Office of Access, Outreach and Inclusion receives grant from American Association of University Women

The grant will help the School of Physical Sciences address gender inequities in STEM.

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One effort the grant will support is a program to connect Physical Sciences with the predominantly-Latinx Godinez High School in nearby Santa Ana.

Picture Credit:

Tiffany Kuo / UCI

The Office of Access, Outreach and Inclusion (AOI) at the UCI School of Physical Sciences recently applied for and won a Community Action Grant called “EmpowHER: Empowering Women through High School Engagement and STEM Research.” It’s a grant offered by the American Association of University Women, and with it AOI will work to address a longstanding issue: the representation of women, particularly those of color, in academia. The grant will give AOI $10,000 for the 2022-2023 school year to help it connect with students and run educational programs for all women at Godinez High School – a school in nearby Santa Ana that’s predominantly Latinx. “There continues to be a lack of representation of women of color who are pursuing STEM degrees, so we saw this community action grant as an opportunity to create a local support structure and serve a community with limited access to STEM education and resources,” said Kara Ward, who’s the Program Coordinator for AOI. “Our hope is that by exposing students to the education and career pathways in STEM as well as mentors to look up to, they can begin to also see themselves as a scientist or a mathematician and become aware of the resources that are in place to support them at places like UCI.” The grant will help fund a slew of initiatives, including an in-person conference at UCI where the high schoolers can start to connect with others in the STEM community, a mentoring program that’ll work to connect students with UCI undergraduates and graduates, as well as in-person science programs at Godinez. If you’d like to help with EmpowHER – as a mentor or program helper – AOI recently sent out a form to all students at Physical Sciences.

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