



Students perform at the opening of the UC Davis Center for African Diaspora Student Success, a space for African and African American students to pursue academic, social and career opportunities.



#### Happy new year from UC Davis!

The university is working hard to recruit and retain motivated students from across California. In the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office, our primary goal is to increase access to higher education by ensuring a clear understanding of resources available to prospective students and families.

I am excited about all the opportunities the new year will bring, including a new award cycle for the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) and [California Dream Act Application](#). Students and families should apply early, as most financial aid funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The priority deadline for both applications is March 2.

University of California is proud to offer the [Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan](#), which ensures that California undergraduates with an annual family income up to \$80,000 will have their base tuition and fees covered by gift aid. Other resources include the [Aggie Grant Plan](#), the [Middle Class Scholarship](#), [merit-based scholarships](#), [work-study](#), and [loans](#).

Our office is also establishing a peer-to-peer [financial literacy](#) program to help students gain money management skills and understand their rights and responsibilities in regard to financial aid.

I am honored to be of service to you and the students you assist. Here's to another successful year helping young people reach their university goals!

**Trina R. Wilson**  
Senior Associate Director  
UC Davis Financial Aid and Scholarships



#### Meet Mark Freeman

Transfer student Mark Freeman is taking full advantage of all that UC Davis offers. As a sociology major, he is exploring pre-health interests through volunteer work at a student-run medical clinic. A job in academic technology services earns money for college as well as valuable workplace experience. And he makes social connections through the Black Community of Science and the Popping Club.



#### 2nd in the U.S. for economic diversity

"Top Colleges Doing the Most for Low-income Students," *The New York Times*, 2015.



#### Grand Opening!

On October 26, UC Davis celebrated the opening of the Center for African Diaspora Student Success. Staff and student leaders highlighted the mission of the center as a safe space offering academic and community support to African and African American students across campus.



#### Important Dates

**Feb. 1-29** Black History Month

**Feb. 6** Black Convocation

**Feb. 8-12** Black Family Week

**Mar. 2** FAFSA and California Dream Act Application priority deadline

**Mid-Mar.** Freshman admission decisions released

**Apr. 16** UC Davis Picnic Day

**Late Apr.** Transfer admission decisions released

**May 21** Black Family Day

#### SMASHing Success

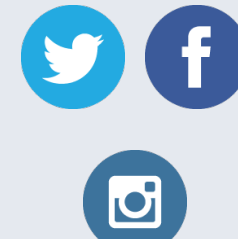
Two participants from the UC Davis Summer Math and Science Honors (SMASH) program were recently honored for placing 1st and 2nd at a social justice focused app hackathon sponsored by Twilio in San Francisco. SMASH brings college preparatory programming to underserved middle and high school students in the greater Sacramento area.

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You can also read the [inaugural October 2015](#) edition of this newsletter.



#### Dedicated to student support: Arnette Bates and Donelle Davis

Arnette Bates and Donelle Davis serve as director and assistant director, respectively, for advising and retention services at the UC Davis [Student Academic Success Center \(SASC\)](#). The center offers holistic academic assistance to students as they adapt to the university environment. "We work fervently to support African American students and pay close attention to their needs," says Arnette.

The [Special Transitional Enrichment Program \(STEP\)](#), for instance, brings African American and other newly enrolled freshmen to campus the summer before fall quarter. Four weeks of residential transitional experiences are followed by two years of formal follow-up. Informal support for African diaspora students continues through connection to groups such as the campus African Continuum network.

Arnette and Donelle together have 43 years of experience on campus. As a former first-generation student, Donelle loves to offer others the kind of inspiring support she received. Arnette started as an admission officer then transitioned to campus services. "It is very rewarding to see students grow at UC Davis as we help them set goals and succeed," she says.

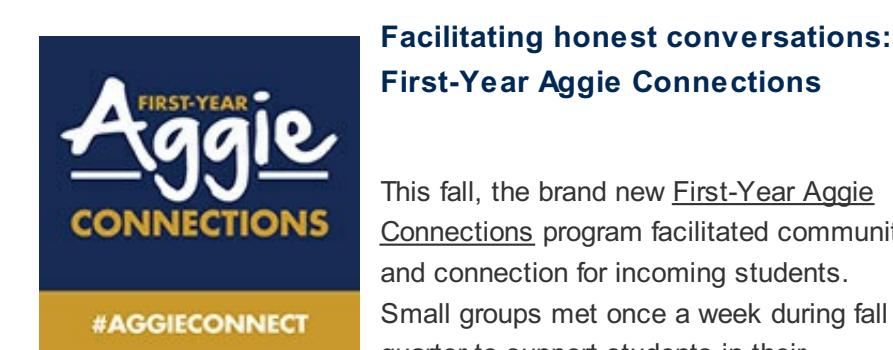
#### Opening doors to UC Davis: Sheryl Blackshire



Sheryl Blackshire serves in [Undergraduate Admissions](#), as associate director for California recruitment. She manages the regional advising team and oversees recruitment strategies throughout the state.

Sheryl travels often to Riverside and San Bernardino counties, her home area, where she provides admission advising to prospective high school and community college students, as well as in-service trainings to counselors and community-based organizations.

"It's extremely rewarding to help students envision themselves at UC Davis," Sheryl says. One of her favorite UC Davis moments was hearing a student panelist say, "I'm here because of Ms. Sheryl."



#### Facilitating honest conversations: First-Year Aggie Connections

This fall, the brand new [First-Year Aggie Connections](#) program facilitated community and connection for incoming students. Small groups met once a week during fall quarter to support students in their transition to university life.

Dr. Kawami Evans, associate director of the Center for African Diaspora Student Success, led a connections group of [Linda Frances Alexander Scholars](#), an academic enrichment program for African, African American and multi-racial students at UC Davis. She says meeting regularly in small groups allowed honest conversations about campus realities through a cultural lens.

"The First-Year Aggie Connections program gave students tools for success based on personal needs," Kawami says. "We could incorporate black cultural experiences into our curriculum, making learning personal and useful for students' lives."

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