

# Stephen F. Austin State University

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## Texas Tides seeking members for curriculum development team

**Emily Taravella - March 9, 2007**

This summer, 12 to 15 middle school and high school teachers from across the state will be selected to serve on a Texas Tides Curriculum Development Team, according to Rachel Galan, program director. Texas Tides is a program administered through the Ralph W. Steen Library at Stephen F. Austin State University, funded through an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant.

"The goal of the team is to develop and evaluate Texas Tides-based teaching resources," Galan said. "All lessons developed by the team must meet the TEKS and correspond to the curriculum being used by the partner school district. All material created by the team will be on the Texas Tides Web site."

Social studies, science, language arts and dual or bilingual education teachers are needed for the 2007-2008 team, Galan said. "Teachers will be selected to participate on a competitive basis," she said. "These teachers should be exceptionally creative, enthusiastic and willing to experiment with new learning resources in the classroom. It is crucial that the participating teachers have the support of their school administration, as they must field-test and evaluate their teaching materials in the classroom during the 2007-2008 school year. Through their participation in the Texas Tides program, the teachers on the team will have an opportunity to work with other talented teachers throughout Texas and from partner institutions in Mexico.

"Two teachers from the 2006 team (composed of elementary school teachers) were given the opportunity to travel to Mexico to visit partner institutions," Galan said.

Donna Bass, a second grade teacher at Thomas J. Rusk Elementary School in Nacogdoches, traveled to Mexico last summer. "We did as much in four days as some would do in four weeks," she said, adding that her teenage daughter and SFA faculty member Priscilla Coulter accompanied her. "We visited all types of ecosystems, and we were also able to see the metropolitan atmosphere of Mexico," she said. "We visited forests by boat, and we experienced flamingos 'up close and personal.'" Seeing the animals in their natural habitats was an experience Bass said she would never forget.

Her daughter's perspective also enlightened her to what students would find interesting about the experience, she said. "It was helpful for me to experience a different culture," Bass said. "We socialized with the people, and we took photographs with families living in huts. These were people who had never seen a digital camera before." Bass said showing her students the photographs from her travels and describing her experiences to them has been validating. "They know these are things I've really seen and done," she said. "Their enthusiasm has been incredible, and it has stimulated the most interesting conversations and discussions."

Bass said some of her Hispanic students from Mexico have been much more willing to share stories of their culture, since she returned from her trip.