

Seminar Background and Purpose

The California Great Teachers Seminar has been held annually since 1979, involving approximately 1300 faculty members. The seminar is both inspiring and rejuvenating. It brings together teachers from all disciplines, counselors, librarians and other faculty, both full- and part-time, to explore successes and innovations and solutions to problems. In spite of what the name might suggest, the seminar is not so much a gathering of teachers who are already great as it is a group of dedicated educators seeking the “great teacher” within.

The seminar is based on the principle that educators learn best from each other. The purposes of the seminar are:

- To analyze educational problems and to find realistic, creative approaches to their solution.
- To venture beyond the limits of the separate disciplines, specializations, and environments in search of transferable ideas and the universals of teaching.
- To stimulate the exchange of information and ideas within the community college movement by building an expanding network of communication among faculty.
- To promote an attitude of introspection and self-appraisal by providing a relaxed setting and an open, humane climate in which participants can seriously review and contemplate their attitudes, methods, and behavior as faculty.
- To celebrate good teaching and renew the commitment to education.

The five days of the seminar are devoted to developing strategies for improving teaching and education within the community college system. Specific agenda topics evolve from an ongoing needs assessment as the week progresses. The program includes general session presentations and small group discussions. Underlying all seminar activities is the perpetual challenge to characterize and define the “Great Teacher.”