



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SAG-AFTRA and HBCU In LA Presents Student-Produced Short Film  
*Uchawi* with Screening Event Featuring Guest Speaker  
Congresswoman Maxine Waters**

**Private Screening & Reception Draws VIP Attendees Including Emmy Award-Winning  
Producer James Bland and Executives from Top Hollywood Studios**



(L-R: Stacy Milner, Hon Maxine Waters, Tashia Mallette)  
*Photo: Maury Phillips*



(R:T. Omodehinde, I. Tudor, J.Bland, JAugust Richards)  
(F: T. Henderson, I. Ford, Hon Maxine Waters, K. Scott, A.Afolayan)  
*Photo: Maury Phillips*

Los Angeles, CA– To mark the successful completion of the 2019 HBCU in LA Internship program, SAG-AFTRA hosted a special event for thirty student participants who proudly showcased their summer culmination project: an independently written and produced short film, ***Uchawi*** (pron. Oo-cha-wee). Entertainment Industry College Outreach Program (EICOP)/HBCU in LA founder **Stacy Milner** and **James Bland**, Emmy-Winning producer, director, and creator of the acclaimed

hit YouTube series *Giants*, celebrated along with supporters and mentors at a private screening, reception and panel discussion that featured guest speaker, **Congresswoman Maxine Waters**. The 10-minute short film project centers around two sisters who encounter an extraordinary power that forces them to confront their troubled pasts and learn the importance of forgiveness. It was created, written, produced, edited and then showcased entirely by student interns, with the support of volunteer industry professionals from **James Bland Films, SAG-AFTRA, IATSE, Endeavor Content, Revolt TV, Jesse Collins Entertainment** and **TV One**, among others. Uchawi was written by **Troi Henderson**, a recent TV & Film graduate of Howard University, whose pitch was chosen from 5 finalists.

The premiere of the short film was presented to a packed house at the SAG-AFTRA Headquarters in Los Angeles. Guest speaker Congresswoman Waters was introduced by SAG-AFTRA Chief People Officer, **Tashia Mallette**. Rep. Waters discussed the important function of HBCUs, offered words of wisdom and encouraged students to pursue their dreams. She left the aspiring entertainment professionals with a word of advice which was met with roaring applause and a standing ovation, "Listen to your Auntie and reclaim your time!"

VIP guests included notable talent and program mentors such as **J. August Richards** (*Angel, Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D, Giants*); **Don Morgan** (9x Emmy Winning Cinematographer); **Kelsey Scott** (*How to Get Away With Murder, 12 Years a Slave*); Casting Director/Producer/Author **Tracie "Twinkie" Byrd**; **Judge Kevin Ross** (*America's Court*); Emmy-nominated music producer/director **Rickey Minor** and production consultant **Sonya Marchand**. Also in attendance were top executives from Warner Bros., Disney/ABC, CAA, UTA, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Amazon Studios, and partners of HBCU In LA/ EICOP. Red carpet interviews were conducted by student correspondents **Kaprielle Trenard** (Rising senior, Howard U) and **Morgan Poole** (Recent grad, Delaware State U).



Hon Maxine Waters speaks to HBCU in LA interns and guests  
*Photo: Jaimie Milner*



2019 HBCU in LA Cohorts and Mentors at screening of *UCHAWI*  
*Photo: Maury Phillips*

For video highlights from Congresswoman Waters' speech, see [Video by SimonVision Media](#)

To view/download photos from the event please visit: [Uchawi Press Gallery](#)

For full red carpet interviews from the screening, go to [HBCU in LA page](#)

To view behind the scenes video of the production process, see: [The Making of Uchawi](#)

To find out more information about the program, please visit [www.eicop.org](http://www.eicop.org). To follow the organizations on social media: @eicophbcu #hbcuinla #uchawi #studentfilm #blackfilmmakers @SAGAFTRA #SAGAFTRA

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### **About Entertainment Industry College Outreach Program (EICOP)**

Non-profit organization dedicated to educating, training and recruiting the best and brightest diverse student leaders from Historically Black Colleges & Universities and other Predominantly Minority Institutions in the media, entertainment and communication industry. This innovative pipeline development program is designed to provide access and opportunity to student groups who have traditionally been underrepresented to meet the industry's diversity goals of employing a workforce that is reflective of the communities it serves.

### **About SAG-AFTRA**

SAG-AFTRA represents approximately 160,000 actors, announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, DJs, news writers, news editors, program hosts, puppeteers, recording artists, singers, stunt performers, voiceover, artists and other entertainment and media professionals. SAG-AFTRA members are the faces and voices that entertain and inform America and the world. A proud affiliate of the AFL-CIO, SAG-AFTRA has national offices in Los Angeles and New York and local offices nationwide representing members working together to secure the strongest protections for entertainment and media artists into the 21st century and beyond. Visit SAG-AFTRA online at [sagaftra.org](http://sagaftra.org).

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