



OFFICE OF THE DEANS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-2920

PHONE: 510-642-5872
FAX: 510-642-7578
E-MAIL: MARK_RICHARDS@BERKELEY.EDU

October 14, 2010

Dr. Robert Schwartz
Executive Director,
Level Playing Field Institute
543 Howard Street, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Executive Director Schwartz,

On behalf of UC Berkeley, I am writing to lend my unequivocal support to the continuation and expansion of the LPFI-SMASH Program.

SMASH is an asset to our campus as well as to the broader scientific community. Any university that chooses to host a SMASH Program will be rewarded by the benefits of having an outstanding program to increase diversity on its campus. The SMASH program is an exemplar of how it is possible to induct members of our society least likely to advance in science into the full range of higher educational institutions. SMASH does this the best possible way, that is, by providing summer and year-round experiences that combine an unrelentingly demanding academic curriculum with full-scale social and material support and genuine encouragement.

Our campus was engaged in the initial process of realizing the vision for SMASH and saw close-up the rigorousness with which this effort was developed. Prior to implementation, LPFI conducted extensive research, went on site visits to successful programs nationally, and engaged in a thorough going process to conceptualize and plan the program. Over the years, it is clear that this initial investment has paid off in both the high quality of its curriculum, pedagogy, and community-building approach, and the exciting reality of its outcomes.

From the outset, an important goal for SMASH was to go well beyond offering high school students general exposure to science or increasing science literacy. These are laudable goals that drive many of the summer and other enrichment programs for young people of color from groups underrepresented in science, mathematics and engineering in the United States. While LPFI certainly incorporated these goals, it set itself a far higher bar to reach. For SMASH the goal has always been to identify talented, motivated students of color from low income backgrounds — young people who are unlikely likely to be receiving the kind of education required to want to go on in science or to know how to hit the ground running in a science or engineering major in college but most likely to succeed if they did— and ensure that the proverbial playing field was leveled for them.

SMASH has succeeded wonderfully at reaching this extraordinarily high goal, sending our participants on to college, many in STEM majors, just as intended. At Berkeley, we have been

the fortunate beneficiaries of SMASH's developmental work with high school students and have seen several of the students enroll here and do very well.

At Berkeley, our interest in SMASH has extended well beyond serving as a formal host. We are dedicated to having SMASH at Cal, and work hard to make sure things go smoothly for the program. We feel lucky to have been the test-bed campus for SMASH and excited for our colleagues at other universities that they too now have the opportunity to both benefit from and lend their support to LPFI's excellent and important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Richards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Mark A. Richards
Executive Dean, Dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
Professor of Earth and Planetary Science