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CONTACT:

Southern CA: Chante Henderson, 310.206.8405

Northern CA: E. Carmen Torres, 415.687.6595

Science Industry Leaders Offer Solution to Nationwide Diversity Challenge

*Building Diversity in Science brings the Scientific Empowerment Movement to UCLA
A program to empower minority students to pursue available careers with a science background*

LOS ANGELES, CA - On Saturday, September 27 at Covel Commons on the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus, 300 minority high school and college students will take part in the Southern California launch of the Scientific Empowerment Movement (SEM). SEM is a statewide program that targets urban communities in Northern, Southern, and Central California to encourage underserved student populations to pursue careers in science, medicine, and technology, where minorities are underrepresented.

SEM is presented by the San Francisco based non-profit, Building Diversity in Science (BDIS) and is funded in part by such industry heavyweights as Northrop-Grumman, Oracle, Bayer Healthcare and Genentech.

The conference boasts a new and exciting partnership between BDIS and UCLA. UCLA will play host to students and conference dignitaries, and is providing outreach services to recruit participants. The day-long event features motivational guest speakers, peer panels and special appearances by leading sports and entertainment figures. Charles J. Alexander, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for Student Diversity and Director of Academic Advancement Program (AAP) reflects on how SEM aligns with AAP, "The Scientific Empowerment Movement (SEM) shares similar goals as the Academic Advancement Program, which is to encourage underserved student populations to pursue careers in science, medicine, and technology. We are excited to be a partner in this event and look forward to contributing to the efforts of attracting more students from low income and underserved populations into STEM fields".

"We launched SEM to connect minority professionals with urban communities around the country and empower minority high school and college students to think differently about education, science and life", says BDIS co-founder and SEM chair, Frederick Moore, PhD. "SEM is our innovative approach to excite students interested in science by exposing the connections between science and technology with the sports and entertainment industries." SEM further rewards students at each event with a signature mini concert, which in the past has hosted artists such as the Grammy nominated group Jagged Edge and entertainer, Lil Fizz, former member of B2K.

Moore founded BDIS in 2001 with fellow UC San Francisco graduate, Michael L. Penn, Jr., MD, PhD, who also felt a responsibility to help minorities succeed. The concepts of SEM include tools, strategies and approaches that students can leverage to enhance their current and future academic situations.

The conference highlights unique workshops to assist students with their transition to college and graduate school on both the emotional and intellectual levels, panels and discussion groups that provide them with a wide-variety of examples of careers available with a science background, and lab tours and exhibits to provide real time context for the application of science and technology.

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ABOUT BDIS

Building Diversity in Science (www.bdis.us) is a not-for-profit organization with a primary mission of using science as a platform to empower underrepresented minority students to pursue careers available with a science degree. In addition to SEM, BDIS feature programs; BDIS Scholars & Mentoring Program (BSMP) that provides one-on-one mentoring for low-income, first generation college students with an interest in science in the San Francisco Bay area, and the Infinite Possibilities Conference (IPC; www.ipcmath.org), a national conference that encourages and supports women of color in the mathematical sciences. To learn more about SEM and register for the September 27th, UCLA event visit www.sem.bdis.us.