

As prepared for delivery

**President Janet Napolitano
Luncheon Remarks
President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program
30th Anniversary Celebration
Claremont Hotel, 41 Tunnel Road, Berkeley, CA
October 10, 2014
12:30 p.m.**

Thank you, Patricia, and thank you all for that warm welcome. It's great to be here this afternoon.

I'd like to begin my remarks today with a little exercise.

How many of you are graduates of the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program? Let's see a show of hands.

How many of you were hired by UC at the conclusion of your fellowships?

How many of you still work at UC today?

Please join me in giving yourselves a hand. You are why we are holding this 30th anniversary celebration today.

I understand that we also have present many students in the Dissertation-Year Fellowship Program as well as many PFP mentors and supporters.

Since the inception of the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, 387 participants have earned tenure-track faculty appointments. More than 170 of these tenure-track appointments have been at the University of California—including 109 in the last decade alone.

I am happy to say 98 percent of those appointees eligible for tenure at UC since 1995 have, in fact, received tenure.

And of the former fellows hired by UC since 2003, ninety percent are still on the UC faculty.

These are remarkable achievements. They are testament to the forward-thinking faculty and advisors who, 30 years ago, possessed the foresight to create this program.

The motivation then, as it is now, is straightforward. It is to increase the number of women and minorities pursuing academic careers at the University of California. And the program remains highly competitive, with 20-30 new fellows each year selected from among 500 applicants.

One of my first acts as UC President was to allocate \$5 million in new funding to support the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program.

Today, more than ever before, it is important to recruit scholars who will enhance the diversity of the academic community through their research, teaching, or public service. Their recruitment is essential to fulfilling UC's mission to serve the needs of our increasingly diverse state, nation, and world.

A former PFP fellow, Scott Moura, who is now an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at UC Berkeley, well explains why this recruitment is essential.

Throughout his academic career, Scott has embraced opportunities that foster engineering education among traditionally underrepresented and diverse populations.

Scott says this:

“Continuing these efforts is an integral component of my core values.”

“The discovery of new technologies,” he says, “is paralleled by the discovery of new cultures and perspectives.”

Now, I must confess that I have another motive in wanting to attract more of our nation's high-achieving postdoctoral scholars to UC campuses.

I'm a little bit competitive. I don't like losing brilliant early-career academics to Harvard, or to Yale...or to that Farm across the bay.

So as part of my PFP initiative, a portion of the funds will be used to cover part of the salary and lab start-up costs that campuses incur when they hire fellows from the program for tenure-track faculty positions.

In addition, because we are committed to faculty development, part of the \$5 million allocation goes to the support of mentoring and training opportunities.

I understand that yesterday, at lunch, many of you were present for the premiere performance of “Ready to Vote?”. This is the theater scenario we are featuring in the leadership seminars for chairs and deans. The training is focused on giving chairs and deans the tools to create inclusive department and school climates. And it will soon take place on each of the ten campuses, beginning on October 20 in San Diego.

Fundamentally, the most exciting aspect of this program is the caliber of the scholars it attracts.

I had the opportunity to meet some of the current fellows at a dinner in August. Many were the first in their family to graduate from a university. Some came from low-income or immigrant families. What they all share is a collective recognition of the importance of meaningful role models—especially when students are just starting out on their academic journeys.

Take Jessica Kramer. Jessica is a post-doc at UC Berkeley in chemistry, molecular and cell biology. She did not have a lot of role models in her science classes, or in her first research position. The absence of role models she experienced inspired her interest in outreach to girls and underrepresented minorities. She wants to help encourage them to pursue science careers, too.

Then there is James Battle. He is post-doc in sociology at UC Santa Cruz. He had neither role models nor family experience to guide him as he climbed the academic ladder. James grew up in a single-parent home in an inner-city neighborhood in Rochester, NY. He was the first in his family to complete high school—let alone to go on to graduate school and postdoctoral research. Based on his own experience, James has worked throughout his university career to promote diversity and inclusion by mentoring undergraduates.

I know that every fellow here today also has a compelling and inspiring story to share.

And I can think of no better way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of this award-winning program than to turn these fellows into faculty. I encourage all the deans and department chairs here today to keep these fellows in mind when hiring.

You see, it's not just your division or department that will benefit—the entire UC community benefits from these hires.

Diversity of background, cultural experience, and critical thinking perspectives are what makes a great research university even greater.

Thank you. And Fiat Lux.