

Community College Faculty: We're Worth It!

25th!

How to organize a community or legislative forum

Forums are a great way to mobilize staff and community support for raising faculty salaries. Imagine the impact you can have on legislators when a hundred or more people attend, filling every chair, and standing several deep around the room! Organizing a successful community legislative forum takes some advance work and planning. Here are some key points:

- **Create an awareness.**

You must make an ongoing effort to keep staff and patrons advised of the college funding and faculty salary situation — hold campus-wide informational meetings, include information in your newsletter and on your Web site, and communicate with the news media. A community or legislative forum should be an event where concerned citizens can share their concerns and get important information.

- **Involve the community.**

Use your citizens network and key communicators to play an active role in organizing and promoting the forum — including information in newsletters, placing notices in church bulletins, and talking to friends and neighbors.

- **Plan the agenda.**

Begin with a presentation about your local situation. To help get things started, brainstorm some possible questions and delegate key messages to a variety of citizens in advance. Also, make a special point to invite your legislators and be sure to follow up after the event — thank them for attending and take advantage of the opportunity to review key points raised.

- **Spread the word.**

Begin publicizing your event early. Make brief presentations at board meetings, staff meetings, service club meetings, and other functions. Provide information to local media and post flyers throughout your community.

- **Make it easy to attend.**

Consider providing free child care (enlist help from college clubs) and provide translators if you expect a large number of people for whom English isn't their first language. Also, be sure to provide some sort of refreshments, like coffee and cookies (perhaps a local business would be willing to donate items).