



For Immediate Release

UCLA research program lends voice to local high school students

Participants to present findings from interviews with state leaders, Supt. Jack O'Connell

LOS ANGELES (July 30, 2010) — High school students from five local urban schools will present findings from a monthlong research project that focused on the equitable distribution of education resources Aug. 6 at Los Angeles City Hall.

Thirty-three current students and recent graduates from Crenshaw, Locke, Manual Arts, Roosevelt and Wilson high schools participated in the summer session of the [Council of Youth Research](#), a project of [UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education and Access \(IDEA\)](#).

The students learned graduate-level research techniques, distributed about 1,000 surveys to gauge high school student attitudes and developed interview questions for educators, administrators and community leaders, including Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell and Undersecretary of Education Kathryn Radtkey-Gaither.

The theme for the summer session is the 10th anniversary of the *Williams v. California* case, a class-action suit filed in 2000 on behalf of California students. The suit alleged that the state and various agencies had failed to adequately provide — especially in low-income neighborhoods — classroom materials, safe and secure campuses, and qualified teachers. The suit was settled in 2004, with the state passing legislation aimed at addressing these inequities.

The students chose to focus their research on five areas: quality teaching, learning resources, social and physical environments, curriculum and educational leadership.

"We wanted to honor *Williams*, which is really our keystone case that points to inequitable distribution of educational resources," said Ernest Morrell, associate director of UCLA IDEA and an associate professor of urban schooling at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. "Ten years later, it seems appropriate to revisit *Williams* and see if we're moving in the right direction."

Preliminary results of an online survey conducted by students participating in the project found that almost 60 percent of responding students thought schools were not providing enough technology. Another 70 percent considered facilities, like bathrooms, inadequate. And about 55 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statement: My school serves healthy food.

However, about 85 percent responded that their teachers care about them and their future.

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The survey results will be used during research presentations. Also included will be the student interviews of teachers, administrators, community leaders and local legislative staff. Earlier this week, the students traveled to Sacramento to meet with Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, state schools chief O'Connell, Secretary Radtkey-Gaither and other political and community leaders.

Students will create PowerPoint presentations and video documentaries. The **Aug. 6** presentation will begin at **10 a.m. in the Tom Bradley Tower at Los Angeles City Hall, 200 N. Spring St.**

"This program makes students realize they have power," said Jessica Velazquez, 17, a first-time Council of Youth Research member from Crenshaw High School in South Los Angeles. "I'm looking forward to having this research really mean something."

IDEA has worked with student researchers since 1999. Previous Council of Youth Research topics have included budget cuts, youth political participation and the experiences of students of color in post-Brown v. Board of Education Los Angeles schools.

For further information on the City Hall presentation, the Council of Youth Research or IDEA, visit www.ucla-idea.org.

The **UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access** is a research institute seeking to understand and challenge pervasive racial and social class inequalities in education. In addition to conducting independent research and policy analysis, IDEA supports educators, public officials, advocates, community activists and young people as they design, conduct, and use research to make high-quality public schools and successful college participation routine in all communities.

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