

Choose Appalachian Teaching Project Summary

Choose Appalachian Teaching (CAT) is a Choose Ohio First scholarship project funded through the Ohio Board of Regents. The aims of the project are (a) to build a community of mathematics and science teachers for southeastern Ohio and thus (b) to strengthen the capacity of secondary schools to deliver state-of-the-art mathematics and science programs in this high-need region of the State.

The CAT project is developing and mentoring 75 additional adolescent-to-young-adult (Grades 7–12) mathematics and science teachers for southern and eastern Ohio. The project provides scholarships for first-generation Appalachian Ohio college students and others who commit to teaching in this region. These CAT scholars are earning undergraduate degrees with licensure, and the project prepares and supports them to become successful career-long teachers within the school districts of Appalachian Ohio.

Ohio University, the lead partner and fiscal agent, collaborates with Marietta College, Muskingum University, Shawnee State University, and the University of Rio Grande. Each of these higher education partners leverages its strengths, and together the partners share proven practices across institutions, improving their individual programs. During 2007–2008, these five institutions formed the Southeast Ohio Teacher Development Collaborative (SEO-TDC), and the CAT project operates within this structure.

The CAT scholarship project incorporates educational innovation through its use of inquiry for mathematics and science learning and for reflective instructional practice. Special sections of gateway courses, freshman seminars, and peer mentoring focus on inquiry, as do advanced courses, field experiences, and the professional internship. CAT scholars become members of a community of reflective practitioners over a 7-year period of course work, field experiences, and a 3-year induction into the teaching profession. Program scholars develop STEM literacy—a combination of mathematical literacy, quantitative literacy, scientific literacy, and technological literacy—and learn how to impart such literacy to their students.

Already areas of critical teacher shortages, mathematics and science education require additional teachers to address the needs of the class of 2014 and those following it. Starting with the class of 2014, students will graduate under the new Ohio Core Curriculum (legislated by Ohio SB311), which mandates additional rigorous courses in mathematics and science. A major goal of the project is to help Appalachian Ohio school districts meet this challenge.