



NEWS RELEASE

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June 4, 2012
MEDIA ALERT

Santa Ana College Team Prepares for Flight Aboard NASA's Weightless Wonder

WHAT: Team Illumi-Nation is one of fourteen teams participating in NASA's Reduced Gravity Flight Opportunities Program (RGEFP). The team includes two Santa Ana College (SAC) alumni, as well as nine other members. The team leader is 50-year-old Orange resident Patricia Sullivan. Sullivan graduated from SAC in May. SAC alumnus Kevin Sullivan, Patricia's husband, will be working as part of the team's ground crew.

The teams will perform the experiments aboard a microgravity aircraft which produces periods of weightlessness for up to 25 seconds at a time by executing a series of approximately 30 roller coaster-like parabolas over the Gulf of Mexico. During the free falls, the students will gather data in the unique environment that mimics space.

Team Illumi-Nation was selected by NASA based on scientific merit and educational outreach potential of their experiment. The team's experiment, "Nanostructured Metallic Foams Created through Self-Propagating High Temperature Synthesis," will create foams using aluminum and silver oxide as their reagents. Previous foams made from these reagents have proven to have antimicrobial properties. These foams could potentially be used in biomedical implants to promote the re-growth of tissue. The team will compare the foam created in microgravity against the ground-based foam based on surface area, density, ignition time, and other properties. The team will also test the antimicrobial properties of each foam.

WHERE: NASA Johnson Space Center's Ellington Field; Houston, Texas

WHEN: Team Illumi-Nation departs for Houston on June 8. The team will do their training for flight in a Boeing 727, high-altitude, supersonic jet on beginning June 11. They will then go through physiological training and fly their experiment during the week of June 11.

WHO: Team Illumi-Nation includes members from seven states—California, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. The majority met through NASA's National Community College Aerospace Scholars Program in November 2011. The team's faculty advisor is Steve Eastmond, Ph.D., SAC professor, physical science.

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Other teams represent Arizona State University, Boise State University, Lamar University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Purdue University, University of Florida, University of Southern California, University of Texas @ El Paso, University of Washington, Utah State University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, West Virginia University, and Yale University.

WHY: The RGEFP gives undergraduate students the opportunity to propose, build and fly experiments in reduced gravity. The overall experience includes scientific research, hands-on experimental design, test operations and educational/public outreach activities. For more information, about the RGEFP, visit <http://reducedgravity.jsc.nasa.gov/>

After the in-flight experiment, Patricia and Kevin Sullivan will be working in partnership with Santa Ana Unified School District where they will visit classrooms to promote and develop interests in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Patricia will also give presentations in SAC's Tessmann Planetarium.

HOW: The SAC Foundation provided \$3,000 to support the team's participation. For more information on Team Illumi-Nation, visit <http://www.illumi-nation.net> or contact Patricia Sullivan at (714) 336-7787.

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