Reflections

Carol A. Bartell
California Lutheran University

I served as President of the California Council on the Education of Teachers from the years 1998-2000. However, election to office in this organization is generally a six-year commitment, because an individual will serve for two years as President Elect, two years as President, and two more as Past President. I was honored to serve with a highly talented and dedicated group of individuals who made up the Board of Directors during my years in a leadership role.

I have identified several themes that characterize this period. These are: (1) unity and inclusivity; (2) political activism; and (3) technology expansion. Each is discussed briefly below.

Unity and Inclusivity

During my years of leadership, we were known as the California Council on the Education of Teachers (CCET). The organization was moving toward the formal merger of three organizations: the California Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (CACTE), the State of California Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE), and the Independent California Colleges and Universities Council on the Education of

Carol A. Bartell is professor emerita and retired dean of the School of Education at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, California. She served as president of the California Council on the Education of Teachers from 1998 to 2000.

Teachers (ICCUCET) and attempting to serve as a broad umbrella for other organizations dedicated to teacher education. Although the three main organizations had been meeting concurrently, these organizations retained their own structures and linkages with national groups. This configuration often led to a fragmentation and lack of unified voice on behalf of teacher education in California.

Therefore, a merger of these organizations dedicated to teacher education was proposed and a committee was established to pursue plans to bring these organizations together. The merger process became a multi-year endeavor, calling for a new constitution and some new structural arrangements. Ultimately CCET, CACTE, and SCATE merged into the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) in 2000 and ICCUCET assumed the role of an associated organization with CCTE.

We were also beginning to recognize the continuum of teacher education that extends from pre-service teacher education through induction and into ongoing professional development. We recognized that there were other specialized groups and organizations dedicated to teacher education in this broadest sense. We wanted to find a way to include them in the conversations and in the new organizational structure. We wanted to hear their voices and perspectives at our biannual meetings.

Many questions arose as the merger committee struggled with how to bring about a smooth transition. What will the new structure look like? How would we configure a new board? Should we change the name of the organization? Would we continue with two separate publications and how would the scope of those be defined? How will we connect with the relevant national organizations? How can we expand the organization to include a broader range of teacher educators? How will we staff the work of this new merged organization? How will the budget be allocated? How will memberships in this new organization work?

Eventually, all of these issues were resolved and the formal merger occurred in 2000. However, since these discussions were only underway as I began my term as President, I was concerned about building a sense of community and inclusiveness during my years in a leadership role.

I believe the tone was set at my first board meeting as President, when I expressed the hope that we could work together on behalf of our profession. I reviewed where we were as an organization, and asked members of the board what they hoped to accomplish during the coming year. A review of the minutes from June 12, 1998 is instructive:

> Dave Wampler indicated that he looked forward to enjoying the semi-annual conferences. Marie Schrup called for a more effective inclusion of special educators within the teacher education community, Carol Barnes sought a more unified approach to public policy in teacher edu-

cation. Jon Synder hoped to see linkages with other education groups. Judith Sandholtz desired a strengthening of teacher education within the University of California system. Pat Gallagher called for greater participation by field-based people in CCET. Andrea Maxie wanted to advance the dignity and prestige of teaching. Judy Mantle advocated for more practitioner involvement as well as other voices in education. Vicki LoBoskey said that we should ask questions on behalf of the kids, and expect to find multiple right answers. Reyes Quezada planed to address many of these goals through continued publication of *CCNews*. Alan Jones hoped that CCET can continue to build on its policy efforts and noted that *Teacher Education Quarterly* was celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. David Georgi expected to see further involvement of diverse constituents in CCET.

All of these issues became central to our five-year plan as we moved ahead over the next several years to build a stronger, more inclusive and unified organization. The five-year plan included the following major goals:

Goal 1. Create a community of teacher educators.
Goal 2. Inform the community of teacher educators of timely issues.
Goal 3. Influence policy on teacher education.
Goal 4. Foster scholarship in teacher education.
Goal 5. Recognize excellence in teacher education.

These goals were adopted by the new, merged organization. To represent the change in structure, our name was changed from CCET to CCTE, keeping the affectionate "Cal Council" nickname intact. The board was configured to include new Vice-President positions to serve as liaisons to the affiliated national organizations.

As was noted earlier, one of the key decisions to be made with the impending merger was related to the journals that now fell under the auspices of the new organization. It was decided to retain both journals, but to make a distinction between them. *Teacher Education Quarterly* would be focused on research that improved practice in teacher education. *Issues in Teacher Education* would be focused on broader policy issues. Both would be peer reviewed. We wanted to produce two high quality journals that would gain a national reputation.

We also created a new category of membership entitled "Associated Organizations." This referred to any organization that shared the goals of CCTE and wanted to be a part of the broader organization and would send representatives to the biannual meetings. They were also invited to hold concurrent meetings with CCTE. In addition to ICCUCET, some of the first members to gain this status were Computer Using Educators (CUE) and the California Association of Professors of Special Education (CASPSE).

Political Activism

It was time for Cal Council to step up and become involved in the policy arena since there were many changes underway that would impact our field. In 1997, the Delegate Assembly of CCET boldly enacted the first Policy Framework that paved the way for the organization to take positions on specific educational issues crucial to the preparation of teachers. The ensuing years proved to be a time of lively debate over some key issues that impact teacher education even today.

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) had established an advisory panel on Teacher Education, Induction, and Certification for the 21st Century, as directed by Senate Bill 1422. The proposed changes were far reaching, mandating the establishment of a learning-to-teach continuum that extended from preservice through induction and on-going professional development.

The first official version of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession was formally adopted in 1997. The standards were originally intended to guide the induction period that was not yet a part of the full credential structure. These standards laid out a vision of teaching to be used by teachers to:

- prompt reflection about student learning and teaching practice;
- formulate professional goals to improve teaching practice; and
- guide, monitor and assess the progress of a teacher's practice toward professional goals and professionally accepted benchmarks. (Commission on Teacher Credentialing and Department of Education, 1997, p, 1).

While not yet realizing the full impact these standards would have on the continuum of teacher education in California, much debate raged within the organization over both the purpose and the content of these standards. Key areas of debate included:

- What role should these standards play in pre-service teacher education?
- Would these standards narrow a vision of teaching and of teacher education?
- Did these standards represent the diversity of the student population in California?
- How might these standards impact teacher assessment?

After further debate, the Delegate Assembly of CCET supported the overall recommendations of the SB 1422 Advisory Panel with some caveats as follows:

- Support for expansion and funding of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment System (BTSA) as long as such expansion consistently includes a collaborative role for both school practitioners and university-based teacher educators.

- Support for multiples routes into the teaching profession which hold all candidates, including district interns and pre-interns (emergency permit teachers) responsible for meeting one set of standards for receiving a teaching credential through an accredited program, those standards being aligned with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

- Support for candidate assessment which is valid, reliable, unbiased, cost effective, and based on research on effective teaching and best professional practice.

- Support for programs of teacher preparation which would attract qualified candidates, especially those from under-represented groups, as early as their undergraduate years when possible, and which would continue the support and development of these candidates throughout their preparation and their teaching careers.

- Oppose attempts of over-regulation of professional practice which would impose on methodology or philosophy on the preparation and ongoing professional development of teachers, to the exclusion of other sound, research-based approaches. (CCET, March 26, 1998)

Another key policy issue facing teaching education emerged from a ballot initiative. Despite strong opposition to Proposition 227 by most educational groups, including our organization, the ballot measure passed in 1998, changing the way that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students would be taught in California. Our organization struggled with some important decisions regarding bilingual education programs and preparation of teachers to address the needs of English language learners. The debate rages on today as California continues to serve students that are increasingly more linguistically and cultural diverse.

Technology Expansion

During this period, there was a rapidly expanding role of technology in teacher education. Campuses were in the process of strengthening and expanding their technological capabilities, training faculty and students, and seeking ways to better prepare teachers to use the technology in their own classrooms. Many of our member institutions were recipients of federal grants under the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) Program. These grants supported innovative work on such things as:

- Online teacher preparation.
- Faculty development.
- Course restructuring.
- Video case studies.
- Electronic portfolios.
- Mentoring.
- Embedded assessments.

Because of the high interest among our members, the theme of the Fall 2000 conference was entitled: "New Teacher Technology Preparation for the New Millennium." The organization became a vehicle for sharing these and other innovative practices in teacher education and teacher mentoring.

Cal Council as an organization was also moving more fully into the technological age. Communication with members became faster and easier with the establishment of listserv. More communication between board members and members was occurring via e-mail. The Board authorized the President to seek concurrence from Board members via e-mail on policy matters that required immediate action when it was deemed that our voice was not heard in a timely way on state policy matters.

An organizational website went live for the first time on May 1, 1999. The initial website included materials from each of the participating organizations as well as links to the affiliated national organizations.

Benefits of Belonging to CCTE

My own introduction to Cal Council came back in 1988, when, as a faculty member at the University of the Pacific, and new to California, I was encouraged to attend a meeting by Dean Fay Haisley. My field was actually Educational Leadership and Policy, but I recognized that teacher education issues were at the heart of both state and national policymaking. I was appointed as an institutional delegate and began attending regularly. In the ensuring years, I was pleased to see the organization continue to grow and thrive.

I would encourage all teacher educators to play an active role in CCTE, an organization that continues to play an important role in teacher education in California. I believe that Cal Council serves individuals and its member institutions in the following ways:

Helping individuals realize their personal and professional goals. We learn from one another as we come together to share ideas, concerns, and professional practices. Conference presentations and publications in one of the two journals help individuals move forward in their own careers.

Gaining access to mentors and mentoring. New scholars can present their work in a non-threatening environment. New teacher educators can find individuals in the organization willing to mentor and provide assistance. Although this occurred on an informal basis during my leadership years, I note that mentoring of new faculty is becoming more formalized.

Interacting with key players. The organization has always drawn speakers and presenters from the strong talent pool in California and nationwide. The structure of the meetings allows for discussions and interactions with these individuals. Over the years, we have heard from prominent scholars and key policy makers in teacher education.

Taking part in broader discussions related to improving the profession. The structure of the biannual meetings allows for extensive and meaningful dialogue and discussion. We learn from one another as we share research and best practice.

Networking and identifying persons with like interests. There is often no one on your own campus that shares your academic or research interests. The organization gives individuals an opportunity to meet and connect with others who share similar interests. Whether it be technology, the arts, service learning, case studies, special education, English-language learning, or some other teacher-education related topic, there are likely to be others in the organization that share these interests. Many collegial and scholarly partnerships have been formed through connections made at Cal Council.

Playing an advocacy role. Cal Council has only increased its role and visibility in the policy arena. Key policymakers and advocates are invited to attend and provide updates, receive comments, and interact with members. The meetings allow multiple voices to be heard, considered, and acted upon. Policy positions are often taken and conveyed to the appropriate legislator, committee, or organization. The CTC staff members attend the biannual meetings, provide regular updates, and work in collaboration with the organization.

Having a broader impact. The organization now includes members representing teacher educators from across the continuum of teacher education. The discussions have broadened to include issues related to all phases of teacher preparation

and practice. We can have more of an impact when we work together.

A way to give back to the profession. Finally, our organization represents a way to make a contribution to your profession. As educators share their research, their knowledge, and their experience, we all become stronger as professional educators.

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