

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Tomorrow's Leaders

UC Santa Barbara's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) will host 400 high school juniors Saturday, Jan. 27, for the sixth annual Education, Leadership, and Careers Conference.

In addition to hearing keynote speakers U.S. Rep. Tony Cárdenas and UCSB 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 UCSB 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 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).

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 high school participants will learn from current professionals how they became what they are today," said UCSB EAOP director Britt Ortiz. "They also will be mentored by current college students who are

only a few years older than they are. What an opportunity for our high school participants to learn from so many perspectives and gain valuable wisdom, insight and motivation.”

Among other speakers are Gloria Castro, senior assistant attorney general; Secretary of the Senate Daniel Alvarez; Amanda Garcia, an associate producer for KCETLink; David Santa Maria, an English and history instructor for the Los Angeles Unified School District; John Lister, a firefighter with the Los Angeles County Fire Department; Judy Weber, deputy director for the County of Ventura human services agency; attorney Susana Angelica Gonzales; Ivan Castelo, a vice president and branch manager of Union Bank; and Justin Brue, an engineer with the City of Oakland’s Construction Management Department.

For UCSB alumni Castro, Alvarez, Garcia, Santa Maria, Castelo and Gonzales, participating in the conference is something of a homecoming.

“Most of our professional speakers and almost all of our student volunteers will be first-generation college-bound, and many will be from under-resourced and low-income backgrounds,” Ortiz said. “Hearing from so many individuals about how they have overcome obstacles, taken on challenges and dealt with hardship in the pursuit of their dreams — what an environment for inspiring and motivating the participating high school students.”

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.