Dear Friends,

As we enter Homecoming weekend with many activities for current students, alumni and the broader community – including a mechanical bull at the bonfire tonight – I wish to put the festivities (http://rside.ucr.edu/homecoming.htm) and the seminal meaning of homecoming into context with a true and compelling story that occurred right here in our backyard.

I recently received a note from one of our professors, in which the first sentence read, “Last night I got an email that moved me to tears of joy – a rare enough event in these challenging times.”

This email grabbed me, because it told the story of one woman on the cusp of ending, and another woman on the cusp of beginning.

Professor Anne Jones shared with me a story that involves these two women whom she met during her outreach work at John W. North High School. The first woman, Rosalyn Anderson, led her to the second. Here are excerpts from Professor Jones’ account:

Rosalyn (is) a teacher at North High School, who has been coordinating the Education and Human Services Academy at North for, well, a very long time. I was fortunate enough to attend a meeting of the Academy’s Steering Committee when I first came to work for UCR 5 years ago, which is where I met Rosalyn and learned about her work.

She has been instrumental in retaining kids at North and guiding them towards college year after year, with scarce and ever dwindling resources – yet she is unfailingly energetic and positive. Her perseverance is her gift to the students of North, and I would argue to the entire community. Her impending retirement will leave some canyon-sized shoes to fill.

For three years the extent of my involvement in this great program was to attend steering committee meetings. Each time the call for mentors went out I smiled and passed because of other commitments, but some events happened that got me off the sidelines, and soon after I met my first mentee, Ms. C. L.

C.L. and I had lunch several times during her junior year at the regular events beautifully organized by Rosalyn. When I first met her, C.L. had ambitions to go to college but was sure UC was out of her reach.

We talked about A-G, AP, SAT, ACT – the language of the University-bound. When job shadow day rolled around, I took C.L. on a campus tour and afterwards, to meet an admissions counselor.

C.L. was encouraged to apply for early admission, which she did with giddy enthusiasm.

She was not accepted.
This past fall, her senior year at North began. Our lunches continued. We kept talking, this time about re-taking the SAT. Rosalyn kept supporting her, as did all the other students in the EHS Academy at North High.

C.L. persevered, which brings us to her latest email to me:

Anne,
Guess what!!! I've been admitted to UCR.
C.L.

So when C.L. arrives in the fall, she will be the first in her family on the way to graduation. But her journey is a testimony to the power of perseverance, mentorship, and great teachers.

But for me, the story is larger than that.

It speaks to the role we can all play in our life and the lives of others if we choose. Professor Jones made a choice to get involved and be of service. That choice led her to our incoming student. Roselyn Anderson makes a choice every day – to be of service to her students and help them find different paths in life, paths that will bring them greater fulfillment and growth. And when you add in some perseverance and aspiration…well it becomes good for all directly involved, and good for society.

Through their actions, the student was then empowered to make her own choices – those choices will take perseverance and ambition, but in the end not only will she benefit, but so will all of society. It is that benefit to society – the public good that motivates the best educators – Professor Jones and Rosalyn Anderson among so many others.

And it is that outcome of being good for society – the public good of a great university – that is one major reason all of us at UCR do what we do each and every day.

Best wishes,

Tim

Tim White, Chancellor