

**Remarks by President Robert C. Dynes  
California NAACP State Conference  
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*Dynes with Alice Huffman (left), president of the conference, and Dr. Geraldine Washington (right) of The Alliance for Equal Opportunity in Education.*

Thank you for the opportunity to chat with you for a few minutes about something that is a crisis. Firstly, your contribution to the cause of social justice is known and understood, and I applaud you for it. ... I want you to know that I'm a white guy, but I'm one of you, well, not quite, but in terms of social justice, we're all on the same page.

We have a common goal, and it's a very urgent goal, of increasing the educational opportunity for young African Americans in California to prepare them to be the next leaders of California. Because if we don't prepare them, they're not going to lead us. And my role is to work with you. As was so eloquently said [by President Alice Huffman], I can't fix this by myself.

We have Prop. 209, and that's the law of the state. I'm intent on building diversity at the University of California in students, in faculty, in staff. I'm intent on building it to reflect California and reflect the future of California. I'm a physicist by training. Physicists look at results, not rhetoric, and try to find what works and what doesn't work. I get the best results in my own laboratory by trying experiments to determine what works. And frankly, that's what we're doing at the University of California. We are trying a variety of things to help young African American students achieve UC eligibility and gain admission.

There are three aspects, three important aspects, to coming to the University of California.

The first is eligibility. For that, we, the University, has to work with K-12 – and I'll talk a little bit more about that – so that your children and your grandchildren are eligible, so that they don't need remedial work, so they walk in the front door of the University, eligible and ready to succeed. So eligibility is the first thing.

The second is admissions. How do we admit students to the University? This year, some of our admissions procedures came under great scrutiny at UCLA because of the way we were doing admissions. And the chancellor and I stood with the Los Angeles Alliance and said, "We're going to alter that, we're going to fix that." And that's in the process of being repaired. Because we've seen how it didn't work. So [UCLA] is patterning their admissions much more like the way Berkeley does. And that will happen this year, God willing and the faculty willing.

Thirdly, we have to make UC as affordable as possible. This you may not know, but the University of California has the best record in the nation in terms of enrollment of young

people from low-income families. At UCLA, 35 percent of the students enrolled are Pell Grant-eligible. That means they come from families whose income is less than \$30,000 a year. And it's one of the most carefully guarded secrets. I don't know why. There are ways for anybody, through work, through loans and through grants, to get through the University of California. And we have important programs for low-income students to work their way through the University of California.

So: Ten years ago, Prop 209 came down on us. I will say with pride that the University of California, not the Regents, the University, the president and the nine chancellors – I was chancellor of UC San Diego at the time – were all opposed to Prop 209. So our record is pretty clear. But Prop 209 happened.

And an interesting thing has happened since that goes to the discussion I had about trying different experiments and different things. In San Diego, we launched what is now called the 4-percent eligibility, that is, the top 4 percent of every high school graduating class is eligible for the University of California; it doesn't matter if they meet the other criteria. That's something we tried because of Prop 209 to find other ways to broaden the diversity and open the doors of the University of California, to make a gateway for success.

We intensified the transfer program from the community colleges. I don't know how many of you know that about one-third of all our graduates from the University of California are students who actually came through the community college process. They spent two years in a local community college and then, if they meet scholastic standards, we guarantee that they're admitted to the UC. We write a contract: If you take the following courses and get the following grades, we guarantee the door will open for you. So we enhanced that program.

We changed the admissions process to something called "comprehensive review," and I think Berkeley practiced that as well as anybody, where you look at the grades and the test scores, but you also look at the accomplishments of the young person, what have they accomplished, what barriers have they overcome, are they winners, have they achieved something in spite of great difficulty in front of them? And we score that, we count that as part of the score.

I and my friends down in San Diego launched something called the Preuss School, a charter school which is aimed at low-income, first-generation [college-going] students. And the school is right on the campus. Berkeley up here has launched an equivalent charter school which is aimed at drawing students from poorly-performing schools and putting them in charter schools and preparing them for college, it's really college prep.

And finally, we're looking at the budget this year, the budget that I will take to the Regents the week after next, will have student aid for what we call middle-income students. We have a great program for low-income students. But middle-income students and middle-income families are feeling an enormous pinch when it comes to the University of California.

But finally – and this is an issue where I truly need your help, I need the community's help, some of you might know Winston Doby, who's working with me on some of this, we truly need your help on this, this is an interesting one – an young African American is eligible for the University of California. Let's suppose he did well, he's eligible, we send him the student aid package, he's admitted to UCLA, let's say, and he goes to Morehouse. Now, I cannot criticize this young man for going to Morehouse. But it doesn't help the University of California break this cycle that we're in.

Why does he go to Morehouse? I go to his parents and ask, "Why?" And they say, "Well, Morehouse offered more money." We cannot give out money on the basis of race because of Prop 209. More importantly, the [UCLA] campus seems unfriendly because he may be the only African American student in his classes. And [parents say], "I don't want my son or daughter to be 'pioneers,' I don't want them to be the only African American so that everybody looks at them when a question of race comes up. I want them to be in a community where there are others so there is a critical mass of students that they can interact with ... I want others there."

How do I break that? It's a good answer, except it doesn't help us for future generations. We have to break that, and we have to break that together. I need community support. I need help from the community to recommend to your young people who are tough enough to come to UCLA or UC Berkeley or UC San Diego. And we'll do everything we can to make it as friendly as possible, even though we can't produce a critical mass until people start coming.

In computer language, this is called an "infinite do-loop," an endless cycle. How do you get out of the cycle? Those of you who are techies, you know how to get out of the cycle. You've got to reboot the computer. And I, as the president, can only stand on one side and reboot the computer. I need help from the community. I have friends who are working with me in communities to help reboot the computer. Because young 18-year-olds often don't listen to parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents. We have to form partnerships, and we're going to do everything we can to make this as friendly an environment as possible given that there aren't that many African American students on some of our campuses.

Let me conclude with a positive story that proves to me that we can and we must fix this, we must have your children, your grandchildren, on University of California campuses graduating, getting bachelor degrees, going on to law school, going on to business school, going on to get Ph.Ds, working in research laboratories, we must have that flow of people, students, from your families.

Let me tell you a story about a UCLA graduate that I met about a month ago. We held the first-ever reunion of former UC student leaders, we held it in Los Angeles. This was a diverse group of alumni. I think the record was held by a woman who was the president of the Associated Students at Berkeley in 1948, she was there, full of fire. The guest speaker – and he was the star attraction, most of you know who this is – was Rafer Johnson, the Olympic decathlete champion, a tower of a man. He told us that when he was a high school senior growing up in the Central Valley, he was looking around at colleges, and he could go to any school he wanted to, so he was visiting campuses. His first priority was to find a campus where he felt that he could be a leader, because he had been student body president in his high school in Fresno County.

Rafer was leaning toward Berkeley, because Berkeley is Berkeley. I can say that because I'm on the faculty there. Then he made his first visit to UCLA. And he walked into Kerckhoff Hall, where the Associated Students have their headquarters. Kerckhoff Hall has on one of its walls a display of all the former Associated Students presidents. And he looked down the line at all the faces, and he saw two African American faces, James LuValle and Sherrill Luke. And, as he tells the story, "I decided right then and there that I was going to UCLA."

You've got to help me put more African American faces on that wall. Thank you.