

**UC SANTA BARBARA**

# *THE* **Current**

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[Andrea Estrada](#)

## **Inspiration and Motivation**

UC Santa Barbara's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) will host 350 high school juniors Saturday, Feb. 6, for the fourth annual Education, Leadership, and Careers Conference.

In addition to hearing keynote speakers Victor Ríos, a professor of sociology at UCSB, and Maricruz Hernandez, director of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning and Innovation for the Oxnard Union High School District, 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 UCSB undergraduate students will highlight a host 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 UCSB 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).

"These students are extremely motivated and many are school leaders, highly competitive academically and interested in pursuing four-year degrees and multiple majors," said UCSB EAOP Director Britt Ortiz.

The goal of the conference, he noted, 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.

In addition to Ríos and Hernandez, speakers include U.S. Representative Antonio "Tony" Cardenas (a UCSB alumnus), Gloria Castro, a senior assistant attorney general; Alex Riviera of Ventura County's Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers; Epifanio Peinado, chief deputy director at the Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources; and Tony Tolbert, assistant adjunct professor at the UCLA School of Law.

"We hope that by providing both professional and undergrad perspectives we can demonstrate successful examples and strategies for the immediate and distant future that the juniors face as they prepare to enter their senior years of high school," Ortiz said. "And we hope that by the time students leave the conference they will truly believe the sky is the limit for their education, leadership and career dreams."

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## **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.