RUSMP Represents Houston and Rice University at Noyce Regional Conference

The Rice University School Mathematics Project (RUSMP) was represented at the 2020 Western Regional Noyce Conference (WRNC) by RUSMP Director of Research, Dr. Adem Ekmekci, and RUSMP’s two NSF Noyce Master Teaching Fellows (from grant # 1556006), Stacy Jaster and Ralph Polley.

WRNC is an annual conference representing western regions but open to and attended by NSF Noyce participants across the U.S. Hundreds of NSF Noyce project leaders and staff and teaching scholars and fellows convened in Portland, OR, from Friday, February 21, to Sunday, February 23, to discuss, share ideas, and learn about effective STEM teaching and teachers.

NSF’s Robert Noyce Program provides millions of dollars every year to fund tens of projects nationally to improve STEM teacher effectiveness, recruitment, and retention. The Noyce annual summit and four annual regional conferences such as WRNC stimulate engagement and networking among all Noyce projects including their teachers and teacher candidates.

WRNC included three important keynote speeches, a fabulous panel with young teachers, five parallel breakout sessions with more than 25 presentations, and opportunities for informal dialogue among diverse university faculty and teachers, diverse both ethnically/racially and discipline-wise. Inclusiveness in education, the significance of teaching profession, the need for quality and dedicated teaching, culturally relevant instruction, and attracting and retaining more STEM teachers were the main topics that empowered and reenergized all participating teachers and teacher candidates.

RUSMP’s presence was an asset to the conference through sharing its research and Noyce Fellows' leadership experiences and active participation during sessions with Noyce project leaders, beginning teachers, and teacher candidates.

One of the most key takeaway messages from the conference was the need for creating an awareness in the community and among the stakeholders about the importance of our STEM teachers and finding ways to support them, which will in turn empower and prepare our school-age children to enter the STEM pipeline and fill the gap between supply and demand in STEM fields.

Written by: Dr. Adem Ekmekci, RUSMP Director of Research