

[Skip to Content](#)

[Cal Poly](#)

[News](#)

Search Cal Poly News

Go

California Polytechnic State University

Sept. 11, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Ponce

(805) 756-1380

[www.preface.calpoly.edu](http://www.preface.calpoly.edu)

[pponce@calpoly.edu](mailto:pponce@calpoly.edu)

### **Cal Poly's Preface Program Unites a Diverse Campus with Shared Reading**

SAN LUIS OBISPO - What do a university police officer, the chair of Cal Poly's Aerospace Engineering Department, the university vice president for Student Affairs, a member of Cal Poly's advancement team, an agriculture professor, a campus financial aid counselor, incoming freshmen from the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Agriculture, Cal Poly Continuing Education Osher Lifelong Learning Institute members, and Honors students have in common?

They are all members of the university-wide book club known as Preface, reading and sharing their thoughts on this year's Preface selection, "Plainsong," by Kent Haruf.

Launched in 2002, Preface aims to enrich Cal Poly's academic life across all disciplines and provide students with a common intellectual experience. Last year's highly successful pilot project targeted the university's 250 Honors Program students, who read "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien and then met in small groups to discuss the book.

"We knew Preface was a great idea, especially when students, the campus community and local citizens packed Chumash Auditorium to hear Tim O'Brien," says Program Coordinator Patricia Ponce. "With wonderful feedback, we extended the pilot this year to include students from the College of Agriculture, Liberal Arts, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

"But what especially excites me is that more than 100 campus faculty and staff members have volunteered to lead the student discussion groups this year. The diversity of Cal Poly's PREFACE Program Unites a Diverse Campus with Shared Reading - participants really fulfill one of our primary goals, which is to develop a sense of community," explains Ponce. "The campus facilitators have already had some great group discussions on the book, in which folks have pointed out that the idea of community is one of its themes."

"Plainsong" tells the story of a small ranching town and the converging lives of its residents. The book has received numerous awards, including The New York Times Book Award, and was a finalist for the National Book Award. It was a national bestseller when it came out in 1999 and was selected as a Notable Book of the Year by both The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times.

Staff and student participants, who were to read the book this summer, will meet in small groups on Sept. 17

during Cal Poly's WOW (Week of Welcome) activities. They will have the opportunity to meet the author, Kent Haruf, on Oct. 15 when he speaks at Chumash Auditorium, in an event open to the public. Preface will also host other activities during the academic year in conjunction with the book.

For more information, call Ponce at 756-1380 or go to [www.preface.calpoly.edu](http://www.preface.calpoly.edu).

[CP Home](#) • [CP Find It](#) [Get Adobe Reader](#) • [Microsoft Viewers](#)

[Events](#) • [Recent Releases](#) • [Cal Poly Magazine](#) •

[Cal Poly Update E-newsletter](#) • [Contact Public Affairs](#) • [Alumni](#) • [Giving](#) • [Athletics](#)

**Cal Poly Public Affairs**

California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

805.756.7266

[polynews@calpoly.edu](mailto:polynews@calpoly.edu)