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News Release

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Cal Poly Pomona Hosts 2-Day Institute Aimed for School Administrators to Raise Student Achievement

POMONA, Calif. — June 24, 2008 — Giving school administrators the skills they need to support teachers and raise student achievement is the goal of a two-day institute at Cal Poly Pomona sponsored by the Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE)/Teacher PREP grant.

Approximately 180 administrators from five area school districts will attend the first-ever Great Leaders for Great Schools Summer Institute on June 30 and July 1 to learn how they can improve school culture, increase meaningful collaboration among faculty and strengthen the alignment of processes, programs and resources to be coherent in schools.

"The Institute is a starting place for administrators to work on building the environment needed to support teachers in working with a diverse student population," said Christina Dehler, project director for the TQE/Teacher PREP grant. "School districts recognize that the Institute is very important to them and important to their strategic plans to move forward."

Participants include principals, assistant principals, superintendents and other district administrators from Baldwin Park Unified, Hacienda La Puente Unified, Pomona Unified, Rowland Unified and Valle Lindo School District. Cal Poly Pomona faculty and educational consultants from Springboard Schools will also attend the institute, which will be held at Kellogg West Conference Center.

Institute organizers hope to create a professional learning community during the two days by encouraging discussions among administrators within their school district and with their peers in other districts. Instead of lecture-style workshops, a lot of time will be spent on reflection and break-out sessions to share best practices and discuss what strategies might work at their respective schools.

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"We want administrators to feel they have a chance to express ideas, concerns and identify what they can do in their districts to enhance the creation of collaborative cultures and to make adjustments to promote learning," Dehler said.

Added Education Department associate professor Ron Leon: "We hope the districts will use the institute as a foundation or catalyst for their own training throughout the school year."

During the institute, speakers from six "turnaround" schools will present case studies and strategies that were successful at their schools. The speakers are: Cindy Paik, California Elementary in Orange; Damen Lopez, Los Penasquitos Elementary in San Diego; Janice Hanada, Cerritos Elementary in Glendale; Virginia Trapani, Yorba Linda Middle; Joe Medina, Torch Middle in Industry; and Loring Davies, Whittier High School.

Keynote speaker Dr. Anthony Muhammad, an expert on urban education, will share how professional learning communities can empower educators and improve schools.

Organizers hope the two-day session will be the start of an on-going leadership institute for educators in Southern California. They're already planning to host follow-up sessions during the school year to discuss new topics or tackle an issue in greater depth.

"Cal Poly Pomona can be a hub for the school districts in the area," Leon said. "We'd like to continue five to 10 years from now."

Cal Poly Pomona received a \$6.3 million TQE/Teacher PREP grant in 2004 to create and implement a comprehensive model of reform to improve the preparation of teachers for the challenges of the region's diverse K-12 classrooms. One of the grant's goals is to equip administrators with leadership strategies to support new teachers and increase student achievement.

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