

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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## Leaders of Tomorrow

UC Santa Barbara's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) will host 400 high school juniors Saturday, March 4, for the fifth annual Education, Leadership, and Careers Conference.

In addition to hearing keynote speakers Mike Miller, director of the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, 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).

"I'm incredibly excited about the speakers we have this year," said UCSB EAOP director Britt Ortiz. "Most, if not all, of our speakers have amazing stories about overcoming obstacles and challenges in life to become who they are today. Many are at the top of their professions in their respective fields."

The goal of the conference, Ortiz 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.

Among other speakers are Gloria Castro, a senior assistant attorney general; Daniel Alvarez, secretary of the California State Senate; Geoff Green, chief executive officer of the Santa Barbara Foundation; Epifanio Peinado, chief deputy director at the Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources; and Jeramy Gray, assistant executive officer for the County of Los Angeles.

For UCSB alumni Castro, Alvarez, Green and Peinado, participating in the conference is something of a homecoming.

“Almost all of our speakers are first-generation college-bound and several come from very humble beginnings and very under-resourced backgrounds,” Ortiz said. “They are here to share their respective stories with our EAOP high school students and to inspire and motivate them to continue on their journeys into their own educational, leadership and career dreams coming true.”

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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.