

# To Whom Much is Given

Summer 2010

The Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board Newsletter

Vol. 1 Issue 3

## Officer's Corner

*This month's Officer's Corner comes to us from Mawuli Dzirasa, Vice-President of the Meyerhoff Alumni Board Advisory.*

It's that time of year again. The summer is winding down, and school is about to start. The new Meyerhoffs who just finished summer bridge will be eagerly looking forward to getting back to newly made friends, and the current Meyerhoffs, already in school, will be looking forward to getting back out of the house and onto campus. For most of us alums, those were the days, and who would have thought we would miss them so much? It's been over a decade since my UMBC days, but I still remember them like they were yesterday (even the parts I would like to forget, like the numerous times I was on the wrong end of a lecture from Mr. Toliver).

It seems like we all still have that same sense of family especially when one looks at the results from the giving challenge. The M1s and M6s tied for 1st place (we'll get 'em next year M7s) and we all collectively managed to raise close to 20K!!!! The most important thing is that participation has increased as well. Let's do even better this year. Remember, it's not how much you give, but that you do indeed give that is important.



## Stay connected...

**Facebook:** Meyerhoff Scholarship Alumni  
**LinkedIn:** Meyerhoff Alumni, UMBC  
**Google Groups:** Meyerhoff Alumni, UMBC  
**Website:** [www.umbc.edu/meyerhoff/alumni](http://www.umbc.edu/meyerhoff/alumni)

Newsletter brought to you by the Communications Committee.

**Editor – Stephanie Bates (M4)**  
**Assistant Editor – Kamili Jackson (M4)**  
**Staff - Tiffani Bright (M11) and Vondell Coleman (m4)**

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

**NEXT ISSUE: November 2010**

## Program Message

*A few words of financial insight from Taifa Hibbert, Assistant Director, MARC U\*STAR Program*

When I was in graduate school completing my Master's degree, I remember a well-respected faculty member who drifted off a tangent in class to give us a reality check regarding our financial situation. She told us that our prime years for building wealth were in our twenties. In fact, some of the greatest opportunities to build wealth were passing us by as we sat in class examining and discussing policies of higher education. While this notion can seem bleak, I am sharing this to highlight the importance of taking control of your finances early and developing sound money management habits. As Meyerhoff alumni, you are uniquely positioned to complete your higher education with minimum, if any, educational debt. In George Samuel Clason's "The Richest Man in Babylon," he presents age-old financial wisdom, which is still applicable today, simple lessons like: pay yourself first, live below your means and make wise investments. So many of us do not truly understand the particulars of such financial vehicles as Roth IRA, 401(k), 403(b) or mutual funds, for example. Invest in your future by talking to financial professionals, your colleagues and even your family. While the time when you can finally slow down your pace may seem ages away, wise and informed decisions today can make for a more enjoyable tomorrow.



*Taifa Hibbert*

## 2009-2010 Alumni Board Members

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Ray Onley, M4

*Vice-President*

Mawuli Dzirasa, M7

*Secretary*

Vondell Coleman, M4

*Treasurer*

Donna Person, M7

*Parliamentarian*

John Foster, M11

*Historian*

Tanisha Hall, M6

## Representatives

- M1 – Michael Haywood
  - M2 – Kellie McCants Price
  - M3 – Angelique Blanding
  - M4 – Delayne Johnson
  - M5 – Jason McCullers
  - M6 – Jennifer Plummer
  - M7 – Camelia Owens
  - M8 – Alexandra Harryman
  - M9 – Mileka Gilbert
  - M10 – Lauren (Battle) Wills
  - M11 – Tiffani Bright
  - M12 – Richard Shoge
  - M13 – Seth Miller
  - M14 – Michael Aaron
  - M15 – Candace Mainor
  - M16 – Shayla Shorter
  - M17 – Latey Jones
  - M18 – **Vacant – Representative Needed!**
- Graduate Fellow – Joe Washington

## Would you like to be a Guest Contributor?

Attention Alumni! - would you like to be a part of the Meyerhoff newsletter? Do you have a great story or idea that you would love to share? Just let us know. The Communications Committee welcomes your work. Who will be first to take the challenge?? To volunteer, contact the committee at:

[maabcomm@gmail.com](mailto:maabcomm@gmail.com)

Can't wait to hear from you!

## Alumni News!

*Catch up on the personal and professional lives of your fellow Meyerhoffs.*

Devin Drummond (M4) welcomed his third son, Micah James Drummond, on September 27, 2009. Devin and his wife celebrated their 5th wedding anniversary on May 14, 2010.

Kiki Jenkins (M5) recently received her first major NSF grant of \$350K for a project entitled *International Adoption of Conservation Technologies (IntACT): Towards a New Theory of Transferring Technology in the Face of Conservation Crisis*.

Segun Williams (M13) married Brianna Burden (a fellow UCSF graduate student) on July 2, 2010 on a beautiful San Francisco day in an intimate ceremony. Fellow M13s Richard Boyer and Kenny Gibbs were in attendance. The happy couple is pictured below.



Deanna Baker (M12) defended her dissertation on June 2, 2010 and returned to medical school in July to finish her MD/PhD program at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, SC.

Tanisha Hall (M6) and husband welcomed their second child, a son, on April 26, 2010. Christian Jacob Hall is pictured below.



Danielle Robbins (M13) was an invited session speaker at the Society for Industrial Applied Mathematics (SIAM) conference in July. Her talk was on Generalized Sensitivity Functions for Delay Differential Equation Models. She was also the recipient of the Lord Fellowship at NC State University given by the Center for Research in Scientific Computation (CRSC).

**We love hearing about your accomplishments.  
Keep the good news coming!**

## The Cohort Giving Challenge - The Results Are In!!

### Congratulations M1s & M6s

A big **congratulations** goes out the **M1s** and the **M6s**!! It was a tie! Both cohorts reached 39% participation which is the highest cohort participation rate since the inception of the giving challenge at the 20th Anniversary. The M1s and M6s will be acknowledged on the cohort giving challenge plaque in the Meyerhoff Scholars Program Office. But the good news doesn't stop there. For the first year, each cohort participated in the challenge and helped to reach a 20% participation rate. Every cohort from M1 to M17 supported UMBC and the Meyerhoff Scholars Program. That is something to be proud of!!

Even more great news – Meyerhoff alums collectively donated \$19,080 this year! This exceeds what was raised in both the first year (\$15,325) and the last year (\$11,860). Meyerhoff's have clearly demonstrated a strong level of leadership in giving and support for UMBC and we look forward to working with you as you continue to build support and interest for the giving challenge.

You should all know that the M1's won the first year with 38% participation and the M6's won last year with 36% participation. Clearly, the M1s and M6s are the cohorts to beat next year! And speaking of next year, let's go even bigger! Why not aim for a goal of \$25,000 or \$35,000 or how about a 45% participation rate. We are Meyerhoffs, we can do it!! In fact, you can start giving right now. Next year's challenge starts now and ends on June 30, 2011.

Congratulations to the M1s and M6s on winning this year and to all of you for your hard work in making this year's challenge a success on many levels.



A breakdown of the cohort giving challenge is provided on the right.

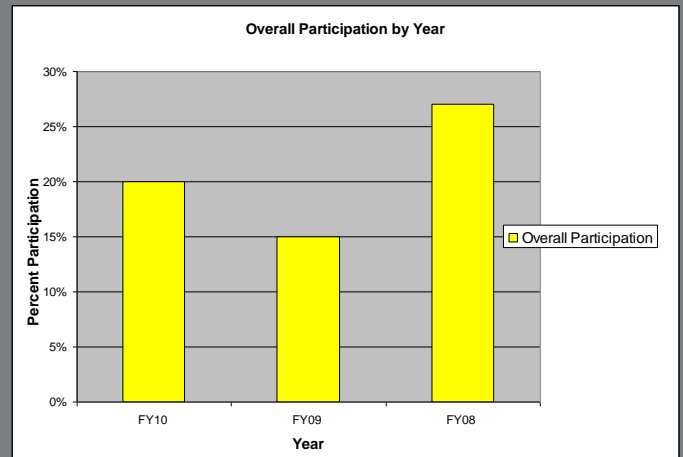
## Cohort Giving Challenge Breakdown

Now that we know the first place finishers, let take a look at the top 5 Cohorts in the giving challenge.

### Top 5 Cohorts by Participation

1. M1 with 39%
1. M6 with 39%
3. M4 with 34%
4. M3 with 30%
5. M17 with 26%

Here is a comparison of the overall participation in the giving challenge over the last 3 years.



Here is a comparison of the total pledge amount during the last 3 years of the giving challenge.



## FEATURED Alumna: Dr. Kennita Johnson Flagler - Capturing the World One Image at a Time



### Education:

BS Physics, 1996  
MS UF Medical Physics,  
1998  
PhD UF Biomedical  
Engineering 2003

### Current Position:

Researcher – Small Animal  
Ultrasound Lab at UNC  
Chapel Hill

### Previous Positions:

Postdoctoral researcher at  
the National Institute for  
Environmental Health  
Sciences and an  
independent consultant

### Current Research:

Pre-clinical imaging to  
quantify disease in small  
animal models that can be  
extrapolated to people

### Community:

Math and Physics tutor for  
middle and high school  
students

**Marital Status:** Married  
since 2008

In moving from her PhD to her postdoctoral studies, Dr. Kennita Johnson made the seemingly imperceptible (by the rest of us!) move of switching from clinical to pre-clinical imaging. She explains that it allowed her to be more creative in her work. A physicist, creative? Sure, the imaging scientist explains that pre-clinical images are not taken home by patients like clinical images and the goal is totally different. The goal in pre-clinical imaging is to manipulate the images to show a particular feature. Thus justification can be made to altering the imaging to show a particular disease or efficacy of a certain drug. Her research involves figuring out the best way to image a particular disease or disease's progression over the long term. This is where the creativity starts and she gets to alter the images to suit the situation.

However, the manipulation of images in her work was still constrained to scientific principles and Kennita was seeking more freedom, at least some of the time. Therefore, the manipulation of images in her pre-clinical work led naturally to photography in her free time. At first the goal was to capture light, motion and color in a particular way by changing the shutter speed and aperture. She was having fun changing the camera settings just to see what would happen. For instance, her experiments with moving water allowed her to capture drops at short exposure and a smooth waterfall with a long exposure. In that way she was able to show a stream or flower or waterfall in exactly the way she wanted without regard to the actual object. She very quickly grew out of the point-and-shoot she started with and, strongly encouraged by her husband, graduated to a digital SLR camera, allowing much more freedom.

This year her new challenge is the unpredictability of people. She has taken to capturing the light and beauty in people around her by making them comfortable enough to laugh and smile or trying to catch them in an unguarded moment. She is realizing that each face is different and the way to capture their beauty also varies. She muses on light and how it can flatter one person and yet be unflattering on another. Making sure that the subject is captured the way that they want to be captured is her ultimate goal and when she shows the final image it is the evidence of what she sees in people. Asked whether all people have beauty in them her answer is an unhesitating "yes" and she is on a mission to capture it.

To see what Kennita has captured so far check out her photography at:

<http://kennitajohnsonphotography.com>

Above article based on an interview of Dr. Flagler by Kamili Jackson (M4).

### Upcoming Event!! Meyerhoff Alumni Reunion during Homecoming weekend

*October 16, 2010 from 2 – 4 p.m. in the Academic Services Building, Room 106*

Reconnect with Meyerhoff program staff and fellow alumni, while learning more about the work of the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board and Chapter of Meyerhoff Alumni. We can't wait to hear what you've been up to! For more information, contact Earnestine Baker at [erbaker@umbc.edu](mailto:erbaker@umbc.edu) or 410-455-3786. For more information on homecoming weekend events, go to [www.umbc.edu/homecoming](http://www.umbc.edu/homecoming)