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University of San Diego

Office of Public Relations

News Bureau

CALLING ALL ENGINEERS: USD HOLDS 1993 WALK-ON-WATER CONTEST

Engineers and engineering students from throughout Southern California are invited to test their design skills in the second annual "Walk On Water" competition sponsored by the University of San Diego's Department of Electrical Engineering.

Contestants must design human-powered buoyancy shoes and use them to traverse the surface of the Olympic-sized swimming pool at the USD Sports Center. The competition, scheduled for Saturday, February 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., will be held to help promote National Engineering Week (February 14 - 20).

"This contest is our way of showing that engineering is a lot of fun," said Barbara Hammack, chair of the student organizing committee. "Engineers love a challenge, especially when it involves having a good time."

Engineering teams from professional firms, colleges and universities, and high schools are encouraged to sign up. Each entry must consist of two separate buoyancy shoes operated by one person, or "shoe pilot," who must remain vertical without support while walking a straight line from one end of the pool to the other.

Expenditures for each team are limited to \$100. The team with the fastest overall crossing time will win the grand prize. Other prizes will be awarded for special design categories.

"This year, the contest theme is recycling," said Ernie Kim,

faculty advisor to the contest. "Entries that have 75 percent recyclable materials by volume will get a 10-second bonus."

"Also new this year, we are inviting high school participants," Kim added. "We understand that several high school engineering teams have studied the video of last year's contest and have learned from our mistakes. So the competition should be pretty formidable."

USD's Department of Electrical Engineering is a relatively young professional program; it started up in September 1986 and its first graduates received their degrees in May 1991. Over the past few years, the department has installed several state-of-the-art computer-based electronics laboratories. This past year, the department moved into a brand-new facility inside the newly-constructed Loma Hall.

Dr. Thomas Kanneman, Director of Engineering, emphasized that USD's engineering students earn a combined Bachelor of Sciences/Bachelor of Arts degree "because we want to produce a total professional person -- an engineer who combines scientific expertise with effective communications skills and strong values."

Contest sponsors include the San Diego Engineering Society, which has designated the Walk-on-Water Contest as the finale of its Engineering Week Observance.

For further information about the Walk-On-Water contest, contact Kim at (619) 260-4609 or Kate Callen at (619) 260-4682.