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THE PHYSICS OF SWIMMING, BABY WHALE TALK, AND RADIO VOYAGER: USD UNDERGRADS PRESENT RESEARCH FINDINGS AT APRIL 11 CONFERENCE

From the hydrodynamics of an Olympic sport to the patois of a killer whale calf, a range of unusual subjects will be explored at the University of San Diego's second annual Student Research Conference on Saturday, April 11, in USD's Serra Hall.

The day-long conference showcasing undergraduate research projects offers cash prizes to the top presenters. A poster session featuring 11 projects is scheduled between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Oral presentations on another 11 projects will begin at 1 p.m. and end around 4 p.m.

Studies presented during the afternoon session will include:

-- "Quantitative Measurements of Hydrodynamic Drag on Swimmers" by physics major Donna M. Laughrin, who has constructed a device for calculating hydrodynamic drag on swimmers that could help find ways to improve swimmers' performances.

-- "Development of Vocal Behavior of a Captive-Born Killer Whale Calf" by marine studies/biology major Antonette Gutierrez, who has recorded and studied the sounds made by a Sea World killer whale calf from age five days to age five months.

-- "Experimental Simulation of Anomalous Voltage Signals on Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 Plasma Wave Antennae" by physics students Cary R.K. Casey and Lawrence B.B. Volz. This project, funded by

grants by UC Irvine and the Research Corporation, explores unexpected voltage radio detections made by the two Voyager spacecraft during flybys of the outer planets.

Research presented during the poster session will include two studies by students of how students learn. In "Cue-Dependent Memory: A Direct Application to Students' Performance," psychology major Amy Favero looks at how student test scores can be affected by test locations. In "Effect of Retroactive Interference in Free Recall," psychology major Juanita Trisnadi examines how a shift in study topics can disrupt memory recall.

"This event is modeled after professional academic research conferences and the findings presented here are remarkably sophisticated," said Dr. Patrick Drinan, Dean of Arts and Sciences. "It's exciting to see undergraduates conducting this kind of hands-on research."

The USD Student Research Conference is free and open to the public. For further information, please contact conference coordinator Marie Simovich at 260-4729 or Kate Callen at 260-4682.