Mr. Graham is also an instructor of communications at San Joaquin Delta College in Sacramento.**

## **What has been the great challenge in your educational career?**

The excitement of working in an educational setting is directly related to the challenges faced every day. My greatest challenge thus far was when I worked at CSU Stanislaus. I moved from undergraduate outreach to the Graduate School as Associate Director of Graduate Studies. I had worked in the undergraduate enrollment services area for more than a decade. When I made the transition everyone in the Graduate School office was fairly new, but they were highly motivated and extremely talented. It would be pretty hard to mess this up because the staff I worked with were so good. The only thing we lacked was an overall vision of where we were heading. I had a good idea of what I wanted to do, but soon realized graduate students are much different from undergraduate students. I took my time and focused on what I could do to help the programs. This ranged from the processing of applications to marketing their programs. Along the way I was able to build relationships with some pretty incredible people throughout the university. We all seemed to share a common goal—helping students succeed. Once I was ready to implement the changes it was relatively easy to do because I had the support of the programs.

## **What motivated you to pursue doctoral studies in education at CSU Stanislaus?**

I want to reach my full potential as a person, and I have recognized my passion is service to others. Whether it be as a parent, spouse, manager, teacher, coach, or any other role I take, I want to make a difference in individual lives. The doctoral program gives me the opportunity to add more tools to my management tool chest, which I will need as I advance in my career. In the end I hope to use these tools to make a difference in public education.



### **What is your impression of the doctoral program at CSU Stanislaus?**

We just completed our first term in the program and I am lucky to have been chosen for the first cohort of the program. There are so many talented individuals in the classroom with me; yet we aren't competing with each other—we are on the same team. We are pulling for each other and we know our success is the program success. We also have the privilege to be taught by outstanding professors. I know I went home after the first night of class wondering what I had got myself into, but after a few weeks I rediscovered my desire to learn. Dr. Poole is an amazing professor who is setting the foundation for all of us...you can't make good decisions in leadership if you don't know your data. I really enjoy Dr. Borba's class because the core area of leadership is interpersonal communication and that's the common thread I am seeing in each activity we are doing.

### **What do you hope to gain from your participation in the doctoral program?**

I hope to gain knowledge and skills in the areas of community college leadership, research, curriculum, assessment, planning, teaching, community involvement and most important, student achievement. As the former Associate Director of the Graduate School at CSU Stanislaus and a current instructor of introductory communication courses at San Joaquin Delta College, I see the challenges facing community colleges on a day-to-day basis. As a result, my interests, objectives, and professional goals center on meeting the challenges faced by community colleges.

### **If there is one thing you can change about public education, what would that be?**

Student achievement! I recently looked over data that talked about how the vast majority of students come into the community college

system underprepared and they leave before they have remediated basic skills. I don't know how we are going to fix this problem (I'm in the EdD program to find some solutions), but I know we have to ASAP.

### **What is your professional goal for the next 5 or 10 years?**

My goal for the next three years is to learn all that I can in the doctoral program so I am ready to face the challenges of educational leaders in the community college system. I also want to apply what I am learning in my classrooms and know that I can be a part of the solution, not the problem. Ultimately, I see myself back in an educational leadership role once I have completed the program.

### **Please describe how you balance your dual role as a college professor and as a doctoral student.**

I am lucky enough to have the full support of my wife, family, colleagues, friends, students and other doctoral program students. My complete focus and attention is on being the best I can be in the classroom, both as a teacher and a student. A good friend of my wife's is Amye Leon. She happens to be in the program with me and we are study buddies. I would encourage all students to have study partners! The first two classes in the doctoral program are difficult, but the faculty are tremendous and I am learning an incredible amount each week. I never considered myself a researcher, but Dr. Poole has lit my fire to do research. Dr. Borba's class on educational leadership is right up my ally. I am really enjoying my experience and would highly recommend the program to anyone else who wants to make a difference in the public schools setting.

# (Ed)evelopments

## NEWS

To enhance the doctoral culture at CSU, Stanislaus, the program offers various academic activities throughout the year. The program hosted an inaugural academic colloquium on Tuesday, March 10, 2009, 7:00-8:30 PM, FDC 118. The colloquium was presented by Prof. Ruth Fassinger, Dean, College of Education. Her presentation is on a study of women's careers, spanning 25 years. The event was attended by 50 faculty, students, and other interested individuals.

The program also sponsors faculty development activities. Prof. John Borba, core faculty, was the presenter for the inaugural event held on Tuesday, April 7th, 2009. His presentation focused on the use of technology for teaching and learning. The workshop was held in the Faculty Development Center.

Prof. Chet Jensen has resigned from the Admissions Committee to focus on his teaching and scholarly activities. He will remain a member of the program's core faculty.

The search for a Community College specialist for fall 2009 has been suspended due to budgetary constraints. The program plans to resume its

search for a Community College specialist, along with a School Administration specialist, and two Teacher Education specialists for the 2010-2011 academic year, pending budgetary approval.



The Executive Council is currently examining the feasibility/possibility of creating a cohort on the Stockton campus, summer 2010.

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

The program has now concluded its admissions for cohort 2, summer 2009. The five-member Admissions Committee will be reviewing and interviewing students throughout April and May. Final decisions on admissions are expected by end



of May. Summer courses begin in mid-June, 2009. Mr. Warren Jacobs, Reference and Instruction Librarian, has been assigned to the College of Education to provide part-time support for doctoral and graduate students. His office is located at DBH 337. Mr. Jacobs can be reached via e-mail at [wjacobs@csustan.edu](mailto:wjacobs@csustan.edu) or by phone at (209) 664-6565.

Thousands of full-text and peer-reviewed journals for Education listed by title with links to the database containing the journal can be found on <http://library.csustan.edu/subject/ejournals/>.

University Library Catalog, containing books, journals, theses, DVDs, etc. owned by CSU Stanislaus Library can be found on <http://millennium.csustan.edu/>.

Books from California and Nevada libraries that may be requested online for delivery to Turlock can be found on <http://csul.iii.com/>.

Through WorldCat, books, videos, theses, etc. from libraries from across the country may be requested via Interlibrary Loan at <http://library.csustan.edu/books.html>.

Over one million full-text dissertations and theses from institutions worldwide can be accessed through ProQuest, <http://proquest.com>.

In summer 2009, two courses will be offered for cohort 1 (2008 admits), EDEL 9004, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and EDEL 9008, Development of Educational Partnerships. Cohort 2 students will enroll in EDEL 9002, Applied Quantitative Research, and EDEL 9003, Leadership and Organizational Theory and Practice.

Cohort 1 students must take and pass the qualifying exam in fall 2009. Those who pass the qualifying exam will take specialization courses—either P-12 or Community College.

The program website, [www.csustan.edu/edd](http://www.csustan.edu/edd), is being updated regularly throughout the year. The program website contains all pertinent program information, including admissions information, course offerings, program requirements, program information session schedules, important dates and deadlines, and faculty information.

## PROFESSIONAL AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI) is currently soliciting applications for fellowships to support research on Direct Instruction and promote the development of emerging scholars in the field of education. First round deadline is April 3, 2009 and second round deadline is July 15, 2009. For further information and online application, visit the NIFDI website at <http://www.nifdi.org>, or call (877) 485-1973.



The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) has recently published a research discretionary funding announcement titled Child Care Research Scholars. Eligible applicants are doctoral-

level students enrolled in accredited public, state-controlled, and private institutions of higher education. This funding will support dissertation research, conducted in partnership with State Child

Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies, regarding child care policy issues. Applicants may apply for project periods of up to two years and will be awarded up to \$30,000 for the first year and up to \$20,000 for the second year of the project. Six individual grants are expected to be awarded. Letters of intent are due March 2 and applications are due March 30.



# (Ed)istinctions



## PROF. ELMANO COSTA

Prof. Elmano Costa was honored by the government of Portugal for his efforts to promote awareness of the Portuguese culture. On September 4, 2008, Prof. Costa received the honorary insignia of Commander of the Order of Public Instruction, conducted at the Portuguese Consulate in San Francisco. The President of Portugal, Dr. Anibal Cavaco Silva, approved awarding of the title which originated centuries ago as the entrusting of duties to a layman by the king. A native of the Azores Islands of Portugal who immigrated with his family as a youngster to California's Central Valley, Prof. Costa was the first in his family to graduate from high school and earn a college degree. Prof. Costa received his bachelor's and master's degrees from CSU Stanislaus and a doctorate in education from the University of the Pacific.



## PROF. JUAN FLORES

Prof. Flores was elected Vice President of the Board of Directors of the California Association of Bilingual Teacher Educators. The California Association of Bilingual Teacher Educators is a newly established organization that is affiliated with the California Council of Teacher Educators and with the California Association of Bilingual Education.

Prof. Flores is co-editor of the Association of Mexican American Education (AMAE) Journal. Under the leadership of the Executive Board, the AMAE Journal was first published in 1982 with the expressed purpose of providing a forum for addressing issues of importance to the education of Mexican American children. The AMAE Journal is the only refereed journal dedicated to examining Mexican American education.

Prof. Flores was invited as a speaker by Hungkuang University in Taichung, Taiwan, March 23, 2008. Prof. Flores spoke on the topic of

Teacher Performance Assessment in an online delivery format. He also lectured at National Changhua University, National Taichung University, and Asia University. Bilingual education is becoming popular in Taiwan as increasing number of Taiwanese schools offer dual language and English classes in elementary and secondary schools.



## PROF. STEVEN LEE

Prof. Lee presented a paper, The Transformation of the Education Doctorate in the U.S., at the annual Japan-U.S. Teacher Education Consortium (JUSTEC) conference, hosted by Bukkyo University, Kyoto, Japan, July 2008. JUSTEC is a bi-national educational organization composed of administrators and faculty at approximately two dozen American and Japanese universities.

Prof. Lee was re-elected the President of the Council for Korean Language Education and Promotion, June 2008. The Council for

Korean Language Education and Promotion was founded three years ago to promote Korean language education in public schools and colleges.

Prof. Lee, representing the Doctoral Program at CSU Stanislaus, was invited to become a member of the CSU Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate and the CSU Doctoral Advisory Committee.



**PROF. DAWN POOLE**

Prof. Poole presented at the annual CUE national conference, Palm Springs, CA, March 2008, a qualitative study examining the trends of the Computer Using Educators (CUE) National Conference sessions in the past 30 years.

Prof. Poole’s research, *An Analysis of CUE Conferences from 1980-2007: Structure and Content*, was published in *OnCUE*, March 2008.

Prof. Poole made two presentations, *Developing Student Writing Skills Using a Word Processor* and *Getting the Most out of Microsoft Word* at the Educational Technology Conference, held March 2008, in Enochs High School, Modesto, CA.

Prof. Poole conducted a workshop, *Getting the Most out of Microsoft Word*, at a professional development workshop hosted by the Ceres Unified School District Summer Institute. This was a 2.5 hour hands-on workshop for Ceres Unified teachers focusing on the MS Word 2003. Participants learned about toolbars, tables, read-only files, creating form letters and labels, and using the Track Changes features of the software.



**PROF. PAMELA RUSS**

Prof. Russ and Prof. Brenda Betts are the authors of the new book, *Writing to Heal from Rape*. The goal of this book is to help women in recovery from rape. *Writing to Heal from Rape* is a collection of stories and poetry written by women who were the victims of violent rape. The women agreed to tell their stories and share their poetry to help other women during the recovery process. *Writing to Heal from Rape* includes a historical overview of rape in the United States, 10 vignettes written by women who were the victims of rape, a case study, poetry, 15 writing activities, resources, and information about the Healing Ourselves Project. The Healing Ourselves Project is a non-profit organization to assist women in recovery from rape.

**PROF. NANCY JEAN SMITH**  
*(not pictured)*

Prof. Smith was “identified as a stakeholder... who could contribute important perspectives” and is working as a Thought Partner with The Academics and Professional Development Department of the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco Education Fund. She is working with Associate Superintendent of Instruction, Francisca Sanchez, and key stakeholders to guide the development of a framework for teacher professional development in the District. The group’s charge is to design collaboratively a framework that will guide the district’s efforts to meet its goals and objectives in the new strategic plan and balanced scoreboard.



**PROF. RAMÓN VEGA DE JESUS**

Prof. Vega de Jesus is a primary investigator in a research project dealing with integrating science and diversity education. A joint project with UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, and San Francisco State University, Prof. Vega de Jesus has been involved in this grant-funded project since its inception in 2007. Prof. Elmano Costa, Teacher Education, and Prof. Michael Stevens, Biology, are partners at CSU Stanislaus. The preliminary

findings of this research project will be presented at the annual National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST) conference in 2009. The proceedings of the conference presentation are expected to be published in a journal. The research team is currently analyzing the collected data and plans to publish a series of 10 articles based on the research. This research project led to a redesign of a course, EDMS 4130, Science and Health Methods, for the Multiple Subjects Credential Program candidates, to align with CREDE standards for science and health education. The research involves examining the (student) participants' practices in student teaching and in their first year of teaching as a result of their learning in the course. There are control and experimental groups at both CSU Stanislaus and San Francisco State University.

Prof. Vega de Jesus has published a letter to Paulo Freire, titled *The Fire of Conscientization Still Burns* in Sonia Nieto's new book, *Dear Paulo: Letters from Those Who Dare Teacher*. Sonia Nieto is Professor Emeritus of Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Amazon.com describes this new book as "a heartfelt response from teachers, academics, and community workers to the work on the internationally renowned educator and author Paulo Freire. From newly minted teachers terrified of facing their first day in the classroom to seasoned academics whose work has largely been inspired by Freire, this collection is both a loving memorial and a call for action to work for social justice, praxis, and democracy, ideals envisioned and brilliantly articulated by Paulo." Fifty percent of the royalties of the book will be donated to two non-profit organizations: Seeds of Solidarity (SOS) and Teaching for Change. Seeds of Solidarity, [www.seedsof-solidarity.org](http://www.seedsof-solidarity.org), is an organization that "provides people with the inspiration and practical tools to grow food and use renewable energy, linking environmental and

social justice through community-based action. Teaching for Change, [www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org), "provides teachers and parents with the tools to transform schools into centers of justice where students learn to read, write, and change the world." The organization aspires to accomplish its mission through publications, professional development, and parent organizing.

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# (Ed)esk

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