Oct. 2

Dear Bruins,

As the newly elected President of UCLA Black Alumni Association (UBAA), I want to first acknowledge all the elders who have come before. Their commitment, sacrifice, passion and resilience laid the foundation for this tremendous organization. I am both humbled and honored to follow in their footsteps. The UBAA has and continues to play a critical role in the ongoing mission for equity and diversity at UCLA and now, in our 50th year of existence, we stand tall in the face of adversity African Americans students have endured, great and small... and proclaim, "We Rise".

In June 2018 we were honored as Network of the Year by the UCLA Alumni Association. We attribute that in part to a robust calendar with such highlights as our Social Justice Conversation with Common and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and our ongoing scholarship fundraising efforts toward the Winston C. Doby Legacy Scholarship Fund for which we have raised nearly 5M to date, awarded to 2200 students. When asked, how do you top that? What do you do now? The answer is simple. "We Rise."

As UBAA stands on the precipice of the next half century with the backdrop of UCLA’s centennial celebration on the horizon, our progress positions us for greater things. Our African American student numbers now surpass any other UC campus. From the ashes of Prop 209 and a freshman class of less than 100 in 2006, we now have over 1600 African American students on campus and 300 in the incoming freshman cohort for this fall. It is a testimony to the tireless efforts of Vice Provost Youlonda Copeland-Morgan and her staff, countless administrators, and the dedication of every UBAA officer, board member, volunteer and donor contributing their time, talent, and treasure. The Winston Doby Legacy Scholarship has served as the ‘legal defense fund’ to help support our African American scholars within a system that tied our hands behind our back. Inarguably, Prop 209 was designed to debilitate us. It did not; instead, we Rise.

On behalf of UBAA, please accept my personal invitation to continue this journey with us. In celebration of so many #1s: most AA undergrads, top public university and most applied to university in the country, the UBAA is hosting its inaugural UBAA Black Homecoming Weekend — October 18 through 20, aptly titled “Black II Westwood Weekend” to commemorate the Rise of our African American numbers, like a phoenix from the ashes.

UBAA members can look forward to historic programming like our 2nd Annual Social Justice Conversation to feature award winning artist Common and activist, academic and author, Angela

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Davis on January 12, 2019; cornerstone events like our Champagne and Sugar Holiday Party December 15; and our 28th Annual Black Ski Weekend in April 2019. Other opportunities to give back will take shape through our Fair Share mentoring program where alumni can mentor students from underserved communities on the road to their collegiate dreams or, volunteer in community action initiatives to engage local agencies on behalf of our greater community, thereby moving the needle from conversation to action. To join this powerful Association and discover where you can Rise with us click here.

Thank you again for your past, present and future support. We look forward to your participation at any of our upcoming events. Let’s Rise Together.

Go Bruins!

Michelle Johnson ‘14
President
UCLA Black Alumni Association