



Dr. Helene Dillard, dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental
Sciences at UC Davis

A Message from Dean Helene Dillard: Welcome to the Start of a New School Year!

Our college leadership team at the <u>College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CA&ES)</u> is committed to enriching the student experience. After Labor Day, we begin preparing for a fresh wave of new and returning students. This fall, CA&ES welcomed 1,179 freshmen and 918 transfer students—roughly a 17 percent increase over last year.

Campuswide, we received more than 9,000 new students.

UC Davis can seem like a big place for newcomers, but our college makes it easy for students to find others with shared interests. We've created a stronger welcoming environment and initiated intentional interactions with undergraduate and graduate students, including Coffee with the Dean and ice cream socials to convey the open door policy of the CA&ES Dean's Office. College Orientation provides students with the opportunity to meet academic advisers who can help them navigate classes and find a support network. We also encourage students to take advantage of faculty office hours and other social events sponsored by departments, and there are plenty of opportunities for service through campus and college organizations like the <u>Aggie Ambassadors</u>.

For our diverse students, CA&ES has provided support for several interesting opportunities: travel funds for students to attend appropriate conferences and workshops, <u>CA&ES Career Discovery Groups</u>, recruitment of underrepresented students to graduate group interview pools, the Aggie Mentors program, networking through the <u>National Society for Multiculturalism in Agriculture</u>, <u>Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)</u>, the <u>Summer Math and Science Honors (SMASH) Academy</u>, the Young Scientist Program and the <u>UC Historically Black Colleges and Universities program</u> in collaboration with the College of Biological Sciences. We have also provided funds in partnership with the

UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine to improve the pipeline of underrepresented students to the program.

We are committed to making CA&ES a place where students can feel at home for the duration of their college experience and look forward to another successful school year.

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Bruce Smail, director of the Cross Cultural Center at UC Davis

Celebrating Campus Cultures with Bruce Smail

Bruce Smail and the <u>Cross Cultural Center (CCC)</u> have a lot in common; they both started addressing issues of diversity 26 years ago. Bruce was working with underrepresented students at Boston University, and across the country, the CCC at UC Davis was emerging as the result of a student hunger strike.

student hunger strike.

Both Bruce and the CCC continue to make a difference in the lives of historically underrepresented students. As the center's director, Bruce is dedicated to providing students with tools and knowledge that will extend

beyond the CCC and their university experience.

"It's really important for us as a center to create opportunities and challenges for students to actually grow," says Smail. "Our students are trying to find their own identities. When their own interpretations of the world are challenged, that's when they grow."

Today, the CCC has a staff of seven full-time employees and 28 student employees. The center is a popular hangout and study spot on campus, open 10 a.m.—8 p.m. Monday—Thursday, and 9 a.m.—5 p.m. on Fridays. "We're a very visible, very active organization on campus," says Smail. "Many of our students are activists, which I think is a tribute to this campus. It creates a space where students can express their ideas and concerns and challenge some of the systems that block opportunities."

American Awareness Week and more. They also have an in-house counselor to help students talk through some of their feelings and the issues they may be experiencing.

New this year, they will host a day-long mini conference for student scholars from across California. They're also developing a new social

address and celebrate diversity, including Black Family Week, Native

in Sacramento to provide them with hands-on service-learning opportunities.

"The African American population on campus may be small," says Smail, "But when you look at all communities of color working together, you

justice class this fall that will match students with nonprofit organizations

have a huge majority on campus. That's a strength."

White House



On April 6, more than
230 African
American students,
staff, faculty and
mentors attended the
White House Summit
on Educational Excellence for African American Aprel 1997

The event was a collaboration between Pro-

Summit on

Educational

Excellence

on Educational Excellence for African Americans. Hosted by UC Davis, the event was a collaboration between President Obama's White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, the California Student Aid Commission and UC Davis Student Affairs.

Students served as speakers and panelists on three panels—one was

moderated by Kayton Carter, director of the <u>Center for African Diaspora Student Success at UC Davis</u>, and the other two were moderated by David Johns, executive director of the White House Initiative on Education Excellence for African Americans. The students highlighted several areas of improvement to ensure African American students feel safe, engaged and supported in school and life. Among these suggestions were providing a space on college campuses designated specifically for African American students, integrating more opportunities for student voice in the classroom and ensuring that curricula are culturally grounded and connected to the lives of students. Students also highlighted the importance of changing the narrative about African Americans in the media by encouraging the use of positive images and language.

The summit included a spoken-word performance by students from Sacramento Area Youth Speaks, a UC Davis literacy program for youth and adolescents. The event concluded with a reception that showcased the new Center for African Diaspora Student Success at UC Davis.

Watch the full video of the summit here.

Read more about what UC Davis is doing to recruit and retain African American students.

A SMASHing Hit This summer, UC Davis joined four other top colleges in hosting low-income and historically underrepresented ninth graders in an intensive five-week

Engineering and
Mathematics (STEM) program on campus. Thirty student scholars
participated in the Summer Math and Science Honors (SMASH) program
at UC Davis. They lived on campus and took classes in biology,
technology, math, engineering and more. In the evenings and on
weekends, they participated in study halls, field trips and a public
speaking class and explored a lot that UC Davis has to offer. This was the
first of several summers these participants will spend on campus—these
same scholars will continue SMASH for three consecutive summers.

"The scholars were really engaged with the UC Davis community," said

Science, Technology,

Dr. Rosalyn Clark, site director of the SMASH Academy at UC Davis.

"They heard presentations from many UC Davis organizations, including the Imani Clinic in Sacramento where UC Davis students run a community health clinic for underserved communities."

The SMASH program, an initiative of the Level Playing Field Institute, has been around since 2004 when it first started at UC Berkeley. It has since expanded to Stanford University, UCLA and now UC Davis. Since the

program's inception, 100 percent of their participants have graduated

high school and gone on to attend college.

Walter Robinson, associate vice chancellor for enrollment management at UC Davis, worked tirelessly with his team for five years to bring this program to campus. He has fostered campus partnerships with the College of Engineering, Biological Sciences, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the School of Veterinary Medicine and Student Affairs. "His efforts really paid off," says Rosalyn. "We had an overwhelming response with students and families—everyone was excited to be a part of our SMASH community. We're already building a

buzz for next year."

Applications for the 2017 SMASH cohort will be available to current ninth-graders residing in the greater Sacramento region by mid-November.



Meet Aaron and Whitney Bonner

Aaron graduated from UC
Davis with a B.S. in Political
Science in 2014, and
started his law degree at
UC Davis this fall. Whitney
also started at UC Davis
this fall, working toward a

"Whitney and I are very fortunate to have access to the amazing opportunities UC Davis provides, because this will allow us to change our lives as well as the lives of others."

B.A. in Sociology.

–Aaron Bonner



UC Davis is 2nd among
U.S. institutions
granting biological and

biomedical
undergraduate degrees
to students of color for
2015 (<u>Diverse Issues in</u>
<u>Higher Education</u>)



Important Dates

November 1–30. Time to apply to UC

November 4–6. Black Leadership Retreat

February 13–17. Black

May 20. Black Family Day

Family Week



Black Leadership

Retreat

This year's Black
Leadership Retreat will
take place November 4–6,
2016 in Cazadero,

California.

Hosted by African Diaspora
Cultivating Education, the
annual retreat allows
students to develop and
enhance their leadership
abilities, learn new skills
and apply what they've
learned through hands-on
activities. Students have a
chance to network with
other student leaders and
discuss Black community
concerns.

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