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Cerritos College Hosts NASA's Engineering Design Challenge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 21, 2023

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NORWALK, Calif. – August 21, 2023 – Cerritos College hosted its fourth NASA on Campus event from August 9-12 as part of the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) program. Twenty-five students from Cerritos College, Cypress College, and the College of the Desert were selected to be part of the program. Cerritos College has been part of NCAS since its pilot stage in 2019.



Students at the NCAS rover competition

The NCAS experience offered students the opportunity to learn about careers in science and engineering, consisting of a five-week online activity (Mission 1) and an educational simulation (Mission 2) that culminated with a four-day event on campus (Mission 3). While at Cerritos College, students formed teams and established fictional companies competing for a Mars rover contract. Each team was responsible for developing and testing a prototype rover, forming a company infrastructure, managing a budget, and developing a communications and outreach strategy. The event also included briefings by NASA subject matter experts, a panel presentation featuring past NCAS students who have participated in NASA internships, and tours of Google and Cal Poly Pomona. Two Cerritos College and NCAS alumni, who now work as engineers for ABL Space Systems and Boeing, served as mentors.

The NCAS program is funded by The Minority University Research and Education Program (MUREP) through a grant from the California Space Grant Consortium. MUREP is committed to engaging underrepresented and underserved students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with authentic learning experiences to sustain a diverse workforce.

With this activity, NASA continues the agency's tradition of engaging the nation in NASA's mission and leading an innovative and sustainable program of exploration to enable human expansion across the solar system and to bring back to Earth new knowledge and opportunities.

"NCAS has proven to prepare our students to explore opportunities and careers with NASA and other STEM-related professions. Many students who participated in NCAS have gone on to achieve their

dream jobs. Some of them return to NCAS to give back and serve as mentors," said Janet McLarty-Schroeder, chair of physics, astronomy, and engineering and NCAS coordinator at Cerritos College.

About Cerritos College: Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college's district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs, and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies. Enrollment currently averages 21,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at <http://www.cerritos.edu/>.

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