



January 28, 2021

Dear Parents,

We invite you to support your child's participation in a long-running computer science program from UC Merced's Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society. This program brings your student into creative, fun, science education with UC Merced computer science and engineering students and online coding exercises. Any middle school student with a computer and internet can join.

The program includes:

- building websites using HTML code;
- learning about hot topics in technology, like drones and sensors; and
- teamwork and individual computational thinking.

During this challenging time, hands-on science is hard to deliver to students. Through NexTech Robotics, UCM students will be going over lessons and answering questions in two 60-minute after-school sessions per week delivered through secure connections and Google Classroom. UC Merced staff will be present as well. Students can create more on their own time.

It might be just the spark your student needs. Through NexTech Robotics, students will:

- connect with mentors in college, showing them the opportunities of higher education,
- engage in science, technology and engineering—important fields for future careers, and
- most importantly, have a fun way to connect with each other.

This is not just another zoom session! Nor a video game! It's tested and middle-schooler approved programming to spark their interest and sustain their skills in computer science. Sign up via our website: [citris.ucmerced.edu/nextech](https://citris.ucmerced.edu/nextech). The program will start **February 8, 2021, and the class time will be 2-3p on Monday and Wednesday**. Please feel free to contact me, Leigh Bernacchi, [lbernacchi@ucmerced.edu](mailto:lbernacchi@ucmerced.edu), 209-382-4216 with questions or comments. Visit our website [citris.ucmerced.edu](https://citris.ucmerced.edu) for more information.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and all the best!

Sincerely,

Leigh Bernacchi, PhD

Merced resident, parent, and program director, CITRIS, UC Merced