



Creating college bound communities

1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 210
Santa Cruz, California 95060
Phone: (831) 459-3500
Fax: (831) 459-3570
<http://epc.ucsc.edu>

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Norma Nichols
GEAR UP College Facilitator
831.212.1568
nnichols@ucsc.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 9, 2006

MAY IS “COLLEGE AWARENESS MONTH” IN WATSONVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

(WATSONVILLE, CA) – The UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC) has declared May as “College Awareness Month” at its partner schools in Watsonville, CA. To raise students’ aspirations about higher education and given them the tools they need to be eligible for and successful in college, the EPC is hosting a series of week-long events for students at five middle schools in Watsonville. These events will cover important topics around college requirements, financial aid, and the benefits to pursuing higher education. Improving college awareness is one of the goals in the EPC’s GEAR UP partnership with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District; GEAR UP is a federally-funded program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

The College Awareness Month kick-off event will be at the Pajaro Middle School cafeteria on May 9, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. Students, parents, teachers, and school staff will participate in a series of hands-on, college awareness activities such as “lotería universitaria,” a traditional Mexican game similar to bingo that has been tailored to focus on college-going information. Manuel Diaz, Coordinator of Employee Training Opportunities for the Santa Cruz County Personnel Department and local community organizer, will be the guest speaker. Throughout the week, teachers will be implementing the “College Is in My Future” curriculum in each of their classrooms, and GEAR UP College Facilitators will host lunchtime activities, such as College Jeopardy, to engage students in overall college awareness.

Also as part of “College Awareness Month,” Cesar Chavez Middle School will host events on May 15-19, 2006, and Rolling Hills Middle School, Lakeview Middle School, and E.A. Hall Middle School will participate in the program on May 22-26, 2006. The “College Awareness Month” is part of the EPC’s comprehensive early college outreach efforts. For more information, contact Norma Nichols at (831) 212-1568 or nnichols@ucsc.edu.

About the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center

The UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC) serves a four-county region in central California—Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito—and links statewide K-12, higher education, community, and business sector partners. The mission of the EPC is to create college-bound communities that improve student learning and increase college-going rates among students from low-income and traditionally non-college-going families in collaboration with school, college, business, and community partners. In 2005, the EPC provided direct services, including mentoring, tutoring, academic counseling and planning, leadership training, test preparation, academic enrichment, and college awareness and preparation, to more than 37,000 students and families. Other recent achievements include two, six-year awards from the U.S. Department of Education’s GEAR UP program totaling \$16.3 million and a \$1.56 million award from the National Institutes of Health for the Assessing Science, Inquiry, and Leadership Skills (AScILS) research project.

About Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)

GEAR UP is a U.S. Department of Education-funded program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The EPC’s GEAR UP partnerships include academic and college advising and tutoring for students, college planning and financial aid information for parents, professional development for teachers, and the opportunity to build strong partnerships between schools and the community to encourage a college-going community. In addition, all GEAR UP participants will have multiple opportunities to visit local college campuses on field trips. Each school district has the opportunity to work with the EPC to shape a program that meets their specific needs, and ongoing data review allows teachers to modify instruction, identify students in need of additional assistance, and conduct program evaluation.

Contact:

Educational Partnership Center
University of California, Santa Cruz
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 210
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Tel: 831.459.3500
Fax: 831.459.3570

###