



## Our Urban Trailblazer

Alecia K. Eugene-Chasten

Ms. Alecia K. Eugene-Chasten, is the Founder/CEO of Urban Advocates & Achievers (UAA). The creation of UAA was inspired by Ms. Eugene-Chasten's personal experiences as a parent, as a Board Trustee for Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD) and the lack of educational equity that occurs at many school districts across the United States as well as the lack of 21st Century learning opportunities that continues to affect outcomes for many students and families of color.

Ms. Eugene-Chasten works with a diverse, brilliant and talented team of professionals and together, UAA provides a personalized and holistic approach to empower and uplift both the student and their family in their pursuit of academic achievement, excellence, educational equity, and economic sustainability for an improved quality of life. UAA's campaign is to:

**“STOP the School-to-Prison-Pipeline, and START-the-Pipeline-to-Educational Opportunities.”**



The Office of Campus Community Relations (OCCR), at the University of California Davis, is in a Founding Partnership with the UAA.

The OCCR is committed to UAA as the lead organization to **START** the “**Pipeline-to-Educational- Opportunities**” for students to

attend UC Davis through the UAA's Reservation for College Community Program, (RCCP).

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Ms. Eugene-Chasten explains that two of her children received inadequate services for an “Equitable, Free and Appropriate Public Education”, (E-FAPE). In addition, the Chasten Parents spent over \$15,000 at Sylvan Learning Center to help their children receive help in reading and math. The most devastating experience involved the inappropriate behavior of a resource teacher at an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), meeting.



At the IEP Meeting for Ms. Chasten’s 9-year-old fourth grader, the resource teacher said, “because her child was struggling in math, her child could aspire to be a warehouse worker!” Ms. Eugene-Chasten was shocked and angry. She also noticed that the words spoken by the resource teacher flowed so easily out of the resource teacher’s mouth and she thought, how many other parents or students had this happened too?

Ms. Eugene-Chasten sternly informed the resource teacher that her comment was inappropriate and that the resource teacher did not have the right to decide what Ms. Chasten’s child would become and furthermore her child would decide his/her goals and profession! It was then Ms. Eugene-Chasten took immediate action and learned how to advocate on behalf of her children and received the needed resources to support her children’s educational success!



The outcome for each of Ms. Eugene-Chasten’s children after high school graduation produced college graduates from Mills College in Oakland, California State University, East Bay and San Jose State University. Ms. Eugene-Chasten’s adult children are successful entrepreneurs, business professionals and productive citizens that are making their “American Dream” a reality!

Unfortunately, and sadly, according to Ms. Eugene-Chasten, there are many stories that do not end with successful outcomes. The travesty continues to be perpetuated with bias, and “Educational Child Abuse” by many educators, administrators, counselors, school board members and superintendents that stereotype, give-up, and/or mis-educate black and brown students, including students “At Promise”, students with disabilities and students in the Education Gap.

Ms. Eugene-Chasten was elected and served as the first African American Woman Board Trustee to the Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD), the third largest school district in California, during 2008 through 2012. During this rewarding and tumultuous journey, she experienced discrimination and harassment from the superintendent Frank Porter, and board members: Michele Rivas, Linda Fowler, Bob Bastian, Rodger Westrup and contract lead attorney Tim Carey.



As a Board Trustee, Ms. Eugene-Chasten witnessed, first-hand how black and brown students were placed in the “School-to-Prison” pipeline systematically by TRUSD utilizing disciplinary methods such as suspensions and/or the expulsions.

At one specific board meeting regarding school closures, Ms. Eugene-Chasten mentioned that many schools in Del Paso Heights were being closed and schools in Rio Linda remained “open,” giving the appearance of segregation and inequities in education.





During the board meeting Ms. Eugene-Chasten further stated this would impact students of color because no transportation of busses would be provided for students resulting in serious safety concerns for parents and for their children. Immediately, Superintendent Porter and Board President, Rivas immediately “stopped and recessed” the board meeting because Ms. Eugene-Chasten said the word “SEGREGATION”!



Ms. Eugene-Chasten used her voice to support communities vigorously and passionately in TRUSD when discussing the Education Gap and opening an investigation with the Sacramento Grand Jury Office regarding TRUSD’s misappropriation of funds including discrimination of former employees of Grant Unified School District, questionable hiring practices and police abuses in communities of color and

specifically in the Del Paso Heights community.

During Ms. Eugene-Chasten’s 5-years as Board Trustee, the Superintendent, Frank Porter and board members: Rivas, Fowler, Westrup, Green and Bastian tried to vote to censor and/or suppress Ms. Eugene-Chasten’s voice and categorized her as the “ill-informed and angry Black Woman”. Ms. Eugene-Chasten demonstrated strength, courage, passion and more importantly used her voice to help students in the Education Gap, students “At-Risk”, and students with disabilities.



Ms. Eugene-Chasten is especially grateful for the valuable support from Mr. Cortez Quinn, past Board Member TRUSD, and community members and thankful for the valuable support from the Black Parallel School Board, the Sacramento NAACP, and the Greater Sacramento Urban League while she served as Board Trustee with TRUSD.

According to Ms. Eugene-Chasten, it was just over 9 years ago, after serving as School Board TRUSD that she was inspired to create UAA. The importance of UAA has positively impacted students and families. Furthermore, UAA is leveling the playing field for young people from under-resourced communities.



In closing, Ms. Eugene-Chasten shares that UAA are “**Education First Responders**” equipped with the “**educational antidote**” and **commitment** to ensure students receive an equitable education, are proficient in reading and math, on track to graduate high school, meet the requirements for entry into college, trade schools, and/or career technical opportunities. UAA strategically coordinates and aligns resources of an entire community together to increase the educational success for students in the Promise Zone, Sacramento’s federally designated high-poverty areas.

As stated by Ms. Alecia K. Eugene-Chasten, The Urban Trailblazer,

**“UAA are passionate “Social Change Makers and Education First Responders” with the belief that when “EQUITY” is applied strategically and consistently in education, there will no longer be an achievement gap.”**

Ms. Eugene-Chasten is proud and excited to officially launch the Urban Advocates & Achievers with a Virtual Grand Opening & Open House Fundraiser that was held on November 14, 2020. UAA will be hosting future Virtual Fundraisers and “Watch” Parties in December and throughout 2021.

