



Creating college bound communities

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 6, 2008

MATH + SCIENCE + ENGINEERING = SUCCESS!

400 Middle and High School Students Compete in Annual MESA Day Preliminary Competition at UC Santa Cruz, Saturday, March 15, 2008

(SANTA CRUZ, CA) – Balsawood bridges, mousetrap cars, model bisected hearts, and trebuchets are some of the engineering designs part of the 2008 MESA Day Preliminary Competition at the UCSC Jack Baskin School of Engineering on Saturday, March 15, 2008. About 400 middle and high school students from 12 partner schools in Santa Cruz, Watsonville/Pajaro Valley, Castroville, Soledad, and Salinas will compete with science, engineering, and mathematics projects, part of the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Schools Program. More than 25 industry and business professionals will join about 75 university faculty, staff, and students as volunteer judges for the 20 different events. The Opening Ceremony is from 8:45 – 9:15 a.m. in the engineering courtyard followed by competitions at the Baskin and E2 engineering buildings. The Closing Awards Ceremony is from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. in Classroom Unit 2.

“We are excited to host MESA Day at the Baskin School of Engineering. This is a win-win situation—creating a pipeline from K-12 to university, preparing students for success in STEM fields, and giving them access to high paying careers while also meeting business and industry workforce needs,” said Pablo Reguerin, deputy director of the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC).

MESA Day is the culmination of students’ year-long efforts. Working with their MESA Teacher Advisors, students follow curricula designed to reinforce California State Math and Science Standards. The hands-on MESA projects allow students to directly apply important academic concepts that help them succeed on the college-going pathway and in their future careers. MESA Day provides added motivation for students’ higher education aspirations; many students will be the first in their family to attend college.

“We want to encourage bright minds to stay in math, science, and engineering and dream big and not lose their interest in these fields. MESA is an important part of our ongoing efforts to build college-bound

communities, and this event helps celebrate students' success and rewards their hard work," said Carol Moran, executive director of EPC.

In addition to the engineering competitions, MESA Day provides students with the opportunity to meet and interact with engineers, university faculty and researchers, undergraduates, and business professionals. Volunteers from Cisco Systems, City of Santa Cruz, Lockheed Martin, Kaiser Permanente, and other firms join UCSC economics and marine biology faculty as competition judges. Participants can also attend a special Student Organizations and Resources Fair to learn more about the resources available at UCSC, such as the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, UCSC Multicultural Engineering Program, Society of Women Engineers, and more. ETR Associates and Girl Game Company will make a special presentation and students, parents, and teachers will enjoy a Tesla coil demonstration by the Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics (SCIPP).

Dr. Tracy Larrabee, professor of computer engineering at UCSC, will provide motivational remarks at the Opening Ceremony about persevering through difficult academic subjects and using math and science as a gateway for freedom and choice in future careers. At the Closing Awards Ceremony, Adrienne Harrell, director of undergraduate student affairs for the UCSC Jack Baskin School of Engineering, will address the students and kick-off the raffle and awards presentation.

The UCSC MESA Schools Program provides academic support and enrichment for middle and high school students from low-income and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds through hands-on projects and other college awareness activities to promote STEM college and career pathways. MESA is one of many student academic preparation programs under the umbrella of the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center.

For more information about the 2008 MESA Day Preliminary Competition on March 15 or other media inquiries, please contact JAIMIE VARGAS, Director of Development & Communication at (831) 459-1747 or jevargas@ucsc.edu. The event is free and open to the public; registration to compete is limited to students enrolled in the MESA Schools Program at partner middle and high schools across Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The competition will be held rain or shine. Log on to <http://epc.ucsc.edu>.

About UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center

Established in 1999, the Educational Partnership Center (EPC) coordinates new and long-standing student academic preparation efforts of UC Santa Cruz with the goal of increasing access and opportunity to higher education for students across the Monterey Bay and Silicon Valley/San Jose regions. EPC's mission is to build 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. An array of direct services and programs support students on the college-going pathway through tutoring, mentoring, academic planning and counseling, leadership training, test preparation, college awareness and enrichment, family involvement initiatives, transfer student support, and teacher professional development.