

Thursday, Aug. 15, 2013

Caine College of the Arts Faculty Member Honored with Founders' Award



Utah State University theatre arts department faculty member Matt Omasta is the Founders' Award recipient from the Educational Theatre Association. His work with a national survey of high school theater programs was acknowledged.



Utah State University faculty member Matt Omasta recently received the 2013 Educational Theatre Association Founders' Award for his research in theater education.

"This is a truly outstanding recognition of Matt and we are very proud of him and the great work he is doing," said Craig Jessop, dean of the Caine College of the Arts.

Omasta led an extensive survey of high school theater education in the country in 2012, conducted by USU graduate students under his direction and in partnership with the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA). High schools throughout the United States with at least 200 students enrolled were invited to participate in the survey, with a questionnaire for both administrators and theater educators.

"This survey was the first of its kind in 20 years, modeled, in part, after other national studies but expanded to address a range of new issues relevant to 21st century education," said Omasta.

Administrators and theater arts faculty members from more than 1,200 schools completed the survey, describing the courses offered, shows produced, student participation, perceptions of theater's impact and other relevant areas.

"School leaders consistently reported that their theater programs play an important role in developing students' skills essential for success in higher

education and the modern workplace,” said Omasta. “When legislators and administrators face limited resources and are forced to prioritize educational programs, this data can help educators advocate for the vital role of theater in our schools.”

The EdTA Founder’s Award is given to an individual or group who has made momentous contributions to the growth and development of theater education, research and practice.

“Matt Omasta’s work leading the “2012 Survey of Theatre Education in United States High Schools” was an important step forward for both theater education and the Educational Theatre Association,” said Julie Woffington, executive director of EdTA.

More information on Omasta’s “2012 Survey of Theatre Education in United States High Schools” and the Founders’ Award can be found online at the [Educational Theatre Association’s website](#).

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