

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR CLASSIFIED STAFF
A BRIEF HISTORY
BY: ELAINE HORD**



Staff development at the College of the Sequoias was initiated prior to AB 1725, which actually designated funds to finance staff development activities. If I am correct in my recollection of events, Dr. Lincoln Hall, in conjunction with a few other staff members, set up the first Office-In-Service Committee in 1986. Agenda topics for the September 26, 1986 meeting were goals (1 year, 2 year, long range); committees (goals, networking, resources, handbook, and program); and a status report of a survey. Sound familiar? Programs offered during the 1986-87 academic year included “Guest Relations”, “Organizational Skills”, “Interpersonal Relationships”, and “Dressing Professionally on a Budget.” In October of 1987, the *Class Acts Committee*, a sub-committee of the staff development committee, sponsored the Second Annual Crafts-n-Tummy-Yummies, which is now called the Holiday Craft Fair.

Since that time, the staff development committee has undergone two name changes. First, we became the Classified In-Service Task Force (*CITF*), and then after holding a contest, our committee name was changed to Professional Association of Classified Employees (*PACE*). Though our committee name has changed, the goals set forth by AB 1725 have not. As stated in the 1989-90 projected plan for Classified Staff Development, education and training remain the primary goals. “Besides the specific job-related, motivational, and morale building activities sponsored by CITF, the committee is proposing that the College expand its program for classified staff development by establishing a career development program. A career development program would enable employees to educate themselves in their current job field and to prepare themselves for advancement to other positions or fields.”

Through the years, the staff development committee has strived to offer a variety of programs with interesting and even inspiring guest speakers. The cost of these speakers has often been shared by the Faculty Enrichment Committee (FEC) and Administration. “Living on the Winning Edge” with former NFL Quarterback Tom Flick, was presented in September 1990. One of our most successful events was our Staff Development Day at the Farm in August, 1995. Guest speaker, Dr. Jim Polidora, set the tone of the event for “Celebrating Wellness.” In addition to a continental breakfast and delicious lunch served by the COS Farm Staff, breakout sessions were offered on a variety of topics, such as “Three Quick Ways to Improve Communication Skills” and a session on gentle exercises conducted by Dr. Polidora. An awards ceremony was part of the lunch program. It was an ambitious project which proved to be very enjoyable and successful.

While we recognize that excellence requires a commitment to constantly improving the skills and developing the potential of each classified staff member (excerpts from Mission Statement), we have also maintained that humor and fun plays a positive role in a staff development program. In pursuit of that goal, *PACE* has organized the Holiday Craft Fair, the highly competitive and fun Holiday Door Contest (the theme changes between Halloween and Christmas), all-staff breakfasts and lunches, the awards ceremony to honor years of service, after hours social events, the Chili Cook-Off, and the Pumpkin Carving Contest.

Classified staff members who have chaired this committee over the years include Shirley Rankin, Joy Edwards, Bob McMahan, Floyd Hord, Donna Orozco, Jana Irvine, Elaine Hord, Tammy Stone Hollabaugh, and currently, Shelli Giles. If you are fairly new to COS, some of these people will not be familiar to you as they are no longer at COS. The *PACE* Committee enjoys a very good relationship with the administrative staff at the College; the President and Vice Presidents have been supportive of our efforts to offer both professional and personal growth opportunities for the COS classified staff. These two groups meet annually to review what is being planned for the coming year as well as to evaluate what was particularly successful the previous year. This gives the Administrators an opportunity to let *PACE* know what kind of training they would like to see offered. For example, at the request of administration, *PACE* offered a Telephone Etiquette Workshop and student employees were also invited to attend.