



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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El Monte Union Schools Continue Strong Showings in LACOE Academic Decathlon

EL MONTE – El Monte High School senior Oscar Martinez and South El Monte High School senior Marina Limon both joined Academic Decathlon as a way to challenge themselves and enjoy the camaraderie that comes with being an AcaDeca team member.

As team captains, Martinez and Limon knew that the 2021 Los Angeles County Office of Education competition would be the most challenging yet, since the El Monte Union High School District AcaDeca teams – including those from Mountain View and Arroyo high schools – could not study and sharpen their skills in-person. Instead, what the teams gained was a lesson in teamwork and perseverance.

“Because of the pandemic, this year’s AcaDeca experience was vastly different from past years,” Martinez said. “It took a lot of adjusting in our study sessions, but we managed to echo the spirit of the competition as closely as we could. There were obstacles along the way, like virtual meetings, but we still found a way to build camaraderie through virtual platforms.”

Mountain View High led the way in this year’s competition with a fourth-place Division II finish. South El Monte, Arroyo and El Monte high schools finished in fifth, seventh, and eighth place, respectively. Overall, 24 students earned medals, with six students receiving gold and 13 students earning multiple medals.

Academic Decathlon is a competition consisting of ten scholastic events, with a common theme linking the subjects. This year’s theme was the Cold War. Teams are divided into three groups, based on grade point average – Honor, Scholastic and Varsity. Individual scores are combined to determine the winning teams.

“Academic Decathlon was definitely a challenging but rewarding experience,” Limon said. “Our coach, Mr. Castillo, made the entire competition more enjoyable despite the setbacks that came with studying at home. It was an amazing opportunity that allowed me to try new things and learn about interesting subjects.”

For El Monte High, the 2021 competition was a high point, with the team earning an all-time high of eight medals. Martinez, who won a gold medal in the interview category, felt the team’s twice-weekly “Kahoot” study sessions inspired his teammates to excel in the core tests, and that remote learning did not diminish the thrill of the Super Quiz, AcaDeca’s hallmark event.

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“The adrenaline rush we get from Super Quiz is immeasurable,” Martinez said. “Super Quiz sparks laughter, light-bulb moments and continuous excitement as we journey through each question and a spectrum of different subjects ranging from Calculus to Soviet music.”

Martinez’s enthusiasm and leadership are no surprise to El Monte High AcaDeca adviser Joseph Estrada, who marveled at Martinez’s ability to pull the team together during a year like no other and called him a driving force behind the team’s success.

“We are extremely proud of our El Monte Union Academic Decathlon participants, who go above and beyond their classroom studies to represent the District,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “This year’s competition was a unique experience that strengthened team spirit and inspired a valuable lesson in determination that will serve the students well.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

040121 EMUHSD ACADECA1: El Monte High School senior and Academic Decathlon team captain Oscar Martinez was a driving force behind the school’s success at the 2021 LACOE Academic Decathlon. Martinez won a gold medal and inspired his team to perform at their best.

040121 EMUHSD ACADECA2: South El Monte High School senior and Academic Decathlon team captain Marina Limon helped her team to a strong performance at the 2021 LACOE Academic Decathlon. Despite the difficulties of preparing for an online tournament, Limon found the experience to be challenging and rewarding.

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.