

## **NJEA SUPPORTS FUTURE TEACHERS**

The NJEA has taken the lead in supporting today's students who aspire to become future teachers. Thanks to NJEA funding, several initiatives are currently being coordinated by the Center for Future Educators (CFE) at The College of New Jersey to reach out state-wide to high school and middle school students who aspire to become the next generation of teachers.

While CFE's mission embraces all students who seek to become future teachers, particular emphasis is placed on recruiting students from diverse, underrepresented backgrounds to reflect the diversity of student populations. Most New Jersey districts still do not hire minority teachers proportionate to the increasing number of minority students in schools. This minority teacher shortage is becoming more acute each year.

CFE's efforts are also geared to recruiting students interested in teaching high shortage subjects such as math, science, bilingual, and special education and/or in high poverty, hard-to-staff schools. Fifteen year olds in the United States continue to trail behind their peers in math and science in many industrialized nations. There are still demonstrable academic achievement gaps between high and low poverty schools districts. The high student drop-out rate in urban areas continues to present enormous challenges, particularly with increasing unemployment rates.

Laurence R. Fieber, CFE's Executive Director at The College of New Jersey, believes we are making an excellent investment in New Jersey's schools by recruiting future teachers. "We seek the best and brightest of today's students who have the calling and desire to become tomorrow's teachers. Our job is to inspire, encourage, and support their journey as future teachers to help fix the shortcomings that challenge today's schools," said Fieber.

Since January of 2010, CFE has worked collaboratively with the national Future Educators Association (FEA), state FEA chapter advisers, New Jersey's colleges and universities, and students to start the New Jersey Future Educators Association (NJFEA). Currently there are forty FEA chapters in New Jersey's secondary/middle schools. CFE plans to double that number in the next year. Information on starting FEA chapters can be found at <http://futureeducators.org/>.

For the first time, state high school and middle school FEA chapters have been invited to send student delegates to the NJEA Convention on Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup> for the Inaugural NJFEA Meeting. Future teachers will be welcomed by NJEA officials, attend a presentation, "What Makes a Great FEA Chapter?" by Dr. Jeanne Storm, Associative Executive Director of Phi Delta Kappa International, visit the NJEA educational exhibits, and attend the NJEA keynote address by Soledad O'Brien, CNN anchor and correspondent. Newly elected NJFEA student officers will then conduct an afternoon plenary session where delegates will ratify their new NJFEA constitution and bylaws, and develop plans for state-wide future teacher activities and service projects.

Registration for the NJFEA Inaugural meeting is currently open. FEA advisers can register themselves and their student delegates at <http://www.oksignmeup.com/fea/tcnj>.

CFE is also sponsoring an annual NJFEA Conference at Kean University on Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-six workshops will be offered to three hundred and fifty students from forty-five New Jersey high schools who have registered for this conference. Keynote speeches will be presented by Ms. Esperanza Alfonso and her Tomorrow's Teachers students from Memorial High School in West New York, New Jersey, and Mr. George Benton and his students from Newark Technical High School who will talk about "How Teachers Change the World".

CFE sponsored an Urban Teacher Academy (UTA) at The College of New Jersey from July 6-16. Fifty-one juniors from twenty-five Central New Jersey high schools were selected for this program based on a minimum GPA of 3.0, teacher recommendations, and essays describing why they are interested in becoming teachers in high poverty schools and/or high shortage subjects.

During the (UTA), students attended lectures by distinguished TCNJ faculty and New Jersey teachers on Child Development, Gifted and Talented, classroom management, teaching ESL, multicultural classroom diversity, bullying prevention, how to write a lesson plan, and Multiple Intelligences. Students took field trips to urban schools, the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, The New Jersey School for the Deaf, the Eden Institute, the NJEA, and the Trenton Boys and Girls Club.

As a culminating activity, UTA students created a one day mini-school under the direction of TCNJ professors, area teachers, and TCNJ undergraduate elementary education majors to try their hands at teaching math, science, and physical education lessons to fifty-one children from Ewing Summer Camp. Trenton High School junior Yaritza Corado said, "The UTA was one of my favorite experiences I've had in life. It helped me take that step into a career that I plan to pursue, and teaching could not be better for me. The UTA helped me discover that I want to make a difference as an urban middle school teacher."

This past June, CFE sponsored two Tomorrow's Teachers instructor trainings, one at Fairleigh Dickinson University, and the other at Rowan University. Tomorrow's Teachers, an elective course for high school juniors and seniors who aspire to become teachers, was developed by the Center for Education, Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) in South Carolina. Twenty-six states are currently using this curriculum to introduce high school students to teaching.

Tomorrow's Teachers includes three themes: Experiencing the Learner, Experiencing the Profession, and Experiencing the Classroom. A variety of hands-on activities and a strong emphasis on observations and field experiences are provided. Emphasis is placed on teaching critical shortage areas. Teachers from one hundred and thirty-five New Jersey high schools have been trained during the past three years as Tomorrow's Teachers instructors. The Tomorrow's Teachers course at Memorial High School in West New York, New Jersey, was recently showcased on an NJ Close-Up television presentation.

CFE sponsors a web site focused on New Jersey future teacher recruitment and activities. It can be accessed at [www.tcnj.edu/futureeducators](http://www.tcnj.edu/futureeducators).

Mr. Laurence R. Fieber currently serves at the Executive Director of the Center for Future Educators. He can be reached at 609-771-2464 or at [fieber@tcnj.edu](mailto:fieber@tcnj.edu).