

Teachers Institute
of Philadelphia

2020
Annual Report

TIP

Mission

The Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) enables public school teachers to expand their knowledge base through university-level study and research. TIP aims to bring new content to classroom teaching, increase expectations for student achievement and raise teacher morale in the public schools.

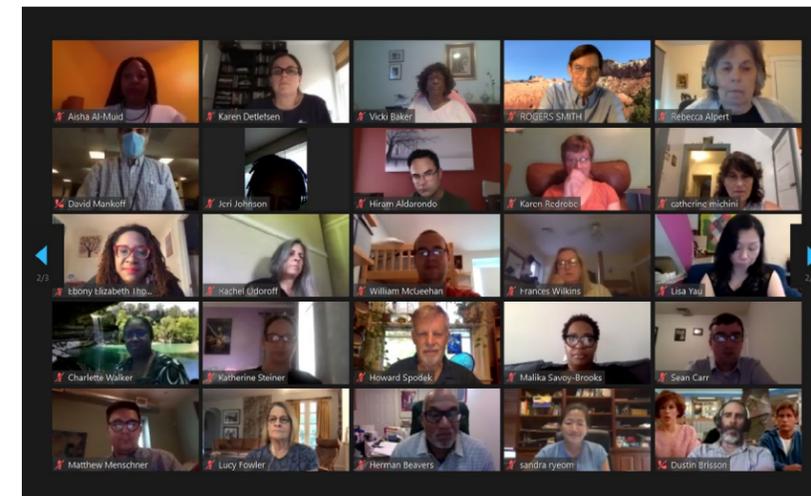
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Executive Summary

2019–20 was a difficult year for educators due to COVID-19, but participants in the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia united to help one another in overcoming these difficulties.

With widespread support for the program in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), Penn, Temple and the community at large, and with a solid base of funding, TIP offered more seminars and served more teachers than any time since 2009. Though they had to move to online instruction mid-way through the program, fellows remained enthusiastic. 51 teachers completed curriculum units, which will be published in the fall of this year.



TIP's Spring Celebration, marking the completion of the program, held via Zoom, April 30, 2020.

Institute Activities

TIP enables public school teachers to expand their knowledge base through university-level study and research. We view teachers as independent thinkers and scholars, and encourage them to support one another in improving their practice. Participating teachers, whom we call fellows, enroll in semester-long seminars led by Penn and Temple professors.

During the seminars, teachers engage intensively with a topic that is on the cutting-edge of knowledge in the sciences, arts, humanities or social sciences, and write an original curriculum unit based on what they have learned. The community that forms among seminar participants helps individual fellows to succeed, and continues beyond the end of the seminar.

THIS YEAR'S SEMINARS

Evolutionary Biology

Dustin Brisson,
Professor of Biology, Penn

New Approaches to the History of Slavery: The View from the Penn and Slavery Project

Kathleen Brown,
Professor of History, Penn

A Visual Approach to Learning Math

Robert Ghrist, Professor of
Mathematics, Penn

Cinema and Civil Rights

Karen Redrobe,
Professor of Cinema and
Media Studies, Penn

The City in History

Howard Spodek,
Professor of History, Temple

The Dark Fantastic: Reading Science Fiction, Fantasy and Comics to Change the World

Ebony Elizabeth Thomas,
Professor of Education, Penn



Institute seminars follow best practices in teacher professional development by providing sustained engagement with a topic, inviting teacher input into how the topic is delivered, and promoting active learning, where research and discussion rather than lecturing are the main methods of study. The community that forms among seminar participants helps individual fellows to succeed, and is continues beyond the end of the seminar. Research has shown that programs like TIP that promote teacher agency are most likely to boost teacher effectiveness.*

YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

TIP's semester-long seminars are modeled on the ones pioneered by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute in 1978. As a League member in the Yale National Initiative (YNI), we selected a cohort of fellows to participate in a national summer intensive session where they studied and wrote curriculum units under the guidance of Yale professors. We selected fellow Lisa Yau to serve as national steering committee representative to YNI.

SDP Superintendent Bill Hite speaking at the April 30 Spring Celebration.

NATIONAL FELLOWS

Alexander de Arana
Bodine High School for
International Affairs

Cristóbal Carambo
Philadelphia High
School for Girls

Rachel Odoroff
H. C. Lea School

Lisa Yau
Francis Scott
Key School

Teacher Leadership

Putting teachers in the driver's seat is a hallmark of TIP's approach. When they enroll in a seminar, fellows work with their seminar leaders to tailor the content toward their students' needs.

Our Teacher Advisory Council (TAC), a group of fellows representing schools throughout the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), assesses the needs of their colleagues and suggests topics for seminars. The program is founded on the idea that teachers are best able to develop strategies for meeting the academic requirements of today's classrooms.

THE TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

The 2019–20 TAC included representatives from schools of all types around the SDP. Schools with teacher representatives (TRs) were:

High Schools Bodine High School for International Affairs, Carver High School of Engineering and Science, Hill-Freedman World Academy, Kensington Creative and Performing Arts High School, Philadelphia High School for Girls, A. Phillip Randolph Career and Technical High School, U School

K-6 and K-8 Schools Sadie Alexander, John Barry, Joseph Greenberg, Edward Heston, Francis Scott Key, H. C. Lea, S. Weir Mitchell, John H. Taggart

TIP FELLOWS SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE

In the fall of 2019 TIP joined Penn GSE's Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP) in hosting the day-long Celebration of Writing and Literacy: Teacher Research and Knowledge. Authors Shani Robinson and Anna Simonton gave the keynote address on the Atlanta cheating scandal and how high-stakes testing has diminished teacher agency. Throughout the day, TIP fellows presented their curriculum units to teachers from around the region in sessions related to their seminars: *Intercultural Storytelling; Lead and Health; Modern and Contemporary U.S. Poetry in K-12 Classrooms; Philadelphia Criminal Justice: Past, Present, and Future; Learning About America and the World from McDonald's.*



Teacher Sam Reed presents at the Celebration of Writing and Literacy.

Ivywood Gift

In 2018, TIP founder, seminar leader, and longtime Advisory Chair Rogers M. Smith pledged a transformative gift of six million dollars from his family's Ivywood Foundation.

We are pleased to report that half of the funds have been awarded, with the remaining portion to be given in yearly increments through 2023. This gift has ensured the long-term stability of the program, providing annual support through 2023, and thereafter endowment returns to cover operating expenses. As stipulated by Smith, one use of the funds has been to endow the director's position and name it in honor of TIP's founding director Alan J. Lee.

University Leadership

Since the approval of our strategic plan in 2018, TIP's University Advisory Council (UAC) has been increasingly active in shaping the program's future.

In accordance with our bylaws, the UAC executive committee, consisting of Advisory Co-Chairs Herman Beavers and Dennis Deturck, and Treasurer Cory Bowman, has been meeting monthly. The full UAC met in October and March, approving a long-term budget for the organization and shaping the seminar content for the upcoming year.

Beginning in July 2020, Karen Detlefsen will succeed Dennis Deturck term as Advisor Co-chair, while Herman Beavers will stay in the role for another year. More on the UAC, including a list of its members, is on the [University Advisory Council](#) page of our website.

How TIP Fared

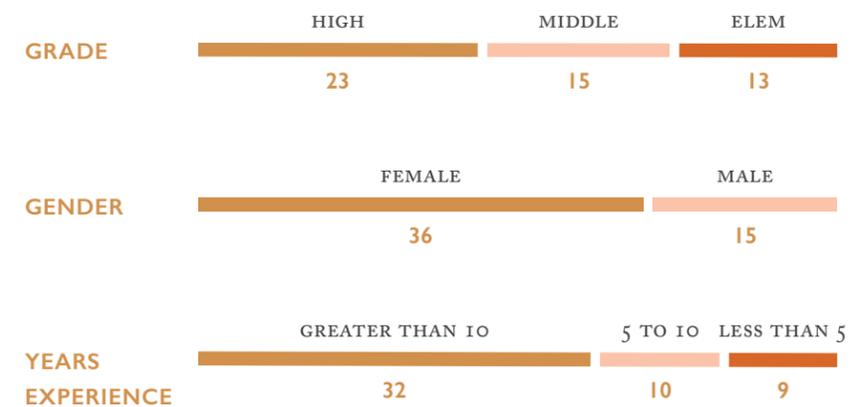
As noted, TIP offered more seminars this year (6) than any time since 2009. 51 teachers have completed curriculum units as of June 30, 2020, and as some teachers have been given extensions due to COVID-19 hardships, that number is expected to increase.

6
SEMINARS

51
TEACHERS
COMPLETED
CURRICULUM
UNITS

SNAPSHOT OF THE 2020 TIP FELLOWS

TIP serves a broad cross section of teachers in the SDP. It enrolls teachers in all grade levels, though the largest share tends to be from the upper (9-12) grades. In terms of gender, TIP's ratio of male to female teachers is representative of the overall SDP teacher population. Teachers with more experience (10+ years) were the most likely to enroll in the TIP program. The charts below show the diversity of the 51 fellows who have completed our 2020 program.



Retention Study

Having received IRB approval in 2019, TIP engaged Penn GSE Professor Wendy Chan and Graduate Assistant Kat Wilson to study the impact TIP of its impact on its participants.

The study compared the retention rates of TIP fellows with those of like teachers who do not participate in our program. Chan used propensity-matching to reduce the chance that confounding variables such as age, gender, ethnicity and experience explained differences in retention. Preliminary results show that, during the period 2010–2018, TIP participation correlated with an increased likelihood of staying on in the job, and that the effect was stronger for African American and Latinx teachers.

Budget

\$480K

2024 TARGET BUDGET

100

TEACHERS PER YEAR GOAL

We anticipate growing to a \$480,000 per year program by 2024, increasing our enrollment capacity from 60 to nearly 100 teachers per year. With our larger enrollment in 2020, we are on track to reach that goal.

Due to COVID-19, which eliminated many in-person events, TIP's expenses were lower than predicted in 2021, a trend we expect to continue into the next year. Though our financial position is strong and the Ivywood gift gives us significant resources, TIP continues to seek funding from new sources such as "broader impacts" science grants, which will enable us to offer a wider range of STEM-based seminars in the future.

BUDGETED EXPENSES  \$346K
ACTUAL EXPENSES  \$327K

Challenges and Goals

As we expand the TIP program, it will be important to develop strong relationships with our partners, the SDP and Temple University.

We will also need to raise awareness of TIP among teachers, school district leaders, and university faculty members.

Our specific goals in this regard are:

- Increase knowledge of TIP through the web, social media and news coverage
- Increase the usage of TIP curriculum units on our website

*Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181–199; Desimone, L.M., Porter, A.C., Garet, M.S., Yoon, K.S., and Birman, B. F. (2002). Effects of professional development on teachers' instruction: Results from a three-year longitudinal study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81–112.



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