



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Whitty
Cal Maritime
707-654-1720 or

Howard Jackson
Cal Maritime
654-1075

Cal Maritime's Summer Program Bridges the Gap For Underserved Teens

VALLEJO, Calif., June 7, 2004 — What do you do with 27 underserved high school students, most of whom don't know the importance of the SAT and have no experience on the water? Send them to college, teach them Calculus, give them some oars, and put them on a boat for a life-changing experience in academics and teamwork that they'll never forget.

That's the premise of the Summer Bridge Program at The California Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime), a campus of The California State University. The six -week program — **which will be held this summer from June 20-July 31, 2004** — is geared toward preparing under-motivated and economically disadvantaged teens from the East Bay for a college education.

During the six-week program, each student gets a true taste of college life — they live in a campus residence hall, eat in the dining hall, and are graded in college level courses that include Advanced Algebra and Trigonometry, Calculus I, General Physics, English Literature, and Engineering. In addition each student works as a team on an engineering project, which this year will be building a balsawood bridge — part of a national contest for high school students that requires implementing engineering concepts in the design and construction of a model balsawood bridge from their own plans. Each bridge will be put to the load test during “finals week.”

“Most anything you do in engineering is a team project,” said Howard Jackson, the Director of Cal Maritime's Summer Bridge Program. “You have to figure out how to get along because you have to work as a team. So while the Summer Bridge Program is driven by academics, it teaches these students how to work in the real world as members of a team...on budget, on time, as a team.”

– more –

This is the fourth year of Cal Maritime’s Summer Bridge Program, which aims to motivate underserved teens to explore all opportunities available to them. In addition to a rigorous academic schedule, the students will learn the steps they need to take to get into college, participate in field trips to the Port of Oakland and the San Francisco Maritime Museum, and take sailboat and basic boating lessons.

“It’s always an interesting transformation to watch these students — many of whom have no experience on the water — in the boats rowing as a team,” said Jackson. “The first day of the basic boating class is usually a disaster. The students are so nervous, oars are everywhere, and they’re not really functioning as a team. They have to work it out by themselves to realize that rowing a boat is a team effort. By the fourth day they have so much more confidence, work in unison, and think they can row all the way to Hawaii!”

Jackson added that this type of teamwork, coupled with the academics, helps students expand their visions of themselves — one of the main goals of the Summer Bridge Program. “Coming into the program, some of the students say, ‘I don’t think I can do this,’” added Jackson. “But by the end of the program, they say, ‘It’s going to be hard, but I can do this.’ It’s rewarding to see them realize that they can compete.”

About Cal Maritime

Cal Maritime, a campus of The California State University, is one of only seven degree-granting maritime academies in the United States, and the only one on the West Coast. Tucked away in San Pablo Bay’s Morrow Cove in Vallejo, Calif., Cal Maritime offers students four-year degrees in business administration, facilities engineering technology, global studies and maritime affairs, marine engineering technology, marine transportation, and mechanical engineering. For more information about Cal Maritime, visit www.csum.edu.

###