Sanity Reigns at the End of the Millennium --
The CSUF Graduate Reading Program is Bursting
with Students Again as Well as Innovative Programs.

Reading Instructional Programs have had a roller-coaster ride during the last third of this century due to the fickleness of the political climate of education. Whatever and wherever the hot trend is, so goes the funding! Despite an obvious awareness that people's lives are empowered when they can read well, administrative decision-makers have periodically taken the process of learning to read for granted and placed their priorities elsewhere for whatever reason. (Was any reason ever good enough to de-prioritize reading instruction?) However, administrative powers are on our side again and reading instruction is hot—perhaps, the results of standardized reading test scores have helped them see the light? Whatever the inspiration was, reading specialists are in demand again. Our CSUF is a leader in providing not only the means for expanding the ranks of reading instructors but also the innovative accommodations for expanding more quickly.

In 1979, the CSUF Graduate Reading Program was at full capacity with two sections of graduate classes offered each semester. Somewhere in the mid-1980s, the school districts decided that if they eliminated reading specialists and had classroom teachers assume the responsibility for the reading needs of their students, there would be a significant savings in their budgets. Of course, whole language was a hot topic at this time also, so perhaps, it was felt that this new program would fill the void of not having reading specialists. Because the districts eliminated reading specialists, certificated reading specialist programs waned in popularity. Consequently, CSUF Reading Department had fewer graduate students, needed fewer instructors, and received less funding. It also changed from a department to a program. In 1994, when I began my masters program at CSUF, I had two graduate classes, one with eleven students and the other with four. In 1999, multiple sections in the graduate reading program are now offered each semester at two campuses with maxed enrollments of 30 to 35 students each. This is reason to rejoice. Priorities are in the right place once again. In the mid to late 90s, CSUF has a Reading Department again.

The overwhelming requests for reading instructors has spawned an amazing CSUF program which is referred to as cohorts. The university reading department has contracted with two school districts to provide onsite graduate classes for the purpose of acquiring masters degrees or certificates in reading instruction. Participants receive special codes which enable them to register through the CSUF telephone registration system. Students are responsible for their own fees including textbooks which can be ordered online. However, the district does provide the classrooms within the district for onsite instruction as well as running interference to ensure that other district events will not conflict with the graduate class schedule. Candidates may commit to the masters degree or to the four classes which constitute the certificate. The classes included in the certificate program include 508 (elementary education), 507 (secondary education.), 581 (clinical), and 516 (diagnostics).

Earlier this year, the information on the cohort idea was distributed to all the school districts. Acceptance was based on a first come, first serve basis. In order for a school district to qualify for a cohort with CSUF, it must guarantee a minimum of 30 to 35 participants (to allow for possible attrition). This fall, the two districts involved in a cohort arrangement with CSUF are the Capistrano Valley Unified School District and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District. The CVUSD had so much interest that they held a lottery to
determine who would be involved in the program. The NMUSD also had applicants beyond the manageable number of 35. CSUF Associate Professor Kathi Bartle-Angus, who has assumed many of the registrative responsibilities of the cohort and who provided the details of the cohort program used in this article, said that the Dean of the School of Human Development and Community Service, Soraya Coley, is pleased and most supportive of the cohort arrangement. Other districts are interested as well.

If the interest and commitment continues to grow, the CSUF Reading faculty will need to be expanded to meet the demand. Currently, Reading Department Chairman Ash Bishop is teaching four sections of 508. The faculty members of the CSUF Reading Department are tireless in their efforts to provide the means and the accommodations to expand the ranks of qualified reading instructors. Many students will reap the benefits of their efforts. The dictionary defines the word cohort as warriors...soldiers. It seems most fitting to adopt this word for this program. As Dr. Norma Inabinette has said on numerous occasions, literacy is a right. At times, it has been a battle convincing others of this. How comforting to know that as we draw a close to the end of a millennium and begin a new one, that we are back on the right path to nurturing qualified reading instructors to facilitate literacy skills for everyone. It is the sane thing to do.

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**Faculty Footnotes**

By Kathi Bartle Angus

The Reading Faculty joined with the rest of CSUF in celebrating its 40th anniversary. The festivities began with a convocation under tents on the green. Goodwill Ambassador, Danny Glover, and Tracey Caldwell, the youngest astronaut in the NASA program, were the guest speakers. Caldwell's speech was particularly moving as she recalled her years at CSUF as a chemistry major. She singled out a number of faculty and staff as her mentors and encouragers. Her enthusiasm and fond regard for CSUF was warmly received by the guests.

The celebration continued in the afternoon with a student faire followed by the "From Orange Groves to Digital Garden" exhibit in the Pollack Library.

The traditional Concert Under the Stars concluded the evening. It was wonderful to see so many alumni join the faculty for this event. The Music and Theater Department provided a fabulous music and dance review, "100 Years of Broadway." Alumni performers, Larry Daggett, Dana Meller, and Elise Hernandez, currently on Broadway, joined the students in the review.

One of the programs highlighted in the press at the time of the 40th anniversary was the Reading Program. The Reading Clinic has been training teachers and providing assistance to students in the community for 30 years. In addition, the Reading Educators Guild is the oldest alumni group on campus and has served as a model for other groups around the state. All those associated with this program have much to be proud of.

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**Notice**

READ585, Professional Development, will be offered at the Fullerton Campus this Spring on Thursdays from 4:00-6:45. The class will be taught by JoAnne Greenbaum and may be taken through Adjunct enrollment. READ585 is the course, in addition to the Master's courses, which is required for the Reading Specialist Credential.

New REG Web Page
http://www.geocities.com/regfullerton
Please come visit the site and discover what REG has to offer. You will find information about our organization, past newsletters, and links to other reading organizations. A special thanks goes to David Greenbaum, our Web Page Design Consultant. His technical expertise has been invaluable!!

Hancock Fund

The Hancock Fund was established to honor Dr. Deborah Osen Hancock for her contributions to the field of reading and specifically to the Reading Department. The fund is solely for use by the CSUF Reading Clinic. Over the years, the fund has supplied books and technology for use by clinicians and students. REG would like to thank the following members for their generous contributions to the Hancock Fund:

Diane Urias
Sarah Ross
Janice Blanton
Denise Dale

Reading Educators' Guild Newsletter Staff

Editor: Jan Bagwell

Faculty Footnotes: Kathi Bartle Angus

The Reading Connection: Janice Blanton

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, by being a regular column writer or just an occasional article donator, please contact Jan Bagwell at jbagwell@fullerton.edu. We need all of you to help make REG great!