

MATH STIMULUS

To combat the trend of a decline in qualified mathematics teachers in middle and high school, the Carnegie Academy for Science Education (CASE) launched a partnership in 2008 with Math for America (MfA) and American University (AU). Math for America in Washington, D.C. (MfA DC) is tasked to improve the mathematics education of the city's public and public charter secondary school students. The program selects, on a competitive basis, individuals with undergraduate degrees in mathematics or related disciplines to become MfA DC Fellows and educates them to become skilled teachers. Using stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the National Science Foundation awarded MfA DC a \$1.498 million grant to cover the tuition, stipend, and mentoring costs for the first 14 fellows. Carnegie president emerita Maxine Singer, a co-principal investigator (co-PI) on the grant, commented, "This support from the NSF will be a huge boost for math education in D.C. Research shows that rigorous mathematics education in secondary school correlates with success in jobs and college."

The academic program is a cooperative effort of AU's School of Education, Teaching, and Health and its Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and includes a 15-month master of arts in teaching (MAT) and a teaching certification program.

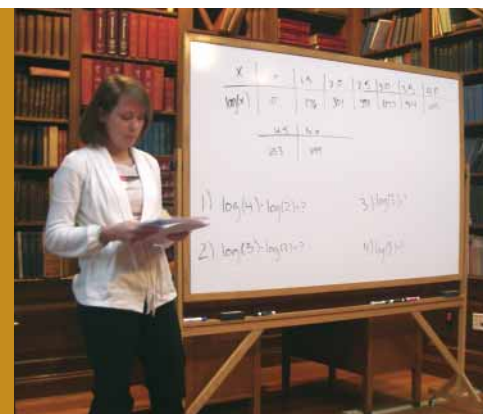
Altogether, MfA DC plans to recruit 34 fellows over the next four years. In return for a full fellowship and stipend for the academic program, the fellows commit to teach in D.C. public and public charter secondary schools for four years after completing their training. During those years they will each be provided with a personal mentor, ongoing professional development, and a supplementary stipend to support them as new classroom teachers.

James H. Simons, a well-known mathematician and the president of Renaissance Technologies Corporation, founded Math for America in 2004 "to improve the quality of mathematics education in the country's public schools by recruiting, training, and retaining effective secondary school mathematics teachers." Currently, MfA has placed fellows in 96 New York City schools. Additional MfA sites have been created in San Diego and Los Angeles. The MfA program was the congressional model for creating the National Science Foundation Teaching Fellowships through the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program.

"The mission of the Math for America-D.C. program is aligned with AU's strategic commitment to improving D.C. schools, and we are thrilled to be involved," said co-PIs Sarah Irvine Belson of AU's School of Education, Teaching, and Health and John Nolan of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. "We look forward to the arrival of our first group of MfA Fellows this summer." The first six fellows, who arrived in June, come from undergraduate colleges and universities across the country, and were qualified by high grades in undergraduate math courses, excellent recommendations, and outstanding performances in rigorous interviews. □



The selection process included an interview before a committee. The members of the interview committee (left to right) are Sarah Irvine Belson, School of Education at AU; Sarah Box, public school math teacher; Arturo Martinez, public charter high school academic dean; Alex Monte-Sano, public school math teacher; Sareeta Carter, public school math teacher; Michael Keynes, AU math professor; John Nolan, AU math professor; Guy Brandenburg, public school math teacher; and Maxine Singer, president emerita, Carnegie Institution.



Then-candidate Katherine Collins taught a lesson during her interview for an MfA DC Fellowship.



Shown here is the first group of the 2009 MfA DC Fellows. Left to right: Max Mikulec, Katherine Collins, Liza Styles, Lindsey Mann, Tom Fenske (host, in back), Krystn Hodge, Molley Kaiyoorawongs.