



NEWS

El Camino College | Public Relations & Marketing Department
16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506
Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations
Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | Email: agarten@elcamino.edu

For Immediate Release

February 20, 2015

Copy by: Tatiana Owens

El Camino College to Present Onizuka Space Science Day 2015

El Camino College welcomes JAXA Astronaut Koichi Wakata to Onizuka Space Science Day 2015, scheduled from 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Saturday, March 7 in Marsee Auditorium and science classrooms.

Sponsored by El Camino College and American Honda Motor Co., Inc. and coordinated by the ECC Astronaut Ellison Onizuka Memorial Committee, the event is dedicated to Ellison Onizuka, a Space Shuttle Challenger astronaut who perished along with six other crew members during the tragic events of 1986. Onizuka Space Science Day is free and open to serious-minded science students in grades five through 12.

In 1992, Wakata was selected as an astronaut candidate by the National Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA, now known as the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, JAXA). He started training in the 14th NASA astronaut class in August 1992 and was qualified as a Mission Specialist (MS) in August 1993. His assignments at the NASA Office have included: Space Shuttle flight software verification, Space Shuttle payloads, the Japanese Experiment Module "Kibo" of the International Space Station (ISS), Space Shuttle and ISS robotics, and Extravehicular Activities (EVAs).

Wakata flew as the first Japanese Mission Specialist on STS-7 and was the NASDA Assistant Payload Operations Director for the Manipulator Flight Demonstration. He qualified as a NASA instructor astronaut for robotics and completed flight engineer training for the Russian Soyuz TMA spacecraft. He served as the Chief of the Space Station Operations Branch of NASA's Astronaut Office, as well as the Chief of the JAXA Astronaut Group. In October 2000, he became the first Japanese astronaut to work on the ISS.

In 2009, Wakata flew as the first resident ISS crew member from Japan and served as a Flight Engineer and the JAXA Science Officer on the crews of Expeditions 18, 19 and 20 as well as a Mission Specialist on STS-119 and STS-127. On March 9, 2014, he assumed command of the station's Expedition 39, and became the first Japanese ISS Commander. He has accumulated 347 days 8 hours 33 minutes in space, spanning four missions, and setting a record in Japanese space flight history for the longest stay in space.

During Onizuka Space Science Day, Wakata will make a presentation to students before they join hands-on science activities and demonstrations.

To register, contact SpaceDay@elcamino.edu. For more information go to www.elcamino.edu/academics/naturalsciences/onizuka-space-science-day/ or call 310-660-3487.

###