

Student engineers



Sisters Jessenia, center, and Christiana Chavez, right, learn to administer sutures to pigs feet, used to mimic human skin, during MESA Day at UC Santa Cruz Saturday. JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

More than 400 youngsters compete at annual MESA Day at UC Santa Cruz

By CALVIN MEN

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SANTA CRUZ — About 400 high school and middle school students swarmed at UC Santa Cruz's engineering building Saturday for a one-day competition designed to inspire them.

The annual MESA Day competition drew local schools as well as schools from Soledad, Salinas, Pajaro Valley and Monterey school districts for a day filled with math quizzes and hands-on events. Many of the students brought projects and designs that were months in the making, said Alexandria Leckliter, director of the MESA program, which is short for mathematics, engineering, science achievement.

"They have been working at their home schools on these



Isaac Holguin of Soledad High School performs a task using a prosthetic arm during competition during MESA Day at UC Santa Cruz Saturday. JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

projects and today is a chance for them to get to test them and see how they compare against their peers," she said.

ON THE NET

To see a video of the annual MESA Day event, visit santacruzsentinel.com and click on this story.

The projects center around engineering items from ordinary objects. An age-old project was how to create a design that would protect an egg after it was dropped from a certain distance. Another project sought to harness the energy of a mousetrap to move a small vehicle.

"It's very technical," Leckliter said. "A lot of engineering and a lot of design go into it."

Issac Holguin and Jessica Yes-

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