

For CSAM newsletter spring 2007:

\$2.8 Million NSF Grant Awarded

Three faculty members in the Department of Mathematical Sciences have been awarded funding for a 5-year, \$2.8 million grant project that begins on March 1st of this year from the National Science Foundation. The project, titled “GK-12 Fellows in the Middle: Partnerships of Inquiry and Interdisciplinary Middle School Science and Mathematics” matches CSAM graduate students (Fellows) with middle grade teachers in five local districts—Kearny, North Arlington, Rutherford, East Rutherford, and Lyndhurst. The project’s main goals are to enhance graduate students' communication skills, to strengthen teachers' content knowledge, and to improve science and mathematics achievement in middle school.

Drs. Ken Wolff, Mika Munakata, and Mary Lou West are the PIs directing the project. It is expected to involve more than twenty CSAM faculty members, at least six members of the CSAM professional staff and several other MSU faculty. Each year eight graduate students, together with their CSAM research advisors, will conduct research and share those research experiences with middle school teachers and students. Fellows and teachers will participate in training activities that promote inquiry- and standards-based teaching, especially as they relate to raising the achievement of students with Limited English Proficiency and Specific Learning Disabilities. Each week during the school year, the Fellows will spend two full days in a middle school classroom co-teaching courses with an experienced teacher. Other major project activities include designing and delivering curriculum units, preparing and participating in science and mathematics field experiences, leading a math/science day at MSU, and presenting cutting edge research results and methodologies to groups of students. Fellows and teachers will also have opportunities to engage in research and educational endeavors at international institutions, further enhancing middle grades students' understanding of research.

Through this program Fellows will bring their content knowledge and research experiences to the classroom, enhancing instruction and piquing students' interest in science and math. Project activities are expected to raise the achievement level of middle school students and develop a vested interest in the public education system in the graduate students. For each year of their participation in the project Fellows receive \$30,000 in stipends and \$10,500 for tuition and related expenses. Interested graduate students may contact wolffk, munakatam or westm@mail.montclair.edu.