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.
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!!

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

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).