

The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute FAQs and Schedule for Fellows 2010

What is the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute?

In December 1998, Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham University and the Pittsburgh Public Schools received a grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Readers Digest Fund with which to fund the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute. That grant which was part of a larger grant that had been awarded to Yale by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund was matched locally by funds provided by the Buhl Foundation through the Frick Educational Fund, The Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and the Hillman Foundation. Funds to continue beyond the demonstration period have been provided by The Alcoa Foundation, The Maurice Falk Medical Fund, The Elsie H. Hillman Foundation, The Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Family Communications, the Snee-Reinhardt Charitable Foundation and The Wean Foundation as well as by the School District with funds from its National Science Foundation and Department of Education Teaching American History grants.

Following the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute model, teachers suggest topics; the university and university professors lead the seminar for the teachers; and the teachers-the Institute Fellows-are treated as members of the university communities. While participating in seminars, Fellows prepare curriculum units or other documents that draw on the content of the seminar and then use their units or other documents in teaching their classes during the following school year. To increase the impact of the seminar on the district, the teacher-developed units and other documents are available to other teachers on the institute's website and in hard copy.

Are seminars appropriate for teachers at all levels?

Yes. During its first three years of operation the Institute offered 17 seminars which were open only to teachers from schools originally invited to participate. In 2002, participation in the Institute was opened to all Pittsburgh public school teachers. Since then preferred participation in three of the seminars has been available to teachers of specified grades for courses so that the curriculum units or other documents that they develop may become a part of the approved curriculum for the grade or course for which they are intended. If space remains, other teachers may be admitted to these seminars. All other seminars are open to teachers of all grades and courses.

What kinds of seminars are offered? How do they work?

The following seminars are being offered in 2010: Africa Rising – How the Poorest Continent is Surviving and Thriving; Forensic Chemistry; Immigration and Life in America, including Pittsburgh; Media Math; Physical Mathletics – Physics of Sports; and Social Justice.

Seminars meet for 15 two-hour seminars during the spring. Prior to the seminar meetings, faculty members put together and distribute reading lists for the seminars. During the sessions, Fellows discuss with each other and the Seminar Leader both the reading they have done and the development of their curriculum units or projects. After the final seminar meeting, Fellows have one month within which to prepare the final versions of their curriculum units.

What are the incentives for participating in a seminar?

In addition to the intellectual stimulus of participation in a seminar and the stipend they receive upon completion of the seminar, Fellows enjoy other benefits. Among them is eligibility for increment and Act 48 credits and the opportunity to apply for two credits toward the conversion of an Instructional I to an Instructional II Certificate or toward a master's equivalent degree through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Is there any cost to participate?

While teachers may be asked to purchase some reading materials, all Fellows who successfully complete their seminars and curriculum units are awarded a stipend, which is more than adequate to cover any expenses they may incur.

Where and when do seminars meet?

Seminars meet on the campuses of Carnegie Mellon University and Chatham University. Meetings begin in the first week of February and run through the first week of June. Initially, all seminars are scheduled to meet on Tuesdays from 4:00-6:00 p.m. except where otherwise indicated, but the time may be adjusted to meet the convenience of the Fellows and the Seminar Leader and with advance notice to the Director of the Institute.

How do I apply?

Application materials, including full descriptions of all seminars for 2010 may be requested from the teacher in your school who serves as an Institute Representative or Contact, or from the Institute directly at 412/365-1184.

Who can participate in the Institute?

Participation is open to all Pittsburgh public schools, representing all regions of the city and all levels of education.

2009-2010 Schedule for Fellows:

December	7	OPEN HOUSE at Carnegie Mellon University at 4:30 p.m.
January	6	Completed applications due
	15	Notification of Acceptance
	27	Welcome and Orientation at Chatham University

Seminar Meeting Schedule & Deadlines

February	2	
	9	
	16	
	23	Required writing workshop for new fellows
March	2	Unit Topic, Prospectus and Reading List due
	9	
	16	
	23	
April	6	
	13	
	20	First draft of unit
	27	
May	4	
	11	
	18	Second draft of unit due
	25	
June	1	End-of-Year Event
July	2	Completed unit due