

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Center for Black Studies Announces New Research Initiative

Anna Everett, director of the Center for Black Studies at UC Santa Barbara, announced today a new academic initiative aimed at coalescing diverse areas of research around the subject of race and technology.

At a campus event entitled "Presenting the Future," Everett introduced the new Race and Technology Initiative before an audience made up of scholars and students from many academic disciplines at UCSB.

She described the initiative as "an exciting new interdisciplinary research program which will leverage science, the arts, and social science to examine the rapidly-shifting role of information technologies for the African diaspora and other racial groups worldwide.

"We believe our timing for this undertaking here at UCSB is perfect, since our campus has developed a critical mass of scholar-researchers, technology programs, and even entire new disciplines centering around studies of race, globalization, new media technologies, and digital arts," Everett said.

Among the research projects on the new initiative's agenda, is Everett's own work, a recently completed book manuscript entitled "Digital Diasporas: The Race for Cyberspace."

In it, she explores several case studies of early Internet and technology adoption, recent theories of virtual communities among the members of the far-flung African diaspora, other issues pertaining to the digital divide, and universal access to new media technology and legislation.

Everett also introduced two visiting researchers who will be working at the center through the end of the academic year: William Jones, a New York visual artist and teacher of computer graphics and design in Ghana; and Jorge Coelho, a network specialist and Web developer, currently studying the use of information technologies in West Africa on behalf of the center's new initiative.

An associate professor of film studies, Everett said she welcomes input and participation from UCSB faculty members in as many disciplines as possible to "establish new collaborations and joint activities around these and other related issues."

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