UCSF FRESNO DOCTORS ACADEMY AT SUNNYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL TO CELEBRATE 10th GRADUATING CLASS

FRESNO - The UCSF Fresno Sunnyside High School Doctors Academy (DA) will celebrate its 10th graduating class on Wednesday, May 23 from 5:45 to 7:30 pm in the Performing Arts Theater at Sunnyside High School (1019 S. Peach Ave.) in Fresno. More than 450 people are expected to attend.

All of the Sunnyside High School Doctors Academy graduates will attend college in the fall. Nine (29 percent) of the 31 graduating students will attend California State University, Fresno. Twenty-one students (68 percent) will attend University of California campuses. One student is expected to enlist in the United States Air Force.

"I am incredibly proud of our Doctors Academy graduating class. These students have demonstrated on a regular basis the quest for excellence in and outside of the classroom. They also have given hundreds of hours in community service and are caring, compassionate young adults" said Sheryl Weaver, principal of Sunnyside High School. "I am particularly pleased to say that nine DA students are among our 20 valedictorians."

Several of the graduates will be awarded the “UCSF School of Medicine Merit Award” for their academic achievement, commitment in the program, and continued interest in a career in medicine.

“I am very proud of these students. Their dedication and hard work is a reflection of their intent to be successful health care professionals. I look forward to their return to the Valley to provide needed health care services in a culturally competent fashion,” said Katherine A. Flores, MD, director of the UCSF Fresno Latino Center for Medical Education and founder of the Doctors Academy.

In addition to the UCSF School of Medicine’s recognition, two Doctors Academy students will be granted similar awards from the UCSF School of Pharmacy. The “UCSF School of Pharmacy Early Conditional Acceptance Program Award” provides students with special consideration for an interview with the UCSF School of Pharmacy based on completion of successful undergraduate course work and admissions requirements.

Mitra Assemi, PharmD, director of the UCSF Fresno Pharmacy Education Program said, “The Doctors Academy and the UCSF School of Pharmacy are perfect partners. One passes the torch to the other. The Academy prepares Valley students for the potential of a career in health care. From there, our program opens the door to a career specifically in pharmacy.”

The Clark Jones Latino Health Scholars Program also will award a scholarship to a student who has excelled in academic achievement during their participation in the Doctors Academy.

Background:
The UCSF Fresno Latino Center for Medical Education and Research, in partnership with Fresno Unified School District and Fresno County Office of Education, started the Sunnyside High School Doctors Academy in 1999 as a pilot program to encourage educationally disadvantaged students to focus on careers in health and medicine. A Junior Doctors Academy Program was established in 2000 to encourage and support students earlier in their academic career as middle school students.

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The Doctors Academy program has grown in popularity and scope in the past ten years. The UCSF Fresno Latino Center continues to support and work closely with Fresno Unified School District to sustain this program at Sunnyside High School and to provide health career opportunities for qualifying students. The Sunnyside Doctors Academy Program currently has 164 students enrolled.

In 2007, the Doctors Academy program was implemented at Caruthers and Selma high schools.

In 2009, the Latino Center partnered with California State University, Fresno to re-establish the Health Careers Opportunity Program with the College of Science and Mathematics. Currently, more than 100 students are enrolled in that program.

For more information about the Doctors Academy or the other health profession programs of the UCSF Fresno Latino Center for Medical Education and Research, please contact Bertha Dominguez, education director at 559-241-7670 or email bdominguez@fresno.ucsf.edu