Thirty-seven Western legislators convened in Colorado Springs in November for the 15th Western Legislative Academy. These legislators, all in their first four years of service, were selected by their state’s leadership to participate in three and a half days of extensive skill-building from national experts. Legislators were kept very busy in a course of training that included legislative institutions, communications, time management, leadership styles and negotiations.

Sessions provided great opportunities to network with peers and learn from trainers and each other. David Landis engaged legislators in simulated negotiations to help them become better deal makers and find opportunities for joint gain. Pam Vaccaro helped illustrate the benefits of focusing attention and prioritizing tasks accurately, while Kevin Stacey drilled down into the mechanics of everyday thought processes that can make or break tense situations. Lawmakers visited the U.S. Air Force Academy, where they learned team building skills and personality assessments from retired Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Miller, who employed the same training exercises used for U.S. Air Force officers and cadets. The legislative class also had the opportunity to learn George Washington’s time-tested lessons in leadership from historical interpreter Dean Malissa.

The Western Legislative Academy is a program of the Council of State Governments West. Since the inaugural Academy in 2000, 563 Western legislators have graduated from the program, with nearly 300 still serving in Western legislatures and numerous others serving in other branches of government.

The 2015 Western Legislative Academy will take place November 30th–December 3rd. Admission is competitive and limited to legislators in their first four years of service. Applications are due April 24th. For more information, visit www.csgwest.org or call (916) 553-4423.

2014 WLA CLASS MEMBERS

» Representative Lynn Gattis, AK
» Representative Lora Reinbold, AK
» Representative Dan Saddler, AK
» Senator Andrea Dalessandro, AZ
» Senator Carlyle Begay, AZ
» Assemblymember Sebastian Ridley-Thomas, CA
» Representative Joann Ginal, CO
» Representative Tracy Kraft-Tharp, CO
» Representative Brittany Pettersen, CO
» Representative Mark Hashem, HI
» Representative Lauren Cheape Matsumoto, HI
» Representative Richard Onishi, HI
» Representative Gregg Takayama, HI
» Representative Wendy Hornaman, ID
» Representative Kelley Packer, ID
» Senator Jim Rice, ID
» Senator Dan Schmidt, ID
» Representative Kimberly Dudik, MT
» Representative Ryan Lynch, MT
» Senator Roger Webb, MT
» Senator Patricia Spearman, NV
» Assemblyman Michael Sprinkle, NV
» Assemblywoman Heidi Ann Swank, NV
» Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, NV
» Senator Clemente Sanchez, NM
» Senator William Soules, NM
» Senator Pat Woods, NM
» Senator Herman Baertschiger, Jr., OR
» Representative Jessica Vega Pederson, OR
» Representative Jennifer Williamson, OR
» Representative Stewart Barlow, UT
» Representative Val Peterson, UT
» Representative Angela Romero, UT
» Representative John Knotwell, UT
» Representative Jake Fey, WA
» Representative Donald Burkhart, Jr., WY
» Representative David Northrup, WY
2014 WLA Class President Kelley Packer is a true Idahoan, having lived there for almost her entire life. Though she was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, her family returned to Pocatello, Idaho when she was two weeks old and besides going away to college, she has resided in Idaho ever since.

She has been married for 23 years and has four children and one grandchild. When asked what motivated her to become involved in politics, she said that she is driven by the prospect of improving the futures of her children; she wants them to have opportunities available to them that are at least as good as what she had, if not better. She also says she became engaged in politics because she saw inefficiencies in the city, so she got elected to city council to bring her leadership skills to that arena. She spent 5 years in the city council, and then got involved in state politics in 2010, and was open to moving into higher office. That opportunity came sooner than expected, as she was encouraged to run for the House of Representatives in 2012, and won her seat.

Now she is starting her second term, and she loves it! She has had wonderful experiences (not the least of which, she says, was the WLA) and wants to continue to serve for as long as the voters continue to elect her and as long as she is effective. In addition to working in the legislature, she has a full-time job as a manager of a busy medical facility. Her busy schedule affords her little free time, though she loves to read when she does have the time. One thing that you may not know about Representative Packer is that she was a professional singer for 14 years, fronting a band called “Roughstock” which toured all over Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and Nevada, and she entranced us all with her beautiful voice during the barbecue and sing-along at the culmination of the WLA.

**PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE WESTERN LEGISLATIVE ACADEMY**

- Wyoming Senator Ogden Driskill (2012)
- Nevada Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson (2011)
- New Mexico Senator John Sapien (2009)
- New Mexico Representative Thomas Garcia (2007)
- Nevada Assemblywoman Heidi Gansert (2005)
- New Mexico Representative Jose Campos (2004)
- Alaska Senator Lesil McGuire (2001)
- Nevada Senator Barbara Cegavske (2000)

**APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED**

**2015 WESTERN LEGISLATIVE ACADEMY**

November 30 – December 3, 2015 | Colorado Springs

» Apply online at www.csgwest.org/WLA

» Applications due April 24, 2015
Communications expert Bill Graham lent his unique brand of Communications training to lawmakers from the 13 Western states, promoting ideas such as “Communication is a one-way street” “Likeability is the final-decision maker”, and “Leadership is about helping others win.”

He brought these ideas home by having participants work on how their facial expressions and tone of voice are perceived, and helped lawmakers hone and increase their likeability and congeniality through a number of clever exercises. He also helped participants understand and excel at the art of storytelling, another key element to being well-received and liked by a multitude of audiences.

Bill draws on over a decade of experience training writers, analyzing audiences and delivering story notes for over 7000 hours of television, as Director of Creative Affairs for Procter & Gamble Productions, supervising the P&G soap operas Guiding Light, As the World Turns, and Another World. Writers that he discovered and developed won Best Writing Emmy’s five of the last seven years he was at P&G. Prior to his TV work, he was the Producing Director at Olney Theatre in Olney, MD.

For the past 7 years, Bill has specialized in helping leaders, legislators, executives, and sales teams become more engaging and successful communicators. He also works with organizations to develop and improve leaders, managers, marketing strategies, and corporate culture.

He is on the faculties of Seton Hall University’s Communications Department, New York University’s School of Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Institute for Organization Management.

Trainer Pam Vaccaro brought her time management expertise to the 15th Western Legislative Academy, and had some unconventional wisdom to share with participants. She pointed out the inefficiency of multi-tasking in some circumstances, and taught our legislators that there is no substitute for undivided and focused attention to a task or situation. She amazed the participants with exercises that demonstrated the importance of focusing attention on the individuals we meet, and taught them how to ask the right questions that will help them to remember and focus on those interactions.

She also helped participants attain clarity about those tasks which are simply “urgent” but not “important,” and shed some light on how to distinguish the two and choose wisely in which tasks deserve our limited time and attention. She also advised legislators to rethink living under the tyranny of a “To-Do” list, and helped the group conceive better ways of managing our most precious resource of time. Legislators appreciated the relevance of this training to their daily lives and found many useful resources to take away from this session.

Pam is known for challenging individuals and companies to rethink traditional time management, as well as providing insights on how to adjust to the revolutionary effects technology has had on managing time and staying organized. Her ideas have been featured in publications as diverse as Medical Economics and Good Housekeeping. She holds a Masters’ degree in Training and Development, and has received the Certified Speaking Professional recognition from the National Speakers Association, one of only 192 women to hold this honor in the international speaking community.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE WLA FACULTY

» Bill Graham, President, Graham Corporate Communications  
» Alaska Representative Craig Johnson, CSG West Chair 2014  
» Thad Kousser, Professor, UC California, San Diego  
» David Landis, Consensus & Negotiations Trainer, Lincoln, NE  
» Dean Malissa, Historical Portrayer of George Washington  
» Daniel Miller, President, New Heights Learning  
» Scott Raecker, Chairman/CEO, Josephson Institute of Ethics  
» Kevin Stacey, President, TrainRight, Inc.  
» Pam Vaccaro, President, Designs on Time
A Special **THANK YOU** to Our WLA 2014 Sponsors

Special appreciation goes to the El Pomar Foundation and Penrose House which play a large role in the success of the CSG West Western Legislative Academy. The Foundation’s ongoing investment in the WLA helps newer Western legislators acquire the skills and networks to be more effective policy makers. The campus environment created by the Penrose House provides a place where participants can step away from their busy lives and immerse themselves in intensive skill building classes. El Pomar fellows serve as independent evaluators of the WLA and are an unbiased resource for curriculum evaluation.

American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity • Bayer Healthcare
Genentech • GlaxoSmithKline • Johnson & Johnson • Pfizer
RAI Services Company • US Bank

Altria • Apollo Group Inc. • Celgene Corporation • PhRMA • Walgreens