

President's Council of Advisors Recognizes Teacher Institutes

The U. S. President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology has recognized Teachers Institutes as effective resources for bridging current gaps between public schools and the professional STEM community. Yale National Initiative Director Jim Vivian shared the prepublication version of the report [*Prepare and Inspire: K-12 Education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) for America's Future*] with CTI recently, drawing special attention to pages 101-102 of the document:

"A variety of programs attempt to bridge the gaps between public schools and the STEM professional community, but not all such programs provide teachers and schools with resources that are useful in their classrooms. Nonetheless, several programs demonstrate the potential for such connections to benefit K-12 schools. For example, [Teachers Institutes, which began in 1978 in New Haven and have since expanded to cities across the country, pair](#)

[universities and school districts, allowing teachers to identify the topics on which they would like to collaborate. University professors then guide these teachers through inquiry-based learning in a STEM subject area.](#) More recently, National Lab Day . . . has linked STEM professionals with K-12 teachers and schools for projects and lab experiments using a technology-based matching service similar to that used for online dating. The United States is home to more than one million STEM professionals over age 60, many of whom have retired and could constitute a vast cadre of volunteers for K-12 schools. [It is important that we find way to harness these sources of partnership and expertise in a committed, sustained way relevant to K-12 teachers and students."](#)

The full text of this Report to the President is available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast-stemedreport.pdf>

A Fellow's Perspective:

Coming Home to Yale

Having now completed the whole Yale National Initiative experience, from spring introduction to fall wrap-up, what I found really interesting was the sense of unity – the “esprit de corps” – created amongst participants. If the spring visit was one of exploration and a certain amount of trepidation, summer was a revelation involving intense work, research, meetings, receptions, fascinating lectures... sometimes the feeling that you needed it to stop because your brain hurt. Producing a unit brings you together because you're all in the same situation – wondering how to organize ideas and make a start, wondering if what you did is heading in the right direction, then wondering how to do everything needed to complete the unit: footnotes, bibliography, teacher resources, etc. Then there is the intense exhilaration of finishing, the celebrations and the farewells.

Returning in the fall is like coming home. There is something magical about it. There were lots of meetings, but they were interesting because now I was really invested in the whole experience. I was proud to be part of the delegation from Charlotte with our successful new Charlotte Teachers Institute. It was fascinating to hear about other teachers' experiences with their units. The professors were all there, and felt like old friends. We, the teachers, were there to listen to faculty ideas for seminars next year. They were there to hear about our classroom experiences. This all was accompanied by an outpouring of enthusiasm, theirs and ours.

But this was not the whole story. Part of the story is Yale itself. The place is quite simply magical. There was the unusual



Four Deborahs make great collaborators

CTI Fellow Deborah Monroy (far left) collaborated with dedicated teachers from across the U.S. (including “the three other ‘Deborahs’” pictured with her here) during her experience as a Yale National Fellow.

experience of reuniting with the three other “Deborahs” in the teacher group (yes, all spelled the same way). Everyone in the local shops seemed to remember me. This was perhaps a reflection of my shopping excesses, but felt as if New Haven was my hometown. And were the magical glimpses of original manuscripts of Bach, Mozart and Haydn in the Beineke Library and the magnificent tones of an organ playing in the adjoining concert hall while we ate. The most profound magical moment for me was two students selling tickets for a Halloween event – one playing the violin and the other the trumpet. Both were staggeringly talented. The violin launched into a spontaneous rendering of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto, and then they played my own private performance of “America the Beautiful.” The tones echoing in Woolsey Hall were, quite simply, extraordinarily beautiful and felt like a renewal of vows. I became American in 2000, so here was an anniversary I would never forget. Only in Yale...