UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

February 5, 2019
Andrea Estrada

Envisioning the Future

UC Santa Barbara's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) will host 400 high school juniors Saturday, Feb. 9, for the seventh annual Education, Leadership, and Careers Conference.

In addition to hearing keynote speakers California State Assemblymember Monique Limón and UC Santa Barbara Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Margaret Klawunn, the students — who hail from Santa Barbara, Ventura and Kern counties — will participate in small group sessions with leadership mentors from a broad range of fields and professions. Afternoon panel discussions with UC Santa Barbara undergraduate students will highlight a range of topics, from the college application process and the availability of financial aid to campus life and academics.

The majority of those attending the conference are first-generation, low-income students who are enrolled in UC Santa Barbara EAOP, a pre-college academic preparation program designed to increase college-going enrollment rates at all four higher education systems in California (UC, Cal State, California Community Colleges and private and independent schools).

For the first time, the conference also will be attended by middle-school students, this year from the Santa Maria Bonita School District.

The goal of the conference is to inspire and motivate the students and to show them how education, leadership and careers relate to each other and impact an individual's life and lifestyle opportunities. "Our participants say they want to be

college graduates and become professionals someday," said UC Santa Barbara EAOP director Britt Ortiz. "We have 21 speakers who will inspire and motivate our high-school and middle-school attendees to pursue their educational, leadership and career dreams."

Among those speakers are Gloria Castro, senior assistant attorney general of California; former Secretary of the Senate Daniel Alvarez; Ernest Cardenas, area manager for AT&T corporate real estate; Charlene Dimas Peinado, president and chief executive officer of the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic; Cary Matsuoka, superintendent of the Santa Barbara Unified School District; Xushie "Zoxie" Brue, senior program analyst for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region IX; Epifanio Peinado, chief deputy director of human resources for Los Angeles County; Steve Ortiz, president and chief executive officer for United Way of Santa Barbara County; and Diana Figueroa, educational advisor with the Educational Talent Search Program.

"This isn't so much about matching up with a particular career mentor as it is about connecting with professionals in a life-mentoring context about how education, leadership and career paths are related to each other," Ortiz explained.

"The students will engage in mini-mentoring sessions with professionals in the morning and then hear from several undergraduates in the afternoon," he continued. "We hope they gain enough insight from the stories and advice that they are inspired and motivated to create their own visions of their dreams coming true as they return to their schools and continue their journeys to higher education."

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.