

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE **Current**

April 9, 1998

Lillian Kurosaka

UCSB TO HOST ENGINEERING COMPETITION FOR TEENS

Over 500 future engineers will test their skills on Saturday, April 18, at the University of California, Santa Barbara, during the California Central Region MESA Day. The annual event for disadvantaged pre-college students features competitions in mathematics, science, and engineering design. Design problems include building a container that would protect an egg dropped from Storke Tower from meeting Humpty Dumpty's fate.

"The engineering contests are designed to challenge students' ingenuity and creativity by requiring them to adhere to specific guidelines. An example is the Enclosed Egg Drop. In this contest the containers for the eggs can not exceed 25 centimeters from any angle," says Frances Hidalgo, the associate director of UCSB's Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Center.

Other engineering problems are to build strong bridges from balsawood or popsicle sticks, create devices that will cushion the fall of an egg from the Engineering II building, and construct vehicles powered by a mousetrap.

There will also be contests in math, essay writing, speech, and the SAT Verbal I based on each student's individual grade level. In addition to the academic competitions, there will be a College/Career Fair taking place in Storke Plaza from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (The junior high and high school students---representing MESA School Program centers at UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Cruz, CSU Bakersfield, CSU Fresno,

and MESA's Success Through Collaboration---have all previously taken part in preliminary competitions sponsored by their local centers.

The California Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement program was one of the first pre-college efforts directed at diversifying the pool of students pursuing math-based careers. Begun in 1970 in Oakland, Calif., MESA's success is due in part to early intervention efforts such as introducing disadvantaged students to greater career choices through field trips to universities and industries; academic advising and monitoring of the program's students; preparing students for PSAT and SAT; and encouraging leadership opportunities. Additional information about Santa Barbara's Center can be found at their web site,

www.engineering.ucsb.edu/programs/mep_and_msp/.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.