Mustard Seed Theatre...the Mission Continues

The Mustard Seed Theatre, nestled in the Fine Arts Building on the Fontbonne University campus, has a mission: “Exploring our relationship with God and our ethical responsibility to the world.”

Deanna Jent’s submissions for FCC grants for the theatre reflect this mission in many ways.

The proposal for “Grow a Show” was one that encompassed the above mission and then some! The play “Crumbs from the Table of Joy”, by Lynn Nottage, told the story of an African-American family’s move from the South to the North in the 1960’s. It explored issues of racism, economic injustice and religious hypocrisy. Advertising and word-of-mouth connections to the African-American director and cast members brought in a new and diverse audience that still attends plays at Fontbonne/Mustard Seed.

Their most recent proposal, submitted by Artistic Director, Deanna Jent, suggested areas of other needs for the theatre. Building on the previous grant and mission, this grant was for the opportunity for excellent plays to be performed that explore questions of faith and social justice and can be a venue for the audience to discuss these issues.

Her goal for the proposal was to encourage all playwrights (including international) to submit plays to Mustard Seed, with a winner being chosen in February 2012, and this play performed in April 2012, using student actors.

“The winning play will be performed as a "staged reading," said Deanna Jent in January 2012. "It will be done with the reading of the lines and stage movement but not a full dress production.” Ms. Jent said that although they had not received an international submission, they received (Continued on Page 4)

OPTIONS lecturer Jim Marchbank shared his international business experience teaching in Bangkok and Bratislava, with the Fontbonne and the St. Louis business community when he hosted the Executive Seminars (July 7 & 22). As a 2011 FCC grant recipient, Marchbank brought the intense and interactive CAPSIM simulation model, used worldwide, to St. Louis businesses for the first time, engaging participants from St. Louis Closet Company, Charter Communications, Tacony, MasterCard, Kellwood, Patriot Coal, Covidiem and other firms. Participating executives formed two teams for a computer based simulation “game” of research/development, finance, production and marketing. Building on buzz from the 19 men and women at the initial seminar, the second seminar — offered for women only — attracted 28 participants. In addition to enriching local corporations’ executive training programs, the seminars introduced executives to Fontbonne and opened the door to long-term corporate relationships with the University. Post seminar follow-up has already resulted in Fontbonne’s Fashion Merchandising program receiving $30,000 in sewing machine equipment from Tacony Corporation — just one example of the "ripple effect" that FCC grants have!
Alpha Lambda Delta

Alpha Lambda Delta (ALD) is a national honor society which recognizes academic achievement of first-year students after one semester of college. Fontbonne’s chapter was created in 2009 and grant recipient, Dr. Judy Failoni, indicated that this determined group was able to accomplish its goal of affiliation with the national organization in just two years, thanks largely to FCC funding. Now that Fontbonne’s chapter is an official affiliate of the national organization, there will not be installation expenses in the future and each year’s initiation ceremonies will be covered by membership fees. Requirements for membership consist of a 3.5 GPA and a ranking in the top 20% of all first-time students at FBU, but the benefits are many and varied. Membership in ALD provides a “community of scholars” at Fontbonne as well as opportunities for leadership in service and social projects on campus. Having a chapter of a national organization, such as Alpha Lambda Delta, will help the university in the retention of high-achieving first-time students, while also serving as an incentive for first-year students to strive for honor society eligibility and national ALD scholarship opportunities.

The installation and initiation ceremonies were held April 10, 2011. All 85 members of Fontbonne’s chapter (2009-2011) received invitations to join the national organization, which resulted in a 100% acceptance response! Doerr Chapel was filled to capacity with appreciative ALD members who were able to attend the ceremony, as well as parents and faculty. Fontbonne received a charter from the national office of Alpha Lambda Delta, which has been framed and now hangs near the Board Room in the library for all to see...so be sure to stop by the next time you’re on campus!
Lunch and Learn

On Thursday, February 9, the FCC were guests of the Human Environmental Department.

Some attendees observed the preparation and some actually prepared the lunch. It was wonderful to see the state-of-the-art kitchen and equipment that FCC funds helped purchase. The menu consisted of Tilapia in Cartoccio, mixed green salad with nuts, cranberries and feta cheese, and chocolate cupcakes made with an unusual ingredient—pumpkin!

The group appreciated all the preparation and teaching by HES faculty-Cheryl Houston, Ph.D. and Mary Beth Ohlms, Instructor.

After lunch the group moved to the Fine Arts Building for two presentations by our grantees, Suzanne Stoelting, Ph.D., and Victor Wang.

Dr. Stoelting explained webinars and how important they are in helping our faculty and staff stay up-to-date in their individual fields. Using this technical tool the faculty can hear and see authorities in their fields without expensive travel. She also explained how Fontbonne is networking with other campuses.

Victor Wang explained how significant his grant has been in the education of his students in oil painting. He explained how the oil used determines the color and helps in the preservation of a painting. With the FCC grant money Mr. Wang purchased these special oils and other equipment to help the students learn new techniques.

Both presentations were very interesting and we all went away feeling very proud of our faculty and our university. The FCC Grants are truly making an impact on the education that Fontbonne students are receiving today. These grants are helping to prepare them for a future in our community.

“The best index to a person’s character is a) how he treats people who can’t do him any good and b) how he treats people who can’t fight back.”

~ Abigail Van Buren

Coming Events

The Events and Membership Committees of the FCC have combined their efforts in planning two very special upcoming activities. Mark your calendar—and invite a non-member friend to attend with you!

March 30 at 6:00pm, we will have a membership recruiting cocktail hour at The Wydown House (Dr. and Mrs. Golden’s home). We are inviting Business majors and the participants of the FCC-funded Executive Seminars which were held last summer. Anita Manion, Director of Faculty for Fontbonne OPTIONS, will give a brief presentation on the Executive Seminars.

On Thursday, April 12, we will have a cocktail party in The Gallery prior to the Mustard Seed Theatre’s opening night production of A Winter’s Tale. We will have Mustard Seed’s Artistic Director, Deanna Jent, update us on the progress of her FCC grant-funded project, the New Play Contest. Watch your mail/email for more details.

Save the Dates...

Save the dates for the upcoming Round Table discussions of the 2012-13 grant applications.

The discussions are held in the Fontbonne Café located in the Dunham Student Activity Center.

The dates are as follows:

May 17 — 9:00-10:00 AM
May 24 — 5:30-7:30 PM
June 2—10:00 AM-12 PM
Dear Fellow FCC Member,

Many of you have asked me how the FCC manages its money, so I thought I would spend a minute sharing with you how it works. First, 100% of the annual dues go into our Award fund and we distribute as much of it as we can each year. There is usually a small residual left that is less than the amount requested by the next highest voted proposal so that amount is carried over for the next year’s award fund. Next, anyone who contributes more than the annual dues amount, either through a direct contribution or through a matching gift, can designate where they want that money to go. In addition to some of the nominations given to non-alums, there were two alums who were nominated: Julie Venegoni ’03 MA ’08 – outstanding supporting actress in a play; and Ken Page ’76 – outstanding supporting actor in a musical.

Kevin Kline Nominations for MST

On January 30, the Kevin Kline Award nominations were announced. The Kevin Kline Awards, named after the actor and St. Louis native Kevin Kline, honor professional local theatre in a variety of categories. The Mustard Seed Theatre, Fontbonne’s theatre-in-residence, received ten nominations. Three of the nominations were for Deanna Jent, a performing arts faculty member and artistic director of Mustard Seed Theatre. In addition to some of the nominations given to non-alums, there were two alums who were nominated: Julie Venegoni ’03 MA ’08 – outstanding supporting actress in a play; and Ken Page ’76 – outstanding supporting actor in a musical.

Message from our Chair

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Karen

Karen Gedera, Chair, Fontbonne Community Connection