



**LEVEL PLAYING FIELD**  
INSTITUTE

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Private Diversity Scholarship Program Graduates Up and Coming Leaders from UC Berkeley**

**San Francisco, CA (May 10, 2006)** Eight students who are part of the Level Playing Field Institute's Initiative for Diversity in Education and Leadership Scholars Program (IDEAL), will graduate from UC Berkeley on **Friday, May 19, 2006**. **The reception will be held at the Bancroft Hotel in Berkeley (2680 Bancroft Way) from 4:00-6:00pm.**

This is the second class of IDEAL scholars to graduate from UC Berkeley. IDEAL scholars are often the first in their families to attend college; many are immigrants themselves who have been in the United States for fewer than seven years. The majority came from under-resourced school districts where they dealt with outdated textbooks, limited access to counselors, having substitute teachers on a regular basis, and poor to nonexistent technology.

Selected for their notable leadership potential; the scholars are individuals who will make an impact in their communities through their careers, activism, and/or academic/scientific research. They are aspiring medical researchers, lawyers, educators, public service agents of change, business entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, among other things. They have overcome many obstacles and traveled a great distance to get to where they are now— about to graduate from one of the nation's top public universities.

Among these graduates is Yancie Davis, who was born and raised in the working class neighborhood of East Oakland. He excelled at Castlemont High School, despite the odds that faced him in a district where only one of three black male freshmen graduate. Initially he struggled academically at UC Berkeley, having to make up ground with his better-prepared peers. Through his hard work, perseverance, and the support of IDEAL, he has created a home at UC Berkeley while staying connected to his Oakland roots. Through Berkeley's interdisciplinary field studies program, Yancie designed a major focusing on globalization and consumer behavior. All during his tenure at UC Berkeley, he has been heavily involved with outreach and recruitment efforts targeting black students and other activities to improve the environment for students of color at Berkeley. He has traveled throughout the state, hosted visiting students, and organized volunteers and activities to promote the superior learning experience that UC Berkeley offers. Upon graduation, Yancie intends to promote positive images of African Americans through his work in advertising.

Using their Berkeley and IDEAL experiences as a springboard, other IDEAL graduates will go on to pursue their career aspirations. One scholar will be a John Gardner Fellow in Washington DC; another will spend the summer in Nigeria in the Minority Health International Research Training program, and yet another will study at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health with a two-year fellowship.

**IDEAL recently received a \$1 million donation to expand the program.** Mitch Kapor, founder of Open Source Applications Foundation, sees his donation as kick starting a \$2 million campaign that will allow an additional 31 students to become IDEAL Scholars over the next five years.

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Some of the students IDEAL hopes to assist are undocumented immigrants, and without private scholarship help must give up their dreams of attending a four year university, even though they've earned their acceptance letters by academic excellence and overcoming daunting obstacles.

**About the Initiative for Diversity in Education and Leadership Scholars Program (IDEAL)**

IDEAL is a program of Level Playing Field Institute whose vision is to ensure that California benefits from leaders who represent broad demographics of the state. Such representation is important as the percentages of Latino and Black Californians, now 40% of the total population (2000 US Census), continues to grow. In addition to financial scholarships, which replace student loans and workstudy, IDEAL scholars receive access to an on-campus advisor, valuable summer internships related to their areas of interest, computer loan program, leadership training, and a strong network of support on campus. Currently, there are 37 undergraduate students in the program: 43% Black, 31% Latino/Hispanic, and 17% multiracial. Since the first class of students was admitted in 2001, we have had 93% retention. Sixty percent of these students are the first to attend a four-year college in their families.

**About Level Playing Field Institute**

Founded in 2001 by Dr. Freada Kapor Klein, the *Level Playing Field Institute's* mission is to promote innovative approaches to fairness in higher education and the workplace by removing barriers to full participation. Through their programs, the Level Playing Field Institute aims to expose and break down hidden barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential.

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