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Appendix 1

Elected Officials Serving Kern Community College District
Introduction

The role and influence of the governor and State Legislature over the California community colleges have dramatically increased since 1978 and the passage of Proposition 13 and Prop 98. This increased influence is shared by an expanded role for the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges (BGCCC) as well as other state agencies.

Over 50 percent of the budget for the community colleges is appropriated through the state budget process. With the increase in the state’s influence over the funding, governance, academic quality, services and programs of the community colleges, it is critical that local governing board members, students, staff, and faculty strengthen their ability and willingness to influence decision-making at the state level.

Local district involvement is the key to successful advocacy on behalf of California’s locally governed community colleges. Locally elected officials are very effective since they, too, have an electoral constituency base. Exercising that political clout in communicating with other elected officials, trustees can achieve the most for their communities and citizens.

The entire college community - trustees, students, administration, staff, and faculty - working together can make state legislators aware of the programs, services, and needs of the local colleges, and apprise them of the impact that their decisions may have on the college districts. With this information, the governor, legislators and other state officials will be better equipped to deal appropriately with state policy issues.

Local district involvement is the key to successful advocacy on behalf of California’s locally governed community colleges.

This handbook is designed to provide the tools for strengthened statewide and local advocacy. Through its use,

• Advocacy can be expanded by informing our KCCD Board of Trustees Legislative Sub-committee and Chancellor of how bills that are introduced would affect Cerro Coso Community College and KCCD as a whole
• Communication will be encouraged to state legislators, our congressional representatives, local legislative bodies and our business partners.
• College personnel and students will discover how to implement quicker and more effective action on legislation of interest to local community college districts.
• As a result, state legislators will be educated on community college issues and needs and be better positioned to understand and support our interests in the legislative process.
• Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the use of the Santa Clarita Community College District’s Legislative Advocacy Handbook in creating this for our college. With Chancellor Van Hook’s permission, much of their handbook was used to develop this document.
Part I. Know the Process

The Legislative Process

Patterned after the United States Congress, California has a bicameral (two-house), two-party Legislature with 80 assembly members and 40 senators. Assembly members are elected for two-year terms and senators for four-year terms with one-half elected every two years. No member of the Assembly may serve more than three terms and no member of the Senate may serve more than two terms. The majority party in each house controls the leadership role.

The California Legislature is the policymaking body of state government, restricted only by the federal and state constitutions and the governor's veto power. The Legislature also conducts investigations into almost any issue of public concern. It can also ratify amendments to the U.S. Constitution. In recent years, there has been a trend by the Legislature to grant itself more of the appointive power traditionally granted to the governor. Many commissions now consist of gubernatorial and legislative appointees.

Annually, the governor, the Senate Rules Committee and the Speaker of the Assembly make hundreds of appointments to State boards and commissions. Information on available appointments and requirements is included in the “Central Registry” of appointments. The Central Registry lists all appointments and respective appointing authorities. The local county clerk is legally required to keep an updated copy of the Registry. Copies are also available at the offices of the Secretary of State. The California Board and Commission Outreach Project, sponsored by the California Elected Women’s Association for Education and Research (CEWAER), publishes “How to Get Appointed to a State Board or Commission.” This document is filled with suggestions and strategies for those seeking appointments to State boards and commissions.

What is a session?

As a result of a constitutional amendment adopted in 1972, the California Legislature now meets in a continuous two-year session, convening on the first Monday in December of each even-numbered year. The two-year session eliminates the necessity of reintroducing and reprinting bills that were not acted upon or refused passage during the first year of the biennial session.

The governor may also call the Legislature into extraordinary session to consider and act upon specified subjects. During these special sessions, the Legislature is limited to considering only the matters specified in the governor’s proclamation.

How many votes are needed to pass a bill?

A majority vote (21 in the senate and 41 in the assembly) of the elected members will pass all but urgency bills, Political Reform Act amendments, and proposed constitutional amendments. These require a two-thirds vote (27 and 54 respectively). Some education appropriation bills, however, may be passed by majority vote. In 2010, voters enacted Proposition 25, which changed the number of votes need to pass the state budget from two-thirds to a simple majority.

What are the effective dates of bills?

Bills enacted by October 2 of a given year become effective on January 1 of the following year. Bills enacted during extraordinary sessions become effective 91 days after the adjournment of that session. Bills that contain urgency clauses, called “urgency measures,” take effect immediately upon being signed by the governor.
What is the committee process?

The Legislature is divided into subject matter “policy committees” within each house. In addition, each house also has “fiscal committees:” Senate Appropriations, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review and Assembly Appropriations and Assembly Budget. The Rules Committee in each house makes the vital decisions regarding which policy committee will be granted jurisdiction over new legislative proposals. Both houses have two fiscal committees; one to review appropriations, and one to review state budget issues.

What are standing bills?

Each house of the Legislature adopts “Standing Rules” which govern the details of daily procedure. In addition, there are “Joint Rules” which are adopted by both houses to govern the transactions between the senate and the assembly. There are also certain additional procedural requirements contained in the constitution and in state statutes.

What are the legislative deadlines?

Throughout the two-year legislative session, there are a series of deadlines that proposed legislation must meet if it is to be enacted. These deadlines are important in that a “crunch period” often develops immediately prior to each deadline day. During these “crunch periods,” legislation can move very fast and immediate response by local trustees and state association representatives is most critical.

How is the assembly structured?

The presiding officer of the assembly is the Speaker. Elected by a majority vote of the members, the Speaker appoints all assembly committee chairs and members except the Rules Committee. The Speaker also appoints a personal representative on the floor, the Majority Leader who assists the Speaker in the conduct of the business of the assembly. The minority caucus chooses the Minority Floor Leader as its representative on the Assembly Floor. The Assembly Rules Committee (ARC) serves primarily as the executive committee for the assembly. Committee membership is highly sought after. The committee is responsible for assigning bills to committees, setting salaries for legislative staff, waiving rules and overseeing the business of the assembly.

How is the senate structured?

California’s Lieutenant Governor is President of the senate, although actual leadership of the “Upper House” is vested in the President pro Tempore who serves as chair of the Rules Committee. The senators elect both the President pro Tempore and the five members of the Rules Committee. This powerful committee appoints all other committees, assigns bills to those committees, makes recommendations to the full senate on gubernatorial appointments, and bears responsibility for administering all business functions of the senate including personnel and fiscal matters. The majority and minority political caucuses also select a Majority Floor Leader, a Minority Floor Leader, and caucus chairpersons.

What are the different types of legislation?

There are three basic types of legislation: bills, constitutional amendments and resolutions. Only legislators and legislative committees can author these measures. The governor cannot introduce legislation, but can ask a legislator to introduce legislation. The governor’s budget is carried in the form of a legislative bill, authored by a legislator. Legislators, special interest groups, staff members, constituents, and government agencies as well as a variety of other sources generate ideas for legislation.
How a Bill Becomes Law

What is a bill?

A bill is a proposed law. It can be enacted by a majority vote in both houses unless it is an urgency measure or carries an appropriation, in which case a two-thirds vote of approval is required. Constitutional amendments are proposed changes to the state constitution and a two-thirds vote of each house will place one of these measures on the ballot for voter consideration.

How does a resolution differ from a bill?

Resolutions are merely statements of legislative viewpoint and lack the force of law. They may be addressed to other governmental agencies, describe state general policy, or commend or memorialize someone. They are normally passed by voice vote. Constitutional amendments and resolutions, unlike bills, are not subject to gubernatorial review.

What happens when a bill is introduced?

When a member introduces a bill, its title is read and it is printed. Then the Assembly or Senate Rules Committee assigns it to a committee. The committee hearing is the most crucial stage in the legislative process, for it is at this point that the fate of legislation is most often determined. Following public hearing, the committee can kill the measure, send it to another committee, or pass it to the floor as is or with recommended amendments. If a bill passed by a policy committee has fiscal implications, the fiscal committee also must review it. Action on bills in committee requires a majority vote based on full committee membership.

When it reaches the floor, the bill’s title is read a second time, amendments are often made, and the legislation is placed on the agenda for debate (third reading). After debate, a roll call is taken. If the bill is passed, it is sent to the other house where the process is repeated. If the bill is amended in the second house, it must return to the house of origin for acceptance or rejection of the amendments. If approved at this point, the bill goes to the governor for signature or veto. If the amendments are rejected, a conference committee of three members of each house is formed to reach accord on any differences. A bill goes to the governor if both houses approve a conference committee recommendation.

Any bill introduced during the first year of the biennium of the legislative session that has not been passed by the house of origin by January 31 of the second calendar year of the biennium may no longer be acted on by the house. No bill may be passed by either house on or after September 1 of an even-numbered year except statutes calling elections, statutes providing for tax levies or appropriations for the usual current expenses of the state, and urgency statutes and bills passed after being vetoed by the governor.

The governor may reduce or eliminate one or more items of appropriation while approving other portions of a bill.

What is the California initiative process?

In 1911, the initiative process was established in California by a change to the California Constitution. Prior to 1911, citizens in California voted only on measures and acts that were placed on the ballot by the Legislature.

The intent of the initiative process was to provide a means by which a citizen could place a measure on the ballot for voter approval or rejection. The process adopted in 1911, which is still in use today, requires the proponent to obtain an official title and summary of the proposed initiative from the Attorney General.
Upon obtaining a title and summary, the proponent of an initiative is permitted to circulate the petition for 150 days. During the course of the 150 days, the proponent must gather a requisite number of signatures of registered voters who support the initiative.

If a citizen circulates an initiative petition with the intention to revise a California statute, the number of signatures gathered must equal 5 percent of all the votes cast for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial election. If the initiative proposes an amendment to the California Constitution, the number of signatures gathered must equal 8 percent of all votes cast for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial election. Once the proponent of an initiative gathers the requisite number of signatures during the 150-day circulation period, the petition must then enter and pass a random or a full signature verification process, or both, before it is finally placed on the ballot to be accepted or rejected by voters.

Unless the text of an initiative measure states otherwise, an approved initiative goes into effect the day after the election and is not subject to a governor’s veto, nor may it be amended or repealed by the Legislature without a vote of approval of the electors. Should two conflicting measures be approved by voters in a given election, the measure receiving the largest affirmative vote will prevail.

The State Budget Process

Each September, every state agency, including the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO), submits to the Department of Finance (DOF) proposals for changes in the state budget. These proposals are submitted in the form of Budget Change Proposals (BCPs), lengthy and detailed analyses of needs, proposed solutions and expected outcomes.

The chancellor’s proposals are based, in part, on input from the community college system as a whole. The requests are refined and narrowed through consultation and the Board of Governors approves a package of budget change proposals.

In October, DOF staff meets with state agency personnel on each proposal, asking questions and seeking more data or justification. By December, following many staff-to-staff sessions, the DOF makes recommendations to the governor, and by January 10 the governor presents a proposed state budget to the Legislature. Soon thereafter, two identical appropriation bills, referred to as the budget bills, are introduced simultaneously for consideration in the Senate and Assembly by the chairpersons of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee.

The budget process in the Legislature involves detailed study and review of the items in the budget. The Legislature’s fiscal expert, the Legislative Analyst, prepares a comprehensive study of the budget and submits it to the Legislature in mid-February of each year. In reviewing the budget, the legislative fiscal committees (Budget and Fiscal Review, and Budget) divide into subcommittees to hear the various state agencies, constitutional officers, and special interest representatives. For months, the subcommittees deliberate on the budget bills and decide which items should be increased, reduced, added or deleted. Full committee hearings follow the subcommittees, and the budget bills then proceed through the normal legislative process.

The budget bills are sent to the floor of each house of the Legislature. The first house to act sends its version of the bill to the other, where the bill is routinely rejected, and the budget bills are sent to a joint budget conference committee.

What is a conference committee?

The conference committee is one of the most important committees in the budget process. It is important to know who sits on that committee each year and how they can be reached with advocacy messages. The committee is composed of members from the senate and the assembly. The Senate Committee on Rules
and the Speaker of the Assembly, in appointing a committee on conference, each select members from their respective houses.

The conference committee on the budget bill must be open and accessible to the public, and is required to report within 15 days after both houses have passed the bills. The conference committee addresses those differences that exist between the assembly and senate versions of the budget bill. The conference committee cannot approve any item of expenditure that exceeds that contained in one of the two versions before the conference committee.

If there are issues on which the Conference Committee cannot agree, these items are negotiated by the “Leadership” or “Big 3” (Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, President Pro Tempore). The conference report then is submitted to each house of the Legislature for approval by a majority vote of the membership. If the report is not submitted by that date, the conference committee shall be deemed to have reached no agreement and inform each house.

As required by law, the Legislature submits the legislatively approved budget bill to the governor by June 15. If they fail to meet that deadline, they forfeit their pay until they pass a budget.

What is the Governor’s role?

By June 30 the governor may act on the budget by vetoing specific items, reducing items or approving items. The items eliminated or reduced by the governor, (“blue penciled”) in the budget bill are reconsidered separately and may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. However, the Legislature does not often override budget vetoes.
Part II. Know Your Elected Officials

Effective Legislative Relations

The task for the college, members of the college family, and community supporters is to help to make community colleges a part of each legislator’s thinking, to make community colleges relevant to members’ agendas, and action priorities, and to connect our system needs to their legislative needs.

The first step to establishing effective legislative relations is simply getting to know our assembly and senate members, and congressional representatives at the federal level. The more we know about those who are elected to represent our district, the easier it will be to communicate with them.

Take the time to learn about our legislators. It will be helpful in delivering our message more effectively. For example: what are a legislator’s committees and leadership assignments? Did the legislator or any family members attend a community college? Other helpful information may include: special interests, legislative background, election history, political allegiances, professional memberships, major political contributors, and previous community involvement.

Common sources of information to help us get to know more about our legislative representatives are:

Media—Online news sources provide an excellent source of information regarding legislators, legislative issues, and voting records. Cal Channel provides coverage of legislative sessions and policy meetings.

Legislators’ Own Newsletters—Such newsletters are designed to keep constituents aware of the activities, accomplishments and interests of an individual legislator. Newsletters often request constituent feedback, which provides an additional format to communicate with our legislator. Be sure to request that you be added to the mailing list for the newsletter or any other publications available through our legislator. Another source of information is newsletters distributed by the leadership in both the Assembly and Senate.

Internet—Both houses of the Legislature, the Governor’s Department of Finance, and the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office maintain websites. Text of bills, committee analysis and schedules are available online at http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/. Additionally ACCCA sends out updates on legislation that focuses on community college issues.

Community College League of California Publications—These often focus on current legislative issues being reviewed at the state level. In addition, it also is advisable to review newsletters published by other organizations representing faculty, other local elected officials, taxpayers, business and industry, and political parties. Review of other publications develops a breadth of knowledge regarding legislative issues and special interest allegiances.

Campaign and Political Party Activities—Direct involvement in a campaign is one of the best ways to meet and understand our legislators. This is also one of the easiest ways to develop access to a legislator and to get to know the person on a first-name basis. Although community college trustees serve in nonpartisan offices, trustees who are also involved in partisan politics will find that such activities provide opportunities to meet and develop access to legislators. These activities provide a network of people to call upon for assistance in influencing a legislator’s perception of an issue. Participation in local fundraisers and political events provide visibility, an opportunity to communicate with our legislator and staff, and shows our interest in the political process. These functions also provide an opportunity to meet friends and supporters of the legislator. Legislators face re-election frequently and need to retain and rely on grass roots support. Our participation at such functions could be essential to both the legislator and our community college district. College faculty, staff, and administrators are free to be involved in activities during their personal time, but cannot use district time or resources to be involved in campaign activities.
Community Activities and Local Workshops—Involvement in community activities provides additional exposure to legislators and increases our visibility to the public as well. Historically, our activities have included:

- Making community contacts—business, media, civic and interest groups
- Increasing our involvement in the community beyond just those things relating only to campus activities
- Building a base for future coalitions and linkages with other organizations like the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, The Economic Development Committee of Ridgecrest, or the East Kern Education Collaborative.
- Attending issue workshops sponsored by legislators, and meetings or monthly lunches. Many legislators send out weekly or monthly email updates about their activities. Signing up for such updates can keep you informed about when workshops or meetings are scheduled.
- Inviting legislators to tour the campus, attend events, meet with faculty, staff, trustees, and students, and visit and speak to classes.

As a community college trustee, administrator, faculty member, student, district representative, business partner, or if you are simply a supporter of our local community college, it is important to maintain visibility with our legislator and community. If a legislator knows you, our later communication to that legislator may carry more weight than letters and contacts from unknown citizens.
Part III. Advocacy Tools and How to Use Them

Communicating with Elected Officials

Through ongoing communication we can assure our legislators and their staffs that we are available to assist them and provide information; identify key issues facing the community colleges and our district; and advise them on the conditions at our community college district and the potential effect of pending legislation on our district.

Ongoing, not just when we need it—

Regular communication with legislators will aid in developing reliance on us and the community college district for accurate and timely information. Communication can take the form of personal visits, letters, phone calls, telegrams, fax and computerized communications (e-mails), and campus activities. Other ways to bring our college closer to legislators include sharing research done on campus that may be of value, offering to assist the legislator with special projects using the expertise of local college staff, and seeking the advice of legislators on major issues being addressed by the district board.

In person—

Person-to-person communication is usually the most effective and conducive to establishing an ongoing relationship with a legislator. Such meetings with legislators can be scheduled in the local district or at the State Capitol in Sacramento. Sometimes legislators schedule meetings with constituents while attending special events or meetings that may be held outside the district. Examples may be conferences, workshops, political party conventions, or other special events where the legislator is in attendance. The Community College League Legislative Conference is an excellent opportunity to meet with our legislative representatives to share ideas and information.

In the Capitol—

Personal contact is among the best ways to develop relationships with legislators. Participation in local fund-raisers provides visibility, an opportunity to communicate with elected officials and staff, and shows interest in the political process. Elected officials rely on grass roots support.

During the legislative session, legislators are most available at the session’s beginning. Legislators generally can be found in the legislative district on Thursday evenings, Fridays, weekends, holidays, and interim recesses. To request a meeting with our legislator or staff, it is advisable to contact the scheduling staff at least one week in advance. Meeting length can vary depending on the issue and time available – anywhere from 15 minutes to a lunch. Many legislators find early morning breakfast meetings a convenient time to meet with constituents. Others prefer quick lunch meetings while still others like late evening dinners after a long day. At certain times, we may call a member off the floor by leaving a note with the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms at the chamber doors.

As the deadlines for bill action and budget votes get near, it becomes exceedingly difficult to reach legislators personally. We must often rely on community opinion leaders and their personal associations to effectively reach legislators. Remember, the goal is to establish and foster ongoing relationships. That is why Kern Community College District and Cerro Coso Community College participates in legislative activities sponsored by the Community College League of California, the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, the China Lake Alliance, and the Ridgecrest Economic Development Council that put us in face-to-face contact with
our local legislators.

Working with the staff—

Legislators’ successes are dependent on their staffs. And, our ability to influence a legislator may also be dependent on that staff. Whether we seek to schedule a meeting, have a call returned, or provide information, the better we know the legislator’s staff, the greater our chances of success.

Public arenas—

Newspapers and editorial boards are excellent forums for generating community support. Keep local news personnel apprised of campus and state level activities. Use the media to encourage other people and groups to become involved with their community colleges. Send letters to the editor of our local newspaper. Such activities should be coordinated with the Public Information Office.

What is our role?

Part of our job is to foster an understanding of community colleges by our legislators. We encourage our college “family” and community supporters to call and write. The importance of this steady drumbeat from the legislators’ home districts cannot be overestimated. Remember that it is the steady pressure that makes us competitive down to the wire. Take time to learn about our legislators. Some common sources of information are:

- Elected officials biographies (Appendix #1)
- People you may both know
- Elected officials staff members
- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Association publications
- Campaign and political party activities.

Visiting Legislators—What Do We Do When We Get There?

Lobbying in person

Talking to an elected official on his or her position in person can be extremely helpful in getting the vote we want on a bill. Creating a delegation that is a two-part community team is also an effective strategy:

- As a college—the president, trustees, faculty, students and/or community college graduates (the “if-it-weren’t-for-community colleges” testimonials); and
- As a community—the community “people with muscle” who view the college as a community resource -- mayors, city council members, county supervisors, chamber of commerce; hospital administrators, foundation leaders, advisory committee members, business leaders, etc.

Guidelines for lobbying in person include:

1. Find out which legislators sit on the committee that will be hearing the bill.
2. Set up appointments with committee members to discuss the bill. Because of time pressure on
legislation, it is often easier for a constituent to get in to see him or her than for a non-constituent.

3. Be honest with the scheduling person on the amount of time you need for the appointment.

4. If a member is unavailable, ask to speak to his or her key aide.

5. Bring materials that can be left with the office to support or summarize our position.

6. When the meeting with the legislator occurs, highlight the bill quickly. List other supporters and discuss the issues that concern the opposition.

7. Stick to the message and try not to get off track.

8. If the legislator doesn’t agree, be gracious about the difference in views and ask if there are any amendments that would make the bill acceptable to him or her. If amendments are suggested, take them back to the author and other supporters of the bill. After a decision is made on the amendment, make sure you get back to the member who suggested the amendment. If the member doesn’t have suggestions for amendments, thank him or her for spending the time to listen to our views.

**Testifying on a bill**

First-person testimony is an effective way to help legislators understand the impact of proposed legislation.

Guidelines for testifying on a bill include:

1. Contact the authors of the bill and let them know you would like to testify. (If you are in opposition to the bill, make sure you let the authors’ offices know in plenty of time, so the legislators or their staffs may contact you before the hearing to discuss the bill.)

2. Coordinate testimony with others who are testifying on the bill, so statements before the committee will be brief and are not redundant.

3. Be prepared to answer questions on the bill from members, especially on those issues that are of concern to the opposition.

4. Finally, be sure to thank the committee chairperson and the committee members for the opportunity to express our views.

How can we best prepare to stay focused and achieve our desired outcomes? Here is a list to help ensure our success:

- Coordinate the visit with the college Chancellor’s office.
- Know the issues. Don’t mix messages. A uniform message is the easiest one for a legislator to remember. Keep major points to four or fewer per visit in priority. Be prepared to state which is most important.
- Send a confirmation letter in advance, outlining the participants and agenda of the visit.
- Hold a pre-visit briefing. Check out up-to-the-minute legislative activity on the part of the guest and make sure all visit participants understand the projected outcomes and objectives of the visit.
- Have a firm, but friendly exchange of views. Never present a legislator with an ultimatum. There is always a legislative “tomorrow.” The legislator who votes against our issue today may very well be on our side of tomorrow’s issue if we haven’t precluded his/her support activity by our actions.
- Do a post-visit debriefing. Determine what he or she said. What are the next steps?
- Send a letter or make a phone call expressing thanks for the visit and send whatever materials or answers to questions were promised.
- Provide the Chancellor’s Office with all feedback, even those commitments that seem relatively unimportant. This information is vital to the formulation of our strategy.
Conference Calls

Some campuses have used regularly-occurring “breakfast” conference calls to local legislators during the session. KCCD participates in a coordinated call with The McCallum Group, who provides advocacy services, including the other large colleges up and down the state such as San Diego Community College District; Los Angeles College District, Los Rios Community College District to name a few.

College Visits

It is important that a tour be structured so the atmosphere is the most conducive to good communication, and revolve around an agenda that will provide for discussion of items of importance to our local college. As a general rule, tours and meetings with individual legislators are more effective than those involving groups of legislators.

Before visits, these items should be considered:

- What will the tour accomplish for our legislative agenda? What is the desired outcome?
- Will the meeting explain or show how an issue affects the college?
- What will the legislator get out of the tour? What is his or her position going into the tour?

Types of visits:

- Four-on-one briefings (trustees, Foundation members, president, business/community leaders, and ONE legislator)
- Conference calls (several business people and ONE legislator)
- Class visits
- Facility tours
- Guest speaker
- Breakfast/luncheon visits; arrange transportation to and from the lunch
- Event attendance (speakers programs, Economic Development Committee event, student presentations, Foundation fundraisers on campus, etc.)
- Political Awareness Day

Planning a visit:

- Make sure the timing is right. Never plan a tour around election time.
- Coordinate your visit with the college Chancellor’s Office.
- Have an objective in mind and plan the tour accordingly. Develop key points and talking points for use during the day. Prepare a one-page fact sheet or Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the issues you intend to bring up.
- Keep in touch all year, not just when you want something. The College sends periodic updates to local legislators with recent news and accomplishments, so if you have something you’d like our legislators to know about, please forward the information to the Chancellor’s Office at any time.
- Make sure elected officials have ample opportunity to visit faculty and students. Choose students with success stories to tell and faculty with innovative approaches/programs that illustrate the point of the visit.
Get approval for press attendance from elected officials’ staff and invite media to cover visit.

Determine who will accompany the elected official.

Plan on following the tour with a visit in the Chancellor’s office for follow-on discussions.

Let elected officials see and hear and confront every issue about the college. Make them feel responsible for the welfare of our college and the community college system.

It is important to “read” our legislative delegation and tailor the visit to their preferences and our strengths. (For example, link up “veteran” senators who have been on campus many times with “new faces” from the Foundation. Get them in a room with Foundation leaders and have friendly discussions. If the legislators are new, give them a feel for the campus buildings -- get them to see some tangibles.)

**Post visit:**

- Write a note of thanks for taking the time from a busy schedule to spend time at the college. Express interest in continuing contact.
- Offer to send information about the college and college issues on a continuing basis.
- Remind elected officials that visiting the classroom and talking about government, politics, current issues, professions, etc. is a value-added activity for our classrooms and is nearly always covered by the press.

**Corresponding with Elected Officials**

The first thing to remember when contacting elected officials is that they are inundated with phone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails on a variety of issues. Contact from citizens (voters) in the community can have a great influence on the elected official’s decisions in many cases, but the nature of the correspondence should be short, reasoned, in plain language and speak to higher principles if possible. Hearing well-thought-out concerns from community members helps elected officials to establish useful resources on specific issues affecting those they represent, as well as allowing them to effectively represent their constituents. There are definite “do’s” and “don’ts” when corresponding with elected officials. Here are some of them:

**Do**

1. Put your view in writing, and whenever possible, send it to his or her office early in the session, then again at least one week before the measure will be heard.
2. Make your letter personal and use our own stationery. When using e-mail, send it from your own personal account when possible, instead of your “work” computer.
3. Address our representative properly. Use correct titles such as Assembly Member Fong or Senator Berryhill.
4. Write legibly if the letter is not typewritten.
5. Be brief and to the point, courteous and reasonable.
6. Include your address and sign your name legibly.
7. Be direct about identifying the nature of the issue you are writing about and how existing or proposed law affects the issue. Provide specific suggestions on what should be done to correct it.
8. Show the local effects and tangible positive results that will occur as a result of taking the action you recommend.

9. Give the elected official something positive to do or vote for—not just fear the consequences if he does not. Offer solutions that indicate you understand the scope of the issue.

10. Have each of the individual members of a group send letters or e-mails to their lawmaker. (Form letters are usually not effective.)

11. Include articles, editorials, etc., from local newspapers/magazines that reinforce your concerns.

12. Before writing, find out which committee a bill in question will go to. Write the committee chairperson and the individual committee members prior to the hearing on the bill.

13. Some legislators like to hear from constituents on a variety of topics; others prefer to hear only about a single issue. Get to know members’ preferences.

**Don’t**

1. Be a stranger to our legislators.

2. Rely on a phone call to our legislators’ offices.

3. Limit our letters and e-mails to one lawmaker.

4. Write to a member from another district just because we disagree with our representative.

5. Be rude, threatening or intimidating.

6. Use a form letter.

7. Go on for pages or beat around the bush.

8. Wait until the last minute before a bill is heard in committee or is on the floor before writing.


10. Begin on a righteous note of “As a citizen and taxpayer...”

11. Just complain.

12. Assume that our legislator will be voting on the measure soon. Only a few legislators vote on bills in the committee process. It is not until a bill reaches the floor that all members have an opportunity to vote.

13. Address the legislator in broad generalities.

14. Apologize for taking his or her time.

15. Be unwilling to compromise or offer solutions.
Part IV. Advocacy Action Plan

Sample Plan

A legislative action plan organizes the jobs to be done, the persons to do them, and the timeframe in which to do the tasks.

Plan Basics

✓ Analyze the prior year’s legislative program step-by-step both locally and at the state level. What worked? What didn’t work? What might be appropriate for the up-coming session, given the new set of circumstances in the legislature and on campus?

✓ Put the legislative session onto your yearly calendar, giving it top priority. Plan for the legislature. Commit our college to inform our district for local AND statewide participation. There is no substitute for everyone doing his or her part all over the state.

✓ Remind campus groups and individuals to update their voter registrations. Hold a voter registration drive on campus, utilizing the talents of students and faculty.

✓ Encourage everyone to vote using notices, posters, campus e-mail, the college’s home page, and the media.

✓ Invite our legislators to campus events: functions where there is no “hard sell” but plenty of information. Have them get to know us and appreciate us on everyday terms. When the time comes to ask for their assistance, they will already know who we are, what our issues are and be more likely to assist us.

✓ Encourage the use of college facilities for meetings and public forums. Our new Community Room and Lecture Center are perfect for these types of meetings. Decision-makers and local citizens who have the power to influence will appreciate our openness and develop a degree of ownership for “their” college, making them more protective of the college and more proactive in forwarding its causes.
Appendix #1

Elected Officials Serving Kern Community College District
Kevin McCarthy
Congressman, California 23rd District/
Majority Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives

Congressman Kevin McCarthy proudly serves California’s 23rd district and is currently the Majority Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives. Kevin was first elected to Congress in 2006 and is a native of Bakersfield and a fourth-generation Kern County resident. The grandson of a cattle rancher and the son of a firefighter, Kevin grew up a working-class family and is committed to preserving and promoting the American dream for hardworking Americans.

In Washington, Kevin fights every day for the constituents of California’s 23rd District and for the future of America with the simple promise: to have the courage to lead with the wisdom to listen.

At the age of 21, Kevin started his own small business, Kevin O’s Deli, from the ground up. As he worked hard, hired employees, and enjoyed success in his community, he soon learned—as all small business owners do—that the margins are thin, the hours are long, and that often Sacramento and Washington are obstacles, not aids, to success. The redundant and frivolous rules along with tedious paperwork and overburdening taxes compelled Kevin to enter public service.

He sold his business to put himself through college and graduate school at California State University, Bakersfield. While at school, he interned for Congressman Bill Thomas and later became a member of Congressman Thomas’s staff. In 2000, he won his first public election as Trustee to the Kern Community College District and then, in 2002, he was elected to represent the 32nd Assembly District in the California State Assembly. As a freshman legislator, he was selected unanimously by his Republican colleagues to serve as the Assembly Republican Leader, becoming the first freshman legislator and the first legislator from Kern County to assume this top post in the California Legislature. Kevin worked with his colleagues in the Assembly and Senate and with the Governor to reduce California’s budget deficit, overhaul the state workers’ compensation system, and enhance California’s business climate to create more opportunities for California workers and businesses.

After he was elected to Congress in 2006, Kevin quickly became Chief Deputy Whip and later served as Majority Whip. In 2014, he was elected Majority Leader of the House, where he now leads Congress in fighting for individual liberty, an efficient and effective government, free markets, and a vibrant civil society. Since Kevin was elected to Congress, he and his Republican colleagues have blocked the largest tax increase in American history, cut out-of-control government spending, passed bills to create jobs, promoted North American energy independence, and fought to free Americans from the meddlesome influence of Washington in health care and beyond.

Kevin will continue to fight for a strong, fiscally responsible, and free America where every person has the ability to achieve the American dream.

When Kevin is not in Washington working for the constituents of California’s 23rd District and for the future of America, he is home in Bakersfield with his wife Judy and two children Connor and Meghan.
Andreas Borgras  
Senator, California 8th District

Andreas Borgeas is a family man and educator, and as State Senator proudly represents California’s 8th Senate District. After earning his law degree from Georgetown University, Andreas served as a judicial law clerk for Federal Judge Oliver Wanger of the Eastern District in Fresno and then practiced international law at Luce Forward.

Andreas earned his PhD in international affairs from Panteion University and has worked overseas in numerous academic and professional capacities. He has been a professor for over a decade in the fields of international law and security affairs at the San Joaquin College of Law in Clovis and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey. Andreas began public service as a Fresno City Councilman in 2009, and then in 2013 as a member of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors before being elected in 2018 to the California State Senate.

While originally from Phoenix, Arizona, Andreas is a proud Fresnan. Andreas and his wife Anna, whom he met at a Starbucks in Fresno, are the proud parents of two young boys. The Borgeas family is also very involved in the local Greek and Armenian communities.

Andreas is Vice-Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and serves on the following committees: Governmental Organization; Insurance; Natural Resources and Water; and Joint Legislative Audit. The eighth Senate District encompasses all or portions of the following Central Valley, foothills, and mountain counties: Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Inyo, Madera, Mariposa, Mono, Sacramento, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Tuolumne.
Melissa Hurtado
Senator, California 14th District

State Senator Melissa Hurtado grew up in the Central Valley. As the daughter of immigrant parents and the first in her family to graduate from college, Melissa knows firsthand what it means to achieve the American dream. That is why she is serving in the State Senate – to advocate for access to healthcare, quality schools, good paying jobs and the opportunity for a better life.

After getting her degree at Sacramento State, Hurtado returned home to the Valley to serve her community and build a better life for Valley families. She served on the Sanger city council from 2016 until her election to the Senate in November 2018.

Before she served on the Council, Hurtado worked as a community organizer for public employees, where she helped lead the fight for good wages, healthcare coverage and retirement security.

On the Sanger City Council she helped create high-wage jobs, balanced the budget and built a reserve, all without raising taxes. In the Senate Melissa Hurtado will work across the aisle to improve the quality of life in the Valley and ensure Valley voices are heard at all levels of government.

Senator Hurtado is a proud resident of Sanger.
Shannon Grove
Senator, California 16th District

Shannon Grove was born and raised in Kern County, and is thankful for the sacrifices her single mother made to ensure she grew up in a loving environment.

After graduating from high school, Shannon served in the United States Army and was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany where she witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. This experience solidified her passionate patriotism and appreciation for the freedoms our country offers to all people.

Following her service to our nation, Shannon worked for two temporary staffing agencies. This led to her establishing her own staffing company, Continental Labor and Staffing Resources, with her sister-in-law in 1993. Grove currently serves as the CEO of the company which serves Bakersfield and Ridgecrest.

Prior to her election to the State Senate, from 2010 to 2016, Shannon served as the State Assemblywoman from the 34th District. While in the Assembly, she focused on supporting the disabled community with additional funding, fought for water funding, and increased job growth in her district.

Shannon currently lives in Kern County with her husband, Rick. They are the proud parents of five children and six grandchildren.

Elected in November 2018, Senator Shannon Grove is the first woman veteran elected to serve in the California Legislature, and is proud to serve as the Vice-Chair for the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. Grove will also serve as a member of the Senate Committee on Health.

The 16th Senate District encompasses large portions of Kern, Tulare, and San Bernardino Counties including Bakersfield, Barstow, California City, Exeter, Frazier Mountain, Joshua Tree, Mojave, Needles, Ridgecrest, Rosamond, Taft, Tehachapi, Twentynine Palms, Tulare, Visalia, Yucca Valley and portions of Kern River Valley.
Frank Bigelow  
Assemblyman, California 5th District  

The first thing you’ll notice about rancher and Assemblyman Frank Bigelow is his hat. To Frank’s way of thinking, he wears it as a symbol of respect for the sacrifice of those who settled our region and it serves as a commitment to continue to preserve our way of life.

With family roots that date to the late 1800’s, Frank’s great grandparents, Harmon and Leota Bigelow, settled in the O’Neals area of Madera County and established a cattle and sheep ranch along with a wagon and stage line that served the high country of the Sierra Nevada.

Later, Harmon strung two wires through the trees so that his wife could talk to her friend a half-mile away with a telephone. In 1908, after requests for service from other settlers and a subsequent request by the Forest Service to take over its phone lines, the Bigelow Telephone Company became Ponderosa Telephone Company.

An employee of the Ponderosa Telephone Company since 1973, Frank worked his way up through the ranks of the company, learning all facets of the business and currently serves as Vice President. Frank remains active in the operation of his family’s cattle ranch Bigelow Farms.

Elected by his neighbors to the Madera County Board of Supervisors, Frank has a proven record of thoughtful leadership. By working to build a budget surplus, Frank helped protect taxpayers from the tough economic times we are experiencing now. His votes to reduce government spending and economic reforms have forced government to live within its means. Frank fought to restore accountability to local agencies and voted to keep and attract jobs to our community.

One of the realities of our region is the threat of fire. Although an official firefighter on his 18th birthday, Frank’s commitment to fire safety was born on the ranch as a young boy. Four decades later, Frank continues to serve as a volunteer with his local fire department.

Frank has served on a variety of local organizations and committees, most notably his service on the Madera District Fair Board, the Madera Ag Boosters Board of Directors, California Shorthorn Breeder’s Association Board of Directors and the Madera County Cattleman’s Association Board of Directors. He served as a leader in the Spring Valley 4-H Club and is a strong supporter of the Future Farmers of America. In keeping with family tradition, he has continued to raise champion registered Shorthorn cattle and champion registered Columbia Sheep, and is a member of the Yosemite Lakes Community Church and Madera County Farm Bureau.

Frank was elected to serve the people of Assembly District 5 in 2012. The 5th Assembly District encompasses nine counties, including: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Mono, Placer and Tuolumne. He represents approximately 500,000 constituents and has three district offices located in Sutter Creek, Placerville and Madera. He currently sits on five policy committees in the State Assembly, and is the Vice Chair for the Committees on General Organizations and Appropriations.

Frank resides in O’Neals, with his wife of 41 years, Barbara.
Devon Mathis
Assemblyman, California 26th District

Devon Mathis has represented California’s 26th Assembly District since 2014. Before joining the Assembly, Devon served his country for 10 years as a Sergeant in the Army National Guard, including two tours in Iraq. During his second tour in Iraq, Devon was severely injured in a roadside bomb attack, for which he was awarded a Purple Heart. He holds a bachelor’s degree in public administration from Fresno State, and an associate degree in social sciences from Porterville College. Devon and his wife, Aubrey live in Visalia with their five children.

Assemblyman Mathis serves on the following committees:
- Agriculture, Vice-Chair
- Human Services, Vice-Chair
- Budget
- Budget Subcommittee 1 on Health and Human Services
- Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
- Governmental Organization
- Natural Resource
- Rules
- Veterans Affairs
- Joint Committee on Fairs Allocation and Classification
Rudy Salas
Assemblyman, California 32nd District

First elected in 2012, Assemblymember Rudy Salas represents the 32nd Assembly District, which is comprised of a part of the city of Bakersfield, the cities of Arvin, Avenal, Corcoran, Delano, Hanford, Lemoore, McFarland, Shafter, Wasco and the communities of Armona, Buttonwillow, Home Garden, Kettleman City, Lamont, Lost Hills, Stratford and Weedpatch.

Since he arrived in Sacramento, Assemblymember Salas has stood by his commitment to take a stand for Central Valley families and the interests of the region. In his first two terms he saved $4 million for Agriculture Education grants that serve Future Farmers of America (FFA) programs in our local schools; secured $15 million in workforce development programs for job training and restored vital funding for disability services for three Independent Living Centers (ILCs) including the Independent Living Center of Kern County. He also authored legislation to prevent the Kern Medical Center from closing its doors and spearheaded legislation to bring more primary care doctors to the Valley.

In the 2017 legislative session, Assemblymember Salas successfully authored legislation to expand the state’s vehicle retirement and replacement programs which previously excluded light-duty trucks. The change will reduce air pollution in the region by allowing Valley families to benefit from existing state-funded incentives to replace older, higher polluting vehicles with newer, more energy-efficient vehicles. Salas also fought to restore $15.4 million in career technical education (CTE) grants for Partnership Academies and CTE student organizations, equipping the students in those programs with the skills needed to be successful in today’s workforce. For the second consecutive year, Assemblymember Salas restored funding in the state budget for ILCs to improve their ability to operate and have long-lasting positive impacts on the thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families.

During his time in the Legislature, Salas has also championed legislation to improve water access, water quality, and water storage which is a major concern for the region’s families and businesses. In 2017, Assemblymember Salas secured $4 million in state funds for the Friant Kern Canal Project to bring stability and flexibility to California’s water system and provide additional water supplies to the region reducing dependence on groundwater wells. He also authored legislation to keep drinking water safe and affordable by expanding state financial assistance to water systems in larger, severely disadvantaged communities, such as the City of Arvin, which requires very costly improvement projects to return to compliance with drinking water standards. Salas has also been a long-time supporter of the Temperance Flat Reservoir Project. As a storage facility, this project will increase regional water supply reliability and operational flexibility once completed.

Similarly, while in office Salas has also been a tireless advocate for public safety funding. As such, he led the charge to re-open local community correctional facilities, partnered with local law enforcement to secure $5 million for Kings County public safety and emergency services, authored legislation to shut down illegal gambling cafes, protected veterans from employment discrimination, and improved pipeline safety in sensitive areas such as homes and schools.

Assemblymember Salas graduated from UCLA with degrees in History and Political Science. Prior to serving in the Assembly, his passion for public service and good governance led him to spend time working at the White House, the State Capitol as a legislative staffer, and ultimately back to the Central Valley where he was a District Director and in 2012 served as the first Latino City Council member in the City of Bakersfield.

Assemblymember Salas has been named “Legislator of the Year” by the California Police Chiefs Association, the American GI Forum of California, the California Issues Forum, the California Latino Capitol Association Foundation, the Foundation for Independent Living Centers, and the California Optometric Association.

He currently serves on the following Assembly Committees: Veterans Affairs; Water, Parks & Wildlife; Governmental Organization; Agriculture; and is Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. He also serves as Chair of the Select Committee on Early Childhood Development.
Jay Obernolte  
Assemblyman, California 33rd District

Jay Obernolte has represented California’s 33rd Assembly District since 2014. Before joining the Assembly, he served as the Mayor of Big Bear Lake for four years and on the Board of Directors for the Big Bear City Airport. Jay is an entrepreneur, founding his own video game company in 1988. He holds a bachelor’s degree in engineering and applied science from the California Institute of Technology, and a master’s degree in artificial intelligence from UCLA. Jay and his wife Heather live in Big Bear Lake with their two children, Hale and Troy.

Assemblyman Obernolte serves on the following committees:
Budget, Vice Chair
Communications and Conveyance, Vice Chair
Appropriations
Business and Professions
Judiciary
Privacy
Budget Subcommittee 1, Health and Human Services, Alternate
Budget Subcommittee 2, Education Finance, Alternate
Budget Subcommittee 3, Resources and Transportation, Alternate
Budget Subcommittee 4, State Administration, Alternate
Budget Subcommittee 5, Public Safety, Alternate
Budget Subcommittee 6, Budget Process Oversight and Program Evaluation
Vince Fong
Assemblyman, California 34th District

Vince Fong was elected to represent the 34th Assembly District, which encompasses most of Kern County including Bakersfield, Bear Valley Springs, China Lake, Frazier Park, Golden Hills, Inyokern, Lebec, Oildale, Ridgecrest, Taft, and Tehachapi in 2016.

Prior to his election Vince Fong began his career with Congressman Bill Thomas working on international trade policy. After the 2006 election he served as the District Director for House Majority Leader and Congressman Kevin McCarthy.

Since his election to the State Assembly, Assemblyman Fong led the fight against the gas tax increase and helped lead the conversation on energy independence in California. He is also working to develop policies that permit business expansion and enhance job opportunities in California. He is also working with small business owners to create a climate for job creation and business growth.

Assemblyman Fong serves as the Vice-Chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee. This committee primarily oversees all legislation related to transportation infrastructure, and the operation and licensing of vehicles, aircraft, and vessels. Additionally, Assemblyman Fong is a member of the Assembly Business and Professions Committee, the Budget Committee, the Appropriations Committee, and the Budget Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Transportation.
Tom Lackey
Assemblyman, California 36th District

Tom Lackey has represented California’s 36th Assembly District since 2014. Before joining the Assembly, Tom served on the Palmdale Elementary School District Board of Trustees and the Palmdale City Council. After high school, he served as a missionary for two years before he earned a bachelor’s degree in special education from Utah State University. Tom later worked as an elementary special education teacher before beginning a 28-year career with the California Highway Patrol.

During his time as a State Legislator, Tom has championed successful efforts to combat drug-impaired driving and provide increased state funding to support programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.

He lives in Palmdale with his two children, Justin and Jani.