

# CAMP Student Scholars Receive Top Placements at Two National Conferences

*Aerospace Engineering CAMP Scholar Wins First Place at EMERGE Consortium*

**December 12, 2005** – UC Irvine CAMP student scholars received top honors in science, engineering, and math research projects presented at two national conferences. Alejandro J. Puga, a fourth-year aerospace engineering undergraduate, placed first at the annual EMERGE Consortium in Atlanta, Ga. and was named a poster winner at the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) conference in Denver, Colo.

Puga, mentored by John LaRue, Ph.D., professor in mechanical and aerospace engineering, traveled to both conferences to exhibit his research on “The Significance of Camber on a Wing of Finite Span in Ground Effect,” competing in both oral and poster presentations against undergraduate and graduate students from colleges and universities across the country.

CAMP, or the California Alliance for Minority Participation, is part of a statewide program supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) that promotes the quality and quantity of underrepresented undergraduate students seeking degrees in science, engineering and math (SEM) in the UC system.

UC Irvine adopted CAMP in 1991, and is one of eight UC campuses that support the program’s initiatives. Derek Dunn-Rankin, professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, is UC Irvine’s CAMP regional director, as well as the director for the bridge to the doctorate NSF-funded program.

Kika Friend, CAMP Program Director, traveled with the selected CAMP students to the EMERGE Conference, sponsored by the NSF, where fellow UC Irvine students also took home second and third place for their research presentations focused on information and computer science and physics.

“The student scholars did a phenomenal job at both conferences, and it was an honor to travel with them and support them in their competitions. Both conferences provided many networking

opportunities, and exposed the students to numerous opportunities,” Friend said.

CAMP scholars are selected during winter quarter, and participate in a 10-week program with a faculty member mentor, designed to provide students with interactive weekly workshops and events to help prepare them for presenting their research projects and applying for graduate school.

“We have about 25 to 30 CAMP scholars, and they participate in a variety of workshops, including how to fund graduate school, GRE prep, presentation skills, social skills 101, networking, and so forth,” Friend explained.

She said each year, at the end of August, the student scholars present their research projects to their mentors, faculty, and peers, and students are chosen to move forward and compete at national conferences.

“It’s extremely powerful to watch these students progress from formulating their research question, to young scientists traveling to national conferences, and presenting their work in a polished, professional, and knowledgeable way,” she said.

Friend was also honored at the SACNAS conference in Denver, where she received the prominent *Professional Mentor Award*.

The next CAMP statewide conference will be held at The Arnold and Mabel Beckman Center of the National Academies on the UC Irvine campus from February 24 – 26, 2006.

### **EMERGE Conference Award Winners:**

First Place: Alejandro J. Puga, fourth-year aerospace engineering student

Mentored By: John LaRue, Professor, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Research presentation: The Significance of Camber on a Wing of Finite Span in Ground Effect

Second Place: Alfred Anguiano, third-year information and computer science student

Mentored By: Nalini Venkatasubramanian, Associate Professor, Information and Computer

ScienceResearch Presentation: Voice Data and Situational Awareness Integration into the 911 System

Third Place: Omar Moreno, fourth-year physics student

Mentored By: David Kirkby, Associate Professor, Experimental Particle Physics

Research Presentation: Neural Network Application to Particle Identification in Lærp Decay Channel



*The 2005 EMERGE Conference Student Award Winners (from left to right): Alfred Anguiano, Kika Friend (CAMP Program Director), Alejandro Puga, and Omar Moreno*

### **SACNAS Conference**

#### *Poster Competition Winners*

Alejandro Puga, fourth-year aerospace engineering student

Mentored By: John LaRue, Professor, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Daniela Dunams, second-year applied ecology student

Mentored By: C. Sunny Jiang, Associate Professor, Environmental Health Science and Policy

Cynthia Ortega, third-year biological sciences student

Mentored By: Carrie Brachmann, Assistant Professor, and Jessica Monserate, Graduate Student, Developmental & Cell Biology

#### **Poster Competition Honorable Mentions**

Alfred Anguiano, third-year information and computer science student

Mentored By: Nalini Venkatasubramanian Associate Professor, Information and Computer Science

Michael Golightly, third-year computer science student

Mentored By: Vivek Pai, Assistant Professor, Network Server Design & Performance, Princeton University

Abimbola Odusoga, fourth-year engineering student

Mentored By: Francois Primeau, Assistant Professor, Earth Systems Science



*The 2005 SACNAS Conference UCI Student Award Winners (from left to right): TOP, Alejandro J. Puga (second person in row), BOTTOM, Cynthia Ortega and Daniela Dunams (third and fourth people in row)*

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