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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cabrillo College Robotics Club Prepares to Compete Again in National, Physical Competition of Third Annual NASA Swarmathon at Kennedy Space Center, April 17-19

APTOS, CA — The Cabrillo College Robotics Club has again earned its place to compete in the national, Physical Competition of the Third Annual NASA Swarmathon, which will be held at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida from April 17-19. Cabrillo's Robotics Club won the NASA Swarmathon Virtual Competition in 2016, qualifying them to participate in the national, Physical Competition for the first time last year.

The NASA Swarmathon competition is a challenge to develop cooperative robotics with the goal of advancing future space exploration. Cabrillo is one of 23 universities and community colleges from across the nation that will compete in the Physical Competition. Of the 23 competing teams, only five teams (including Cabrillo College) are from a community college – the rest are four-year universities.

Successful space exploration requires technology to aid in the location and retrieval of resources that would potentially support life on another planet (such as ice, water, rocks, minerals and construction materials).

Small, rover robots, or 'Swarmies' can be programmed to explore extra planetary surfaces for these resources. The goal of the NASA Swarmathon competition is to develop and optimize the Swarmies so that they work in cooperation, retrieving resources more quickly and efficiently than robots working alone. NASA will consider using some of the ideas that Cabrillo and other schools develop for the competition, for future space exploration missions.

"Last year was a great experience for us – our first time in the Physical Competition and we competed well, among a field of mostly four-year universities," said Fritz Billingsley, President of the Cabrillo Robotics Club. "For this year, we've made some changes to the coding as well as a few added swarmie features that we designed and made at our Cabrillo MakerSpace, which should give us a strong finish. We'd love to bring home a win!"

The Robotics Club has also established a GoFundMe page to raise funds for their upcoming trip, at: <https://www.gofundme.com/cabrillo-college-robotics-club>. Additional information about the NASA Swarmathon is also available at www.nasaswarmathon.com.

As stated on the NASA Swarmathon website: "Students will be challenged to develop search algorithms for robotic swarms. Swarmathon participation will: (1) improve students' skills in robotics and computer science and (2) further advance technology for future NASA space exploration missions."

Minority Serving Universities and Community Colleges were encouraged to apply and compete. Cabrillo College is a Federally Designated Hispanic Serving Institution. As part of Cabrillo's participation in the

Swarmathon, Cabrillo's Robotics Club is conducting outreach with local K-12 students through a number of events. The Club members participated in the Baskin Girls in Engineering program, designed to introduce middle school aged girls to engineering disciplines. In addition, the Club worked with a local Boy Scout troop on an event called 'Sumo Bots,' and also gave Robotics demonstrations during Cabrillo's Samper 4th Grade Experience, during which all Santa Cruz County 4th graders visited Cabrillo College to experience a day at college. The YouTube video of their Samper 4th Grade Experience presentation can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/HMFBafTtHlk>.

Cabrillo's Robotics Club will be participating in the Santa Cruz Mini Maker Faire and also on May 5th, is working to organize a Star Wars®-themed Cabrillo event that will feature different STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) clubs on campus.

For more information, please visit the Robotics Club website at:

<https://www.sites.google.com/site/cabrillorobotics/home> or the [Cabrillo College Robotics Club Facebook page](#).

About Cabrillo College

Cabrillo College is a leading California community college serving Santa Cruz County with locations in Aptos, Scotts Valley and Watsonville. It is ranked #1 in transfers to UC Santa Cruz. Founded in 1959, the college offers over 100 academic and career technical education programs that serve multiple educational goals such as A.A. and A.S. degrees, certificates of achievement, skills certificates, transfer to 4-year institutions or for lifelong learning and personal enrichment. With a commitment to quality and equity, we connect all learners to pathways that propel them from where they are to where they aspire to be, including: academic, personal, and career growth.

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