Thanks to vigorous recruitment and bi-partisan support from legislative leaders and Western Legislative Academy (WLA) alumni, a record number of state legislators applied to the Academy in 2003. The WLA is the premier professional development program for lawmakers from 13 Western states and is offered by the Council of State Governments-WEST. The Academy took place October 14-17 at the El Pomar Foundation’s retreat center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Eighty state lawmakers applied for 40 slots at the Academy. Leaders and alumni wrote more than 150 letters of recommendation on behalf of this year’s applicants.

Qualifications for admission to the Academy include commitment to public service, to the institution of the legislature and to personal legislative effectiveness. Preference is given to lawmakers in their first four years of service. Participation in the Academy is limited to legislators from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Since its inception four years ago, 150 legislative alumni have successfully completed the annual training that relies on an outstanding faculty of academics, corporate trainers, legislative leaders, military and communications experts. These WLA teachers deliver lessons in leadership, time management, team building, media relations, negotiations, ethics and more. The twin goals of the Academy are:

1. Helping Legislators Become More Effective
2. Building Stronger State Legislative Institutions.

This year’s legislative “students” reflected the West in all its diversity. The class included members of both parties, business men and women, public sector employees, labor union affiliates and lawmakers from both urban and rural districts. Legislators also boasted a wide variety of occupations from horse breeding to tamale making.

Nevada Assembly Member Kelvin Atkinson was elected president of the class. Atkinson represents North Las Vegas and is in his first term in the legislature.

Hawaii Senator Brian Taniguchi emceed the three and half days of intensive training with humor and diplomacy. He is the immediate past chair of CSG-WEST. Joining Taniguchi was Idaho Senator Bart Davis who now chairs the organization. The veteran lawmakers agreed that reaching across state and party lines is one of the most important benefits of the Western Legislative Academy.

For information about how to apply to the 2004 Academy, call CSG-WEST at 916-553-4423 or 505-424-3322.
A Sense of the Last, Best Place

CSG-WEST’s Executive Director Kent Briggs opened the WLA with the message that the West is a unique region that binds political leaders together regardless of party affiliation. He said the amount of federal land in the West is one of its defining characteristics in contrast to other regions. At the same time, the West is the most urban area in the nation with several of the fastest growing population centers. But what makes the American West a truly remarkable place is its diversity, its majesty and its mythology.

This recognition of the power of place in American political and cultural life, said Briggs, is what sets the Council of State Governments apart as an organization that works for states. Each of the four CSG regions—East, South, Midwest and West—operates in a way that is uniquely responsive to the concerns of its own elected state officials. In the West, CSG serves legislatures exclusively, while other regions may include members of the executive branch. CSG-WEST works closely with other Western regional groups such as governors, attorneys general, cities and counties as well as with regional water, energy, economic development and higher education organizations to strengthen the voice of the West.

(left to right) CSG-WEST officers Sen. Brian Taniguchi (HI) and Sen. Bart Davis (ID) emceed the WLA.

El Pomar Legal Counsel Kyle Hybl (left) and Chairman William J. Hybl (right) welcomed Academy members to the Penrose House in Colorado Springs. As the largest private foundation in the Rocky Mountain West, the El Pomar Foundation is an invaluable supporter of the Academy, generously contributing classroom space, a grant and meeting management services.

Council of State Governments - WEST

Chair: Bart M. Davis Idaho Senate Majority Leader
Chair-Elect: Kate Brown Oregon Senate Democratic Leader
Vice Chair: Ron Teck Colorado Senator
Past Chair: Brian T. Taniguchi Hawaii Senator

CSG-WEST staff Mary Lou Cooper, Cheryl Lee Duvauchelle, Rich Lindsey and Eric Cole produced this newsletter.
Building Stronger Western Legislatures

50 Years of Changes

Political scientists from Boise State University and from Brigham Young University gave the Class of 2003 an overview of how and why their institutions have changed in the last 50 years. Boise State Professor Gary Moncrief explained that two of the biggest change agents are rapid population growth and term limits. Population growth has led to increased workloads, longer sessions and more populous districts. Term limits have altered leadership patterns, disrupted continuity and given more power to special interest groups and the bureaucracy.

Brigham Young University Dean David Magleby told lawmakers that the increased use of the referendum and initiative in the West threatens the institution of the legislature. They essentially replace the representative democracy of legislatures with the direct democracy of voters. The only check to government by initiative, he said, is the court system. According to Magleby, initiatives enhance the power of special interest groups and political consultants. Because of the nature of the deliberative process of legislatures, they add value to issues in a way that initiatives cannot. Initiatives are more prevalent in Western states than in any other region.

Lessons from Leaders

According to former Arizona House Minority Leader Art Hamilton, true legislative leaders understand the importance of civility. They know there are no permanent enemies, just permanent problems. Good leaders, he said, do the public’s business. And they are able to stand in their opponents shoes to gain insights.

Democrat Hamilton got no argument from Republican Lane Beattie, former Utah Senate president. The two veteran leaders shared the do’s and don’ts of effective legislators in a session at the Academy moderated by Alan Rosenthal, public policy professor at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

Good leaders care about people, forget about power and criticize issues and not people, according to Beattie. They know when to speak and when not to speak. It’s his view that leadership means solving problems, not creating them. Character is the foundation of good leadership, Beattie concluded.
Managing Time!

We can’t manage our time. We can only manage our attention.” That’s according to Pam Vaccaro, president of the St. Louis-based Designs on Time. She told Academy participants that the overwhelming demands that legislators face each day frequently create time management problems because of the inability to focus attention. When you focus on one thing at a time, clearing your mind of all other distractions, then you spend less time accomplishing objectives.

So what are a few secrets of virtuous lawmakers?

1. **Compliance isn’t ethics** (legally driven versus principle driven);
2. **There are no ethical systems that always work** (sometimes principles are at odds with each other—loyalty versus honesty)
3. **Watch out for value adjustors** (when someone you admire acts in an unprincipled way, you may rationalize the behavior); and finally

Vaccaro offered WLA’ers suggestions for both quick fixes and for real change to ensure that they focus on what’s really important, as opposed to just what’s urgent. She gave tips on how to organize desks and file and track paper, techniques for managing voice mail as well as diplomatic strategies for saying “no” to requests. Vaccaro maintains that 20 percent of what you do gets 80 percent of the results you desire, so it’s important to stay in the 20 percent area most of the time. The worst use of your time, said Vaccaro, is to spend all your attention on activities that are urgent, but not important.

**Lies we tell ourselves & others**

- Everybody does it.
- It’s for a good cause.
- They started it.
- I have no choice.
- Nobody is hurt.
- Don’t sweat the small stuff.
- It’s legal!
- Pick your battles.
- I deserve this and nobody’s perfect.
- This is the last time.

---

**4. Ethics isn’t easy!** (so anticipate dilemmas in advance)

On the flip side of the coin, Marshall warned lawmakers about the top ten rationalizations for unethical behavior:

---

**7 Habits of Highly Effective People**

Using highly interactive exercises, senior FranklinCovey trainer Leigh Stevens introduced WLA’ers to the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. At the root of effective results, she said, are effective relationships. And trust is the key to building effective relationships. Stevens reminded lawmakers that in the words of Henry Ford, “You can’t build a reputation on what you’re going to do.” Your effectiveness depends on your competence and on your character.

As she focused on a few critical habits, Stevens told lawmakers that effective people are proactive, begin with the end in mind and put first things first. And perhaps most important, highly effective people take time to “sharpen the saw.” That is, they take time out to tend to their own physical, mental, spiritual and social needs.
Become More Effective

Why Isn’t Everyone More Like Me?

Each year legislative “students” at the WLA adjourn to the U.S. Air Force Academy where they work on two objectives—discovering their personal behavior styles and figuring out how to work effectively with people whose styles are different.

Lawmakers first assessed themselves using a standard profiling questionnaire. Although most people demonstrate a variety of personality behaviors, they generally fall into four categories—dominance, influence, conscientiousness and steadiness.

WLA’ers then moved into a series of activity-based exercises. The hands-on exercises practically illustrated that effective leaders must work with individuals who are not like them, must build teams, must communicate clearly, must create an environment to get the job done and must work together even in the midst of major distractions.

What Lawmakers Need to Know about Negotiations

Fortune 500 negotiations trainer James F. Hennig conducted an in-depth session on negotiations. He said that a successful negotiator must listen, ask the right questions, build rapport, establish trust and be willing to take risks.

Hennig suggested that one of the biggest mistakes people make when negotiating is to underestimate their own power. Other common errors are jumping to conclusions, not bringing alternatives to the table and offering to split the difference. He said that good negotiators always begin by having a best alternative to a negotiated agreement in mind. And they never take the process personally.
Class of 2003
Legislative “Students”
Academy Faculty

Danny Miller, USAF and New Heights Training

Lisa Robinson
New Heights Training

Leigh Stevens
FranklinCovey Company

Alan Rosenthal
Eagleton Institute, Rutgers University

Art Hamilton, Former Arizona House Minority Leader

Lane Beattie
Former Utah Senate President

Arch Lustberg
Lustberg Communications

James Humes (aka Winston Churchill)
Colorado State University
A

n afternoon spent with communications trainer Arch Lustberg is like being plugged into an electrical outlet. With equal parts humor and tough love, Lustberg took lawmakers at the Academy through an intensive session of on-camera media interviews, speech making and invaluable lessons in political communications.

The goal is to be liked, says the former Catholic University speech and drama coach. Likeability happens when you raise your eyebrows, open your face and smile. Use positive statements that project the same warm image you would if speaking to a neighbor. Use body language and gestures to project a caring attitude. And use your voice in a quiet, conversational way.

Lustberg also pointed out the communications pitfalls that often trip lawmakers. Intellectual dysentery is high on his list of “thou shall nots.” Lawmakers are speechmakers, when they should be storytellers, he said. They mouth buzz words, ramble and use government jargon when they should be simple and brief and clear.

Lustberg advised legislators to “interface, replicate and exacerbate only in the privacy of your own home.”

Michele Ames of the Rocky Mountain News and Adam Schrager of KUSA-TV in Denver led a lively session on how legislators can work more effectively with the media. Ames advised lawmakers not to take aggressive questioning as negative, to expect the media to dig for facts and to remember to speak like a “common” person.

Schrager said that the single most important advice he could offer legislators is to develop good relationships with the media. He encouraged lawmakers to take their time when responding to questions and to understand that deadlines are real. Schrager told legislators they should talk to the media as if they were talking to a neighbor or friend. Keep messages simple and brief, he concluded.
Communication Skills

The Language of Leadership

Churchill scholar, presidential speech writer and actor James Humes delivered lessons in leadership to the WLA Class of 2003 at closing night graduation ceremonies. In the character and costume of Sir Winston Churchill, Humes shared the secrets of the 20th century's greatest orator.

He advised lawmakers to take control of their audiences by pausing and locking eyes before uttering a word. Begin with a bang, he admonished, and relegate introductions of dignitaries to the middle of your speech. Know your bottom line message and polish it to perfection in advance. Surprise your audience by being brief and memorable. Don’t make speeches. Tell stories. Paint pictures with your words such as Churchill’s never to be forgotten phrase—“an iron curtain has descended across the continent.” And finally, Humes told lawmakers to end speeches as strongly as they begin, with a powerful quote or anecdote.

James C. Humes is the Ryals professor of language and leadership at Colorado State University at Pueblo. His most recent book is “Speak Like Churchill, Stand Like Lincoln.”

WLA Elects Class President

Newly elected WLA Class of 2003 president Nevada Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson (second from left) is surrounded by well-wishers. From left to right are Rep. Elaine Harvey (WY), Atkinson, Rep. Linda Flores (OR) and Rep. Mike Lange (MT).
WLA Class of 2003

Back row (left to right) Raymond Rose (CO Rep.), William Horne (NV Asmb.), Dale Brandland (WA Sen.), Mike Schaufler (OR Rep.)


Not Pictured: Marcus Conklin (NV Asmb.), Irvin Harrison (NM Rep.), Phil Lopes (AZ Rep.)

A Special Thank You to the Sponsors of the 2003 Western Legislative Academy

El Pomar Foundation
Altria Group, Inc.
Bayer Healthcare
Coors Brewing Company
Cox Communications
Eastman Kodak Company
Electronic Data Systems

GlaxoSmithKline
International Gaming Technology
Intermountain Rural Electric Association
MedImmune Inc.
Microsoft Corporation
Salt River Project
The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of Colorado