



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## GRANADA HILLS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL RECLAIMS U.S. ACADEMIC DECATHLON TITLE

LOS ANGELES —The eight-member team from Granada Hills Charter High School, in the Los Angeles Unified School District, (LAUSD) rushed the stage again as the 2015 champions of the U.S. Academic Decathlon.

The Highlanders claimed their fourth national championship in the last five years. Members of the championship team are: **Peter Cho, Jenean Docter, Natalie Gonzalez, Jasmin Kim, Irene Lee, Tanthai Pongstien, Fernando Sanchez and Jorge Zepeda.** Julia Howelman is the administrator, and the coaches are Matt Arnold and Jon Sturtevant.



More than 450 students gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Garden Grove on April 16-18 to compete in the United States Academic Decathlon National Competition.

“I’m always amazed by the incredible dedication of the Academic Decathlon’s students and coaches, and for the sacrifices they and their families make in preparing for the competition,” said school board member Tamar Galatzan. “I’m very grateful to all of them and so proud to have Granada Hills Charter representing Los Angeles Unified.”

The newly crowned champs scored 53,592.3 points out of 66,000, beating 46 other high school academic decathlon teams across the U.S. in this year’s rigorous scholastic battle.

“Congratulations to the members of the Granada Hills Charter team for your exemplary performance,” said Ramon C. Cortines, Superintendent of Schools. “With your laser-like focus, team spirit and devotion, you proudly represented the LAUSD to the rest of the country.”

The “Fab Four” from Garfield HS, Wendy Olvera, Alfonso Caballero, Joseph Nabor and Brian Rios also came away winners with the following medals in essay, music, art, interview, literature, economics, science and social science.

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The decathletes were entered in the newly-added category that allows individual students to participate based on their highest scores in the State competition.

Garfield's team made an impressive showing last month, placing seventh in the statewide contest. That result marked the 14th time the school has participated in the state championships.

During Friday's Super Quiz competition, Granada Hills Charter won first place in the Super Quiz event.

Earlier this year, Granada Hills Charter won the LAUSD Academic Decathlon and last month California's Academic Decathlon. With this win, the LAUSD continues its ACADECA dominance with 16 national titles.

The academic decathlon is a team competition, in which students battle other teams, using their intellectual skills. The students competed in 10 categories: art, economics, essay, interview, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science and speech. This year's study subject was Alternatives in Energy: Ingenuity & Innovation.

United States Academic Decathlon® is an academic competition for high school students founded by Dr. Robert Peterson, former Superintendent of Schools in Orange County, in 1981. Dr. Peterson firmly believed that everyone's learning potential can be encouraged through competitive challenge. The national competition is hosted in a different state every year to allow students a once in a lifetime experience and to motivate them to succeed academically. Academic Decathlon® has come to be recognized as the most prestigious high school academic team competition in the United States.

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