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Andrea Estrada

UCSB to Hold Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Expo at Oxnard College

UC Santa Barbara and Oxnard College are teaming up for STEM EXPO 2011 a daylong event that will bring middle and high school students from the Oxnard and Santa Paula area together with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) professionals, researchers, and college and university students to explore STEM fields, college pathways, and career opportunities.

Approximately 500 secondary students are expected to participate in the event, which begins at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, September 20. They include students in the MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement) programs at Oxnard's Channel Islands, Hueneme, Oxnard, Pacifica, and Rio Mesa high schools; Oxnard's Frank, Fremont, and Haydock

intermediate schools; Santa Paula's Isbell Middle School; prospective MESA students ó primarily first-generation college-bound students interested in exploring STEM opportunities.

Among the scheduled activities are workshops focused on science and engineering education and careers, and a special presentation by Sulema Castro, Ph.D., a Smithsonian Institute conservation biologist, who coordinates biological research for the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. Other highlights will include a

hands-on NASA Robotics demonstration and guided robot-building; UCSB Marine Science Institute's Mobile REEF Program with hands-on sea animal experiences; "The Magic Planet," a digital projection globe with views of natural global phenomena by UCSB's Outreach Center for Teaching Ocean Science (OCTOS); and "Build-a-Buckyball," UCSB Material Research Lab's take-home model of the C-60 molecule.

Also participating in the STEM EXPO are students from UCSB's MESA Engineering Program, Ventura College's MESA Community College Program, and Oxnard College's HSI-STEM Center. Los Ingenieros, UCSB's Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, and the National Society of Back Engineers will be hosting many of the workshops and presentations. Most of the 50 undergraduate and graduate student volunteers are first-generation college students pursuing STEM degrees, and advocating for more young students to follow STEM-related studies and careers.

The STEM EXPO represents one of many collaborative efforts between UCSB, Oxnard College, and Oxnard area schools to link secondary school students to Oxnard College, Ventura College, and UC and CSU campuses. It is made possible through a Title V Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to Oxnard College. UCSB partners in the STEM EXPO include the MESA Programs, the Office of Education Partnerships, the College of Engineering, the Center for Engineering and Science Partnerships, and the Marine Science Institute. Also partnering in the event are the Oxnard Union High School District and Oxnard School District.

UCSB's MESA program serves more than 800 students from 15 schools in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, 80 percent of whom go on to college. It is part of the University of California's statewide MESA program, which overall, serves more than 20,000 K-12, community college and four-year college students each year. The program prepares students academically so they graduate with baccalaureate degrees in math-, science-, and engineering-related disciplines. A total of 70 percent of MESA high school graduates pursue college degrees. In comparison, 48 percent of all California high school graduates go to college. UCSB is among the top university destinations for MESA high school graduates.

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.