It is amazing how fast summer has passed and has become a distant object in our rear view mirrors. It seems only yesterday that the ASTE Board convened in Sacramento, California for its summer board meeting. One advantage of meeting at the future site of the ASTE Conference is that we get to see first hand what is in store for January. And let me say without hesitation that Rick Pomeroy and Catherine Martin have done an outstanding job of selecting a site for our conference. The hotel is wonderful with ample meeting rooms and informal spaces with a spacious open atrium. It is also located in an area that is chocked full of superb eating establishments.

The summer Board meeting offers a chance for the Board to work on critical issues facing the association. During this particular session, the Board diligently revised the By-Laws and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Please note that the By-Law changes will be presented at the same time as the slate of candidates to be voted on by ASTE members. The Board focused on making the By-Laws and the SOPs consistent in language and intent. As always, we need to thank Eugene Wagner, our Executive Director, for making our arrangements in Sacramento. As well, a big thanks goes to Rick Pomeroy and Catherine Martin for being wonderful hosts.

As we all gear up for the upcoming fall and spring semesters, there are several issues that have arisen that have great potential to impact science education. In particular, President Obama’s Race to the Top reform continues to be a point of discussion. Congress has given the Secretary of Education approximately 4.35 billion dollars with almost no strings attached to use as he sees fit to promote school reform.
Unlike the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), not every state will get Race to the Top money and the funds will be distributed through a competitive process. Indeed, these funds will be used to push states in the direction that the Secretary desires.

During a recent webinar sponsored by AACTE I learned a great deal about the Race to the Top reform initiative. A key to this reform, and for that matter all stimulus efforts, is a focus on the four key areas: a) improve struggling schools, b) address teacher quality and the unequal distribution of teachers, c) build and use statewide data systems, and d) create and use common standards and assessments. Priorities have been set based on these areas and all applications must include a comprehensive approach to the four key education reform areas—the first priority. An emphasis on STEM education is the second priority and is competitive. This means as an applicant that you have an advantage in the competition if you focus on STEM education. Finally there are priorities relating to the expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems, p-20 coordination and vertical alignment, and school-level conditions for reform and innovation. Focusing on these priorities will not give you an advantage in the competition, but the Secretary of Education considers these a priority.

As one examines—closely—the intent of the Race to the Top, several key components become very clear. Most notably is that throughout the Race to the Top there is an effort to tie teacher quality to test scores. For example, the Race to the Top Proposed Priorities, Requirement’s Definitions and Selection Criteria document states, “Research indicates that teacher quality is a critical contributor to student learning and that there is dramatic variation in teacher quality. Yet it is difficult to predict teacher quality based on the qualifications that teachers bring to the job…measures such as certification, master’s degrees, and years of teaching experience have limited predictive power…one of the most effective ways to accurately assess teacher quality is to measure the growth in achievement of teacher’s students and by aggregating the performance of students across teachers with a school to assess principal quality.” (2009, p. 15-16). As well, the Race to the Top specifies alternative routes for certification that focus on producing more teachers, but lacks any substantive discussion of quality. In part the Race to the Top states, “…pathways to certification that are authorized under the State’s laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State that have the following characteristics: a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers; b) provide a clinical/student teaching experience; c) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test-out of courses; and d) award the level of certification that permits a candidate who successfully completes the program to teach or lead in public schools within the state.” (p. 38, Section IV, Definitions, Race to the Top).

It seems clear that the efforts of the Department of Education and the Secretary of Education are working to link teacher effectiveness to student achievement where effectiveness is defined as one year of academic growth in one calendar year measured by a standardized test. There is also an emphasis on charter schools and alternative routes to earning a high school diploma. In addition, there is a movement to generate common standards and assessments.

My biggest concern with the Race to the Top is a systematic exclusion of higher education teacher preparation. This concern has been echoed by other science educators, who in their own states have seen their governors, legislatures, and policy makers use the Race to the Top as a tool to eliminate or minimize the role of higher education in teacher preparation. What can we do? How can we respond? It is always a good idea to arm our legislatures and policy makers with accurate information regarding the quality of our programs. We can also rely on ASTE and our colleagues as well as other organizations like AACTE to provide sound advice, documents, and data that will help us prepare responses at a state and local level. The bottom line is that we must get involved. We cannot sit on the sidelines and be spectators in the political arena any more. I would encourage you to take positive steps to impact legislation locally and nationally. Take time to get to know your state representatives. Make an effort to write op-ed pieces.

We cannot sit on the sidelines and be spectators in the political arena any more.

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President’s Newsletter Message Continued from Page 2

When given the opportunity, as I was given this summer at a Congressional Breakfast, take advantage of invitations to speak at policy forums. I can’t say it any better than Kathy Norman (Past President of ASTE) who in the summer 2006 Newsletter said, “It is vital that we, as members of ASTE and as involved citizens, become active in political advocacy… up-to-date legislative information are available at http://www.stemedcoalition.org/ and http://www.stemedcaucus.org/.”

References

Ardila-Rey, A. (2009). Stimulus Update Webinar Archive- Watch it here On-Demand! Stimulus Update Webinar Archive- Watch it here On-Demand!


Announcing the Fall 2009 NASTE (North-Central ASTE) Region meeting October 8-10 at the University of Dubuque in Dubuque, IA.

We are very excited to hold the 2009 NASTE meeting in historic Dubuque during the height of upper Midwest’s fall colors. Adjacent to the mighty Mississippi, Dubuque offers beautiful scenery, historical connections and an opportunity to meet with excellent science-teacher educators!

Our conference begins Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m. with a poster session and social hour. Friday’s activities include paper presentations, skill-oriented sessions, roundtables and this year a work session focused on performance assessments of our graduates. We will also be spending planning time preparing for the ASTE conference in Minneapolis, MN, in January 2011. Late Friday afternoon and evening include a fieldtrip to a local point of interest as well as a shared dinner experience. Saturday’s activities include more presentations and a business meeting.

Information concerning presentation proposals, registration and lodging should be directed to:
Mickey Kolis, NASTE conference chair
University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire
kolismw@uwec.edu

The 2009 ASTE Northeast Region meeting October 22-24 is at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) this year!

The conference Web site is available at: http://environmentaleducationonline.com/neaste

Please see this Web site for registration and submission information.

PEEC is located within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. It is a beautiful setting that includes access to shady hemlock gorges, diverse lowland and upland forests, rushing waterfalls and streams, unique flora and fauna of boreal bogs, and ponds teeming with insects and amphibian life.

The conference will begin on Thursday evening with an opening dinner followed by a panel session and activity. After the session we will gather around a bonfire and make s’mores. Paper sessions will be given during Friday morning and early afternoon. An afternoon break will follow that with optional activities including a very scenic waterfall hike. Evening roundtable and poster sessions will occur over dessert. Additional paper sessions will take place on Saturday morning with the conference concluding after lunch.

Session formats will include 20 minute paper sessions (15 minute presentation followed by 5 minutes of questions and discussion), roundtable discussions, and a poster session.

The 2009 conference registration fee includes all meals and lodgings. Lodging options include cabins and yurts. Please note that onsite lodging at PEEC is limited. We encourage everyone to register early.

Additional information about PEEC is available online at: http://www.peec.org/

Important Dates/Deadlines

Advance Registration Deadline: Sept. 7
Presentation Submission (Papers and Roundtables) Deadline: Sept. 7
Late Registration Deadline: Oct. 1
Poster submission deadline: Oct. 1
With great pleasure, we issue a call for papers for a special themed issue of the *Journal of Science Teacher Education*. Brenda Capobianco, Allan Feldman, and Elaine Howes will serve as Guest Editors for this special *JSTE* issue on teacher action research. Full details about this special themed issue are below.

**Call for Papers**

*New Pathways for Teacher Action Research in Science Teacher Education*

The *Journal of Science Teacher Education* is soliciting scholarly manuscripts for a special themed issue on teacher action research. Teacher action research and its products, including accompanying stories and intellectual narratives, serve as a mechanism for researchers to study the relationship among factors, such as student/teacher voice, social change, accountability, learning, and identity development. The editors are seeking manuscripts that explore these issues and share innovative methods for capturing and analyzing knowledge construction, learning, transformation, and empowerment in practice.

Manuscripts may involve individuals and groups of science teachers and science teacher educators, who identify areas for improvement, if not transformation, in their practice, who systematically engage in action research about their ideas, and who willingly make public their self-critical inquiry. This work may address the significant role action research plays in preservice and inservice science teacher education, professional development, and research and development initiatives across and within science disciplines. Both empirical and conceptual manuscripts are encouraged.

Some questions that manuscripts submitted for this themed issue might address include:

- In what ways has engagement with teacher action research transformed how science teacher researchers (i.e. science teachers and/or teacher educators who engage in action research) teach science or teach science teachers?
- In what ways has action research become a transformative undertaking for the science teacher educators and/or their constituents?
- What issues, dilemmas, or conflicts have arisen in the context of science teacher action research?
- What are alternative methodological approaches employed when science teachers and/or science teacher educators conduct action research?
- In what way has your action research informed or reformed educational practices in science teacher preparation programs and/or inservice science teacher professional development?

Manuscripts should be submitted to: [http://jste.edmgr.com](http://jste.edmgr.com) and accompanied by a cover letter indicating that the manuscript is a “Special Issue” submission. Authors are encouraged to follow JSTE manuscript guidelines (see: [http://www.springer.com/education/science+education/journal/10972](http://www.springer.com/education/science+education/journal/10972)). The deadline for submission is November 30, 2009.
Knowles Science Teaching Foundation
2010 Teaching Fellowships

The 2010 Teaching Fellowships support exceptional individuals who are committed to becoming outstanding mathematics and science teachers in U.S. high schools. Applicants should have at least a bachelor’s degree in biology, a physical science, mathematics or a related field, and have received their most recent content degree within the past five years. Individuals who are currently enrolled in a secondary math or science teaching credential program are eligible if they are within five years of their most recent content degree and will not have completed their credential before December 2009.

Fellowships will be awarded in each of three disciplinary strands: biology, physical science, and mathematics. Benefits include:

- Financial and professional support for up to five years, including tuition assistance for up to two years and a monthly stipend while fellows are enrolled in a recognized teacher credential program.
- Room, board, travel expenses and fees for summer professional development activities as well as a monthly stipend during the summer.
- Opportunities to apply for instructional materials, academic year professional development, school-site mentor support, support for National Board Certification and financial support for leadership activities.
- Membership in a professional organization.
- Room, board and travel expenses for three meetings per year with other KSTF Fellows.

Deadline: January 13, 2010 - 5:00pm Eastern

Website: [http://kstf.org](http://kstf.org)

Knowles Science Teaching Foundation – Physical Sciences Program Officer

The Knowles Science Teaching Foundation (KSTF) is currently seeking a Physical Sciences Program Officer for planning, coordination, and management of the KSTF Physical Sciences Teaching Fellows Program. The primary responsibility of the Physical Sciences Program Officer will be the management of up to two groups of about 15 KSTF Physical Sciences Teaching Fellows each, which includes: the recruitment and selection of yearly cohorts; planning, conducting and evaluating a five-year trajectory of professional development and support for teaching fellows; and working with the program staff and institutions outside of KSTF to enhance the foundation’s capacity to positively impact the profession of secondary science and mathematics teaching. Please see [http://kstf.org/jobs.aspx](http://kstf.org/jobs.aspx) for more information.
Recognition for Science Teacher Preparation Programs

In July of 2009, the following institutions were recognized by NSTA as meeting the 2003 NSTA Standards for Science Teacher Preparation. These institutions demonstrated excellence through assessment alignment, data collection, reflection and improvement of programs based on data (for a complete list, go to www.nsta.org/preservice).

Congratulations!

Buffalo State College, Canisius University, Edinboro University of PA, Fairfield University, Fordham University, Furman University, Harding University Cannon, Harris-Stowe State University, McDaniel College, Ohio Dominican University, Shepherd University, Texas Southern University, Texas Southern University, University of Akron, University of Central Oklahoma, University of Dayton, University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of Houston-Clear Lake, University of Rhode Island, University of St. Francis, Walsh University, Western Connecticut State University, Western Governors University, and Youngstown State University

ASTE Continues to support recognition process

A sincere thank-you goes to the ASTE community for continuing to support the NSTA recognition process for meeting the Science Teacher Preparation Standards. This is a rigorous process where institutions have content, pedagogy and student learning requirements that are demonstrated through assessments, data collection, reflection and program improvement. The Audit Team members Elizabeth Allan, Erica Brownstein, Rita Hagevik, Joseph Shane, and William Veal thank ASTE for providing a meeting room for auditing to take place.

ASTE also provided a meeting room for Reviewer Training. Reviewers apply and are trained to review submissions for NSTA Science Teacher Preparation Program recognition. In January, the following successfully completed the first stage of the reviewer training: Cheryl Grable, Don Schillinger, Erin Peters, Stephen Burton, Jann Joseph, and Gerald Ketterling. Their dedication to the profession is appreciated!

If you have questions about the NSTA recognition process or would like to become a reviewer, please contact the Preservice Coordinator, Erica M. Brownstein at ebrownst@capital.edu or visit the web page at www.nsta.org/preservice

NSTA offers workshop for alignment with the 2003 Standards for Science Teacher Preparation

A day-long workshop to discuss the process in developing a Program Review for NSTA preservice programs will be offered at the NSTA Regional, Fort Lauderdale Florida, November 13, 2009. Topics include a discussion of standards and sample assessments. Program recognition is about empowering institutions to use the NSTA standards to improve their programs and develop better science teachers. For more information go to www.nsta.org/preservice.
Make your plans Now!

It is not too early to begin thinking about your plans for the 2010 ASTE Conference in Sacramento, January 14-16, 2010, at the Sheraton Grand Hotel. Over the summer, the program committee has been busy reviewing proposals and we are pleased with the diversity of topics and formats for all attendees. At the time of this writing, we have 10 preconference and embedded workshops, over 200 accepted papers, experiential sessions and posters, invited presentations from Delta Scientific and keynote presentations by noted scientist Richard Alley and science educator, Sheila Tobias. Non-session activities will include a Thursday morning fun run, the WISE dinner and the availability of dining opportunities to meet every budget and taste. Downtown Sacramento, home to the State Capital also includes several outstanding theater venues, world famous museums, and the beautiful Capital Park and garden. For those planning to come early or stay late, there are several world famous wine regions within an hours drive. For those wanting a more scenic experience, beautiful Lake Tahoe with skiing, winter resorts and the Nevada casinos is an easy drive to the east and San Francisco is an hour to the west. Watch the ASTE website for more information about the conference and recommendations about travel plans. Sacramento is served by all of major airlines and Amtrak so now is the time to catch those great travel deals. The conference planning committee and the Far-West Region look forward to welcoming you to Sacramento in January.

Rick Pomeroy  
ASTE 2010 Conference Chair  
jpomeroy@ucdavis.edu

Catherine Martin-Dunlop  
ASTE 2010 Conference Program Chair  
cmartin7@csulb.edu
The REESE Program supports fundamental research in STEM teaching and learning in a variety of disciplines. Examples include: proof-of-concept studies for curriculum or professional development innovations; cognitive and neural bases of STEM learning; policy, synthesis and meta-analyses; and measurement, modeling, and methods in research and evaluation. This list should not be considered exhaustive.


Individuals may also direct questions about the program via email to DRLREESE@nsf.gov, or by phone, 703-292-8650.

The 2010 ASTE elections are just around the corner!!!

Be on the lookout for information about the upcoming elections for the offices of President, Board Member at Large (2 slots) and Elections Committee (3 slots). Last year was the first year for online voting. The voting this year will take place online as well, but the window to vote will be 45 days instead of the 60 days it has been in the past. Voting will start on October 1, 2009 and end on November 15, 2009. A message will be sent via the ASTE listserve when the voting website opens. Please be sure to vote!

The Elections Committee
Malcolm B. Butler, Ph.D. Chair