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Public Library, UC San Diego Team Up to Provide Free Classes to Prepare Youth for College, STEAM Careers

BRANCHES THROUGHOUT CITY TO OFFER YOUTH COURSES
IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART,
MATHEMATICS & COLLEGE PLANNING

San Diego – As part of his mission to create opportunities for youth in every neighborhood of San Diego, Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer and leadership from the University of California, San Diego announced the official launch of a partnership between the San Diego Public Library and UC San Diego Extension to offer free classes to middle and high school-aged students to prepare them for college and good-paying jobs.

“Every child in San Diego deserves a chance to go to college and get a good-paying job but sometimes the price tag puts courses that would give their college applications a boost — like a robotics class or test prep — out of reach. This program gives students across our city the opportunity to learn valuable skills that can propel them into rewarding careers,” Mayor Faulconer said.

The classes offered through Library NExT are part of a larger goal to maximize the city’s library system by offering a host of education and training programs to middle and high school students to prepare them for college as well as the workforce. Classes will focus on:

- STEAM education—short for science, technology, engineering, arts, and math—through the Sally Ride Science at UC San Diego program for middle and high school students.
- Pre-college preparation with test prep and college counseling for students and families, with a special focus on students in underserved communities.
- Courses and specialized certificates for the most in-demand skills, including computer programming and data analytics.

Library NExT started as a pilot program in six San Diego libraries in early 2017 and it will now be expanded to five more libraries. There are plans to expand it to branch libraries throughout the entire city.

The libraries currently offering classes are the:

- San Diego Central Library
- Mira Mesa Library
- Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library
- Tierrasanta Library
- Valencia Park/Malcolm X Library

The branches slated to receive programming by the end of 2017 are the:

- City Heights/Weingart Library
- Linda Vista Library
- Logan Heights Library
- Rancho Peñasquitos Library
- Skyline Hills Library

“We’re receiving an overwhelming response to every STEAM and STEM program offered at the San Diego Public Library so I’m thrilled to expand our partnership with UC San Diego Extension,” said Misty Jones, Director of the San Diego Public Library. “The Library NExT program is also helping the Library to fulfill its vision to be the place for opportunity, discovery and inspiration.”

Access to advanced STEAM education, college preparation training, and workforce development training is limited in many school districts throughout the nation and wide disparities exist even for those who do have access to these resources. For example, in 2015 fewer than 15 percent of all high schools offered any Advanced Placement (AP) computer science courses. In those schools, only 22 percent of those who took the AP exam were girls and only 13 percent were African-American or Latino students.

“With the pace of innovation accelerating, we need to equip students with the knowledge and specialized skills that our employers demand. Education and workforce training like this program are critical to creating an inclusive economy,” said Mary Walshok, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Public Programs at UC San Diego

and the Dean of Extension. "This partnership also highlights the collaborative spirit that sets San Diego apart."

Visit sandiego.gov/librarynext for more information.

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