

## Program Message

*A few words from Alicia Hall, Executive Administrative Assistant for the Meyerhoff Scholars Program.*

Greetings All! It has been my pleasure to work at UMBC with the Meyerhoff Scholars Program, and in particular with many of you, for the past 13 years.

First of all, I would like to take a moment to remember a man that made a difference in this program and the lives of everyone he came in contact with during his years at UMBC. As you read this newsletter, please think of him and the contribution he made, but also think about the foundation he laid for all of us. LaMont was such a big part of our lives and will always be with us, especially as we reflect on all the encouraging words of wisdom he shared through the years. After his passing I believe that we all have a deeper appreciation for the phrase "standing on the shoulders of giants," as he was a giant to all of us in some way, shape or form.

Congratulations to our Scholars who completed their undergraduate studies May 21, 2012. Graduation is always a happy time of the year for us in the Meyerhoff Office, but it is also a sad time. We do realize that just as you came to the Meyerhoff Scholars Program so must you leave to go on and pursue the next phase of your life. Though all of you have now graduated from the program, please remember, once a Meyerhoff, always a Meyerhoff!

As service is a foundational principle of the program, large numbers of you continue to give back to the program in many ways. These include monetarily, volunteering to interview during selection weekends, referring students to the Program, serving as mentors, and/or assisting the Meyerhoff Program whenever called upon to name a few. The Meyerhoff Scholars Program is so fortunate to have alumni who continue to serve, many above and beyond the call of duty. We encourage you to continue to do so and look for new ways support the program's legacy.

In closing, I wish everyone a safe, prosperous and enjoyable summer. We look forward to seeing many of you on Sunday, June 10, 2012 for the Alumni Cookout with the M24 cohort.

Alicia Hall  
Executive Administrative Assistant

## Officer's Corner

*A few words from Torria Ellis-Dugar M4, Treasurer of the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board.*

Hello Meyerhoff Family,

The 2011- 2012 year has been full of highs and lows for the Meyerhoff family. Who can forget the enthusiasm and chatter on Facebook when Doc and the program were featured on *60 Minutes*? Every other Facebook update was from either a UMBC alum and/or Meyerhoff talking about how proud they were of their university. To top it off, we all get to say that we know someone personally that was featured in *TIME* magazine.

That being said, the passing of Mr. Toliver can only be described as a collective shock to the Meyerhoff family. There is no doubt that he will be missed. Each one of us can take something from LaMont's leadership and mentoring style and apply it to our daily lives. I am sure that he would be so proud of how we came together to support each other and honor his legacy. I would be remiss if I didn't thank his family for allowing us to show our love and affection for him during their time of grief.

As we look to the future, I would encourage everyone to continue developing and maintaining your Meyerhoff relationships. That can be done in a variety of ways. You can mentor, donate or just reconnect with other Meyerhoffs who have graduated but haven't remained in contact with over the years. One thing I know for sure is that we are a family. Together, we can help each other move onward and upward. Lastly, I would like to thank Kamili Jackson for her tireless efforts as President of the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board. She shepherded us through a very difficult period with grace, leadership and honesty.

Torria Ellis- Dugar

### MAAB OFFICERS

**President** – Kamili Jackson, M4  
**Vice President** – Tiffani Bright, M11  
**Secretary** – Shawnielle Predeoux, M4  
**Treasurer** – Torria Ellis, M4  
**Parliamentarian** – Jason Lee, M3  
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### MAAB REPRESENTATIVES

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**M7** – Camelia Owens      **M8** – Alexandra Harryman  
**M9** – Raj Stewart      **M10** – Sabrina Johnson Turner  
**M11** – Aolat "Abi" Chike      **M12** – Erica Reaves  
**M13** – Nwokedi Idika      **M14** – Donel Sequea  
**M15** – Tiffany Williams      **M16** – Stephen Mobley  
**M17** – Nancy Chiles      **M18** – Natee Johnson  
**M19** – Lydia Grmai  
**Graduate Fellow** – Joseph Washington



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In this section of the newsletter, alumni answer questions submitted by other alumni. Thank you to all who participated and keep the questions and answers coming.

### Question 1

*I just obtained my first job offer and it seems decent. However, how can I know whether I'm getting market value?*

### Answers

**Response 1** – Very good question, it's often hard to evaluate an offer and determine if you are really getting "what your worth". However, **getting multiple offers and comparing them can help**. Since this is your first job, as long as you feel like you're getting a decent offer I would use the opportunity to explore the field, the new position and really learn as MUCH as you can about your new field. **After a year** at your new company you'll likely be put through some sort of "performance evaluation" or similar process and you may even be given a raise. At that time **it's not a bad idea to explore (discreetly) interviewing with different companies to get a feel for the positions available and what companies are paying**. You can then use this information to evaluate if it's a good idea to stay where you are or move on. **In other words, when your company evaluates your performance use it as an opportunity to also evaluate theirs.**

**Response 2** – **It's always good to check on [salary.com](http://salary.com) as you probably already know**, but the information available can be limited. The best thing is to find out from people. **Ask till you get some insight (each company is different). You'll be surprised but some people are open about this subject.**

**Response 3** – Well, **when looking at a job offer, it's important to consider the location**. In other words, \$75 K in St Louis is NOT the same as \$75 K in New York. So, if you are in a low-cost area, don't just assume that the offer isn't good. Also, it helps to search for similar jobs on the web to see the salary range.

**Response 4** – You can find out, but it's going to be a lot more effort for not that much more money. You should be able to look things up by your major/job and location and get a ballpark range, but that's about it.

**The best thing you can do is find someone who is older than you and in the same field, and ask for their advice.**

Otherwise, you may have to get compensation in other ways - benefits, time off, etc.

### Question 2

*I was curious to know if anyone, while in their first-year as a PhD student, was still not completely sure if PhD was for them? I have heard of so many opportunities in industry with just a masters in electrical/computer engineering and I am not sure if that is the path I should take or continue for PhD? I know they say that finding a job after getting your PhD is difficult because you are so specialized and you have little work experience... Was just curious to know if anyone else experienced this and had a different perspective/advice on this?*

### Answers

**Response 1** - For engineers, it's not a bad idea to leave the master's option open. For industrial jobs, the master's may actually be the more valuable degree in many instances. If you chose to complete the PhD, make sure that you completely master your area of expertise. If your area of study is more theoretical and less practical, **develop expertise in some common analytical/coding/etc. technique to make yourself attractive.**

**Response 2** - I was never sure, throughout the whole process, if a PhD was for me, if I was good enough and if I'd be able to find a job that I like after I finished. I found that I was good enough and finding a job was no harder or easier with the degree. First, I'd encourage you **not to make a decision based on money or any job offer** that may or not be currently present. Second, you will be to find a job with a PhD but more importantly you will be able to start a career, which is better than a job.

If you are concerned about finding a job I encourage you to find a **summer internship**. There are a lot available for graduate students in the national labs. You will meet people with PhDs that are not necessarily in academia which will show you the possibilities. **Some possibilities are academia, engineering consulting, national labs and other government facilities, and R&D in private industry.** Also, some management consulting firms like McKinsey, have a whole program to train technical PhDs to be in consulting. I explain it like this: If you are a mechanic and you get a degree in mechanical engineering you are now overqualified to be a mechanic but other possibilities are open to you. The same goes here.

I am sure you ask, if not for money or jobs how do I make this decision? Well, are you at all interested in your potential research? Are you interested in learning more in your chosen field. Do you like to know something before anyone else? Do you enjoy teaching? Do you enjoy problem solving? I am not saying the answer to all of these should be yes but some should. Take a minute to think about it. **Talk to some PhDs in various careers.** Reach out to other alums who are in grad school or have finished in the same major. If you decide to move forward, surround yourself with supportive people and figure out how to be enthusiastic about what you are doing at least some of the time by finding an interesting project and/or dynamic and engaging advisor. Good luck!



## ALUMNI NEWS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Dr. Chiatogu Onyewu** (M7, Biological Sciences) and her husband Mr. Adim Offurum welcomed their daughter, Amarachi Chinyere Offurum on May 2, 2012.



**Kyle McKay** (M13, Computer Engineering) defended in October and received his PhD in electrical engineering in December from Duke University. He was also awarded an NRC postdoctoral fellowship to work at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Boulder, Colorado to work on trapped ion quantum computing. In January he moved to Boulder and started work at NIST.

**Tesia Stephenson** (M17, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology) passed her PhD candidacy exam at Duke University on April 30, 2012.

**Shamit Patel** (M18, Computer Science) recently secured the highly competitive National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NDSEG) Fellowship.

**Natee Johnson** (M18, Mechanical Engineering), **Jessandra Hough** (M19, Mechanical Engineering), **Nicholas Pinkin** (M18, Chemistry) and **Dina Popovkina** (M18, Biochemistry) all received Fellowships from the National Science Foundation.

## THREE GRADUATING SENIORS AWARDED GEM FELLOWSHIPS

**Jasmine Jones** (M19) is going to a PhD program in Computer Science at University of Michigan.

**Jeffrey Avery** (M20) is going to a PhD program in Computer Science at Purdue University.

**Monroe Kennedy** (M20) is going to a PhD program in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania.

## SUMMER BRIDGE COOKOUT



The **Summer Bridge 2012 Alumni Cookout** will take place on Sunday, June 10, 12 - 3 pm. This will be an opportunity for MAAB mentors as well as all other alumni to meet the newest members of the Meyerhoff Scholars family. Please make the time in your schedule to be there if you will be in town.

## Toliverisms Book

The book of Toliverisms is almost complete. If you want to contribute a saying from Mr. Toliver there is still a little time left. Please send it to [Toliverisms@gmail.com](mailto:Toliverisms@gmail.com) by June 15. After completion the book will be available for sale at [lulu.com](http://lulu.com)

## FEATURED ALUMNUS

### Once a Meyerhoff, Always a Meyerhoff – Shawnielle Predeoux (M4)

*Article written by Nwokedi Idika (M13) after an interview with Shawnielle*



Shawnielle Predeoux stepped onto UMBC's campus the summer of 1992, an M4 as a chemistry major with aspirations of becoming a pharmacist. Today, in 2012, Shawnielle is a lawyer at a law firm that specializes in compliance advice for banks and businesses who offer loans and credit products to consumers. How in the world did that happen?

Well, let's go back to 1992. After becoming bored with chemistry, Shawnielle decided that she would try computer science. But why computer science? "In high school, I was good at everything. I took computer programming there for three years so I was interested in that," Shawnielle says. This change of major would not be permanent though, as she would quickly realize that she "didn't want to sit alone in an office all day programming." This realization led her to major in Information Systems. Her passion for this major would be cultivated by paid internships with Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC). Her talents and abilities allowed her to have varied interests, one of which being law.

While in high school, her passion for law was sparked and nurtured as a member of the legal intern club. "We visited court, talked to judges and lawyers, and had to write a legal brief," Shawnielle recounts. So it was her ambition to get her law degree after graduating from UMBC. While she would eventually obtain her law degree, she never actually graduated from UMBC. In 1994, Shawnielle became pregnant. She remembers receiving support from Mrs. Baker throughout this difficult period as well as other difficult periods she had while at UMBC. Shawnielle would leave UMBC in December of 1994, and give birth to a son in February of 1995. Her decision to leave UMBC was due in part to only having a tuition scholarship at UMBC and the following feeling: "it would be too difficult to raise a child at school and have to pay for the remainder of my education," she remembers.

She would win a transfer scholarship to Salisbury University. However, she would have to sit out for 1995 due to the academic year cycle and the timing of when the transfer scholarship was won. In May of 1998, Shawnielle would graduate summa cum laude from Salisbury University with a double major in Accounting and Information Systems. Her passion to pursue law was fortified by some of her tech-oriented work experiences. For instance, while doing IT auditing she remembers "I didn't enjoy it because I didn't get to interact with people very much." Also, the compliance auditing work she had been involved with was related to law and gave her further evidence that law was in fact her passion.

After 10 years of working, she decided to finally get her law degree. She obtained her JD from Georgetown University Law School in May of 2010, and a LLM (Master of Law) in Taxation in 2011. So, with all of her experiences, what advice does she have for anyone trying to identify his or her passion? "If you want to find your true passion, you have to obtain some experience in it to make sure that it is something that you want to do." And what about Meyerhoff alums who may be on the fence about getting their PhD degrees? Any advice or words of wisdom for them? "They should analyze their career goals to determine how obtaining the PhD will help achieve them. If a PhD is pursued, it's alright to work on it over time as long as you achieve your goal in the end."



## Health and Wellness



### HEALTHY EATING 101 By Dr. Dozie Onunkwo

When it comes to improving your diet, it can be difficult to figure out the correct eating habits for losing fat and/or building muscle. For those who are trying to start a new healthy life and don't know where to begin, this is for you! Here are the basic rules to healthy eating!

#### I. Each meal should consist of complex carbohydrates, lean protein, healthy fats, and a fruit/vegetable.

##### 1.1 - Carb Digestion (ACSM, 2007)

When carbs are digested, they are **converted into glucose**, and **absorbed into the bloodstream**. This induces a **rise in blood glucose** levels and **initiates the release of insulin** into the blood. **Insulin allows glucose to be converted into glycogen for stored energy** in the liver and in muscles. However, when muscles and the liver are full of glycogen, **remaining blood glucose is converted to fat and stored**. Therefore, you should be **avoiding frequent, large spikes in blood glucose** throughout the day.

The use of glycogen as energy also spares muscle protein from being used as energy.

##### 1.2 - Simple vs. Complex Carbohydrates (ACSM, 2007)

Simple carbohydrates are made up of one or two sugar units (saccharides or disaccharides). Because of their simple structure, they are **quickly converted into glucose and absorbed into the bloodstream**, resulting in **large, rapid spikes** in blood glucose and insulin. High levels of blood glucose and insulin can lead to a variety of health issues, including excess fat storage.

**Complex carbohydrates** (polysaccharides) are made up of at least three sugar units. Because of their complex structures, they **require a longer period of time for digestion and conversion into glucose**. Therefore, they **increase blood glucose levels more slowly, avoid large insulin spikes, and storage of excess glycogen as fat**.

With the use of the **glycemic index**, you can easily differentiate between carbs that increase blood-glucose levels quickly or slowly. Carbs are compared with the ingestion of glucose, which has a glycemic value of 100. Therefore, carbs that cause quick rises in blood-glucose have a **high-glycemic index**, whereas, carbs that cause slow rises in blood-glucose have a **low-glycemic index**. Common food sources with a **high-glycemic index** (GI  $\geq$

70) include sugar, white bread, white pasta, white flour, sodas, and fruit drinks with added sugar. Common food sources with a low glycemic index (GI  $\leq$  69) include oatmeal, sweet potatoes, brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, fruits (bananas, apples, pears, peaches, strawberries), and green vegetables. So, for your carbohydrate choice, stick to complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, that are have a medium to low-glycemic index. There are plenty of options, so no excuses!

##### 1.3 – Protein

**Proteins** are complex compounds made of various amino acids and **play many roles in the body**, such as (ACSM, 2000; Manore and Thompson, 2000):

1. Tissue and enzyme synthesis
2. Hormone production
3. Energy
4. Growth and Tissue Maintenance
5. Balance of fluid between the blood and surrounding tissues

Sources for high-quality **lean** protein include chicken breast, turkey breast, tilapia, salmon, tuna, eggs, greek yogurt, cottage cheese, or tofu.

##### 1.4 - Healthy Fats

**Polyunsaturated fatty acids** play a role in **lowering cholesterol in the blood**. The most popular examples of polyunsaturated fatty acids are **linolenic acid (omega-3), linoleic acid (omega-6), and oleic acid (omega-9)**. Since the **human body cannot synthesize omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, they are considered "essential"** and can only be obtained through one's diet. **Omega-9 fatty acids are synthesized in the body, but only in limited amounts**. Therefore, a diet with omega-9 fatty acids is also necessary. These fatty acids **play a vital role** in supporting many systems in the body, such as the **immune** (Calder, 1999), **nervous** (Alessandri et al., 2004) and **cardiovascular system** (Richard et al., 2009). **Omega-3 deficiencies** have been linked to **increased LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, excessive inflammatory factors throughout the body, hypertension, depression and Alzheimer's Disease** (Alessandri et al., 2004; Calder, 1999; Richard et al., 2009).

**Monounsaturated fats** also **lower "bad" (LDL) cholesterol while maintaining "good" (HDL) cholesterol levels** (Spiller et al., 1992).

Good sources of these fats are avocados, coconuts (meat, milk, or oil), olive oil, flaxseeds, nuts (Almonds, Walnuts, Brazil nuts, Peanuts), or salmon.

## II. Eat smaller, more frequent, high-protein portions (every 3 hours)

A common rule of thumb is that just by eating smaller portions, you can increase your metabolism and lose more weight. However, a recent review paper suggests that while there are lower peaks in perceived appetite, satiety, glucose, and insulin with greater meal frequency, **the total values of these parameters remain unchanged throughout the day** (Leidy and Campbell, 2011). So **simply eating smaller, more frequent meals is not enough. The type of foods in these meals is of the utmost importance.** Additionally, **high-protein meals facilitate fat loss and weight maintenance** more effectively than high-carbohydrate meals (Claessens et al., 2009; Clifton et al., 2009). So to reiterate, **each meal should consist of lean protein, complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, and a fruit/vegetable**, and should be **eaten every 3-4 hours**. This allows you to take advantage of the **lowered peaks in perceived appetite, satiety, glucose, and insulin** throughout the day while earning the weight loss and health benefits of these eating habits.

## III. Drink at least 64 - 128 oz. of water

One of the major roles of **water** in the body is to **carry nutrients to cells and carry waste away from cells**. All of our lean tissue consists of 70% water. However, we constantly lose water through breathing, urination, bowel movements, sweating, and even through the skin when there is no sign of sweat (ACSM, 2000; Williams, 2002). Therefore, it is very important for you, especially athletes and active individuals, to replenish these fluids throughout the day. Some **benefits of being hydrated during exercise** include (Manore and Thompson, 2000):

1. Less dramatic increase in heart rate or core body temperature
2. Improved skin blood flow
3. Reduction in net muscle glycogen use --> more endurance

Here are a couple of other tips (ACSM, 2000; Horswill, 1998):

1. **Don't use thirst as a signal to drink water** - this signal occurs **after 1-2 liters** of fluid in the body has already been lost.
2. **Spread it out throughout the day** - drinking large volumes in a short period of time can cause gastrointestinal distress and affect exercise performance.

By using these guidelines, you will effectively lose body fat, gain lean muscle, and improve your overall health!

*Dr. Dozie Onunkwo (M14) is an independent nutritional consultant, writer, and entrepreneur. Since attaining his Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from Purdue University in December 2010, he has applied his research training to the health and fitness field. He currently writes for his blog, [UnbiasedHealth.com](http://UnbiasedHealth.com), and [LiveStrong.com](http://LiveStrong.com), and has had previous publications in the Southern Indiana Fitness Source and Fit & Firm Magazine. He provides nutritional counseling sessions at International Sports Clubs in Lafayette, IN and works as a nutritional advisor and volunteer with the Lafayette-based, non-profit organization, Cooking With The Troops.*

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## 2012 GIVING CHALLENGE



### 2012 Cohort Challenge Standings

- Overall Participation 12.66%
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – M1 (28 % participation)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – M6 (24 % participation)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – M17 (23 % participation)

*The 2012 Cohort Giving Challenge ends on June 30, 2012 to coincide with the completion of the university's fiscal year. If you have not yet donated, please consider making a gift by this deadline.*

Go to <http://retrievernet.umbc.edu/mhoffgiving> (we should use this website consistently)

Fill out the required information and be sure to make "Meyerhoff alumus/a; Parent or Friend" your affiliation.

**THIS IS A CRITICAL STEP SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SELECT THE PROGRAM FUNDS!!!**

Follow the prompts to the next information page.

You'll see a space to select the designated fund.

The Meyerhoff Alumni Scholarship Fund will be the first on the list.

You can also select your cohort, decide whether you want your gift to be recurring and set up matching gifts here.

Finish up your gift by entering your payment information

Pat yourself on the back! You did a good thing today.

### **Why I Give: Jattu Senesie M4**

Philanthropy has always been an integral part of my life, even when I did not really know what it was. As a child growing up in the church I was taught to give money in the offering plate and to donate to missions work. Since grade school I was excited to set aside my nickels each week to give to what I deemed a good cause. I did not realize it at the time but I was making a habit of giving.

As I grew older and went on to higher education I was the fortunate recipient of others' generosity to offset costs in both college and medical school. I probably took for granted at the time that good students are supposed to get scholarships. However as I spoke with fellow residents during my medical training, I recognized a lot of very intelligent people took loans for every credit of schooling they received. The opportunity I was given was special.

These life experiences helped me determine the importance of giving no matter how much or how little I have. One person giving \$5 may not seem like much. However, if every person in a cohort gives \$5, a student can buy a book. This small contribution gets one into a charitable mindset and it is hardly sacrificial giving. It helps establish the habit of giving so when more means are available, it is second nature to give a larger contribution.

I give...because I have been on each end of philanthropy and have reaped numerous benefits from both.

## Message from the Fundraising Committee

Very recently the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board voted to start an endowed fund with the name **Lamont Toliver Alumni Memorial Scholarship Fund**. This is a major change in our fundraising approach. The current fund is an operating fund and thus earns no interest. Funds must be raised each year to replenish it but they can be used immediately. It is currently being used by the program for hardship scholarships. The new endowed fund will earn modest interest which can be spent after accumulating a base amount in the fund. I am sure there are some questions. We will have an email coming out very soon to explain all this to everyone. If you have a question that we should address please send it to [kamilijackson@gmail.com](mailto:kamilijackson@gmail.com). Until then, we have tried to answer some of these below.

**Q:** Will the current fund go away?

**A:** No. It will remain active but we will not be emphasizing contributions to it for the time being.

**Q:** How much money needs to be raised before we can spend it?

**A:** About \$25,000

**Q:** What is the typical interest?

**A:** The typical amount that can be spent is 4-5% per year

**Q:** How will the fund be used?

**A:** It will be used for scholarships and operating expenses of the program.

**Q:** When will it be active?

**A:** We have just informed the University of our decision and expect it to be active within a month or so. We will make an announcement as soon as it is ready.

**Q:** How can I contribute?

**A:** You can contribute the same way as before.

**Q:** Why was this decision made?

**A:** The idea is to make a long lasting contribution. This way the funds we raise will continue to grow over time. We are taking the long view on this believing that twenty years from now we will be able to point to the fund as evidence of our commitment to the program.

**Q:** Who made the decision?

**A:** The cohort representatives and executive board voted. 100% of these members participated and unanimously voted to start the endowment.

This newsletter was brought to you by the MAAB Communications Committee:

Editor: Jattu Senesie (M4)

Staff: Christopher Aberg (M11), Stephanie Bates (M4), Vondell Coleman (M4), Nwokedi Idika (M13)

Questions, comments and corrections can be addressed to the staff at [maabcomm@gmail.com](mailto:maabcomm@gmail.com).

Spring 2012

# To Whom Much Is Given

The Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board Newsletter

Volume 3  
Issue 2



*IN LOVING MEMORY OF LAMONT F. TOLIVER*

MARCH 12, 1963 to FEBRUARY 28, 2012