Cal Poly Continuing Education Receives Grant to Engage 55+ Community

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly Continuing Education and University Outreach has been selected to receive a $40,000 "Models of Significant Service" grant by RespectAbility, a program of the National Council on Aging.

The first-ever grants assist organizations in attracting and supporting adults over 55 to fill important leadership roles in nonprofit organizations and develop approaches for coordinating and managing these roles.

Cal Poly Continuing Education and University Outreach was one of 12 national demonstration sites chosen by NCOA from more than 200 diverse applicant organizations in nine states.

"We are very pleased that NCOA recognizes the work Continuing Education and University Outreach is doing to engage adults over 55 in our community," said Dennis "Skip" Parks, dean of Continuing Education and University Outreach. "This grant will help us expand lifelong learning opportunities for this segment of the population while also helping local nonprofit organizations."

Recent surveys indicate that nonprofits are not taking full advantage of the extraordinary pool of talented adults over 55 who want meaningful volunteer opportunities. The grant will provide start-up funding to establish the Center for Nonprofit Organizational Advancement at Continuing Education and University Outreach. The Center will provide training and educational opportunities for adults over 55 who desire to use their experience and talents to help raise funds for local nonprofit organizations.

"Having mature adults in such roles will increase capacity and capability, fulfill mission and vision, and make a real difference to the clients the organizations serve," said Tom Endres, vice president for Continuing Contribution at NCOA and director of RespectAbility. "The results of the two-year demonstration will provide the evidence needed to make a strong 'business case' for greater investment by nonprofit executives and boards in engaging adults 55-plus in such meaningful roles."

Through a rigorous participatory evaluation, Continuing Education and University Outreach will define best practices and measure their success in engaging and managing highly skilled adults. The partners will also be able to learn from one another and from experts in the field through the Continuous Learning and Innovations Community, an online platform of forums, blogs and shared libraries.

Continuing Education and University Outreach is a self-supporting unit within the Academic Affairs division of Cal Poly. Its mission is to provide community access to the intellectual knowledge and resources of the university. For more information, visit www.continuing-ed.calpoly.edu or call 805-756-2053.

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