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EAOP promotes a college-going culture with annual conference

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With a goal to inspire and motivate young students, the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) at UC Santa Barbara will host its 12th annual Education and Careers Conference (ECC) on Saturday, Feb. 1. Some 300 high school students from Santa Barbara, Ventura and Kern counties will participate.

The UCSB EAOP is one of UC's largest and oldest pre-college academic preparation programs. EAOP strives to promote a college-going culture at its partnership school and increase enrollment rates in California's four higher education systems.

With the ECC conference, EAOP seeks to showcase how education and careers intertwine, shaping an individual's life and opening avenues for diverse lifestyle opportunities. The event also will highlight perspectives of professionals and university undergraduates, to help participants envision their own success as college students and professionals. Most ECC participants are first-generation students enrolled in EAOP and on track to complete their CSU-UC eligibility requirements by high school graduation.

Students will have the opportunity to interact with conference keynote speakers, Alexis Ivan Aleman and Irvin Garcia Real, first-generation UCLA medical students who have used their stories to empower others via social media and call themselves the “Foos in Medicine.” Afterward, students will participate in three sessions, hearing from presenters in engineering, health and human services professions. The conference will have nine speakers, including Angelica Lopez Macen, Juan Zepeda, Dr. Marcela Areyano, Gabriel Macias, Dr. Ivan Covarrubias, Maria Solis, Samantha Herrera Fuentes Davila, Dr. Celina M. Benavides and René García-Hernández.

“For many participants, this might be the first time students will meet and hear from professionals who look like them and have shared life experience,” said EAOP Director Rosa Martinez. “We know this has been an impactful experience for the students as they learn how their speakers overcame obstacles, took advantage of opportunities and strove to meet their goals and set new ones.”

Students also will participate in a Q&A discussion session with a panel of UCSB undergraduate students representing a diverse range of majors, campus leadership roles and career interests. The undergraduates will highlight an array of topics, from the college application process, to academics, to financial aid, to campus life, and their transition from high school.

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edge of the Pacific Ocean.