A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Technological change ... organizational restructuring ... competitive pressures ... demographic shifts. These are just a few of the challenges that organizations face today. What can we do to ensure that we remain as competitive, productive and organizationally healthy as possible?

As leaders we need to be aware of the issues, create strategies to effectively address challenges and form partnerships that will best implement them. As employers we need to prepare our agencies and staff for the upcoming workforce succession. We need to attract, train and develop our employees and make sure our workforce has current technical skills and knowledge to meet the demands of our global village. As citizens we need to be willing participants in the process—willing to change, to listen, to educate and to learn.

In this issue of Access Magazine, we look at examples of working smarter within government, education and organizations; we provide examples of organizations that are leveraging the unlimited capabilities of technology. In each featured project, the solution and benefits described are outcomes of groups of individuals who have the willingness to work together and seek opportunities for continuous improvement and learning. The message is simple: an organization that knows more can do more.

Sincerely,

Alice K. Tom
Dean, College of Continuing Education

First Impressions

- When Benjamin Franklin said, “In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes,” he probably never imagined that filing taxes would inspire a cooperative agreement revolution at the California Department of Transportation (page 4).

- Can you hear me now? Dr. William Vicars (aka “Safari Bill”) takes his digital Lifeprint.com American Sign Language curriculum to South America and inspires the California Department of Education right here at home, too (page 12).

- A Skills Center, a union, and SETA—oh my! How did the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency transform eight employee classifications into one? Check out SETA’s working smart strategy (page 20).
The College of Continuing Education (CCE) is one of eight colleges at Sacramento State. As a self-supporting college, CCE has offered certificates, courses, seminars, workshops and conferences since 1951. With an insight and responsiveness to the workforce development needs of the Sacramento region, CCE’s professional development focus advances individual employability and promotability while furthering the effectiveness and success of business, industry and government.
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POSITIVE

impact PACT
Caltrans partners with CCE to automate its cooperative agreement process, saving Caltrans time, money and resources.
One of our nation’s founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, often referred to the term “good government.” Jefferson believed that government should be judged by how well it meets legitimate objectives. Legitimate objectives—a broad statement of what an organization chooses to accomplish—can be defined by how well that organization performs its mission.

In 2005 the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Office of Cooperative Agreements began to develop a digital tool to automate cooperative agreements. While Caltrans originally designed the Project Agreement Construction Tool (PACT) to improve a process riddled with delays, PACT exceeded this objective by changing a statewide process, ultimately saving time, money and resources—which by anyone’s standard defines an act of good government.

Caltrans developed PACT under the guidance of Mark Robinson, office chief, Office of Cooperative Agreements (OCA), Division of Design, who saw an opportunity to streamline the old cooperative agreement process in order to create higher quality agreements in less time. State law requires a cooperative agreement whenever Caltrans partners with a local agency to undertake a transportation project on the state highway system. The cooperative agreement specifies which agency is responsible for what part of the project, and identifies who is responsible for what sum of money and how that money will be spent.

“We used to assemble new cooperative agreements by pulling language from more than 40 different templates from past agreements,” said Robinson. “So someone would say, ‘Oh, this template sounds like my project, and I’m going to be doing some of the work on this project, and we have a mix of this kind of money so I need template E4.’ They would cut and paste different templates together to make it fit their project. The difficulty was that some of those templates were developed as early as 1992 and had not been maintained very well.”

Unlike the previous process where each project development team essentially started from the beginning with each new agreement, PACT guides users through a series of standard questions with standard multiple-choice answers and assembles preapproved contract language based on the users’ answers. A well-prepared team can create a cooperative agreement with PACT in as little as two hours. “If you can answer all of the required questions in the PACT program using the answers provided you can walk out of a meeting with an approvable agreement,” said Robinson.

“When you’re trying to forge an agreement and partnerships with local partners the length of time to get something through what they perceive as a bureaucratic process can be very frustrating to the partnership,” said Rick Land, Caltrans’ chief engineer and deputy director for project delivery. “We look at PACT as a way of simplifying and speeding up the process of coming to an agreement on how we’re going to move forward together as partners. While [PACT] has a time-saving value, in my opinion, it also has the value of strengthening the relationship or partnership between Caltrans and our local partners.”

The PACT process dramatically reduces the time required to approve documents. “When people used to cut and paste new agreements from the old templates and add original language, every agreement would have to be reviewed and enabled PACT users to supply unique information when needed.

“The idea for PACT started when we had a meeting and someone said, ‘I just did my federal taxes on TurboTax®. Cooperative agreements can’t be more complicated than taxes,” said Robinson. “We did a Web search and found HotDocs®, which is like a computer interview. You call up the program on a computer and it asks you questions and supplies information based on your answers. PACT is a fancy TurboTax-like tool. It gives you a format for the type of answer you can provide to each question and assembles the agreement as you go through the questions.”

“A Hot Product”

Robinson’s team created PACT using a simple and effective software tool called HotDocs®, available from LexisNexis. HotDocs® helps users create re-useable interactive templates from word processing documents and graphical PDF forms. Through HotDocs® the team built a template, identified the information that changes within each document version, and supplied information based on your answers. PACT is a fancy TurboTax-like tool.
Drilling down on the questions and devising the language for the answers required the expertise of Cindy Edwards, instructional designer for CCE, and Shaw who painstakingly reviewed all the language used in the outdated templates, analyzed its meaning, and designed questions to guide the user to that language in order to create the programming logic for PACT. “We basically boiled all of the qualifications for each article down to a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question,” explained Shaw. “It’s almost binary, in that each question can only have an answer of zero or one. If the answer is zero you get Article A or another question; if the answer is one you get Article B or other questions that lead you down a different path. So we were able to take most of the arguing and debating over which article to use and the meaning of words out of the process and get right down to knowledge.”

A Challenging Process
While PACT’s positive attributes mean progress for the Office of Cooperative Agreements, progress rarely occurs without challenge. As PACT changes how Caltrans processes cooperative agreements, the day-to-day activities of Robinson’s office also change.

“Before PACT the Office of Cooperative Agreements read every agreement statewide from beginning to end every time it was submitted—an average of four submittals per agreement,” said Robinson. “Today, we only have to focus on any custom language that a project development team adds to the pre-approved PACT language. This evolves our office from a line function to a more corporate type role of supporting and developing the tool.”

The advent of PACT also required training district cooperative agreement coordinators statewide on how to use PACT. A second type of training focuses on helping project development team members, project managers, function unit staff, and local agencies understand the document that PACT produces. “This training is very important because a PACT agreement looks very different from a traditional agreement,” explained Robinson. “At its core the same content exists but it’s in a new format and we rewrote all of the language in plain English—not legalese, engineer-speak or Caltrans-ese. It’s more approachable and positive for our project development teams.”

A Positive Impact
That change means a lot to Susan Miller, director, projects, for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority. “PACT did a good job of putting Caltrans and the local agencies on more equal footing in the agreements. Now there’s a feeling of ‘We are partners in this project and here’s how we’re going to get it done,’” said Miller, who points to the mutual indemnification articles as an example. “This area always gave us some heartburn in the past because the old articles only protected Caltrans. The new language also protects the local agencies so in terms of making the playing field level, PACT was a really good move.”

The consistency of each agreement encourages PACT users. “I like the idea that if I have the same inputs I will get consistent output. It’s one of the best projects I have ever worked on.”
similar outputs with PACT, which we couldn’t say was the case in the past,” said Trichelle Suntrapak, cooperative agreement coordinator, District 6 (Fresno), Caltrans. “Before PACT we didn’t have any control over what we might come up with on every project—and things were constantly changing. Now every time a change is done through headquarters the product stays consistent. I can tell my customers and stakeholders what product they can expect to have and why we’re using this particular language, policies and procedures, which are all now standardized. It’s just so much more efficient.”

Suntrapak is so impressed by PACT that she believes other state agencies should consider its adoption. “A lot of opportunity is yet to be realized with this amazing program,” she said. “It’s not a pie-in-the-sky or wishful-thinking application. PACT is the kind of program that we often expect out of private industry only it has come out of the public sector. It’s a total best practice.”

Smart Strategy Nets International Awards for Caltrans and CCE

At a time when government agencies struggle to achieve more with less, organizations embracing digital training reap the rewards.

In 2000 the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Project Management initiated a department-wide culture shift when it partnered with Sacramento State’s College of Continuing Education (CCE) to transition its vendor-based classroom project management training to an online certificate program.

In October of 2006 the Project Management Institute (PMI), the leading membership association for the project management profession, honored Caltrans’ and CCE’s smart strategy with its prestigious Product of the Year and Provider of the Year awards.

Leaders inside Caltrans determined that an online project management training program would enable the organization to provide more consistent training to a wider pool of people and also enable training to continue through budgetary challenges.

To create the Project Management Certificate Program for Transportation Professionals, Caltrans combined its project management experience with CCE’s training knowledge and technical infrastructure to create a highly customized program targeting Caltrans’ senior-level project delivery employees.

The hybrid program includes six online and two classroom courses that use Caltrans-focused examples, case studies and class exercises to equip students with practical tools immediately applicable on the job.

“This program capitalized on technology and e-learning before virtual training was ‘cool’ and we appreciate the fact that Caltrans trusted CCE to be a partner in their larger vision for organizational culture change,” said Jenni Helfrich, CCE’s director of extension programs. “From a professional development standpoint, this program is right on target because it combines the familiarity of case studies in transportation with the terms and tools in the field of project management, and simultaneously enhances an individual’s comfort level with technology tools and non-technical written communication.”

As the first unit within Caltrans to embrace online training, the Division of Project Management had to sell the concept to an employee population unfamiliar with virtual classrooms. The culture shock was a significant hurdle; today, enrollment and graduation numbers validate the Division’s success.

More than 417 Caltrans employees have completed the certificate program with an additional 94 currently enrolled. The program also prepares students to take the Project Management Professional (PMP®) exam, which upon successful completion designates the individual with the profession’s most globally recognized and respected credential. Since the program’s inception, 327 Caltrans employees have earned PMP certification.

According to Helfrich online training benefits Caltrans through its consistency, convenience and cost savings. Calculations indicate that the online curriculum costs 156 percent less than the traditional classroom-based courses previously offered.

“Today people view online training as normal, even expected, so this program might not seem as innovative as it once did,” explained Helfrich. “But when you realize that forward-thinking people within Caltrans had that vision seven years ago, it’s pretty unique. By changing their perspective on training, Caltrans employees reduced state expenses, created a better work-family-life balance and even decreased their environmental impact. That’s working smart.”
The Smart Work Ethic for the New Millennium

Have you ever heard the expression, “Work smarter not harder?” In the public sector where budgets and resources continue to shrink, executives constantly learn to do more with less. They understand accomplishing this goal requires efficient management of public resources, creation of effective partnerships, and development of innovative technologies. In their desire to accomplish more with fewer resources than ever before, many government leaders turn to Sacramento State’s Conference and Training Services (CTS) to design and deliver smart, effective and efficient educational programs, training and events.

The Conference and Training Services Team at Sacramento State’s College of Continuing Education is recognized throughout California as a leader in the event planning industry.
When it comes to working smart, leaders who attended the 2008 California Strategic Highway Safety Summit held May 7, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency, Sacramento got a first-hand glimpse of what it means. There they witnessed a smoothly run event that unfolded seamlessly and apparently effortlessly as they listened to critical issues related to traffic “accidents” that officials deemed most often caused by driver error.

These leaders participated in the Sacramento summit (another was held in Anaheim) to help raise awareness of traffic safety issues and begin implementation of the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which guides safety activities related to roadway users on all public roadways within the state of California. This plan highlights the challenges to roadway user safety on California’s roads; paints the picture of fatalities experienced on California’s roads; proposes high-level strategies to reduce fatalities for each challenge; and serves as a guide for the implementation of specific projects and activities through 2010.

Both the Sacramento and Anaheim events owe part of their success to efforts of a seasoned team of CTS professionals working in tandem with primary contractor ProProse, a Sacramento-based social marketing firm. ProProse hired CTS to organize and coordinate the summit, to iron out the event logistics, establish the Sacramento venue, and coordinate content. CTS worked with stakeholders involved in implementing the plan, including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Highway Patrol, the California Office of Traffic Safety and county traffic safety organizations.

“The summit introduced the plan to the community and those involved with implementing the plan,” said Barbara Lowell, senior conference planner with CTS. “ProProse sub-partnered with us to put the summits together because they wanted to make the logistical process as efficient and effective as possible.”

The summit kicked off with a welcome, introduction and an overview of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan followed by a press conference that featured a number of high-profile leaders, including Jeffrey Lindley, associate administrator for safety, Federal Highway Administration Headquarters; Jim Bourgart, deputy secretary, State of California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency; Randell Iwasaki, chief deputy director, California Department of Transportation; Joe Farrow, commissioner, California Highway Patrol; George Valverde, director, California Department of Motor Vehicles; Mark Horton, M.D., M.S.P.H., director, California Department of Public Health; Dan Smiley, chief deputy director, California Emergency Medical Services Authority; and Chris Murphy, director, California Office of Traffic Safety.

“CTS provided a wonderful resource to plan out the facilities side of the events and ensure all of the resources and facility needs were efficiently taken care of,” said Anne Staines, founder of ProProse, who supervised the summits and media relations and led marketing outreach for the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. “They helped with registration, communications, break-out sessions and workshops. To have CTS’ resources and knowledge, which enable us to put on smooth-running events, was a huge asset for the summits. We were very happy after the summit completion. I am really proud that ProProse has been a part of it.”
As part of its flood protection program, in June 2008 the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the public draft of its *FloodSAFE Strategic Plan* to capture a shared vision for success, enroll broad participation, and serve as a cornerstone to focus massive efforts to reduce flood risks by working with numerous partners and stakeholders throughout the state. Part of FloodSafe involves the Flood Protection Corridor Program to provide grants to fund restoration, enhancement and protection of real property and preserve sustainable agriculture while enhancing wildlife around and near flood corridors throughout California.

A key piece of the Flood Protection Corridor Program requires communicating and educating stakeholders, including local agencies, water districts, nonprofit groups and organizations—about how to win grant funding for individual projects. Chris McCready, executive engineering assistant to the deputy director for public safety at DWR, enlisted the help of CCE’s Conference and Training Services (CTS) staff to help organize two educational summits, one held in Southern and another in Northern California. Stakeholders were invited to attend in person or listen live over the internet via webcasts to learn about the grant process.

“At some point we want to stop trying to manage every flood and start working more with nature—and that is an important part of the Flood Protection Corridor Program,” said McCready. “It’s about working smarter by working with nature to improve flood protection and enhance the environment and agricultural lands. So we knew we would have to reach the right people, invite them to come to the summits, and help everyone understand how their projects might align with the goals of the program.”

“The regional and statewide efforts are to ensure the grant money goes where it can do the most good,” said Earl Nelson, program manager, Division of Flood Management, DWR, who also developed and delivered one of the key presentations. “My presentation addressed the flood protection corridor and floodway corridor programs, which are grant programs to fund non-structural flood-risk reduction coupled with ecosystem restoration or agricultural and conservation efforts. The audience was looking for money; we have money. The whole purpose was to let them know how to submit a proposal for grant funds. We rank the proposals competitively and there are always more requests than funds available so only the best projects receive funds.”

McCready and Nelson felt that the working relationship developed between DWR and CTS staff created an efficient forum to communicate the message to as many stakeholders as possible. “The value of using the latest technologies such as webcasting allowed us to reach a wider audience than in the past,” explained Carragh Taylor-Hunt, senior conference planner with CTS. “Some people just couldn’t physically show up to a summit in person but they had adequate Web capabilities to listen to it live or to the recording when they had time.”

Overall all parties described the summits as a success. “It went as planned and we accomplished the objective—to get the word out,” said Nelson.

“CTS staff helped guide us in the use of technology to reach more people and applicants,” added McCready. “We could characterize the program as working smart by reaching and educating the right people to help them be competitive, answering their questions, and trying to give everyone an equal chance at presenting a viable project.”

(\textit{Smart Work Ethic continued on page 24})

**Prince of Tides**

“At some point we want to stop trying to manage every flood and start working more with nature.”
“Teaching ASL is my life’s work.”
Dr. William Vicars is hard of hearing, considers himself “culturally Deaf,” and enjoys being a member of the Deaf Community. Nicknamed “Safari Bill,” Vicars’ goal is to share sign language with the world.

“Teaching ASL is my life’s work,” said Vicars, assistant professor in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, School Psychology and Deaf Studies at Sacramento State’s College of Education. “ASL is a complete and natural language so in addition to learning the vocabulary, becoming truly fluent in ASL involves learning grammar, culture and history.”

The American Sign Language (ASL) Certificate Program, directed by Vicars and offered through Sacramento State’s College of Continuing Education (CCE), includes all four elements.

Developed in collaboration with Vicar’s own digital Lifeprint Institute, the ASL program combines two online vocabulary and grammar courses with an intensive two-week no-voice immersion experience on the Sacramento State campus. This hybrid delivery format makes the ASL program a smart solution for anyone interested in learning American Sign Language including high school, community college or university students needing to fulfill a foreign language requirement as well as adults who interact with members of the Deaf Community in the workplace. “We usually end up with a line of prospective students literally begging to get into the classes to earn their language credits to graduate,” Vicars said.

Meghan Sokol, a Sacramento State student majoring in social work who completed the two online ASL courses last year, appreciates both Vicars’ teaching style and the accessibility of his coursework. He does a “tremendous service to students by bridging the understanding between the Deaf and hearing world,” she said.

After completing the two online courses, students earn the full certificate by participating in the two week-long intensive courses during the summer where they “turn off their voices” and practice ASL in-person. The hybrid delivery model teaches students both receptive and expressive signing abilities and balances the needs of traditional and online learners.

Kimmy Nguyen, analyst, California Department of Education, Special Education Division, appreciated both delivery models. “The online courses were a good way to review and refresh my memory of ASL vocabulary, and to learn new vocabulary,” explained Nguyen. “The classroom sessions have one rule: no voice. Not only that, we also gained experience by going to restaurants and trying to order our meals by gesturing, signing and writing without using our voices.”
Can You Hear Me Now?

ASL is not based on spoken English. It has its own grammar, idioms, historical contexts and cultural nuances.

Deaf versus deaf

def: (with a lowercase “d”)
The condition of partially or completely lacking in the sense of hearing to the extent that one cannot understand speech for everyday communication purposes. Example: He is deaf. (Meaning that he lacks the sense of hearing)

Deaf: (with a capital “D”)
Embracing the cultural norms, beliefs and values of the Deaf Community. Example: He is Deaf. (Meaning that he is a member of the Deaf Community)

Leaving a “Lifeprint” on ASL Education

With the launch of Lifeprint.com in 1997, Dr. William Vicars introduced one of the first comprehensive digital ASL learning experiences. As president and owner of Lifeprint Institute, a consulting business focused on technology-enhanced ASL instruction, excursion-based instruction, and extended immersion-based programs, demand for Vicars’ expertise and enthusiasm now circles the globe.

In Cameroon, sign language interpreter Che Manasseh uses Lifeprint.com to work with secondary school students. “I have worked with the hearing impaired for eight years and this website is a wonderful assistance to us,” said Manasseh.

Lifeprint.com includes a free electronic ASL library, comprehensive dictionary, finger spelling tools, archived question and answer session from past students, lesson plans, and even Deaf and hard of hearing humor. Vicars offers these self-study materials free allowing anyone to study ASL at any time, from anywhere. Students pursuing foreign language academic credit are required to register and pay tuition.

“Lifeprint is a curriculum resource not just for students but for instructors, interpreters and parents of deaf children, too,” said Vicars. A father of four, Vicars and his wife Belinda, who is deaf, sign and lip read with their own children — three with normal hearing whom Vicars teasingly considers “hard of listening” and one who is hard of hearing.

Jon Miller, sign language interpreter for Travis County Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Austin, Texas, uses Lifeprint.com for professional development. “The interpreters in my office use the site often for ongoing skill building without leaving their desks,” said Miller.

Sitting at a desk holds little appeal for the energetic Vicars. He traveled to South America in July 2008 to deliver a two-week Train the Sign Language Trainer workshop for local instructors as part of an initiative to teach sign language to deaf and hard of hearing children in six primary schools in Guyana.

“At the workshop I presented the Lifeprint.com ASL curriculum model and taught the instructors how to put it to work in their own classes as a flexible, effective and free alternative to traditional curriculum,” said Vicars.

What’s next for this visionary? “I’m thinking about becoming a licensed travel agent,” Vicars said, “to be better prepared to set up ASL immersion trips to interesting places all over the world.”
For Nguyen, who is technically deaf but considers herself hard of hearing, ASL training is important on multiple levels. “When I was four years old I learned Sign English Exact (SEE) but it’s important for me to be part of the Deaf Community and that includes being able to communicate in ASL,” said Nguyen. “Professionally, knowing ASL is a benefit for my job so that I can communicate with and provide support for deaf and hard of hearing clients, just the same as a Spanish-speaking analyst would for Spanish-speaking clients.”

Both types of ASL classes attract their own set of students. “It is a fact that online learning appeals much more to introverts than extroverts,” explained Vicars. “If you ask a bunch of extroverts how they feel about spending an evening alone in front of a computer versus going to a classroom full of people, you can predict the type of answers you will get.”

“However,” Vicars continued, “I am convinced that online learning is better for some people like those who live long distances from classrooms, work full time, have small children or have physical disabilities that make classroom attendance difficult.”

The ASL program serves as an example of how digital technology can effectively deliver even highly visual content. “When you stand in front of a live class and teach for an hour, 30 students appreciate your efforts,” claimed Vicars. “When you instead spend 30 hours building an hour-long online lesson and post that lesson to the Internet, 3,000 students can appreciate your efforts. And once you take the time to develop an online course, the material doesn’t go away. It is still there online and it is highly portable.”

“Our long-term focus is to open our programs up to a larger market and globalize our curriculum,” said Jill Matsueda, CCE’s senior program manager for academic programs. “The ASL Certificate Program is just one example of our very successful non-traditional course delivery formats that help people with challenging schedules or minimal access to the Sacramento State campus achieve a university-level education.”

Moving forward, Vicars maintains that “using computer skills will be as natural to future students as using a pencil is to today’s students. Even now, some students find using a pencil somewhat archaic.” It is this type of innovative thinking that keeps the ASL program thriving.

“I really enjoy being at Sac State, trying new things, and building up my online curriculum,” said Vicars. “The online ASL program will continue to grow and develop to make use of new technologies. Eventually there will be more streaming video, more interactivity, and a wider range of language models.”

For Dr. William Ellerbee, Jr., deputy state superintendent, School and District Operations Branch, California Department of Education (CDE), a personal desire to better communicate with deaf and hard of hearing CD employees grew into a partnership with CCE to deliver customized American Sign Language (ASL) training to more than 50 individuals.

What motivated you to learn ASL and to share it with your department?

Ellerbee: I frequently visit CDE’s State Special Schools throughout California. During my visits to the schools for the deaf, I have the opportunity to interact with our hearing and deaf staff who provide exemplary teaching and support services to our deaf and hard of hearing students. These individuals encouraged me to learn American Sign Language (ASL) so that I could effectively communicate with them and the students.

I wanted to share my own words and express my own thoughts using ASL, so I decided to take ASL classes at Sacramento City College as a starter. As I became more comfortable expressing my own words using ASL, I began to communicate more often with the deaf and hard of hearing staff. They seemingly appreciated my attempt to learn ASL and understand Deafhood. My new learning experiences were shared with others at CDE, and to my surprise, I learned there were others who also wanted to learn ASL. Working with CDE’s Training Office, we conducted an interest survey to determine if there were enough employees interested to start an onsite ASL class and there were. Over 25 employees initially enrolled in the first ASL session.

How does learning ASL benefit employees at CDE?

Ellerbee: Those who participated in the classes significantly enhanced their ASL skills. Some became better communicators with their loved ones and friends who are deaf. Others became more confident in holding conversations with the Deaf Community. And those who periodically interact with our schools for the deaf became more proficient in communicating with deaf school personnel. For them, it was rewarding to see how pleased deaf school personnel were when they saw hearing CDE employees communicating with them in ASL.

How could other state agencies benefit from this type of educational experience?

Ellerbee: I believe it is important for all state agencies to be sensitive and aware of the needs of the deaf. And those in leadership positions must make every effort to ensure they have an understanding of Deaf Culture and provide work environments where the deaf are an integral part of the workforce. In some state agencies and public work institutions, the deaf and hard of hearing are ostracized because their co-workers and supervisors lack the knowledge, skills and sensitivity to effectively communicate with them.

All employees, including hearing, deaf and hard of hearing, will always work beyond what is expected of them when they feel appreciated and understood. State agencies taking full responsibility for educating their workforce about [ASL and Deaf Culture] will indeed gain many benefits.
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Imagine you work in a division of emergency management services (EMS) in a hospital. One day your human resources manager walks into your office and asks,

“Did you hear about the accident at the freeze-dried strawberry plant?”

“What happened?”

“I don’t know but you might want to check it out.”

You discover the accident involved hundreds of workers and that your hospital along with several other regional emergency response agencies needs to prepare to handle any patient intake, communication coordination, or emergency response activities. You start dialing around and run into call center phone trees. You reach an operator who redirects you to possibly the right contact person as valuable minutes tick away, delaying critical coordination and responses.

Now imagine you have a secure Web-based system accessible anytime and anywhere for emergency planning and response communication with public health partners. This system would allow the emergency services coordinator to send emergency alerts from state and local government within minutes during emergencies, urgent events and disasters, and transmit relevant information about emergency issues to public and medical partners. These urgent alerts would be delivered and received by emergency responders via email, fax, pager, personal digital assistants or phone (landline or cellular).

The California Health Alert Network (CAHAN) is just such a system. If you had never heard of or used it, then you like hundreds of health and emergency management services personnel across California might still use old technology and disconnected networks to send alerts.

The California Department of Public Health (DPH) launched CAHAN in 2002 to facilitate this collaborative Web-based alerting and notification system between federal, state and local health departments, clinics, hospitals and other public health partners. “In the event of a catastrophic event, CAHAN provides the tool to quickly send an alert to CAHAN participants to inform them of the event and its status or required action,” said Julie A. Whitten, chief, Information Technology and Telecommunications Section, California DPH, Emergency Preparedness Office. “During the summer fires, smoke and excessive heat, we sent a CAHAN alert to notify our partners that the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services had indicated the state was activated to Phase II (Heat Alert) of the State Emergency Contingency Heat Plan.

“We were able to quickly send this alert to our public health partners along with the location in CAHAN where the State Emergency Contingency Heat Plan is located,” continued Whitten. “So, in addition to the alert and notification feature of CAHAN, it also includes a document library of resources to use to plan for and respond to an emergency. Instead of trying to remember where you have that binder or file or email, CAHAN participants receive a link to where [electronic] emergency plans are located.”

CAHAN has 14,000 users and is growing; however, leaders at DPH recognized the need for an educational outreach program to attract more users. DPH enlisted the help of Sacramento State’s Conference and Training Services (CTS) to train users on how to take advantage of CAHAN’s capabilities. CTS staff would design, produce and facilitate workshops held across the state.

**CAHAN Workshops**

DPH considered many approaches to reaching its target audience. Using CTS staff expertise and guidance, DPH decided on multiple workshops held in many geographical regions. “DPH needed to launch the program expeditiously and get as many of its partners into the system as possible,” said Susan Gonzalez, director of CTS. “This meant holding the training programs in everybody’s backyard in order for more hospital staff to come to the training.

“DPH turned to us because we have a network of facilities we contract with up and down the state,” she continued. “We put the training in multiple locations where everyone could attend without paying travel costs. Then we opened up every date on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday over a 14-week period, allowing participants plenty of opportunity to come to the training.”

CTS worked with DPH training and outreach specialists and its own instructors and facilitators to design an easily-understandable workshop format to teach participants how to become Health Alert Network (HAN) coordinators for their agencies. HAN coordinators coordinate, implement and maintain CAHAN for their agency or jurisdiction. “My role with the CAHAN workshops is to facilitate education and outreach,” said Lee

“In the event of a catastrophic event, CAHAN provides the tool to quickly send an alert to CAHAN participants to inform them of the event and its status or required action.”

**JULIE A. WHITTEN, CHIEF, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTION, CALIFORNIA DPH, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS OFFICE**
Scott, instructor and facilitator for CCE. “CAHAN has been around since 2002—and it is a fantastic system but people were not aware of it. You can’t just build it and they will come. You have to communicate about it and then they will come.”

Come they did. As workshops began taking place in prime locations throughout the state, including San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Costa Mesa and others, momentum built. By the time the workshops reached Costa Mesa and were held at National University on July 15, 16 and 17, the seats were full of interested health and EMS professionals. Tiffany Magee, DPH CAHAN training and outreach specialist, attributed this success to the strategic partners who helped spread the word. “We have had a lot of really great partners in reaching the right participants. For example, the California Hospital Association also partnered in promoting the workshops along with local health departments,” she said.

“CAHAN has three main functional pieces: communication to local facilities and EMS, the directory to outline who is in charge and who to directly contact, and the document library to share resources like emergency response plans in a secure environment,” said Scott. “Our goal for the workshop was to get people set up in the system, teach them how to log on, and learn how to send out alerts so the appropriate people will receive it—be they the emergency management officers or coordinators.”

The knowledge level each attendee brought to the training varied. For some attendees such as Susan McDougall, communications manager and emergency management coordinator at St. Jude Medical Center in Orange County, the workshop enhanced her knowledge. McDougall’s added understanding of the system increased her faith in its capabilities as an ideal communication tool. “What CAHAN does for us is instead of calling each other individually we’re able to send out a mass notification to other EMS agencies, hospitals and long-term care facilities in our community,” said McDougall. “CAHAN helps us make sure we’re on the same page and everyone is aware of what is happening—and if we’re all able to have that capability then we’re causing less chaos and fear. The community knows and the patients and their families know. Everyone understands what they’re walking into.”

Other participants such as Sue Montierth, emergency preparedness coordinator from Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital based in Whittier, Calif., the workshop provided essential information about a system she knew little about. “I wasn’t sure what [CAHAN] was about until I came to the workshop,” she said. “I think the workshop is very good. It explains the system and uses interactivity with the computer so you can get started. I know what I need to know to try using the alerts to connect with the right people.”

Customized Communication

CAHAN is built based on consistent technology standards that set a minimal level of accessibility to enable multiple jurisdictions with varied system capabilities to still find each other. At the same time, CAHAN provides flexibility for each county to customize it based on technology and geographic needs. “CAHAN becomes a network of networks,” explained Scott. “Users can communicate within a region and then they can communicate into other regions that may not have otherwise had those capabilities available internally but now with CAHAN they do.”

“Some counties have their own [county] hospitals but Orange County does not,” said Marianne Goodrich, Web content developer and CAHAN administrator, Orange County Health Care Agency, Health Disaster Management Division. “We have many private hospitals and it’s a major thing to have this system. We want to find out what the hospitals want to do with the system. Redundancy is important and communication in a crisis is important to know what is going on, and all hospitals in the state would key up and know and then be able to notify all of the right agencies. You can communicate and monitor capacity and pass the information back and forth to keep people informed during an emergency.”

CAHAN PARTICIPANTS

- California Department of Public Health
- California Department of Health Care Services
- California Health and Human Services
- Governor’s Office of Emergency Services
- Emergency Medical Services Authority
- Local Health Departments
- Medical Providers
- Hospitals
- Clinics
- First Responders
- Law Enforcement
- Schools

“It’s always better when we get the same information through the agencies and the emergency services department—that way we all get the same information and make sure our process is the same,” said Kathryn Robidoux, director of emergency services, Los Alamitos Medical Center.

“We have provided a great resource to our hospitals and their partners,” said Magee. “CAHAN is an excellent way to communicate across the state in an effective and efficient manner. It is a positive program for the hospitals to be a part of. We really want to tie everyone into a larger network—that being CAHAN—so that we can communicate in the event of an emergency or disaster with our key stakeholders in an effective and efficient manner. So it has been positive all around.”
BUILDING

a Better Employee

PHOTOS BY DALE KOLKE | BY JUSTINE BROWN
Margaret Hwang, CCE Human Resources Coordinator; Calvin McGee, SETA Senior Personnel Analyst; Erin MacEneaney, CCE Program Manager
The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) is a joint powers agency of the city and county of Sacramento. SETA’s mission is all about making connections: connecting people to jobs; connecting business owners to quality employees; connecting children to education and nutrition services; and connecting refugees with the assistance they need. Annually, SETA serves over 45,000 people.

Over the last few years, SETA increasingly struggled with cumbersome internal hiring, classification and staff development processes. SETA directors wanted to ensure that, in addition to delivering on their mission to connect local people with jobs, they also gave their internal staff the chance to learn, improve and advance.

“I was working to establish an internal staff development program,” said Calvin McGee, senior personnel analyst with SETA. “I was grappling with how to get it started and where to go with it. We had eight employee classifications, and getting folks certified and moved up was taking up way too much time and was very complex.”

To revamp its classification system, SETA first developed focus groups to develop a structure. After a year of working together, the team decided to merge the eight classifications into one classification with three ranges. After SETA management accepted this proposal, the team spent another year negotiating the change with the union. “It was a long process,” said McGee. “We were lucky in that Robin Purdy, our deputy director, served as champion for the process and not only supported it but gave it the time needed to develop. It’s much less subjective than the old system.”

Around the same time, Purdy spotted an advertisement for the Skills Center at Sacramento State’s College of Continuing Education (CCE). “When I checked it out it became clear that with a little tweaking the Skills Center could be a great asset to us,” said McGee. “While the Skills Center is set up to help people certify their skills in areas used by various industries, we saw how it could be used in a similar way for our staff development program. We had the new classifications established; now we needed to formalize things a bit.”

SETA reached out to CCE’s Skills Center and the two organizations worked out an agreement. SETA would use the online assessment tool for their current employees in order to establish a standard for professional development—to identify where each employee might have gaps in their skill set and what type of training each employee needed.

Collaborating for a Unique Solution

SETA now uses the online assessments to clearly and easily identify who is ready for the next career level and who needs more training before they move up. Once an employee identifies his or her training gaps, SETA will reimburse that employee for completing online training courses through the Skills Center or elsewhere.

“The Skills Center has over 200 assessment categories,” said Erin MacEneaney, a CCE program manager. “SETA picked the 10 they felt were most important for their employees.”

SETA employees can take the assessments from their own desks at SETA, or from their personal computers at home. Employees also have time during the workday to work on the assessments. In addition, SETA recently set up a proctored assessment in one of its computer labs so that groups of employees can take assessments together at one time.

“Our employees feel empowered in terms of having more control over their...
own upward mobility,” said McGee. “This has not only improved morale, but it makes my personal work easier since I am the one that would have had to do the testing for promotional consideration.”

SETA also uses the Skills Center’s online assessment tool to select new employees. Job applicants can go to the Skills Center on the Sacramento State campus to take an online civil service test on a specific day. SETA chose from the assessments the Skills Center already had, but asked the Skills Center to narrow down the number of questions in each assessment from 40 questions to 20 to make the assessments more manageable for applicants.

“Under their old system SETA orally interviewed everyone that applied for a position,” said MacEneaney. “It isn’t unusual for SETA to have 90 applications for one job so using the assessment tool saves a huge amount of time and helps to quickly narrow down the pool of applicants to those who are truly qualified. This dramatically decreases the amount of time in the recruitment process.”

Margaret Hwang, human resources coordinator for CCE, applauds SETA’s innovation. “SETA is a leader in this kind of staff professional development and we are proud to work with them,” she said. “CCE continues to introduce novel ways of training people to help offset the time and budget crunches government agencies and businesses face today. SETA understands that and was willing to work with us on an innovative approach to solving their personnel challenges.”

Moving forward, SETA and CCE plan to evaluate using the Skill Center’s online assessment tool with the community SETA serves.

“We’ve figured out one thing we can do but I believe there are other ways SETA and CCE can collaborate,” said McGee. “Only time will tell how far we might take this.”

A Stronger Workforce Starts with SETA

Robin Purdy has a long history of helping people seek, prepare for and gain employment. Before joining SETA 20 years ago, Purdy was the director of the Sacramento Women’s Centers’ employment programs. During her tenure there, Purdy developed training programs to help women get into high-wage, non-traditional jobs where they were traditionally underrepresented. Today, as deputy director of the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), Purdy oversees $20 million in federal and state funding focused on preparing people for work. We asked Purdy why SETA’s work with CCE’s Skills Center is so important, both for her 111 internal employees and, ultimately, for the customers SETA serves.

Why is the professional development project between CCE and SETA important?

Purdy: For one thing, it provides credentials to our staff from a well-recognized institution. But most importantly, it emphasizes for us that it’s important for our own workforce to continue learning. That’s something we preach to our customers all the time—now we are actually doing it with our own people.

It is my hope this will allow us to retain our staff—which is truly a valuable asset. Before we had this project in place, people would often leave for higher paying jobs. I now have a mechanism to offer them promotions and increased wages and I am hoping we are able to better retain them as a result.

What kind of reactions has the new system generated from employees?

Purdy: I ran into one of our employees in the parking lot after he had taken the first four assessments. He was pleased with the amount of knowledge he had—it was a validation of his skill level to him. This gave him another indicator of his worth.

Most employees I’ve talked to say the assessments are difficult but they felt good after taking them if they were successful. If they aren’t successful, they are given information about online courses or courses offered through Sacramento State’s College of Continuing Education that they can take in order to improve their skills. They can then retake the assessment(s) they didn’t score well on and hopefully improve their performance. We are offering the assessments on a quarterly basis.

What end results do you hope to see from this process—both in terms of your internal employees and SETA customers?

Purdy: There is one assessment on project management people are having trouble with because they haven’t had to think about project management in terms of the tools they might use. They can manage a project well, but they don’t use tools to do it. This assessment has spurred several of them to research project management tools or take a class, get a book, etc., so they can pass the assessment. They can then use those tools in doing their jobs and our customers will ultimately benefit from having a better informed, better skilled and more organized employee working with them.

This is It’s an investment in my workforce that is going to pay off in multiple ways. I hope to see that I keep my staff longer, that they become more skilled in their jobs, and that they can then help our customers increase their own wages and employment retention.
CTS plays an active role in organizing many events for the California Department of Public Health (DPH) including the upcoming December 2008 Smoke-Free California conference. Leaders from the California Tobacco Control Program plan for the event to provide information to local tobacco control community advocates about the effects of second-hand smoke and multi-unit housing issues. The goal is to present the latest information, science, policy, advocacy and other tools needed to help pass local policies that further reduce second-hand smoke exposure where Californians live, work and play.

The main objective is to reach as many people in the most productive way by organizing one conference and inviting as many interested parties as possible to ensure everyone receives the same messages. Organizing a single conference versus a series of summits or workshops reduces redundancy, miscommunication and costs associated with multiple venues. Parties invited include community advocates working on smoke-free policies related to outdoor dining, outdoor entertainment venues, and places such as parks, beaches, multi-unit housing, casinos and other areas within California where people are still exposed to second-hand smoke.

Lori Loftis, chief, Administrative Support Unit, California Tobacco Control Program, has enjoyed a 10-year relationship working with CTS staff on various tobacco control projects and uses their knowledge and expertise to work smarter, more efficiently and productive-ly to plan this conference. “We’ve had a positive working relationship with their staff,” she added. “They’re familiar with how we operate, what we want, and what we can and can’t do when it comes to state conferencing requirements.”

“When it comes to conference planning you go through the same steps to plan each event—regardless if the event is for 20 people or 500 people. The only thing that changes is the focus, topic area and people you work with,” added Barbara Lowell, senior conference planner with CTS. “The logistics, coordination and expertise required to pull it off all stay the same.”

When the California Tobacco Control Program contracts with CTS to help organize their events, they make an investment in expertise and manpower not normally at their disposal. The partnership saves time, effort and long-term resources by using outside assistance rather than hiring new staff or relying on already-burdened staff to assume more responsibilities. “CTS always helps us adapt to what is needed,” said Loftis. “They give us guidance on how to keep our costs down, market the conferences or put on trainings. I can’t say enough positive things about them.”
Curleene Langman can always count on “I Love Lucy” reruns for a good laugh and her family for inspiration. Born in Fiji with stints in Western Australia and Auckland, New Zealand, before immigrating to the United States, Langman is fiercely proud of her heritage, a lover of Indian food, and a desipser of bikinis. With secret ambitions to play the piano and dabble in law enforcement, Langman currently represents Sacramento State’s College of Continuing Education as a service specialist with a stunning smile and the ability to bring out the best in her team.

At CCE I am proud to provide… Cultural diversity, many years of administrative, operations and project management experience, and a flair for working with international students. I am proud to be an ambassador for CCE.

Working smarter in my position means… Continually reviewing our service processes to develop new strategies that maintain or increase our quality standards, yet reduce the time we use for each. Simply put, working smart is about doing the right thing, using the right tools and accomplishing the desired goals in less time.

Other people rave about Curleene’s ability to… Bring out the best in others.

Curleene is the smiling face of CCE to so many people! Since joining the CCE team in 2007, Curleene has implemented new systems to streamline communication with program staff, started a feedback program so that we can better listen to and understand our clients, and started to maximize the talents of our front counter service specialists using their skills and interests. When they aren’t providing excellent customer service, Curleene now has them searching the Web for information requested by program staff, preparing digital course materials to save paper, proofreading CCE materials, and making personal contact with students to let them know about upcoming classes and events.

~ Jenni Helfrich, CCE Director of Extension Programs

As I child I dreamed of being a… Flight attendant. My Aunt Hansivae was the first Rotuman flight attendant in Fiji and I remember being so fascinated with her beauty and the scent of her uniform and luggage. I also remember awaiting her return to enjoy the special candies only available on the airplanes (and stashed in her purse of course). My obsession to be a flight attendant—and to be in charge of those candies—emanated from those wonderful experiences.

Now when I grow up I want to be… Someone who contributes to their organization at the executive level.

I wish someone would invent… This one is a secret that may make me rich one day!

Curleene Taukave Langman
Administrative Operations Service Specialist
Sacramento State College of Continuing Education
CTS is recognized throughout California as a leader in the event planning industry.

A sampling of upcoming events includes:

**OCTOBER 2008**

- **Expanding Your Horizons Conference – Motivating Young Women in Science + Mathematics**
  - **Date:** October 4
  - **Host:** Women of AT&T

- **Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program – Program Overview and Steps-to-Take Training**
  - **Date:** October 6 – 8
  - **Host:** California Department of Public Health

- **California Air Response Planning Alliance Summit**
  - **Date:** October 15 – 16
  - **Host:** California Air Resources Board

- **Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force Meeting**
  - **Date:** October 16 – 17
  - **Host:** California Department of Water Resources

- **Time Series and Forecasting Class**
  - **Date:** October 28 – 29
  - **Host:** California Department of Water Resources

- **California Privacy and Security Advisory Board Symposium**
  - **Date:** October 28
  - **Host:** California Health and Human Services Agency

- **NEXUS XIII Training Conference – Violence within the Home and its Effects on Children**
  - **Date:** October 30
  - **Host:** Inter-Agency Council of Child Abuse and Neglect

**NOVEMBER 2008**

- **Project Engineer Academy**
  - **Date:** November 3 – 6
  - **Host:** California Department of Transportation

- **Local Enforcement Agency Conference – Cultivating Partnership and Harvesting Success**
  - **Date:** November 4 – 6
  - **Host:** California Integrated Waste Management Board

- **Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program – Perinatal Services Coordinators Statewide Meeting**
  - **Date:** November 5 – 6
  - **Host:** California Department of Public Health

- **Tobacco Control Program – Capacity Building Task Force Meeting**
  - **Date:** November 5 – 6
  - **Host:** California Department of Public Health

- **Parent Leadership Conference**
  - **Date:** November 7
  - **Host:** California Department of Social Services

- **Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program – Program Overview and Steps-to-Take Training**
  - **Date:** November 17 – 19
  - **Host:** California Department of Public Health

- **Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force Meeting**
  - **Date:** November 20 – 21
  - **Host:** California Department of Water Resources

**DECEMBER 2008**

- **CalWORKs Partnership Summit**
  - **Date:** December 2 – 4
  - **Host:** California Department of Social Services

- **Tobacco Control Program – Secondhand Smoke/Multi-Unit Housing Conference**
  - **Date:** December 2 – 4
  - **Host:** California Department of Public Health

- **Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force Meeting**
  - **Date:** December 18 – 19
  - **Host:** California Department of Water Resources

**JANUARY 2009**

- **Tobacco Control Program – Tobacco Education and Research Oversight Committee Meeting**
  - **Date:** January 20
  - **Host:** California Department of Public Health

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**Book Signing of**

_The Offsite – A Leadership Challenge Fable_

by local author Robert H. Thompson

Join us for wine and cheese and an evening “Inside the Author’s Library.”

Thursday, October 23, 2008
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Napa Hall, Sacramento State
Bachelor of Arts: Early Development, Care and Education (EDCE)
Fall 2009 application deadline: Aug. 1, 2009
Online Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice
Spring 2009 application deadline: Jan. 15, 2009
Fall 2009 application deadline: Aug. 1, 2009
Bay Area Mild/Moderate/Severe Specialist Credential and Master of Arts in Education: Special Education
Spring 2009 application deadline: Oct. 6, 2008
Certificate of Advanced Business Studies
Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA)
Spring 2009 application deadline: Feb. 1, 2009
Master of Arts in Education: Workforce Development Advocacy
Spring 2009 application deadline: Dec. 1, 2008
Master of Arts in Spanish: Travel Study
Summer 2009 application deadline: Apr. 1, 2009
Master of Science in Accountancy
Master of Science in Business Administration: Taxation
Online Special Major in Fire Service Management
Spring 2009 application deadline: Jan. 15, 2009
Fall 2009 application deadline: Aug. 1, 2009

Analytical Skills Certificate Program
First Fall 2008 Course: Oct. 10, 2008
First Spring 2009 Course: Jan. 13, 2009

Project Management Certificate Program for Transportation Professionals
First Fall 2008 Course: Oct. 14 – Nov. 13, 2008 (Online)
First Spring 2009 Course: Jan. 5 – Feb. 4, 2009 (Online)

Crime and Intelligence Analysis Certificate Program

Leadership for the Government Executive Certificate Program
First Session: Nov. 7, 2008

Advanced Supervision for the Government Professional
First Session: Nov. 14, 2008

Project Management Certificate Program
First Course: Jan. 13 – Feb. 2, 2009

State Supervisory Training
First Course: Jan. 14, 2009

Human Resources Management Certificate Program
First Course: Jan. 16 & 23, 2009

Management for the Government Executive Certificate Program
First Session: Jan. 29, 2009

Unless otherwise noted, all professional and certificate program events take place at Napa or Modoc Hall on the Sacramento State campus.

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