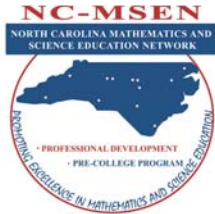


North Carolina Mathematics and Science Education Network (NC-MSEN)



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2008 P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholars Banquet

On a hot, summer Saturday evening, June 28th, 2008, the NC-MSEN Pre-College Program (PCP) hosted its first annual banquet for the P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Project at the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education in Chapel Hill. There were approximately 100 guests including the P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholars, their parents and teacher advisors, PCP Coordinators and staff, as well as special speakers and guests from UNC-General Administration and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

The Pre-College Experiences to Recruit Students Into Science Teaching Project is for students with high potential but who may not have been encouraged to pursue teaching as a career. It enables students to develop a greater understanding of the teaching process and gives them the fundamental skills needed to prepare for a science or mathematics teaching career.

This project is made possible through a Burroughs Wellcome Fund grant. Ninth-grade students, recruited through the NC-MSEN Pre-College Program, are participating for three years in year-round activities and experiences that will increase their interest in science and mathematics teaching. Follow-up activities during the cohort's fourth year will assist the students' successful transition into college.

Participants represented six of the NC-MSEN PCP sites, i.e. Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), Fayetteville State University (FSU), NC State University (NCSU), UNC Chapel Hill (UNCCH), UNC Charlotte (UNCC), and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU).

An hour before the Banquet, guests viewed table-top displays from each of the participating PCP sites. P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholars proudly and innovatively showcased their accomplishments and experiences during the first year of the project, from journaling to scrapbooking to a digital slide show.

Some of the P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholars served as ushers. They greeted banquet guests at the door and seated them in the dining room. Dr. Rita L. Fuller, P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director, presided at the event. The banquet began with greetings by Dr. Verna L. Holoman, NC-MSEN Executive Director and P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Principal Investigator; Ms. Melanie B. Scott, Senior Program Associate at the Burroughs Wellcome Fund; and Ms. Alisa Chapman, Associate Vice President of the University-School Programs at UNC-General Administration.

Ms. Taylor Pinckney, a UNCC P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholar, gave the invocation. While guests were indulging in an elegantly served and delicious dinner, they had a chance to view highlights from the first year of the project through a PowerPoint slide show.

After dinner, Ms. Bria Freeman, one of the ECSU P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholars, introduced Dr. Leon Rouson, the guest speaker. Dr. Rouson, currently an Assistant Professor at Norfolk State University, is a former ECSU PCP Coordinator. His speech was full of personal convictions, both powerful and inspiring, with the goal of strongly encouraging the P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Scholars to pursue teaching.

The PERSIST Scholars were recognized for their achievements:

2008 Essay of the Year was awarded to Ms. Taylor Pinckney from UNCC.

2008 Best Essay Awards for the individual sites went to:

Ms. Bria Freeman, ECSU
Ms. Maria Zermeno, FSU
Ms. Taylor Pinckney, UNCC
Mr. Joe Goodson, UNCCH

2008 Students of the Year were announced and presented with awards.

Mr. William Curry, ECSU
Ms. Maria Zermeno, FSU
Mr. Joel Nortey, UNCC
Ms. Sandra Mendoza, UNCCH
Ms. Maryel Simmons, WSSU

The recipients of the 2008 Best Journal Awards were:

Mr. Jamila Houston, ECSU
Mr. Daron Holman, FSU
Ms. Morgan McRae, UNCC
Ms. Hannah Allison, UNCCH

All participating Scholars were presented with a certificate. Those who had a 70% or higher attendance record in their first year received a \$25 stipend. P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Teacher Advisors and PCP Coordinators were recognized and presented with a token award for their hard work in making the first year of this project a huge success. Parents were recognized for their gracious support to the P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Project and the Pre-College Program. The banquet closed with tokens of appreciation for all special guests including Dr. Rouson, Ms. Chapman, Ms. Scott, and Mrs. Felicia L. Umstead, Pre-College Program Assistant and P.E.R.S.I.S.T. Project Assistant.

Special thanks go to the volunteer videographer, Mr. Stephon Harper, and the volunteer photographer, Mrs. DeShay Everett.

***The North Carolina Mathematics and Science Education Network (NC-MSEN)** is a constituent program in the UNC Center for School Leadership Development. It has two primary components: teacher professional development and a pre-college program. The purpose of the Pre-College Program is to broaden the pool of high school graduates who are prepared to pursue college/university majors that lead to careers in mathematics, science, technology, engineering, and teaching. Please visit <http://www.unc.edu/depts/msen> for more information.*

