February 26, 2015

Earlier this month, the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) hosted its 30th Annual Emerging Issues Forum, *Innovation Reconstructed*. This year, in addition to an amazing line-up of speakers, the Institute launched several new features including the “North Carolina Spaces for Innovation” Challenge.

In early December, individuals, groups, and organizations were invited to nominate a qualifying “space for innovation.” These spaces could be new, long-existing, or evolving; physical, virtual, or both; and their sponsorship could be private, public, nonprofit, or any combination of these. Whatever the model, the space had to be located in North Carolina or, if entirely virtual, had to have active North Carolina contributors. Competition was intense, with twenty-five entries from across the state. IEI’s working group members selected seven finalists to go before a public vote. The winner of the public vote, which earned them a spot on the Forum panel, was the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM). (You can watch their winning video here.)

**Featured Educator**

This month’s Featured Educator is Chris Thomas. An eight year veteran at NCSSM, Thomas’ inspiration comes from his students. Read more.

**Featured Content**

Check out IEI’s own Anita Brown-Graham and NCSSM on WUNC’s “The State of Things,” hosted by Frank Stasio.

**Featured Priorities**

Share your reactions: Forum participants’ three action priorities.
A representative of the winning space for innovation was featured at the Forum as part of a panel entitled “The Spaces We Need.” NCSSM Chancellor Todd Roberts joined the panel to describe what makes this school’s residential and distance education programs such an innovative model, one that’s been replicated in eighteen schools across the globe. With the goal of increasing the percentage of graduates who are actively engaged in STEM-related fields, NCSSM—one of the largest providers of live videoconference education in the state —provides unique STEM courses to underserved and under-resourced schools across North Carolina. Other panelists included Enric Fuster, Strategic Innovator for Barcelona’s Innopro; Bob Geolas, President and CEO for the Research Triangle Foundation; and Adam Klein, Chief Strategist for Raleigh-Durham’s American Underground.

With the goal of engaging 1,000,000 students and 100,000 teachers through its products and services over the next five years, NCSSM encourages curious minds to take new and innovative ideas back to their own communities. NCSSM faculty reach 720 students via distance education courses each year. With students from all 100 counties, NCSSM’s alumni have contributed an astounding $500,000,000 to the state's economy. Clearly NCSSM is a winning example of how North Carolina can, and must, continue to lead in education innovation.

NCSSM’s residential program, the largest of its kind in the U.S., serves 680 high-potential 11th and 12th grade students coming from 90 North Carolina counties each year. Students and families do not pay a fee for NCSSM’s residential or distance education courses.

Did you miss this year's Forum? Want to revisit your favorite speaker or panel? Click here for a full Forum recap, including the archived Forum livestream, Forum...
program book, and additional resources.

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Do you know a teacher who is working hard to help students succeed? Let us know, and s/he could be featured in the next education issue!