



Office of Public Affairs
Division of University Advancement

News Release

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Release No: 0708-089

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2008

Sumo Robots Built by 4th and 5th Grade Students to Compete at Cal Poly Pomona

POMONA, Calif. — May 8, 2008 — Building robots for competition isn't just for college students. For the past four months, Cal Poly Pomona faculty and students have helped fourth and fifth grade students build sumo robots. The hands-on project will culminate with a Robotics Competition, on Tuesday, May 13 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Cal Poly Pomona Engineering Atrium (Building 17).

During the competition, the children's robots compete in bouts and are gradually eliminated until there is a winner. While there is only one robotic winner, all the youths come out on top with expanded knowledge of robotics and technology.

Since January, the 66 children from Kingsley Elementary in Pomona and Collegewood Elementary in Walnut have been building and programming LEGO Mindstorm robots with the help of the Cal Poly Pomona School Robotics Initiative. The School Robotics Initiative is a team of Cal Poly Pomona professors and students who work with the elementary school groups to enhance their education of robotics. Team members include Cesar Larriva, associate professor of education; Jill Nemiro, associate professor of Psychology & Sociology; and Mariappan "Jawa" Jawaharlal, associate professor of Mechanical Engineering.

This outreach is intended to inspire young minds so they are excited about science and technology. Initiative members hope that interesting these youths early will better prepare them to someday enter the science and technology disciplines. In addition, it allows university faculty to study how children take to learning about robotics.

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“We hope our program will capture these students’ imagination early in their schooling, and that it will promote their interest in pursuing further study in the areas of science, technology, engineering and technology,” said Larriva, head of the initiative. “By engaging students in the kinds of problem-solving tasks that professionals tackle everyday in the field, our program provides students an authentic view of how these disciplines are interrelated and important.”

The Cal Poly Pomona School Robotics Initiative plans to someday develop a network of schools in surrounding communities. This network will give interested students the option to participate in robotics from elementary through high school. Participating students will emerge with hands-on experience and technical skills, and be better prepared to succeed in college.

The robotics equipment is provided for the children, who generally wouldn’t have access to such technology at home. This year’s program is sponsored by a private foundation.

For more information, please contact Nicole Forrest Boggs at (909) 869-4450.

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ABOUT CAL POLY POMONA — Striking a balance between urban excitement and rural charm, Cal Poly Pomona is nestled in 1,438 rolling acres in the heart of sunny Southern California. With 3,000 faculty and staff to serve 21,500 students, Cal Poly Pomona’s mission is to advance knowledge by linking theory and practice while preparing students for leadership and careers in a multicultural world. The university seeks to place learning at the center of every program, course, and activity on campus. Students can apply their knowledge through hands-on projects, collaborate with faculty members on research, and participate in valuable internships and service learning programs. Seven colleges (agriculture; letters, arts and social sciences; business administration; education; engineering; environmental design; and science) and one school (Collins School of Hospitality Management) offer 56 undergraduate and 23 graduate degrees, as well as 8 credential programs. A piece of Pomona.