



TRACY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

June 18th, 2024

To Dr. Luis Zepeda-Ruiz and 2024 AACGE Western Section Conference on Crystal Growth & Epitaxy Organizers

The TUSD STEM Mission states: engaging STEM experiences connect each student to the real world and prepare them for college and career success through collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving! The opportunity for TUSD students to attend the AACGE annual conference was a wonderful experience that is in full alignment with our STEM mission. Students benefited in a multitude of ways from attending the conference and we are so grateful for this opportunity.

"The future belongs to the educated"

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Over the course of the conference, students grew from being a bit intimidated by the scientist participants and topics being presented to feeling comfortable to approach scientists and discuss their research. Students self-reported that the conference created a welcoming environment where they were encouraged to interact and ask questions of the researchers. This led to the considerable advancement of their understanding in topics such as carbon sequestration, biomineralization, crystal nucleation and growth, micro- and nano-scale structures, etc.. After a few sessions we would break and have a discussion to process the complicated topics that were being presented. These discussion reinforced my impression that students were benefitting from this initial exposure to high level research. The freedom to then enjoy the setting of Fallen Leaf Lake provided the perfect balance of intellectual development, social bonding, and connection to nature. The accommodations and dining experience were phenomenal and greatly appreciated!

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration to invite high school students to this conference. It is an experience that our students will never forget and our students and faculty are grateful for this tremendous opportunity. We hope you will consider having TUSD faculty and students attend the AACGE conference in years to come. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Dean Reese

Director of STEM Curriculum
Tracy Unified School District