Accomplishments – Visual and Performing Arts

Many exciting things are happening in the Visual and Performing Arts Department. The department has successfully merged with the Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts, creating a larger, yet more responsive VPA department. The Rozsa is now fully staffed under the direction of the Chair of Visual and Performing Arts. Significant support has been given to the areas of technical theatre with the hiring of a new Production Manager (George Hommowun), a new Assistant Production Manager (Steve Jones), an Audio Production Manager (Denny McKaig) and a full-time scene shop supervisor (Jeremy Littlefield). Additional support is being provided to the costuming aspects of technical theatre with the addition of Mary Cyr who serves as an Instructor of Theatre (Costume) and as the Costume Shop Supervisor. Mary Muncil is serving as the Director of the Rozsa, tasked with programming, outreach, and VPA advancement. Bethany Jones continues as the Marketing Manager, now with an expanded role in the VPA department.

Faculty in the VPA department have been active with international performances and collaborations in China, Guatemala, and Argentina. They have been collaborating with artists and musicians of great renown. In fact, composer John Luther Adams was working with students and faculty at Michigan Tech when he was informed that he had one the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Upcoming events this year include the multi-media exhibition, “World Without Ice”, which brings in renowned artists, musicians and geoscientists to Michigan Tech to present lectures and an exhibit focusing on climate change.

The VPA department has submitted a significant grant to the National Endowment for the Arts and is actively pursuing other funding initiatives. Faculty members of the VPA department hold significant leadership positions in state, regional, and national professional organizations such as USITT, KCACTF, CODA, and ACDA.

Students from VPA have impressed employers. This past summer two Tech students landed internships with Cirque du Soleil. The work that these students have done, as well as a single student intern with Cirque the previous summer has led to conversations with Cirque about the possibility of a closer student internship collaboration in the future. Students are landing jobs with major entertainment industry players, installing and designing sound systems, running live sound reinforcement, and providing backstage support.