

Celebrating 10 Years
1999 - 2009

Academic Advancement

California Reading and
Literature Project (CRLP)

California State Summer
School for Mathematics and
Science (COSMOS)

Early Academic Outreach
Program (EAOP)

GEAR UP Partnerships -
North Monterey County,
Pajaro Valley & South
Monterey County

Girls in Engineering

Mathematics, Engineering,
Science Achievement Schools
Program (MESA)

San Jose California Student
Opportunity and Access
Program (San Jose Cal-SOAP)

Transfer Partnerships
Program (TPP)

PRESS RELEASE

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STUDENTS PREPARE FOR COLLEGE: 'THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!'

3rd Annual Highlight to the Future: College & Career Conference in Watsonville for High School Students and Families, Saturday, January 31

(SANTA CRUZ , CA) – Students and families from Watsonville and Pajaro Valley High Schools will convene on Saturday, January 31, 2009 for a special one-day conference to explore college and career options and learn about academic preparation for success on the college-going pathway. Financial aid for higher education, California college systems, and strategies for success in high school are some of the many topics covered at the conference, which will take place at the Mello Center and Watsonville High School in Watsonville from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

"We want students to have options, to feel inspired that they can do what they want in the future," said Yesenia Cervantes, assistant director for Pajaro Valley, UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC). "The Highlight to the Future conference is a good opportunity for students and parents to learn how to build a roadmap to reach their college and career goals."

The Jan. 31 conference, "Highlight to the Future: College & Career Conference," is being organized by EPC and its GEAR UP partnership along with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Migrant Education Region XI, and CSUMB Upward Bound and Talent Search. The conference is an important part of EPC's ongoing work in the region to improve student learning and increase college-going rates, especially among low-income and educationally disadvantaged students. This annual event highlights the collaboration among many university, community college, and K-12 partners to open doors of opportunity for more students and increase access to postsecondary education.

"Families play a critical role in fostering their child's aspirations to include college in their future. Whether it is parents, grandparents, or older siblings, having the family engaged and

knowledgeable about college is a major factor in student success,” said Carrol Moran, executive director of EPC.

About 250 students and families are expected to attend the conference at Watsonville High School. Free, onsite registration begins at 8:00 a.m., followed the welcome session at 9:00 a.m. at the Mello Center, featuring a keynote address from Watsonville City Council Member and WHS alumnus Luis Alejo. Volunteers and presenters from EPC, the school district, and college and universities will cover a variety of important topics in the English and Spanish workshop sessions, including:

- California college systems and pathways;
- Scholarships and financial aid;
- UC/CSU admissions and A-G high school requirements;
- Career exploration and assessments;
- Community college pathways and UC transfer;
- Support for migrant students and families;
- Resources for AB 540 and undocumented students;
- Strategies for success in high school;
- Academic enrichment through COSMOS, MESA, EAOP, and Upward Bound; and
- Parent and student panels.

After the workshops there will be a College & Community Fair at 12:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Hall. Participants can talk to representatives from regional UC and CSU campuses, Cabrillo College, Gavilan College, Hartnell College, Academy of Arts, and Devry University. Other groups in the fair include: Center for Employment Training, Adult Education, Watsonville Law Center, Digital Bridge Academy, UCSC Jack Baskin School of Engineering, Bay Federal Credit Union, and other EPC academic preparation programs such as COSMOS and MESA.

Free, onsite registration is available for students from Watsonville and Pajaro Valley High Schools and their families. Childcare and lunch is included in conference registration. Students who attend the conference may also receive credit for Saturday school. For more information about the Jan. 31 Highlight to the Future: College & Career Conference or other media inquiries, please contact JAIMIE VARGAS, director of development and communication, at (831) 239-9130 or jevargas@ucsc.edu.

About UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center

Established in 1999, the Educational Partnership Center (EPC) coordinates academic preparation efforts on behalf of UC Santa Cruz with the goal of increasing access and opportunity to higher education for students across the Monterey Bay and San Jose/Silicon Valley regions. EPC is a research- and data-driven, umbrella organization for an array of integrated programs, serving students, teachers, families, and schools from kindergarten through college. The mission of the Educational Partnership Center 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 January 2009, EPC celebrated its 10th anniversary.

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