

UC president visits WHS



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

University of California President Robert Dynes engages with students at Watsonville High School Thursday. Alex Madueña is at right with Ester Lomeli and Alejandro Lobato.

Robert Dynes encourages students to go away to college

By AMY LARSON
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

"When you go to college, the world opens up," University of California President Robert Dynes said Thursday to a group of Watsonville High School students in the library.

When Dynes faced the crossroads that all high school seniors face as they walk off their school campus for the last time, he chose a path that surprised people in his hometown.

The young hockey player with cuts and gashes over his face declined an invitation to play on a semi-professional

hockey team. He went to college on a financial aid scholarship instead.

"And that made the difference," Dynes said. "I fell in love with physics."

Dynes went on to earn a Ph.D., become a distinguished physicist and professor and is now the 18th president of the University of California.

Watsonville High student Adrian Salinas said his classmates were inspired by their prestigious guest's vision.

Academically, Watsonville High is ranked in the bottom 20 percent of the state. Sixty-three percent of its students are on the free lunch program and 45 per-

cent are English-language learners.

With blue-collar jobs increasingly moving overseas, the key to today's youth escaping poverty lies in students aiming for college and professional careers, City Manager Carlos Palacios said.

The MESA students at Watsonville High are doing just that.

An extensive effort by the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement program, and nine others created through the University of California at Santa Cruz's partnership with local high

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