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SDSU, Balboa Park are InforMath

NSF funds collaborative project connecting math and art

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The Mingei International Museum is one of four Balboa Park institutions participating in InforMath.



San Diego State University and the Balboa Park Learning Institute have formed a new collaborative, InforMath, to design and implement new programs that will connect museum visitors with mathematics.

Funded by a \$726,733 National Science Foundation grant to SDSU's Center for Research in Mathematics and Science Education, the program will involve the center's researchers and staff from the Mingei International Museum, the Museum of Photographic Arts, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center and the San Diego Natural History Museum.

“This is a unique and exciting opportunity for us to work closely with art and science museum professionals to try and change the way our community perceives mathematics, to conduct periodic analysis on our progress, and to ultimately establish a research center for informal mathematics learning in the park,” said Molly Kelton, co-director of the InforMath Collaborative, in a statement.

Lisa Silagyi, director of the Balboa Park Learning Institute, called the project “the first large-scale, multi-institution initiative of its kind,” which will allow individuals working in the arts and in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) “to learn from each other and together come up with new and more expansive ways to draw the community into the park.”

InforMath, whose leaders are SDSU's Ricardo Nemirovsky, Kelton, and the Fleet's Paul Siboroski, expects to invite public participation in its pilot projects at MOPA and the Mingei by mid-March. Data from that endeavor will be analyzed through September and lay the groundwork for more extensive projects that will involve all four participating Balboa Park institutions.

“This will also give Balboa Park staff and San Diego STEM and art educators a new venue for professional development as well as new ideas to take back to the classroom,” said Silagyi.

One of the founding principles of the Balboa Park Learning Institute (created in 2008 by the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, the group representing 27 of Balboa Park’s institutions) was to initiate educational programs for “staff and volunteers in arts, science and cultural institutions.”

Article can be found on U-T’s website:

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/dec/02/balboa-park-learning-institute-sdsu/>