

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 TEST THEIR MATH, SCIENCE SKILLS: "TAKE FLIGHT WITH MESA!" **300 Middle and High School Students Compete in Annual MESA Day Preliminary** **Competition at UC Santa Cruz, Saturday, March 7, 2009**

(SANTA CRUZ, CA) – Speeding mousetrap cars, growing crystals, and flying balsawood gliders are some of the exciting engineering designs at the 2009 MESA Day Preliminary Competition at the UCSC Jack Baskin School of Engineering on Saturday, March 7, 2009. About 300 middle and high school students from partner schools in Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Seaside, Monterey, and Marina will convene at the UC Santa Cruz campus to compete against their peers in a variety of science, engineering, and mathematics projects, putting their design, presentation, critical thinking, performance, and teamwork skills to the test. The opening ceremony is from 8:15 – 8:45 a.m. in the engineering school courtyard followed by competition events throughout the day at the Baskin and E2 engineering buildings. The closing awards ceremony will begin at 4:00 p.m. in Classroom Unit 2.

"The competition helps students experience math and science in a new way and gives them an opportunity to interact with industry professionals and learn about college and career pathways," said Bronwyn Moreno, director of the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Schools Program. "For some students, this is what makes the light bulb go off and they realize why they want to go to college."

The Mar. 7 event is being organized by MESA at the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC) to increase college-going rates across the region and prepare more students, especially underrepresented and educationally disadvantaged students, for success in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and careers. MESA Day is the culmination of students' year-long efforts in the classroom. Working with their MESA Teacher Advisor, students follow curricula designed to reinforce California State Math and Science Standards.

The hands-on MESA projects allow students to demonstrate essential skills and concepts in a variety of competitions, ranging from trebuchets and model bisected hearts to team math quest, civil structures, and web design. This year, students will compete in a new Windmill Energy Challenge competition, building devices to capture and use wind energy. MESA is shifting toward projects that are most relevant to current STEM research—sustainable energy is at the forefront of engineering and requires students to develop real world problem-solving skills, said Moreno.

“We want to encourage bright minds to stay in math, science, and engineering and dream big and not lose their interest in those fields. MESA Day celebrates students’ achievements and rewards their hard work,” said Carrol Moran, executive director of EPC.

More than 30 university faculty and business and industry professionals from Cisco Systems, Santa Cruz Community Credit Union, City of Santa Cruz, Skyline Solar, Bay Federal Credit Union, and others are volunteering to judge the competitions. The opening ceremony will begin at 8:15 a.m., featuring welcome remarks from Joel Kubby, associate professor of electrical engineering. In addition to the competition events, students and families also have the opportunity to participate in a bilingual parent workshop, renewable energy resources presentation and demo, California Peregrine Falcon presentation, and a Tesla coil demonstration and presentation on medical robotics. There will also be a special Student Organizations and Resource Fair in the afternoon. The closing awards ceremony begins at 4:00 p.m., including the keynote speaker, Anselmo Ontiveros, systems engineer at Lockheed Martin Corporate and UCSC alumni.

Registration for the 2009 MESA Day is limited to MESA program participants at partner schools only. The event is free and open to the public. The competition will be held rain or shine. For more information about the MESA Day Preliminary Competition on March 7 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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