

IN THIS ISSUE 4 - Former Teacher Cadet Receives States Top Honor 5 - Ann Byrd Reflects About CERRA

Cohort Begins Amid Changes; Fellows Begin Journey In Fall

by Jane Hardin
Program Director

The eighth freshman cohort of South Carolina Teaching Fellows was named March 1. The 175 Teaching Fellows will begin their educator journey in a year of positive change for the Fellows program.

The South Carolina Teaching Fellowship, a merit-based scholarship program for high school seniors desiring to be educators, was created in 1999 with the naming of nine Teaching Fellows Institutions, public and private. In 2002, two more institutions joined the group. The 11 institutions are Anderson University, Charleston Southern University, College of Charleston, Columbia College, Furman University, Lander University, Newberry College, SC State University, USC Columbia, USC Upstate and Winthrop University. When chosen, each institution committed to provide the recipients of the Teaching Fellows Scholarship special opportunities for learning and leading.

Teaching Fellows participate in programs

that are designed to examine critical education issues and topics as well as build a sense of belonging to the teaching profession. While the scholarship provides \$24,000 over four years, the program is designed to develop teachers ready to meet the challenges of South Carolina's public schools.

Under the direction of a Campus Director, each group of Teaching Fellows – called a cohort – develops its leadership potential; the Fellows plan activities and programs and serve on governing bodies in their awarded institutions. Following the sophomore year, Fellows participate in a summer enrichment program designed to meet the needs of the individual cohort. Several cohorts have spent a summer week learning about team building and collaboration, a skill necessary for the 21st century educator. Some cohorts have developed summer programs that broaden students' awareness of social and cultural diversity and an appreciation for the contributions of other cultures in our public schools. Still, other programs have focused on best practices for teaching culturally diverse

Continued on page 3



Jo Ann G. Sherbine, left, and Rhonda Farmer will begin term as Teachers in Residence in July.

Teachers in Residence Selected For Region 4, 5

Region 4

Jo Ann Sherbine

Bennettsville Middle School

-Actively involved in CERRA sponsored activities over the past 20 years

Region 5

Rhonda Farmer

Estill High School

-Current Teacher Cadet instructor Estill High School and former ProTeam teacher

Full bios will be featured in June's CenterPoint

Frost Joins CERRA As Public Information Coordinator



by Mychal Frost
Public Information
Coordinator

Beginning April 1, Mychal Frost assumed the role of Public Information Coordinator for the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement. A December 2006 graduate of Winthrop University, Frost joins CERRA after volunteering as a Media Relations Assistant in Winthrop's athletic department for the past 10 months.

He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in publication layout and design from his active involvement with communication and public relations offices with the

Carolina Panthers (NFL), Charlotte Knights (Minor League Baseball), Winthrop University and Coker College.

Frost completed CERRA's Teacher Cadet program while a senior at Rock Hill High School in 2002 before attending Coker College on a soccer scholarship with visions of a career in communications. After transferring to Winthrop in 2004, Frost says his passion for communicating effectively began to flourish while working for his father, Jack Frost, Winthrop's Assistant Athletic

Director for Media Relations.

"I am thankful to Gayle Sawyer and the CERRA staff for believing in me and allowing me to have the opportunity to work for such a worthwhile and meaningful cause as we aim to better the teaching profession in South Carolina," he said.

With an extensive background in athletics' communication, the 22-year-old Frost welcomes his new venture with CERRA.

Frost can be contacted at frostm@winthrop.edu or by phone at 803.323.4032 ext. 6408.

Director's Chair



CERRA provides support for South Carolina's improvement initiatives.

by Gayle Sawyer
Executive Director

Recently retired columnist for *The Washington Post* William Raspberry delivered the keynote address on "Meeting the Challenge of Poverty" at the SC Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (SCACTE) and the SC Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE) conference at Coker College in Hartsville on Friday, March 30, 2007. Without question, the conference attendees knew the side on which they must fight – our children's.

Raspberry spoke with great passion and quick humor about a very serious topic – children of poverty and their need for "a belief in the magic of education" as an open door to opportunity. "Children will work hard," he said, "because they want to please an adult who cares about them." The adult to whom Raspberry referred was the classroom teacher.

One of the questions asked of a panel of educators at the conference was, "How might inexperienced teachers prepare for the challenges of teaching children who live in poverty?" Panelists said there are two key factors to understanding the children, many of whom attend underperforming schools. They pointed out the need for clinical discussions in how to teach the students as well as for experience in the communities with families of the students. Similarly, Raspberry had stated earlier in the day, "We haven't paid enough attention to the homes our students come from."

Teachers who have experienced only other communities, other cultures, other states, or other countries need help understanding how to teach students who live in poverty.

Several times, Raspberry reiterated that he has seen a strong correlation between good homes and good students. Likewise,

Continued on page 3

Cognitive Coaching Increasing Effectiveness Of School Leadership

by Kathy Schwalbe
Program Director

Cognitive Coaching has been a breath of fresh air for the development of practice for classroom teachers in South Carolina. With a focus on improving the support of beginning teachers by trained mentors, CERRA found ways to embrace the model created over 20 years ago by Art Costa and Bob Garmston. It didn't take long, however, to embrace the administrator role in guiding teacher thought processes with the goal of self-directedness.

As principals, assistant principals and mentors move away from the "checklist" approach to observing classroom practice and for improving teacher performance, they have realized that the only way to have a lasting impact and change teacher behaviors is to mediate the thinking of teachers around the choices they make in the classroom. "It's not my purpose to always fix concerns or problems of my teachers. I can assist them in finding their own answers within themselves," said Karen Smith, an instructional mentor in Anderson School District Four.

The skills taught in the Cognitive Coaching Foundation SeminarSM, an eight-day training, are ones that will shift educators' paradigm to more supportive language and behaviors over time. Implementing the conversation maps and tools that deepen thinking ultimately saves valuable time of administrators and teachers.

"Coaching actually utilizes time more wisely. It not only makes the time more effective, it also shortens time expended on surface-level ideas," said Mona Jefferson, an administrator in Anderson School District Four.

An intended outcome of offering this

training is realized by the staff at CERRA – administrators and teacher leaders serving as coaches and mentors are voices of reform across our state. To date, CERRA trainers have led trainings for administrators in Darlington, Anderson Five and Anderson Four. Currently, Dorchester Two district leaders, principals, assistant principals and interventionists are participating in the training.

"In each of those trainings, we've seen high levels of collaboration and learning with principals, teachers and district level staff - including superintendents. We are thrilled with the level of leadership and learning this training has provided," said Dr. Gayle Sawyer, CERRA Executive Director.

Dates for future Cognitive Coaching Foundation Seminars will be posted on the Web site www.cerra.org.

Outcomes Of Cognitive Coaching

- Increased student test scores and other benefits for students
- Teachers grow in teaching efficacy
- Impacts teacher thinking, causing them to be more reflective and to think in more complex ways
- Teachers are more satisfied with their positions and with their choice of teaching as a profession
- School cultures become more professional
- Teachers collaborate more
- Assists teachers professionally
- Benefits teachers personally

-Dr. Jenny Edwards (2005)



Vicki Kirby (left) and Jacquelyn Brown (right) stay in rapport as they co-coach Brenda Jamison (middle) during a Cognitive Coaching Foundation SeminarSM held at the Clarion Hotel in Columbia.

Director's Chair

Continued from page 2

he said that our purpose as educators should not be to blame the victim (the child) for the barriers to education in his/her world, but to help all the children we can find.

To compound the education issues surrounding poverty, a dilemma in our state is keeping teachers in the classrooms of our highest needs schools. The very children who need the consistency of Raspberry's caring adult go to schools which, for a number of reasons, often have a high teacher attrition rate.

Research by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (*No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*, 2003) indicates that the "real school staffing problem is teacher retention. Our inability to support high quality teaching in many of our schools is

driven not by too few teachers entering, but by too many leaving" (p. 8). That report, as well as many other studies, strongly supports a mentoring and induction process for new teachers as one solution to keeping teachers in the profession and in the classrooms of students who need the support of caring and capable teachers.

In the "fight" over how to divide South Carolina's education budget, mentoring for teachers is not fully funded at this time. As Raspberry said about other funding issues that affect children in poverty, "Someone will win that fight, but, for sure, it won't be the kids."

Teaching Fellows

Continued from page 1

populations by traveling within South Carolina and abroad to gain first-hand experiences in the field.

Program changes were in place for Fellows even as interviews were being conducted. In order to provide for a more consistent interview setting, the interview process was moved to a regional model, providing five neutral sites for interviews as opposed to the 11 host schools. Following an application process that considers scholastic aptitude, commitment to school and community, service, leadership and the submission of personal references, approximately 350 students were invited (of 760 applications) to participate in an interview process. Interviews included the completion of a written essay, an opportunity to answer interview questions and provide an oral presentation. Interviewers noted the addition of the oral presentation to the interview provided them with a greater sense of the student's passion for teaching and desire to become an educator in South Carolina. For the second year, several former Teaching Fellows, now teaching in South Carolina, participated in the interview process for the newest cohort of Fellows.

The 175 Fellows who are awarded the scholarship will attend institutions with teacher preparation programs that are not only accredited nationally and by the state of South Carolina, but that will also be evaluated by CERRA for their Teaching Fellows Program effective-



ness. In addition, CERRA will evaluate the institutional commitment made to these cohorts of future educators for whom the 11 Teaching Fellows Institutions have devoted time and resources. USC Upstate will pilot the Fellows Institutional Evaluation in April 2007. The formal five year evaluation cycle will begin this fall.

The Teaching Fellows cohort for 2007-2008 represents every region of South Carolina and 52 percent of our school districts. The newest Fellows have an average SAT score of 1090 (Reading and Math), well above the state and national averages of 985 and 1021, respectively. Additionally, the average ACT score of 25.5 is well above the national average of 21.1.

The program continues to reflect a national trend by awarding to more females than males. It remains CERRA's desire and pledge to recruit Teaching Fellow cohorts that reflect the ethnic diversity of our state.

The 2007 - 2008 Teaching Fellows are entering a year for program changes that will continue to examine the effectiveness of our efforts to develop teachers who can meet the many diverse challenges our South Carolina classrooms continue to provide.

CERRA's Mission Statement

The purpose of the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement - South Carolina (CERRA) is to provide leadership in **identifying, attracting, placing and retaining** well-qualified individuals for the teaching profession in our state. In doing so, CERRA will respond to changing needs of teachers from under-represented populations, in critical subject fields and in underserved geographical areas in South Carolina. CERRA will work cooperatively with other organizations to promote the teaching profession.

Staff at CERRA

Executive Director
Dr. Gayle Sawyer

Program Directors
Amanda Graham
Jane Hardin
Kathy Schwalbe

Public Information Coordinator
Mychal Frost

Business/Office Manager
Kimberly Pittman

National Board Program Manager
Michelle Began

Teacher Database Manager
Phyllis Archie

Administrative Assistants
Martha Kennedy
Miranda Long
Jessica Parsons

Teachers In Residence

Region One
Brett DeLoach Vaughn
Region Two
Jason Fulmer
Region Three
Tria Grant
Region Four
Shelby Wiley
Region Five
Cyndi Pride
2007 South Carolina Teacher of the Year
Buffy Murphy

PERFECT ALIGNMENT

District Teachers of the Year Join Dr. Rex For Town Hall-Style Meeting To Highlight CERRA's Teacher Forum Winter Workshop

by Kathy Schwalbe
Program Director

Sometimes the planets simply line up in favor of teachers and state superintendents. On the evening of February 21st, South Carolina's District Teachers of the Year and newly-elected State Superintendent of Education Dr. Jim Rex celebrated teaching with a grand opening of the 20th SC Teacher Forum workshop and Dr. Rex's first town hall meeting.

"When Dr. Janice Poda contacted us to see if Dr. Rex's comments could be expanded to a town hall meeting that evening, my first thought was how appropriate this would be. Our state's most accomplished teachers meeting with our new superintendent would be the perfect kick-off for the two-and-a-half day leadership workshop," said Dr. Gayle Sawyer, Executive Director.

In his comments, Dr. Rex commented that he has traveled full circle in his journey to being elected State Superintendent in November. He referred to himself as the "midwife" of CERRA (formerly the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment) which found its home on Winthrop University's campus when he served as dean of education there 20 years ago. Dr. Rex fought for the creation

of CERRA then, and now he sees great things in its future.

"We must teach students in a way that none of us were taught," said Dr. Rex. As he said, thinking beyond our challenges is going to be critical if we are going to build a stronger generation of educators. He described a profession that will take the top-down power base and turn it upside-down – enabling classroom teachers to be atop the decision-making process.

In true town hall style, teachers and other guests from the surrounding Horry County community asked questions of Dr. Rex. The exchange of professional ideas and comments created a positive tone that lasted until the conclusion of the workshop on February 23rd.

Other featured guests and presenters included National Teacher of the Year Kimberly Oliver; Dr. Gayle Moller, author of *Lead with Me: A Principal's Guide to Teacher Leadership* (2006); and Dr. Bill Coon, principal of Pleasant Hill Middle School in Lexington One School District.

This year's workshop was led by SC Teacher of the Year Buffy Murphy.

Special Educator, Former Teacher Cadet, Receives Statewide Honor

From an article by Georgia Williamson / *The Georgetown Times, Georgetown SC, March 7, 2007*

Since the age of four, as she was playing school with her friends, Georgetown area native Kara Merritt dreamed of becoming a teacher. Growing up in the Georgetown County school system, Merritt knew she wanted to teach elementary school, but it wasn't until taking Teacher Cadet at Georgetown High School that Merritt realized she was meant to teach special education.

Now in her ninth year of teaching, Merritt has just received one of the highest honors from her peers. In late February, Merritt was named the 2007 South Carolina Exceptional Educator of the Year. This award, given to a special education professional, was created in 2005 by the South Carolina Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) and the South Carolina Council for Exceptional Children (SCCEC). In March, Merritt was recognized for her honor at the Georgetown



County School Board meeting.

OEC is the largest professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities and/or the gifted.

The organization and its local chapters advocate for appropriate governmental policies, set professional standards, provide continual professional development, advocate for newly and historically underserved individuals with exceptionalities and help professionals obtain resources necessary for effective professional practices.

After graduating cum laude from Lander University, Merritt, daughter of school board member Lynn Freeman, began teaching in 1998 at Brown's Ferry Elementary School. She has taught all subject areas to fourth and fifth graders.

At Lander, Merritt earned certifications in

the fields of early childhood, elementary and generic special education. This background helped her become the professional disabilities teacher at McDonald Elementary School in 2001.

Merritt works with her students one-on-one and in groups to determine their individual education plan (IEP) which, Merritt said, are goals and objectives each individual student needs to overcome to improve. Merritt works to see that her students meet their goals.

Her dream has always been to teach at McDonald Elementary School, because, as a senior at Georgetown High School, she completed her Teacher Cadet field experience with the special education teacher there.

Believing that education is for a lifetime, in 2005 Merritt completed a certification in elementary administration at The Citadel in hopes that one day she can help an entire school of children by working at the administrative level.

Q&A

Ann Byrd reflects on her tenure as CERRA's Executive Director

'I had become such a student of teacher leadership... this was a dream position for me'

When you think about the decision you made to apply for the position of Executive Director of the Center in 2000, what kinds of things did you take into consideration?

What I remember most is being encouraged by Dr. Janice Poda, who was then the Executive Director. I really did not think I was ready for such a challenge, and I was certainly not very confident that I could fill such big shoes.

Janice, and her predecessor, John Norton, were both so experienced and had done such a terrific job of shaping the direction of the Center. Here I was, one year out of the classroom after several years as a Teacher in Residence; this was quite a different world from the one where I had gained most of my experience and comfort.

I had been very comfortable in my classroom of 12th graders at Lancaster High School. Entering the world of school districts, higher education institutions and state policymakers was a distant leap from teaching Shakespeare or facilitating field experiences for a group of eager Teacher Cadets.

As I pondered my decision, Janice gave me great advice: "If you wait until you think you are truly ready for a new position, you will probably never apply. No one is ever completely set to step into a new role. Don't let that stop you." That advice, coupled with Janice's encouragement, helped me make a career-changing decision. And one that I am most grateful to have been given the opportunity to realize.

As you pondered this decision, what aspects of the Center's

Executive Director position intrigued you most?

CERRA represents the platinum standard for organizations that advocate for recruiting and retaining quality teachers and providing leadership opportunities for them. I had become such a student of teacher leadership and was becoming more and more intrigued by state-level policy, so this was a dream position for me. I really enjoy working. Naturally, the opportunity to work in areas that were of such keen interest was truly a gift.

During the six years you were the Executive Director of CERRA, what CERRA accomplishments come to mind now as mere educational progress (at the time) but actually ground-breaking in South Carolina's history of education now that some time has passed to reflect upon them?

There are several policy changes that came about during my tenure as Executive Director. What comes to mind now is working with the State Department of Education to ensure that the Teacher Cadet course is granted honors credit; this had a significant impact on recruiting high school seniors.

Also, having the Teaching Fellows Program fully funded and implemented at 11 institutions was absolutely critical. Implementing the National Board Certification loan program for the state and providing support for districts and candidates was very rewarding.



CERRA really served as a model for a number of other state programs, just as the Teacher Cadet Program has been a model for 30+ other states. In addition, I think the fact that a small state like South Carolina ranks third in the nation in the number of NBCTs speaks to how successful CERRA's NBC initiative has been.

Also, I am very proud of the contributions CERRA has made to support more aggressive induction and mentoring policies for South Carolina's teachers. If our profession is not intent on supporting the teachers once we invest so much time and energy into recruiting them, then we really do not have a strategy that has a chance to be successful.

I would also add that I am very proud of the work we did to re-organize the CERRA Board of Directors. While the Board has historically provided very strong leadership for the organization, I think the work to more evenly distribute the representation of

the Board among PK-12, higher education, state organizations and agencies, as well as the business community, was a significant contribution to CERRA's future.

During your career, who has been your professional mentor and why?

I think I am fortunate to have had a number of wonderful mentors. Of course, Janice Poda first comes to mind. She had been my leader for four years, prior to my becoming Executive Director. And she continued to offer her guidance and support to me once she moved on to serve at the State Department of Education. I learned so much from her, and I am very fortunate to have had that experience.

I would be remiss were I not to mention Dr. Pat Graham, the Dean of Education at Winthrop University. Pat was such a great role model for me; she is such a professional and I learned so much from working with her. In all the years I worked at CERRA, as busy as Pat always was in her role as Dean, she always made time to see me. I have no doubt that the support from Winthrop University, especially from Dean Graham and from President DiGiorgio, has been key to the longevity, national exposure and overall success of CERRA. I firmly believe CERRA would not still exist were it not for Winthrop's loyalty.

Continued on page 6

Conversation with Ann Byrd, continued from page 5

Another great mentor is Billy Boan. At the time I became Executive Director, Billy was serving as Governor Hodges' Chief of Staff. He is a longtime family friend, and I think there is no one who has greater credibility as a policymaker than Billy. He is absolutely brilliant in the policy arena and was extremely generous with his time so that I could learn the ropes of the policy world in Columbia. I owe him much for all that he has taught me.

As you left CERRA, which of your own leadership accomplishments made you most proud?

Well, of course, my heart goes to the thousands of ProTeam students, Teacher Cadets, Teaching Fellows, NBC candidates, NBCTs, Teachers of the Year and district administrators with whom I was privileged to work. I am most proud of the opportunities CERRA is able to provide for future teachers and teacher leaders.

And I am also proud of the

rebirth of the Center: changing its name and image from the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment (SCCTR) to the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). And nothing speaks more strongly to the heart of CERRA's work than its tagline: "Teachers make a difference every day." Truer words were never spoken.

Now that you have had nine months of distance from your leadership position here, what kinds of CERRA resources do you think South Carolina depends upon most?

Of course, fiscal resources are vital. But I think the livelihood of an organization like CERRA depends just as much – if not more so – upon human resources. One may question why I would leave an organization I love so much. I would tell them that, after ten years, I had really used most of my creative energy for how to advance the work of CERRA in the direction that it needs to keep

developing. It was just time for new energy and new leadership. And I was ready for a change.

It's almost as if I continue to lead a charmed life with my career. My new position at the Center for Teaching Quality (in the research triangle area of North Carolina) is akin to working at CERRA on the national level.

What could be better? The only downside is that I had to leave the best group of people with whom I had ever worked. CERRA has a dedicated staff that ensures that future teachers and current practitioners have the resources to make a difference every day.

I wish more educators had the good fortune to work with such a dedicated staff. With strong support from all of them and the flexibility to choose five of South Carolina's most outstanding teachers to join the State Teacher of the Year as Teachers in Residence, it is really not difficult to understand what makes CERRA a one-of-a-kind place to lead.

What's Next



4

June

Job Fair EXPO
Columbia
Register Online at cerra.org



11-13

June

Teacher Cadet
Curriculum Training
Rock Hill
Register Online at cerra.org



11-13 &
12-14

June

Foundations In
Mentoring Training
Colleton County &
Georgetown County



9-11

July

CERRA Advisory
Board Workshop
Columbia

CERRA

Stewart House
Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC 29733
800.476.2387

BY THE NUMBERS....

National Board Certified Teachers

5,079..... NBCTs in South Carolina

1,854..... Current candidates in SC

1,256..... First time candidates in SC

598..... Retake candidates in SC

*Numbers are accurate as of March 23, 2007 on NBPTS Web site and CERRA data