PHYSTC19-2018-000020

Abstract for an Invited Paper for the PHYSTC19 Meeting of the American Physical Society

Get the Facts Out: Changing the Conversation Around STEM Teacher Recruitment

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The new PTaP (Perceptions of Teaching as a Profession) survey and the recent APS POPA (Panel on Public Affairs) report has found that there are strongly held beliefs about the teaching profession, many of which are misperceptions. These misperceptions discourage students from exploring teaching as a viable career option. The major misperceptions that preclude consideration of teaching as a career are: (1) the inaccurate belief that the salary gap between teaching, the private sector and government is very wide; and (2) inaccurate beliefs about tangible and intangible benefits of the profession. The POPA report has also found that discussing teaching as a career option correlates with the number of teaching majors in a department. To encourage discussion about teaching as a profession and change these misperceptions, we formed a partnership among APS, the American Association of Physics Teachers, the American Chemical Society, the Mathematical Association of America, 100Kin10, a behavioral change researcher, a neuroscience messaging expert, and several colleges and universities to develop a joint national campaign effort called Get the Facts Out. This campaign provides resources for faculty to use when discussing math or science teaching as a profession with STEM undergraduates.