CSUN Reaches Out to Engineering’s Next Generation
Innovative Program Enlists 71 High School Students for Online College-Credit Course

Reaching out to the next generation of bright young minds, Cal State Northridge has launched an innovative program that could inspire dozens of local high school students to study engineering.

A group of local high school juniors and seniors recently made its first official visit to a CSUN engineering lab as the newest members of manufacturing systems engineering and management professor Tarok Shraibati’s “Introduction to Engineering,” an online, college-credit course offered for the first time to students at eight area high schools.

“The idea is that, hopefully, the students will decide to go on to an engineering school, maybe even CSUN,” said Shraibati, robotics lab director. “But even if that doesn’t happen, these young people are taking a college-credit course that will help them in the future, showing them that college is not inaccessible.”

Monroe, San Fernando, Granada Hills, El Camino Real, Chaminade, Fraizer Mountain, Northridge Academy and Fulton College Preparatory School are the home schools for the 71 students in the program.

They complete a one-hour session per week and follow up with lab work at their schools, supervised by teachers who have the background and training to support their work.

“This is not an Advanced Placement class, this is an actual college course, similar to one I teach for students here at CSUN,” said Shraibati, whose lectures include the design process, study skills, time management and other information leading to college success.

The teens’ work will culminate with their participation in the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Tech Challenge, a regional robotics competition designed to excite young people about careers in science and engineering.

“Students from each participating school will design a robot using a Vex Robotic Design System, which Shraibati calls “an erector set on steroids.” The students are going to discover that engineering is serious work, Shraibati said, “but it’s not boring.”

Manufacturing systems engineering and management chair Bonita Campbell said the “exceptionally qualified” high school teachers who participate in the ACCESS (Accelerated Coursework for Computer Science and Engineering Student Success) Program are appointed as part-time faculty with her department.

Karla Johnson-Majedi, director of the Student Services/EOP Satellite in the College of Engineering and Computer Science—which helped set up the program with the high schools—said the demand for the online course already is so high that it will be expanded next year and beyond.

“Research shows that once you bring a young person to a college campus, they are more likely to return as a student,” she said. “There is such a shortage of engineers out there. It would be outstanding if some of these high school kids came back and studied engineering at CSUN.”

‘Climate Crisis’: Not Your Average Chat About the Weather
‘Speak Your Mind’ Lecturer is Active on Nobel Prize-Winning UN Climate Change Panel

One of the world’s foremost experts in the field of climate change will launch Cal State Northridge’s 2007–08 Speak Your Mind lecture series at 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 25, in the campus Plaza del Sol Performance Hall, University Student Union.

Stephen H. Schneider of Stanford University is actively involved with the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which last week was named co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize with former Vice President Al Gore. He will address the series’ discussion theme for the year—the environment—in a talk called “Climate Crisis: Can California Cope?”

Frequently cited as a compelling speaker with a gift for communicating the complexities of global climate change, the scientist has noted that California often is in the forefront of Speak Your Mind.
Transfer Students Get an Honor Society to Call Their Own

Tau Sigma Will Give Transfer Students a Sense of Community ‘Built Around Honor and Excellence’

When Leroy Geter transferred to Cal State Northridge from a San Diego community college in 1973, he had to find his own way on the large campus, get through the admissions process, scramble to find housing, and fit in with students who had been friends for years.

“There was nobody available to say, ‘Go here. Do this. This is what you need,’” remembers Geter. As coordinator of transfer student initiatives, he focuses on enhancing the experiences of CSU’s transfer students, who primarily come from community colleges—some having completed their two-year degrees—to seek their bachelor’s degrees from CSUN.

To help these newcomers become more deeply connected to the campus, Geter has launched a CSU chapter of Tau Sigma, the national honor society for transfer students. The society recognizes outstanding academic achievement, provides a common bond and encourages greater involvement of transfer students at universities.

CSU’s chapter will be the first in the California State University system, according to Geter, the chartering advisor. Induction is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 3.

Some 3,800 transfer students enrolled last year at CSUN, said Geter, who works in the office of the vice president for student affairs. They may not be clueless when they arrive on campus, he said, but they do need support to succeed and to graduate.

“Because many of them commute, the best way to give transfer students a sense of community is to involve them in an organization of their own,” said Geter. “Who wouldn’t want to build a community around honor and excellence?” Geter’s unit also is organizing a Transfer Student Association.

To identify potential honor society members, he sought an analysis based on the grade point averages (g.p.a.) of transfer students who came to CSUN a year ago. The results indicated that nearly 600 full-time students had completed their first term with at least a 3.5 g.p.a. Of that number, 65 have accepted the invitation to join Tau Sigma and have paid the $45 membership fee.

Tau Sigma members will become student ambassadors who can help the university address the needs of transfer students and welcome new transfers, said Geter. They also will qualify for scholarships offered by the national honor society, and can attend national conferences of transfer students to explore issues of importance to them.

“You’ll have students who are excelling, talking genuinely about their experiences and explaining what the university is like,” said Geter.

“They’ll be role models.”

CSUN 9th in Awarding Engineering Mgmt. Master’s Degrees

In National Ranking, Norridge Master’s Program Doubles U.S. Average for Degrees Awarded

Cal State Northridge ranked ninth in the nation for the number of master’s degrees in engineering management it awarded in the academic year 2006–2007.

The ranking is based on data collected by the American Society of Engineering and was published in the 2007 edition of Profiles of Engineering & Engineering Technology Colleges.

According to the data, CSUN ranked ninth out of 53 recognized U.S. institutions in the number of master’s degrees in engineering management awarded. On average, a university awards about 29 engineering management degrees annually. CSUN doubled that average, awarding 56 in the past year.

Continuing growth of the management program is due to the relevance that the engineering industry actively seeks for its technical, professional employees, said Bonita Campbell, chair of the Department of Manufacturing Systems Engineering and Management.

“Because the students have a wide range of undergraduate engineering and related discipline backgrounds, they are able to gain valuable interdisciplinary experiential learning in working with class colleagues on course projects,” she said.

In other engineering news, a class of 16 students—under the direction of mechanical engineering professor C.T. Lin—has created an autonomous robot that will compete in the Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition (IGVC) come June 2008. It will be CSUN’s third year of participation in the Michigan-based competition.

“This class is a year long project in which students are required to deliver a design product,” said Lin. “My group is focused on the unmanned robotic vehicle, also known as LinBot.

Mechanical, electrical and computer engineering seniors are required to participate in a senior design class, a multi-disciplinary project allowing them to put into action what they have learned in the classroom.

“Students go from concept to actual design by the end of the first semester,” said Lin. “Second semester they turn design into construction of the vehicle.”

About 40 schools from around the world test their innovation skills in the IGVC competition. Last year, CSUN placed seventh overall, but Lin said the team hopes to place within the top three at the 2008 competition.

‘Amber Light’ Program Keeps Eye on CSUN After Dark

Public Safety Parking Officers’ Vehicles Beam Lights to Signal Help is Nearby

It’s dark. You can’t remember where you parked your car. There is no need to panic. Look for an amber light on top of a truck driven by a Cal State Northridge parking officer, and get help. As darkness falls across the campus, said Captain Alfredo Fernandez of the campus’ Department of Public Safety, CSUN’s parking officers are instructed to turn on the amber lights above their trucks. As they patrol with lights easily seen and felt in the parking community about such services, the Public Safety Department later in the semester will begin distributing a convenient, wallet-sized, “amber light” card that lists public safety services and phone numbers.

“If you ever have a need or request, we’re going to have information about all the services parking officers provide and police officers provide,” Fernandez said. Cards will be distributed at various campus presentations and programs, or will be available at the Public Safety Department, corner of Darby Avenue and Prairie Street.

Captain Fernandez said after parking officers end their evening shifts, faculty, staff, students or visitors can request an escort from Matador Patrol, the student-run public service organization which operates under the guidance of the Public Safety Department, providing personal safety escorts at (818) 677-5012, Monday through Thursday from dusk until 11 p.m. during the academic session.

“Even after hours, when the escort program is no longer running, you can request an escort, and usually a police officer will come and escort you,” Fernandez explained. “You’re never alone. Public safety is always with you.”
Events

Tuesday, October 16
Geological Sciences Colloquium
The Geological Sciences Department and the Geology Club sponsored Aurora Piatruska of San Diego State University’s Department of Geological Sciences, speaking on “Rapid Passage Through the Melting Regions of Kilaeua and Mauna Loa Volcanoes,” at 4 p.m. in Live Oak Hall 1231. fmi–x5541.

Wednesday, October 17
Vietnam and Iraq Wars: A Comparison
The Center for Ethics and Values presents the open forum “A Comparison of the Vietnam War and the Iraq War” from 9:30 a.m. to noon, Oviatt Library Presentation Room. Presentations include “The Vietnam War: An American Tragedy” by James Mitchell (Political Science), “Lies for War: Vietnam, Iraq, and Beyond,” by David Klein (Mathematics), and “The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counter-Guerilla Warfare” by Ronald Schaffer, emeritus professor of History. Philosophy professor James Kellnerberger will moderate the Q & A. Open to the CSUN community and the public. fmi–x5054 or james.kellnerberger@csun.edu.

Tuesday, October 23
Growing Up Without Language
Susan Schaller, author and human rights advocate, will discuss her work promoting equal access to language for deaf people and introducing hearing people to a rich culture based on sign language.

Public Meetings

Personnel Planning and Review Committee
The University Senate’s Personnel Planning and Review Committee meets 1–4:30 p.m., Oviatt Library Presentation Room. The meeting includes: (1) Friday, October 26, Meets 1–4:30 p.m., Oviatt Library Presentation Room. The meeting includes:

Student Executive Committee
Meets 1–4:30 p.m., Oviatt Library Presentation Room. The meeting includes:

Speak Your Mind…

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tives. As such, he observes, the Golden State is in the position to help create solutions to the global “climate crisis.”

A 1992 recipient of the famed MacArthur Fellowship, or “genius” grant, Schneider served as consultant on environmental science issues to federal agencies and White House staff in the Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Clinton and Bush (previous and present) administrations.

Faculty members are encouraged to bring their classes to hear Schnieder’s latest findings on the impacts of warming temperatures and their projected effects on the planet’s water resources, its heat waves and air quality.

Tuesday, October 24
Chileans in the California Gold Rush
Kelly Sisson, current W.P. Whitsett Research Fellow, will explore how Chileans “mapped” the physical and social spaces they expected to find in California, the kinds of labor Chileans expected to implement in the gold fields, and how they responded to conditions in California in her lecture “Bound for California: Chilean Contract Laborers in the California Gold Rush, 1849–1853” at 7 p.m. in the Whitsett Room, Sierra Hall 451. Seating is limited. To RSVP or for Department of History, x566.

Monday, October 29
Study Abroad Program Photo Competition
CSUN students can vote for their favorite photos at the first Study Abroad and National Student Exchange Photography Competition, and find out about study abroad and national student exchange opportunities as well.

Wednesday, November 7
Provost’s Colloquium
The annual Provost’s Colloquium features geological sciences professor Elena Branca, speaking on “Past as the Key to the Present: What Can Old Continental and Oceanic Faults Tell Us About Active Faults in California?” at 4 p.m., Oviatt Library Presentation Room. RSVP by October 31 or fmi–Karen Storey, x2138 or karen.storey@csun.edu.

For Your Information publishes announcements of events, public meetings, notices, classes and deadlines. Submission deadline is noon on Monday, one week before the next issue.

The deadline for the October 29 issue is Monday, October 22. We strive to include all items submitted by deadline occurring until the next issue. Submit future items by e-mailing them to pubinfo@csun.edu, sending them to mail drop 8214 or faxing them to (818) 677-2488. Your preferred method of submitting. Note: fmi–means for more information.

Educational Policies Committee
Meets 2–4 p.m., Oviatt Library Presentation Room. The agenda includes:

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Deep Conductions
The Michael D. Eisner College of Education and the CSUN community extend sympathy to the family and friends of professor emeritus Donald Lahr (Educational Leadership and Policy Studies), who passed away on September 19 from prostate cancer. Professor Lahr “challenged and inspired many generations of students during his 28 years of teaching in Northridge’s education college.” During the civil rights movement, he was actively involved in obtaining grants for the College. He is survived by his wife, Karen Lahr, and three children.

University Advancement joins with the Institute for International Studies, or at fmi–Juliet Aylmer, x2053 or juliet.aylmer@csun.edu.

Wednesday, November 7

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Catastrophic Leave Donations
Mart Graham (Housing and Conference Services), out of medical leave of absence, has exhausted her leave credits and is requesting catastrophic leave donations on her behalf. To make voluntary donations of sick leave and/or vacation leave, forward completed catastrophic leave donation forms to Payroll Administration, mail drop 8228. Donation forms are available at https://usu.csun.edu/bvs/forms/benefits/forms.html.

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Free copies of his book, “Climate Change Policy: A Survey,” will be available in limited numbers to students attending the lecture. The Honorable Timothy Wirth, president of the United Nations Foundation, has called the world’s “new standard” on the subject. Planned by Associated Students, the University Student Union and representatives from the universities divisions, the lecture series in 2006 focused on the Middle East and on international issues. As such, he observes, the Golden State is in the position to help create solutions to the global “climate crisis.”

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“Th...
Financial Aid Program Makes Dollars Make Sense

Reality often fails to match expectations when students manage their finances. Students are expected to know how to maintain a budget; however, they are acquiring debt at record numbers, which can impact their ability to continue their education or delay graduation. Educating CSUN students on important financial topics can help break the cycle.

The Financial Aid & Scholarship Department, in collaboration with the University Student Union and CSUN’s Career Center, will present “Dollars & Sense: Financial Literacy on Campus,” a series of nine one-hour workshops which will address topics relevant to a college student’s success, such as college budgeting, student financial aid, credit card management, borrowing educational loans, and more.

Upcoming workshops include: “Scholarships: Becoming a Winner!” October 16 at 1 p.m. in the USU Granada Room, “The Benefits of Opening Checking/Savings Accounts,” October 24 at 2 p.m. in the USU Ventura Room, and “College Majors and Financial Success,” November 1 at 2 p.m. in University Hall 105.

Attendees will be encouraged to assess their needs and may more effectively manage their income and expenditures while balancing their roles as students. CSUN students, staff, and faculty are invited to attend one or all workshops.

For more information or to find out about additional workshops in November, contact Sergio Belloso at sergio.belloso.59@csun.edu.

Get Marathon-Ready—Take the CSUN Challenge

Cal State Northridge’s LA Marathon Completion Challenge may make the dream of completing a four-hour, five-kilometer marathon a reality for motivated members of the CSUN campus community and the public.

The challenge includes an extensive preparation course that provides proper conditioning for the Los Angeles Marathon scheduled for Sunday, March 2, 2008. The CSUN challenge is open to everyone who can complete the “prep” program, which requires them to be able to jog continuously for 30 minutes by the week prior to November 12.

“Exercising is a challenge for many people,” said Steven Loy, professor of kinesiology and coordinator of the project. “I’m offering an opportunity to set a goal that requires regular exercise by beginning a program that has structure, camaraderie and a realistic probability for success.”

The program is based on “The Non-Burnout Marathon Trainer” by David Whitsett, Forrest Dolgenyer and Tanjala Jo Kole.

Each runner will need his or her own support member. A support member will accompany the runner by bicycle or by car to provide water and moral support.

Loy asked each participant to recruit family and friends. “The more diverse participants we have, the easier it will be for you to stay with a program that will change your life,” he said.

To participate or for more information, contact Loy at steven.loy@csun.edu.