

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Meeting Novices' Needs

Concern about the high attrition rate of first-year teachers inspired the National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Illinois, to reach out to new professionals with a special support program. That outreach effort achieved such remarkable results that NCTE is now developing a comprehensive induction program to meet the professional needs of its new teacher-members.

NCTE launched TEACH2000 in May 1999 in an effort to reduce the numbers of new teachers leaving the profession; the average first-year teacher attrition rate is 16 percent, according to an *Education Week* study. TEACH2000 offered first-year teachers (kindergarten through university level) free support and resources, including a one-year membership, journal subscription of their choice, cybermentor directory (mentor.ncte.org), a list-server, and classroom-tested ideas posted online. By January 2001, NCTE had enrolled 12,500 participants in the project, exceeding its enrollment goal of 6,900 by more than 70 percent.

Given the overwhelming response to TEACH2000, NCTE has decided to create an induction program designed specifically to meet the needs of local beginning teachers. Many of the TEACH2000 offerings will be incorporated into the new program.

NCTE is also developing a school-based program known as CoLEARN (Centers of Literacy Education, Achievement, Research, and Networking: colearn-demo.ncte.org/). The program offers a wide range of online resources as well as the support of a network of experienced mentors to help teachers deepen their understanding of student learning."

ALLIED SOCIETIES

SAN ANTONIO TOUTS BENEFITS OF STUDENT CAREER FAIRS

Looking for a way to promote your organization, hook the interest of future members, and focus attention on the important role played by associations? Student career fairs may be just the ticket.

The San Antonio Society of Association Executives recently participated in a local career fair for high school students. SASAE used the event, which attracted more than 2,000 students, to educate young people about the variety of different careers available within association management. Booth volunteers also told students that an association exists for almost any interest and that many organizations offer student rates. In addition to receiving valuable community exposure, SASAE generated new memberships.

Getting started. Most high schools and colleges offer some type of career fair. A districtwide event offers the greatest visibility. To find out about local career fairs, call the career development department of your local high school or school district. At the college level, contact the placement office. Since college-level career fairs may be more focused on actual placements, find out if your association or allied society can participate simply as an educational exercise.

Creating a display. Your booth will need to offer information on association management, available career paths, salary ranges, skills required, and how to find a job in the field. SASAE prepared a series of PowerPoint slides to familiarize students with the association industry. Copies are available at www.sasae.org.

Managing the booth. The number of volunteers you need depends on the length of the career fair. Find out how much time your volunteers are willing to donate and set shifts based on their availability. SASAE had two volunteers in its booth at all times during the three-



Kathy Mittler, SASAE president, explains association management to high school student Sean Bray at a recent career fair.

hour fair. Asking the school how many students it expects to attend the career fair will help you determine how many handouts to have available—keep in mind that only a small percentage of visitors will want handouts. For example, SASAE took 50 handouts for an expected attendance of 2,000, which was plenty. It's also a good idea to have two sign-up sheets: one for sending follow-up information if you run out of materials and another for sending information to students who are especially interested in the association field.

Attracting an audience. Adopt an enthusiastic demeanor and stand in front of the booth. Be prepared to explain what associations do, what types of careers are available, and the benefits of working for a nonprofit organization. Today's students are interested in doing worthwhile work that contributes to the community. Leverage this aspect of nonprofit management to get students "hooked."

Submitted by Laura Bray, association manager for the San Antonio Society of Association Executives and president of Bray Communications. E-mail: laurabray@braycommunications.com.