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El Monte Union Academic Decathlon Team Returns to State Finals

Rosemead High leads the way as 4 EMUHSD schools finish in Top 25

EL MONTE – Rosemead High School's Panther Academic Decathlon team will return to the California State Championships for the second year in a row, capping an unprecedented season that saw nearly every El Monte Union comprehensive high school place in the Top 25 in the Los Angeles County regionals.

In its second year competing as a Division I team, Rosemead High earned a fifth-place finish at the Los Angeles County Office of Education Academic Decathlon in February and will return to the state competition March 22-24 in Sacramento.

"We finished second in state last year, so I feel as if we have unfinished business," Rosemead High senior and AcaDeca team captain Sean Thai said. "We would really like to win it all this year."

The team was joined in the Top 25 by Arroyo High (15th place), Mountain View High (19th place) and South El Monte High, which earned Rookie School of the Year honors with its 25th-place finish. Though placing out of the Top 25, El Monte High also excelled, winning eight medals, including two gold.

"These schools are our brothers and sisters. We created a Google Drive file so that we could share information and resources before the competition," Rosemead High AcaDeca adviser Eric Burgess said. "The results speak for themselves. I couldn't be happier for our Rosemead students and partner schools."

Rosemead's nine-member team includes newcomers senior Dustin Luong and junior Madelyn Huynh, both of whom joined because of the rigorous competition, which may bolster their chances of attending an elite university.

"This is the most significant thing I've ever done," Luong said. "My family is very proud of me and participating in AcaDeca has made me a better student and person."

"I joined AcaDeca because I wanted to try something new and challenging," Huynh added.

The Panther team earned 34 medals, including a third-place trophy in Division I Super Quiz.

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Arroyo High earned 27 medals and placed fourth overall and second in Division II Super Quiz. Junior Mia Cabrera placed third for Top Decathlete-Varsity in Division II and senior Hai Chou was the top overall Decathlete for Arroyo.

Mountain View High earned 12 medals, including three gold and three silver. The top scorer was James Liu.

South El Monte High, participating in its first Academic Decathlon, finished first in Division III and earned second place in the Super Quiz. The team earned 23 individual medals, led by senior Cesar Raygoza, who won nine medals and earned the distinction of being the top scoring decathlete for Division III.

Academic Decathlon teams are composed of students from all grade point averages. The county competition involved 40 official teams and 15 junior teams from 26 school districts. This year's competition was focused on the subject, "The 1960s: A Transformational Decade."

"The District-wide success in the Academic Decathlon is truly a significant achievement for El Monte Union and is a testament to the dedication of our students and their advisers," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "The success of Rosemead High is providing a template for the rest of the District to follow. I wish them the best of luck."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

031918_EMUHSD_ACADECA1: Rosemead High School's AcaDeca team will compete for a second time as a Division I team at the California State Championship, to be held March 22-24 in Sacramento.

031918_EMUHSD_ACADECA2: Arroyo High School earned 27 medals and placed fourth overall and second in Division II Super Quiz at the Los Angeles County Office of Education Academic Decathlon in February.

031918_EMUHSD_ACADECA3: South El Monte High student David Aguilar proudly holds the Top Scoring Team trophy, which went to the school after earning Rookie of the Year honors.

031918_EMUHSD_ACADECA4: Mountain View High School came in 19th place and earned 12 medals.

031918_EMUHSD_ACADECA5: El Monte High School students celebrate earning seven individual medals at the Los Angeles County regional competition in February.

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