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# UCSB to Host IT Expo Focused on Solutions for California Education Sector

UC Santa Barbara will be hosting its second annual "IT in Education Exposition" this Friday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the campus's Events Center. Information Technology professionals supporting the education sector throughout California are invited to attend this free event, which is open to the public.

Geared toward finding solutions for IT professionals who deal with the constant effort of developing and maintaining technology solutions in the K-12 and higher education sectors, the Expo offers attendees the opportunity to talk to 80 vendors in one place. It also allows them the opportunity to attend technical presentations and peer discussion forums, where they network and explore options that are not only efficient, but economical as well.

"We need to learn how to leverage technology to provide more efficient and effective solutions for the entire educational sector throughout the state of California," said organizer Joe McLain, the user support group leader and Windows systems administrator for the Life Sciences Computer Group at UCSB.

As educational institutions across the state deal with years of a down economy, slashed budgets, and ever smaller IT departments, the work hasn't gone away, said McLain. Now, as systems infrastructures become obsolete, IT departments are

scrambling to keep their systems current; and schools could be paying more than necessary and struggling with inadequate solutions while doing business "the old way," he said.

Among the hot topics to be discussed at the Expo are innovations in conferencing, storage, network technology, hardware, and asset management. Desktop virtualization has also been gaining attention for its potential to make upgrades and administration more efficient and cost-effective, as well as its ability to benefit campuses financially through dramatically reduced energy costs.

"It's a giant virtualized computer," explained McLain, where the monitors, keyboards and other accessories are wired into a small piece of hardware that replaces each individual computer, and instead connects to a central server. This makes it easier to perform necessary upgrades, while saving money in electricity, hardware and software costs, and staff workload. At least one major university has made the switch, and is saving

"a stunning amount of money," according to McLain. Copies of their white paper will be made available at a peer discussion forum.

The second event of its kind, the Expo got its start last year as an effort to streamline the task of bringing together vendors and IT professionals in the education sector. Instead of fighting to find information, or waiting for vendor representatives to somehow find the right people to talk to on campus, the event's organizers decided to invite companies to campus to talk and make themselves available for consultation.

"We thought if six vendors and 20 techs showed up, that would be great," said McLain. In the end, 35 companies participated, about 300 attendees walked through, and the event got great reviews from both vendors and visitors. Many vendors were so encouraged that they returned to campus to do their own technical presentations to the staff during summer and fall of last year. This year he has seen techs register to attend from as far away as San Diego and San Francisco.

"There's an incredible need for this information," McLain said, "and this can benefit the entire state of California."

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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.