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For Immediate Release

May 22, 2013

El Camino College Honors Transfer Program Presents Research Projects at Annual Conference

El Camino College student Cindy Barrientos was looking forward to learning about different topics and ideas outside of her own major of neuroscience while attending the recent statewide Honors Transfer Program research conference. What she didn't expect was meeting new people and thriving in an incredibly interesting academic atmosphere.

"I absolutely loved the conference," said Barrientos, a graduate of Torrance High School who is leaning toward transferring to the University of California at Irvine this fall.

"I love to learn new things - especially those out of my major field, so it was great being able to see posters and hear oral presentations on things that I never knew about. The environment was also great - everybody was so supportive of one another."

Barrientos was one of 21 students in the El Camino College Honors Transfer Program (HTP) who recently presented research projects at the statewide Honors Transfer Council of California (HTCC) Student Research Conference at UC Irvine. She received a scholarship for her award-winning research poster, titled: "The effect of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on the cellular communication of *Vibrio harveyi*."

"I thought this would be a great topic as there is a lot of concern over environmental impacts due to human activities," she said. "Due to more sensitive equipment, scientists are able to find trace pharmaceuticals in marine habitats. I wanted to see if these low concentrations could potentially harm the organisms by testing an effect on the marine bacteria, *Vibrio harveyi*."

In addition to Barrientos' award, two other ECC students were honored at the conference for their accomplishments. Helin Hernandez and Daniella DeLucia received HTCC Exceptional Achievement Scholarships for displaying extraordinary commitment or overcoming obstacles to success.

This conference was created by ECC Natural Sciences Dean Jean Shankweiler when she was

HTP director and many community colleges from all over California participate every year in the daylong event. ECC always sends one of the largest contingents of student presenters. The conference is designed to allow honors students at community colleges to present their research in a university setting.

Each student presented either a research poster or an oral presentation at UC Irvine. In addition, most of the students will have their abstracts printed in a UCI publication.

El Camino College Honors Transfer Program students have access to priority registration, academic and social interaction with other highly motivated students, smaller class sizes, designation of HTP on El Camino College transcripts/degrees, and enrichment seminars.

The HTP offers a unique learning environment that stresses scholastic excellence. The major objective of the program is to better prepare highly-motivated students for transfer to a university by focusing on enhanced writing, reading and study skills.

“The Honors Transfer Program has really helped me,” Barrientos said. “First, it provided me with the opportunity to present at the conference. Second, I have met some wonderful professors who truly care about their students. Director Joe Holliday in particular was so enthusiastic at the conference and really dedicated to student success.”

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