

Fresno's University High wins National Academic Decathlon title for 9th straight year

By Hannah Furfaro



University High's team claimed the top prize February in the Fresno County Academic Decathlon.

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Nine University High students helped swing the school to its ninth straight National Academic Decathlon title this month.

The students — Andrew Pham, Christian Wilson, Fayyaz Ahamed, Karthik Ramesh, Michael Perales, Michael Seley, Philip Canozza, Ric Rodriguez and Sean Chan — competed to win the title in the small schools division on April 16-18.

Coach Sean Canfield now has to find space for another national title banner to add to his classroom walls, which are already covered by banners from past years' wins.

"It's a good problem to have," he said. "It was a very solid win for us. The competition was a bit more challenging this year than in some other years. We just happened to have a really strong team this year."

Academic Decathlon, an activity where students research and then compete in scholastic events, includes teams of nine students. Three of the students have an "A" average, three typically earn B's and three usually earn C's. Canfield said the activity especially helps his "C" students grow. They're all bright, he said, and Academic Decathlon helps improve their work ethic, and sometimes their grades.

"It really makes the students become responsible. They have to learn to balance workloads," he said.

University High's win follows two other big accomplishments this year. The team took home wins at both the Fresno

County Academic Decathlon and California's Small School State Competition.

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