Every year, I look forward to meeting the dozens of high school students who participate in our Saturday Academy — a four-Saturday series organized by our medical students in January and February.

This year, we welcomed a diverse group of students from Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School to this year’s program, being held in our Education Building.

In the morning, we discussed the importance of celebrating diversity in the health professions. We talked about how current statistics show huge gaps between the diversity in California’s population and diversity in its physician workforce. Then, the students spent the rest of the day in rotations that gave them hands-on experience in anatomy, radiology, vital signs and medical research.

As you know, a diverse health-care workforce is key to helping reduce health disparities and provide culturally competent care – two of our health system’s priorities. Our medical students fully understand those priorities, and I am proud that they have been organizing the Saturday Academy since 2001 to help us move forward in those areas.

Why do our medical students feel so strongly about continuing the important tradition of the Saturday Academy?
I think the answer is twofold.

First, medical students are attracted to UC Davis School of Medicine because they share our values of equality, diversity and social responsibility. The Saturday Academy provides them an opportunity to share these values with future students who will build on their legacy.

Second, our medical students see these values reflected by the dedicated work of our faculty and staff every day in our classrooms, our research labs, our hospital and our clinics. Inspired by you, their role models, our students become role models for the next generation.

So, in closing, thank you for providing the supportive environment that motivates our students to make a difference in our community … and the world.

Sincerely,

Claire