

Community College Faculty: We're Worth It!

25th!

Organizing for grassroots support

A step-by-step guide

The key to our success rests in our ability to mobilize at the grassroots level. Here are some step-by-step suggestions on how you can create a groundswell of support to raise faculty salaries!

1. Identify partners.

We can't do this alone! Make a list of organizations or individuals who might be interested in working with you on this project. Then invite representatives to take part in a steering committee to plan activities and disseminate information. Don't forget to consider "key communicators" — people who are especially well-liked and influential in your communities.

2. Gather information.

Outline specifically how your wages are impacting the college. Gather facts such as salary comparison, hard-to-fill positions, and lost faculty. Focus specifically on how these facts affect learning opportunities for students and gather as many "personal stories" as possible.

3. Communicate internally.

It's important to communicate first with our own members so they understand the issue and can get involved early on. Schedule brief informational meetings with all staff on individual campuses, if possible.

4. Form a citizen advocacy network.

Communicate with other organizations that support community colleges—chambers of commerce, local League of Women Voters chapters, local service groups, and local businesses—and ask if they would be interested in forming a network to communicate with legislators.

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5. Make news.

Legislators are strongly influenced by newspaper articles, editorials, and letters to the editor. Use local information to develop your own key messages for reporters and newspaper editorial boards. Enclosed are some tips for working with the media.

6. Meet with legislators.

Work at establishing personal relationships with your legislators by setting up a system of regular meetings and contacts. Be sure to include your citizen advocacy network and other “key communicators” in your plan. Enclosed are some tips for successful lobbying and other information to help you communicate with legislators.

7. Keep the issue alive.

Stay in touch with the latest legislative developments by regularly visiting the ISEA Web site (www.isea.org) and/or making sure you receive any electronic newsletters or updates ISEA sends. Set up a system of sharing this information with educators, board members, and your key communicators.