



The African American Initiative

*Your generosity strengthens
Black life at Berkeley*

It is with deep appreciation that I write to express my gratitude for your commitment to the African American Initiative (AAI). This essential program provides comprehensive resources that support and empower our Black and African American community at Berkeley. Since its inception in 2015, AAI has endeavored to promote Black life on campus by increasing representation of Black and African American students and leadership, strengthening efforts to improve the college experience for the Black student community, and advancing Berkeley's commitment to becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive university.

Your generosity bolsters our capacity to offer scholarships, provides programs and services tailored specifically to Black and African American students, and helps ensure that all have equal access to a world-class education. This past year, the African American Initiative's first cohort of scholarship recipients graduated while Black and African American admissions continue to grow, the African American theme floor in the residence hall increased its capacity to house Black students, and AAI will hire its first program manager this academic year.

As we begin a promising new year, I am reflecting on what your partnership with the African American Initiative has helped accomplish and I am truly grateful. I hope you enjoy reading further about the impact your investment has made on this transformative program that does so much to build a better Berkeley. Fiat Lux!

Sincerely,

Carol T. Christ

Carol T. Christ
Chancellor





Creating a Community of Belonging

In partnership with the San Francisco Foundation, the Cal Alumni Association, UC Berkeley, and thoughtful donors like yourself, the African American Initiative Scholarship — a cornerstone of AAI — is a resource that sustains students as they pursue their Berkeley education, and better enables our Black campus community to flourish. Scholarships are awarded to incoming freshmen who demonstrate leadership potential and endeavor to make a positive contribution to the Black community. AAI scholars are awarded \$8,000 annually for up to five years.

This Fall 2022, we proudly welcomed 30 distinguished AAI scholarship recipients to Berkeley. With your commitment, the African American Initiative has awarded scholarships to a total of 141 students since the program's inception, ensuring that these outstanding scholars have equitable access to an unparalleled educational experience.

In addition to a monetary award, AAI Scholarship recipients are furnished with a suite of resources and programming designed to promote a sense of belonging and to strengthen equitable and inclusive experiences for Black students on campus. Facilitated by the African American Student Development Office, scholarship awardees take part in the Black Student Orientation, the AAI Scholarship Reception and Retreat, meet with the AAI Academic Counselor, live on the African American theme floor in the residence halls, and attend workshops sponsored by the Cal Alumni Association. By cultivating a vibrant community of support around our scholarship recipients, AAI is removing institutional barriers, expanding access, and empowering our Black and African American students to thrive.



The AAI scholarship was an integral part of my decision in going to Berkeley. As a low income student, scholarships are essential, even more so when you are an underrepresented minority. The AAI scholarship has allowed me to attend this prestigious university where I have met lifelong friends, acquired immense knowledge, and seen what the world has to offer. To the donors, thank you so much for giving me this opportunity. I look forward to paying it forward in the future.

—Raven Gatson, '24, AAI Scholar, Political Science major



William Parker '22, AAI Scholar,
Political Science and International
Politics major



This past Spring 2022, we celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of AAI Scholarship recipients. Twenty extraordinary students who joined Berkeley in 2017 as the inaugural class of AAI scholars are now Berkeley graduates.

For William Parker '22, a member of the first graduating AAI cohort, the scholarship not only influenced his decision to attend Berkeley, but the program also provided a social network that aided in his career search as well:

"Money isn't everything, but it sure can make some decisions less difficult. One of those decisions was attending UC Berkeley, and the AAI Scholarship made deciding easy. The scholarship also helped open up new opportunities during undergrad, which made my post-graduation career search considerably less difficult. I was able to have informational interviews and network with donors and people I met through the AAI Scholarship Program about my career path. Currently, I work in the tech industry as a software account development representative and was employed within two months of graduating."

Your commitment strengthens the AAI Scholarship program, breaking down financial and social barriers, giving our talented Black and African American students — our next generation of thought leaders and change-makers — keys to the doors of opportunity at Berkeley and beyond.





African American Initiative Scholarships by the Numbers

141

Total number of scholarships given since the program's inception in 2015

30

Scholarship recipients in the 2022 incoming freshman class

70

Percentage of recipients who said the scholarship played a role in deciding to attend Berkeley

59

Alumni and student volunteers who participated in the scholarship and recruitment process for 2022

88

Alumni volunteers who read scholarship applications for the 2022 incoming class

22

First cohort of AAI scholars to graduate in Spring 2022

LIGHT THE WAY
THE CAMPAIGN FOR BERKELEY



The Vivian Osborne Marsh, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Kappa Chapter, Endowed Scholarship Fund was established to ensure that the best and brightest are able to attend Cal, regardless of their ability to pay. AAI makes it easy to direct our philanthropy to Black students at Berkeley — allowing us to build upon and deepen the legacy of Black excellence at Cal.

—Robynne Oliver, President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.,
Kappa Chapter

Resources that Strengthen the Black Student Community

Berkeley's commitment to recruiting a more diverse student population requires a thriving infrastructure for our growing Black and African American students. The percentage of Black and African American freshmen admitted to Berkeley for the 2022-2023 academic year is 67% higher than just five years ago, and for the past three years, the freshmen classes have been the most racially and ethnically diverse of the past three decades.

In partnership with African American Student Development (AASD), the Fannie Lou Hamer Black Resource Center, and other key campus programs, AAI is providing a robust framework of resources and services that nurture and support the Black and African American student community. Berkeley's Black community has more than 30 organizations representing academic, civic, social, and cultural life on campus, hosting more than 200 events and activities throughout the year. Below are just a few highlights of programs and resources available to students and the greater campus community.

The Fannie Lou Hamer Black Resource Center (FLHBRC) provides a space and opportunity for Black students and organizations to engage in academic, social, cultural, and political community development and networking activities.

The African American Student Development (AASD) office is a support center for Black and African American students. AASD develops and implements programs and events focused on the academic, emotional, social and cultural well-being of students as well as professional development opportunities.

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) provides first generation, low-income, and underrepresented students with guidance and resources to succeed. The EOP provides AAI scholars with dedicated counselors who provide academic support. Through the EOP-AAI partnership, upper-division scholars are able to serve as mentors to incoming AAI cohorts.

The Black Recruitment and Retention Center (BRRC) is a student-run organization that creates efforts on campus toward the recruitment and retention of Black students. The BRRC hosts college tours and application workshops for high school students, overnight stays for admitted students, and professional development and financial literacy workshops for current students.

BLACK2Cal is an annual event held in conjunction with Homecoming. BLACK2Cal welcomes alumni and students to campus while serving as a hub for campus events and activities particularly relevant to the African American community.

The African American Theme Program (AATP) provides a live-in community for students at Cal. Residents live on the African American theme floor of a residence hall and participate in seminars, community service projects, and have access to resources designed to encourage solidarity and unity among Black students from all backgrounds. This past fall, the African American theme floor expanded from 50 to 84 residents.

Blackbook University is a digital platform tailored specifically for Black students. Blackbook was developed by Berkeley students to furnish their peers with an inclusive community focused on academics, networking, and professional development. Blackbook recently partnered with the AASD to create an internship program that teaches students entrepreneurship and innovation.



Black excellence is Berkeley excellence, full stop. The AAI is shifting the way things have been done on campus for over one hundred years. We're deepening partnerships across campus organizations, divisions, and centers to give our students the support they need to thrive in their own ways and get the most out of their UC Berkeley experience. This work is helping Black students see themselves as belonging, right from the moment they step on campus.



Building a Legacy of Access and Excellence

This past fall, Berkeley was recognized with a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award. *INSIGHT Into Diversity*, the oldest and largest diversity magazine in higher education, acknowledged Berkeley for its “outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion” and lauded Berkeley’s efforts to make campus a place where students, faculty, and staff can thrive. While there is more work to be done, vital programs like AAI are helping transform the university to be a place where everyone belongs, and equity and social justice are championed.

Thanks to your support, the African American initiative continues to ensure that our distinguished students have access to an equitable and inclusive academic experience at Berkeley. As we look forward, this program aims to increase the number of scholarship recipients, as well as improve the recruitment and yield of undergraduate and graduate Black and African American students. With your help, the AAI is aiding in our collective efforts to make Berkeley the top choice for Black scholars cultivating the next generation of exceptional leaders and alumni.

I am inspired by your generosity that helps bright young minds succeed by removing institutional barriers, expands access, and improves the campus climate and experiences for our Black and African American community. Because of your partnership, these scholars are the beacons who ensure that Berkeley’s light continues to shine brightly for generations to come. Fiat Lux!





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