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Contact: Susan Duffy
Cal Poly Liberal Studies
(805) 756-2327

Cal Poly Seeks Teachers, Artists to Help Develop Art Education Initiative

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- The Dana Foundation has awarded $25,000 to Cal Poly’s Central Coast Center for Arts Education to develop and implement a new initiative to support theater arts education in rural public schools.

Performing artists and teachers are being sought to help create the year-long program, titled “Illuminating Shadows: Introducing Storytelling and Shadow Puppetry to a New Generation.”

“The project has five primary goals that we believe will lead to sustaining theater arts in rural California schools,” said Susan Duffy, director of the CCCAE and chair of the Cal Poly Liberal Studies Department. The goals include:
• Training five theater artists to work as resident-artists
• Using storytelling and shadow puppetry as the basis for lessons;
• Offering workshops for the artists and rural school teachers
• Providing opportunities for the artists to demonstrate the lessons they prepare at school
• Placing the artists at the five schools by fall 2006

“We selected theater as the performing art for the development of this project prototype because of the ease with which it can be integrated with a school’s language arts content standard,” Duffy said.

Cal Poly is seeking nominations, including self-nominations of artists to participation in the program. To apply, send a letter explaining your interest and experience working in theater and with children. Selected artists will receive $1,000 to complete all training, all presentations and develop lessons with selected teachers.

Teachers from the five selected schools will also be invited to participate in the workshops. This will allow the teachers and the artists to cooperatively develop lesson plans appropriate to topics and grade level.

Teachers from rural California public schools will receive $500 to participate in the workshops and assist artists with developing lessons. The artists will be present their lessons at the school in the fall.

The resources created in meeting the first four goals will be used to develop a distance-learning training course that can be disseminated throughout the state and nation.

“The final product will be an online course that we hope to offer through Cal Poly Continuing Education to theater artists across the nation,” Duffy said.

Performing artists and teachers interested in participating in the project are urged to contact Duffy as soon as possible. The first workshop is tentatively planned for late March.

Interested artists and teachers can send a brief letter to Duffy in the Liberal Studies Department, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407. For more information, contact her at (805) 756-2326 or sduffy@calpoly.edu.

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