

OUR STORY

The Future Teachers Conference – How We Got Our Start

The Future Teachers Conference made its debut in 1997 with about 100 future teachers from 10 two- and four-year colleges and universities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. It was truly a unique event at its inception because the planning team was comprised of future and new teachers and college faculty. Over the years, we have come to know that having future and new teachers on the planning team has served us well. They understand the needs and interests of conference attendees and serve as their voice during the planning of the Future Teachers Conference. We are delighted to report that the Future Teachers Conference has grown over the years and we now host about 450 pre-service and novice teachers each October. In 2001, Washington Mutual became our corporate sponsor. We are very grateful for the financial sponsorship which provides the resources for an exciting and enriching conference for our attendees.

The Future Teachers Conference – Our Current Work

Each June, the Planning Team begins the planning process for the Future Teachers Conference. During the next four months, we select workshop topics, contact the speakers, create the conference theme, make the decorations with one goal in mind – a conference that will be an exciting, wonderful, and informative experience for each attendee.

When the conference is less than one week away, the planning team convenes at Santa Monica College to collate the folders and stuff the conference bags with assorted catalogs and goodies.

On conference day, we arrive at Santa Monica College bright and early at 6:00 am. We make the coffee, set up breakfast, decorate the facilities, place signage so that attendees can easily make their way to the registration area, and set up the registration area and the check-in station for the speakers. After check-in, attendees enjoy a continental breakfast, look at the conference program to decide which sessions are of interest, and have lively conversations before we start the festivities.

Opening session begins with welcoming remarks from a planning team member and a WaMu representative. Then attendees proceed to the morning sessions where they select workshops of their choice. We reconvene at lunch and attendees join in on a lunchtime activity. Attendees then visit two additional sessions in the afternoon and meet again for the closing remarks. During the closing remarks, attendees complete the conference evaluation form and we distribute the door prizes. We finally send our special thanks to WaMu and a good-bye to the conference attendees and we sincerely hope each of them had a very worthwhile day at the Future Teachers Conference!

The Future Teachers Workshop – An Extension Of Our Work

The Future Teachers Workshop made its debut in 2003 as a series of informal gatherings joining future teachers and an exemplary educator to discuss and learn about important topics facing classroom teachers. We have had a variety of successful workshops with topics that included: Classroom Management, Working Effectively With Parents, Writing Effective Lesson Plans, Language Arts And Literacy, All Of The Things They Didn't Tell You, and Meet The Teachers Roundtable.

We continually strive to improve the events we host; the Future Teachers Workshop has a new look in 2008. The day-long event has an exciting program. The morning holds a two-hour seminar on classroom management for K-2, 3-5, and 6-12 classrooms. Seminar attendees and a role model teacher discuss effective strategies which promote a positive learning environment and show how these techniques might work in a classroom setting. After a delightful lunch, attendees visit three exciting lessons with some of the most outstanding K-12 teachers in the greater Los Angeles area. Attendees actively participate in each lesson just as if you are a student. The lessons span grades K-12 and focus on mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, and music, and the arts.

New Teachers Discussions – We Continue To Expand Our Work

The New Teachers Discussions is a series of informal dinner meetings joining first-year teachers and an exemplary role model to discuss the challenges that face new classroom teachers. During the discussions, peers and the expert teacher examine strategies and suggestions to improve the dynamics and learning environment in the new teacher's classrooms. This informal setting also provides new teachers a chance to share their own experiences. We hope that these meetings will build strong professional relationships that will grow over the years. In our own special way, we anticipate that the New Teachers Discussions will enhance the teaching experiences of novice teachers, provide a strong support network, and ultimately impact the longevity of their teaching careers.

New Teachers Conference – Our Latest Endeavor

Two-thousand and nine brings a new event to our work. As part of the evaluation progress for the Future Teachers Conference in 2008, attendees who were novice teachers requested that we develop a conference just for them. We listened carefully to their suggestions and are delighted to announce that the New Teachers Conference made its debut in October 2009 at Loyola Marymount University. About one-hundred novice teachers joined us for inspiring words from exemplary educators as well as a myriad of small workshops with essential information that new teachers need to know.

Thoughts From The Planning Team

We hope that as each attendee participates in the activities we host, they know that it was the pleasure and privilege of each planning team member to make this event a worthwhile experience. When the event comes to an end, we sincerely hope that each attendee has gained valuable information about teaching, met new mentors and peers who are as excited about teaching, and have once again recognized that there is no better profession than teaching!