



# I Choose to Teach!



A PUBLICATION OF THE STUDENT CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
FEBRUARY 2007

## FACULTY AND STUDENTS: A PAIR THAT WON'T BE SILENCED

KEVIN WOLFE, STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE, CSU FULLERTON

In 1965, student fees were just \$76 and a student had to work only 58 hours at minimum wage to pay college fees. In 2006, fees were \$2,520 which would mean a student would have to work 373 hours (more than 6x as long) at minimum wage to pay the fees. – “23 Reasons Why CSU Faculty are Mad”

For several months, the California Faculty Association (CFA) has been uncovering several instances of neglect regarding the students and faculty of California State Universities (CSU) in its quest to negotiate a new contract. The CFA argues that despite supposed budget cuts, salaries for CSU’s top officials, including Chancellor Charles Reed and members of the Board of Trustees, continue to rise while conditions on the campuses continue to decline. Included in the list of “crimes” are: the increase in class sizes as class offerings are cut, annual increases in student fees, and a stagnant salary for faculty and staff. Although the CSU administration has made offers to increase the salaries of CSU faculty and staff, the CFA has determined that the offers up to this point have either been misleading, or force them to turn a blind eye to one of the many offenses that the CSU is committing.

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## FIGHTING RACISM THROUGH EDUCATION

TAMARA HARRIS, ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATIVE, CSU FULLERTON

In the past few months, racial tensions have been high and there have been many racially charged incidents in the news. From celebrity’s making racial slurs to biased news reporting, there has been a visible increase in racism in our society. When listening to the tape of Michael Richards rattling off numerous slurs against an African-American fan in the audience of a comedy club, it became apparent that those words and thoughts were not foreign to him. The racially charged insults rolled easily off his tongue as if they were commonplace in his vocabulary. Mel Gibson’s insults against the Jewish community and Isaiah Washington’s slur against a fellow gay cast member on the set of *Grey’s Anatomy* makes a person wonder what is happening behind closed doors. There seems to be a resurgence of racism and sexism today. However, it may just be that through the expansion of technology, the internet, and media sources, people’s real feelings are becoming more apparent.

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**Deadline : March 23**

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### FEBRUARY 2007

2-4 REGION 3 LEADERSHIP CONF., COSTA MESA  
10 **SCTA SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, UC RIVERSIDE**  
10 CBEST & RICA EXAMS  
19 HOLIDAY (PRESIDENT'S DAY)  
23-25 URBAN ISSUES CONFERENCE, LONG BEACH

### MARCH 2007

2 READ ACROSS AMERICA  
2-4 EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE, SAN JOSE  
9-11 GOOD TEACHING CONFERENCE, LOS ANGELES  
17 **SCTA NORTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
17 CSET EXAM  
30-APR, 1 **STATE COUNCIL/SCTA BOARD MEETING, LOS ANGELES**

### APRIL 2007

6 HOLIDAY (GOOD FRIDAY)  
14 CBEST & RICA  
24 **SCTA LOBBY DAY, SACRAMENTO**  
27-29 REGION 4 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, NEWPORT BEACH  
28-29 **SCTA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY, LOS ANGELES**

### MAY 2007

19 CSET EXAM  
28 HOLIDAY (MEMORIAL DAY)

### JUNE 2007

8-10 **STATE COUNCIL/SCTA BOARD MEETING, LOS ANGELES**  
16 CBEST & RICA EXAMS  
25-28 **NEA-SP STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, PHILADELPHIA, PA**  
30-JULY 5 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY, PHILADELPHIA, PA

### JULY 2007

4 HOLIDAY (INDEPENDENCE DAY)  
16-20 PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE, ASILOMAR  
20-22 **SCTA BOARD ORIENTATION, BURLINGAME**  
21 CSET EXAM  
29-AUG. 3 SUMMER INSTITUTE, UC LOS ANGELES

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## SPEAK UP FOR CHANGE

ANGELA DROPE, NORTHERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT, CSU SACRAMENTO

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As a single person, we have a small voice that can be heard by few, as a group we have a voice that echoes loud and can be heard by many. The only way change is going to happen is if we make change happen. Statistically, teachers are paid less than those who work in other professions requiring similar education and responsibilities. Low teacher pay comes at a high cost for schools and kids, who lose good teachers to better-paying professions. Some 20 percent of new public school teachers leave the profession by the end of the first year, and almost half leave within five years. Pay-related turnover is especially high for minorities, males, and teachers under the age of 30.



Having highly qualified teachers is essential to student success — but who in the future will be lured into a profession with wages that start low and fail to keep pace with comparable careers? A National Education Association (NEA) report comparing teachers' weekly wages to those of other workers with similar education and experience shows that, since 1993, female teacher wages have fallen behind 13% and male teacher wages 12.5% (11.5% among all teachers). Since 1979 teacher wages relative to those of other similar workers have dropped 18.5% among women, 9.3% among men, and 13.1% among both combined. According to a recent study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the teaching profession has an average national starting salary of \$30,377. Meanwhile, computer programmers start at an average of \$43,635, public accounting professionals at \$44,668, and registered nurses at \$45,570. This is clear evidence that as future educators we must speak up for change, but we must have a loud voice to be heard, therefore I urge you to join Student CTA at: <http://www.cta.org/membership/scta/join>.

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## FACULTY AND STUDENTS: A PAIR THAT WON'T BE SILENCED

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One of the most recent offers, reached at a mediation session last month, included a 1% raise to bribe faculty to support the contract and remain silent on the next budget. The proposed budget includes, among other things, a 10% increase in student fees and a \$7 million cut from outreach to and retention of students who are first-generation college students, low-income and otherwise disadvantaged. CFA President John Travis stated, “This is an outrageous attempt to buy our political support and divide us from our students. Our voice is not for sale, period. We became educators in the first place because of our commitment to students. This is a blatant political effort to muzzle us after we have exposed the administration's waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars over the years.” As a result of this breakdown, the negotiations will enter a stage known as fact-finding. Even now, faculty at campuses on the quarter system are starting informational pickets to get the word out on the contract situation, and though hoping for a settlement, CFA continues to prepare for possible job actions.

While the California Faculty Association is fighting for their own livelihoods, they are also fighting for the students of the California State Universities. I invite you to look at the informational links below, and hopefully help support the CFA in their plight. If you are attending a public college or university, even if you are not attending a CSU right now, this could ultimately affect you, so don't give up a chance to have your voice heard!!! The CSU administration continues to commit “crimes” against the university on a daily basis. In order to stop these administrators from cashing out at the university's expense, the gumshoes of the CSI:CSU investigation squad at: <http://www.csicsu.org> continue to pound the pavement documenting and correcting their misdeeds. By visiting <http://www.csicsu.org/content/fmd/files/whymad.pdf> you can see “23 Reasons Why CSU Faculty Are Mad.” To view the full schedule of planned informational pickets including the action coming up at your campus as well as updates on those that have already taken place visit: <http://calfac.org/infopicket.html>.

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## WHY CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

TONI DUPONT, NORTHERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT, CSU EAST BAY

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As educators, we are compassionate and intelligent beings. We choose this career path, not for prestige and money, but for the intrinsic rewards it brings into our lives. And most of our colleagues will share our passion and fit into our sphere well.

But what about the teacher who is set in their ways and just doesn't get it? The administrator who rubs you the wrong way? The staff coworker who is more irritating than helpful? The parent who refuses to see anything negative about their own child? There will always be someone who does not share our views or someone who just tends to cause more trouble than good. While we do not enjoy confrontation, at some point in our careers we will need the skills to cope with a difficult individual or situation.

Here is a list of some helpful tips and techniques to deal with difficult people:

- Make the decision to deal with the person directly
- Don't try to change their personality
- Listen carefully to the other person and make sure they feel understood
- Keep the communication style open and sincere
- Ask them to commit to making one or two changes
- Discuss with them how their actions are impacting the relationship
- Make them feel valued and appreciated
- Don't try to appease them, as it may encourage them to continue the behavior
- Get their input on how to improve the situation
- Do not continue to push for a solution when the other person is in attack mode
- Be aware of defensive behaviors, in yourself and the other person
- Don't try to beat them at their own game
- Be sensitive to their perception of the situation
- Do recognize that other people have valid ideas and suggestions
- Consider taking courses in listening skills, team-building, or other pertinent people skills
- Don't take their behavior personally



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## IRIS MARION YOUNG'S FIVE FACES OF OPPRESSION

JAMES SHELDON, STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE, NEW COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

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These people are considered useless in the economic structure and have to rely on impersonal and punitive government bureaucracies in order to survive.

Have you ever had a student that was having unexplained difficulty in school that you thought related to the student's status as a member of a minority group? There's a possibility, of course, that it can be due to discrimination--- an individual treating another individual unfairly on the basis of personal characteristics. But going deeper than that, there's oppression. Oppression is how the system is rigged against certain classifications of people--- women, homosexuals, working class people, people of color, people with disabilities, youth, the elderly, people with mental illness, etc... Within the classroom there are styles of discourse, systems of power-knowledge, institutional structures and practices- all which combine to marginalize and harm certain groups of people.

The recently deceased Iris Marion Young divides oppression into five categories-- exploitation, marginaliza-

tion, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

Exploitation, according to Prof. Young is the transfer of the results of the labor of one social group to benefit another. She writes of how women's work is unpaid or underpaid and results in the transfer of energies to please and comfort men. She also writes of how the history of racial discrimination has reserved menial work for people of color-- an important observation given the formal and informal tracking systems in public schools that push students of color into non-college preparatory classes and eventually into menial, low-paying jobs. As teachers, therefore, we need to work to dismantle tracking systems and to make sure that all students benefit from a high quality education. Moreover, we need to work in the political realm through our unions to dismantle economic systems that result in exploitation.

Marginalization is the process by which "a whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life."

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## COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY IN PROCESS

The College Student Relief Act, H.R. 5, meant to make college more affordable and accessible, was introduced on January 12 by Reps. George Miller (D-CA), Joe Courtney (D-CT), and 208 other cosponsors.

H.R. 5 proposes cutting the fixed interest rate on subsidized Stafford loans for undergraduates from 6.8% to 3.4% over the next five years. Loans originated during the intervening five years would be set at fixed interest rates of 6.12%



in 2007-2008, 5.44% in 2008-2009, 4.76% in 2009-2010, 4.08% in 2010-2011, and 3.4% from 2011 forward. After graduation, students could consolidate their loans into one loan at the weighted average of the interest rates of their various loans. The bill has strong bipartisan support – in a recent poll, 88 percent of Americans stated they

supported the proposal.

About 5.5 million students borrow subsidized Stafford loans every year. Of those borrowers, nearly 3.3 million attend four-year public or private non-profit institutions. The vast majority of these borrowers come from low- and middle-income families. According to the Congressional Research Service, 75% of traditional-aged borrowers with subsidized Stafford loans come from families with incomes below \$67,374. The median income for an American family of four

is \$65,000.

PIRG's Higher Education Project report evaluates, state by state and campus by campus, the impact that cutting interest rates would have on student loan debt.

If you want to know specifically about savings in your area, the full reports can be found at <http://www.uspirg.org/home/reports/report-archives/affordable-higher-education/affordable-higher-education-reports/cutting-interest-rates-lowering-student-debt>



Center: SCTA President, Ngoc Le, stands outside the U.S. Capitol after a day of lobbying on issues of student college affordability.

## THE BEGINNING OF A STRONG CHAPTER

REBECCA FAIRCLOTH, STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE, CALIFORNIA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Let's give a hand to all those who dare to venture out and start a new chapter on their campus! We all know how fantastic SCTA is and we sure need to get the word out so that all future educators can take advantage of everything SCTA has to offer.

One of our newest SCTA chapters is at California Baptist University, Riverside. California Baptist University-SCTA have established a Yahoo groups page (CBUSCTA) to keep in contact with their members and are planning on raising funds from a Valentine's Day bake sale and a Scholastic Book Fair. Those funds will be used to purchase supplies for an after school program they are working on.

Do you have a new chapter on your campus? Are you thinking of starting one? Are you a current chapter having an event that you would like to promote? Let's hear about it! Submit an article for the newsletter and get the word out!



Left to Right: Allison Ribblett; Secretary-Treasurer, Rebecca Faircloth; President and Brisena Morales; Vice President

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## FIGHTING RACISM THROUGH EDUCATION

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In several school newspapers, there have been articles that have been offensive to African-Americans. In one there was even a cartoon that showed a white man dressed in hip-hop gear walking up to a black man in a suit, addressing him using a similar slur as that used by of Richards. What does this say about our society, when things like this don't cause outrage?

This is significant for future educators because racism starts early. In our classrooms, we must educate more than merely tolerant. Diversity training needs to step beyond acknowledging existence and acceptance. It is important for educators to teach students about how racism affects those that are victims of it. By facing racism and its effects head on and making those that engage in it accountable for their action, is the only way that we will ever conquer it. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* recently had a show that addressed this

issue in a high school. The students were made to face how their words and actions affected the people around them. By the end of the program, students apologized to others students for their acts of racism and bullying. Through understanding the pain that these acts caused, the students were able to change from the inside out. Teachers see children at their best and at their worst. By addressing issues that arise while students are young, teachers have the power to correct negative attitudes. Education is the most powerful weapon there is against racism; therefore, it is important for teachers to take the lead in fighting racism. For free teacher resources go to: [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org).



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## IRIS MARION YOUNG'S FIVE FACES OF OPPRESSION

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Many of our students come from communities significantly affected by marginalization, and recognizing these systems and working to transform them is an important part of effective educational practice-- both as teachers in the classroom and as activists in a teachers' union.

Powerlessness is something that all students experience; students from oppressed backgrounds even more so. Prof. Young writes, "The powerless are those who lack authority or power... those whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them." This, unfortunately, could describe the experience of many of our students in our classrooms. Students under the age of 18 don't get to vote in school board elections or for the state leadership that make many educational decisions. Most classrooms are structured hierarchically, with the teacher having the ultimate authority in any decision making. In addition, parents of color and working-class parents lack the knowledge of how to use the school system to benefit their children-- thus furthering those children's powerlessness. As teachers, therefore, we have an obligation to create classrooms based on principles of democracy, community, and consensus in which students are empowered over their own lives-- and to work in the political realm to change oppressive governmental structures that establish classroom practices and standards without participation by the affected students.

The fourth face of oppression is cultural imperialism. According to Young, this is "how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's

own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it as the other. Paradoxically, one is both made invisible and presented in a stereotypical fashion. This form of oppression is particularly evident in mass media representations of oppressed groups, although certainly it can be also seen in classroom curriculum-- and as teachers, it is important for us to remember to include perspectives of different groups (particularly in their own voices) and to avoid perpetuating stereotyping and marginalization. Moreover, it is important to work with our students to sharpen their skills of cultural critique so that they can learn to recognize these dynamics of representation in mass media and in their lives.

The last face of oppression is violence--- the systematic violence directed at people because they are members of some group. At my undergraduate institution, for example, there was a problem with racist and homophobic violence. This can also be verbal violence too-- racist and homophobic comments proliferate in public schools. Young writes, "Group violence approaches legitimacy, moreover, in the sense that it is tolerated... according to the prevailing social logic, some circumstances make such violence more 'called for' than others." As teachers, it is important for us to make sure that all students feel safe from violence, and to engage our classes in the process of deconstructing institutionalized systems of violence.



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## INSIGHT TO A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

PAT GLEASON

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I live for this. I didn't make that up. It's a catchy new slogan for Major League Baseball on ESPN this summer. The ads capture famous players in pressure situation in which they succeed. They do and they live for that. The same can be said for me and teaching.

You know, it seems like only yesterday I was writing to you about graduation. Man, time sure does fly when you are doing...nothing! I spend the majority of my time off watching my kids at play in the front yard; looking at the birds, chasing the trains, and getting as wet as they could with the hose and pool. It was great! I don't take my summers for granted. Heck, I get more time off year round than anybody else. I'm not complaining.

So many folks say we teachers don't work enough. That's a valid argument. However, I do what the state requires. If Sacramento says work 185 days of year, then that's what I work. If anyone doesn't like it, then I say get a credential and join the club. It's not a private one, you know. I get so tired of people telling me that I have it so easy. "You teachers have so much time off," they say. Well, if you think it's so easy, go back to school and become one of us. It's not that big of a deal, as far as I'm concerned.

Sure, I really do have it easy in some respects, but I've earned it. I've been teaching 18 years and I'm proud of what I do. Simply put, I take care of your kids. My goal year in and year out is to teach them to think for themselves. Sure, as an English teacher, literature is at the core of what we do, but creating independent thinkers takes hard work and creativity. Would you want to do it? Ninety-nine percent of the folks who say I don't work enough will also say they would not trade places with me for any amount of money in the

*"You teachers have so much time off," they say. Well, if you think it's so easy, go back to school and become one of us.*

world. "How can you stand those kids?" they say. It's easy. I live for this. Tomorrow is the first day of school. I can't wait. I get 30 fresh new bodies five periods a day for the next ten months. In a manner of speaking, they're mine! I get to mess with their heads, challenge their intellects, and hopefully make them better writers. What I won't be is Mr. Daddy Day Care. If all you care about is me watching your child every day for an hour, then please come pick them up. My job is to teach, not baby sit.

I live by the credo of Thomas Jefferson: "A nation cannot be both ignorant and free." One thing I cannot stomach is people who are just plain stupid of their own free will. That just drives me nuts!!!

As hard as I try to reach everyone, I won't succeed on all counts. Last spring, I had one student tell me in an evaluation that I was a horrible teacher. In one way or another, I had let him down and failed him. I felt really bad. However, on the other hand, I have former students who still seek my wisdom. This makes me feel good. For example, there are two sisters, Sandra and Deanna DaFonseca, who are excelling in graduate school. I was very close to both while in high school, and we still keep in touch. Sandra asked me to help her with her entrance letter to graduate school in Washington. She got accepted to her first choice. As for Deanna, she recently graduated from UC Santa Barbara and worked this summer teaching at a private school. My recommendation helped her get the job. So, in this regard, I know I am not a total failure.

Yet, when one has around 150 kids passing through his doors every day for ten months, it's inevitable to miss someone. I try not to.

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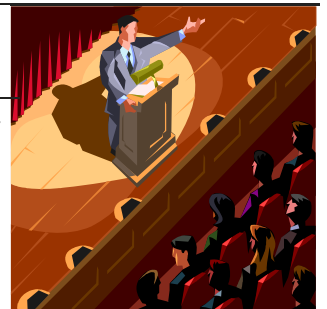
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## REVISIT YOUR ALMA MATER TO INSPIRE!

CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN, SOUTHERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT, CSU FULLERTON

There are many high schools all throughout the state of California that provide classes or clubs such as CLUB ED for students that are interested in future teaching. In the class along with the instructor's curriculum (usually in connection with a local CSU campus) the class and/or club also provides time for guest speakers. Guest speakers play a vital key in giving first hand information to what it is like to become a teacher. They illustrate the necessary steps, hints, and what to look out for to maintain a smooth path towards teaching. Revisit your Alma Mater and inspire them to become awesome teachers of the future. Take the time to provide information that you would have liked to know if you had a guest speaker during your high school career for these students.

If your high school doesn't have such a class and/or club, as alumni you can do a number of things such as talking to your school principal and ask to hold a meeting with interested students. And you can even start CLUB ED on your campus. CTA wants to encourage students to become educators and would be more than happy to assist you with an application and kit to do so. Contact the CTA Human Rights Department for more information in regards to CLUB ED and truly inspire these high school students to be educators.



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## INSIGHT TO A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

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Parents, listen to me when I tell you this: get involved in your child's education. Whoever their teacher is, get to know him or her. Find out what their expectations are and learn what you can do to help. It doesn't take that much effort. After all, your child's education is more important than anything else. At least it should be. I see so many parents who really don't care what their kids do at school. That doesn't make any sense. Hey, Mom and Dad, you're missing the boat. If for no other reason, use me as an example. I love my parents for many reasons, but the one I love the most of all is the fact they pushed me to become what I am today. If it hadn't been for them, I would be stacking shelves for Clark Drugs in Southern California. That's not a pretty thought. But, I went to college and received two degrees. My parents pushed me the entire way. For that, I am eternally grateful. They knew what was best for me when I didn't. That's what good parents do. So, get involved in your child's education this year. Whether or not your child succeeds or fails could be totally up to you. Simply put, you should live for that. I would.



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## A NEED FOR SCHOOL NURSES

NEIL ODA, ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATIVE, CSU FULLERTON

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In the future, thank your school nurse. Today, school nurses are a minority among the various school support professionals. They are often put to the side even though they play an integral role in the daily operations of a school.

In the January 2007 issue of *NEA Today* the article "A Band-Aid Solution" highlights the current plight of many school nurses. According to the article "nurses are squeezed by growing workloads and shrinking budgets." This then puts the job of being a school nurse onto the teacher's aides and secretaries. It really is a tough situation because qualified school nurses are being released and are being replaced by individuals that mean well, but really do not have the qualifications or experience to perform the duties of a school nurse. In addition to this, students seem to have just as many, if not more health issues than in the past. They vary from disabilities, diabetes, asthma, to allergies. It is a never ending list of students with needs that for the most part are not serious. Except, when a teacher's aide is asked to take on the role of school nurse and all he or she has for training is a video and a few hours of one-on-one practice with the district nurse. It is a bad situation waiting to occur. The school nurse/ teacher's aides interviewed in the article all felt that they were not qualified to be doing the tasks assigned, but since they knew the importance of the situation they would perform "often complex medical procedures." They ranged from tube feedings to urinary catheterizations.

The situation will hopefully get better in the future. Everything else in the world is specialized, but yet these support professionals are asked to wear multiple "hats" as they work on a school site. The next time you are on a school site and when you get a fulltime teaching position thank your school nurse. Let them know that they are important and appreciated. We all are required and needed to perform our tasks to have a functioning school site and positive environment for students to learn in. \*The article referred can be found in the January 2007 *NEA Today* issue by Rebecca L. Weber.

### CSU Fullerton SCTA Chapter Presents: *Teaching Tomorrow's Students* Conference

A Conference designed to give future  
teachers professional development.

Date: Sat. April 14, 2007  
At Cal State Fullerton  
Titan Student Union  
8:00am - 2:20pm

\*Registration information to come in March  
Check our website for that information:  
[http://www.come.to/csuf\\_scta](http://www.come.to/csuf_scta)  
Registration is Free to SCTA members

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## GET THE FACTS

CHANTAINE FAUNTLEROY, PAST OFFICER

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Some experts predict that, for the first time in history, because of inactivity and obesity related illnesses, children's life spans will be shorter than their parents. About 16% of our nation's youth are overweight or obese. Obesity among children and adolescents has tripled in the past 15 years. Heart disease is #1 cause of death in men, women, and infants in the U.S.

President Clinton underwent open-heart surgery a couple of years ago, after he suffered a major heart attack. He largely attributed his poor cardiovascular health to eating habits and lifestyle choices he developed as a child. Upon his recovery he contacted the America Heart Association (AHA) to form the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to specifically target children's health. Since then the Clinton Foundation has been working closely with the AHA to reach children and families with healthy messages. For more information and activities please visit: [www.healthiergeneration.org](http://www.healthiergeneration.org), [www.americanheart.org/org/jump](http://www.americanheart.org/org/jump).