

Program Message

A few words from Mitsue Wiggs, Acting Assistant Director for the Meyerhoff Scholars Program.

Hello family! I count it an honor to be a part of such a committed and caring community. For 7 years, I've had the absolute pleasure of advising some of the greatest people I've ever known. We show up every day to support, guide and advise you as is expected from professionals. However, what is not expected is how much we learn, discover and develop because of our time spent with you.

Each year a new cohort shows up to Summer Bridge bright eyed and ready to tackle the world, but little do they understand the challenges threatening their goals and dreams. Nevertheless, cohort after cohort continues to press forward and do so with great confidence and enthusiasm for STEM advancement, personal goals and all those yet to make it this far.

On behalf of your staff, I thank you for the example and legacy that you exemplify before our younger students. You blaze the trail and remind all of us of the great possibilities available to those that remain committed and passionate about their dreams. This fall we welcomed 69 new scholars and our theme for Summer Bridge was, "Living the Legacy". It was our moment to remember the giants that came before us while learning what it means to bear the name Meyerhoff. The scholars' understanding continues to grow and their success is limitless because they are standing on the shoulders of giants.

Thank you for the lessons you have taught us, the inspiration that you are and the role models that you continue to be for our current scholars and one another.

All the best,
Mitsue

MAAB OFFICERS

President – Kamili Jackson, M4
Vice President – Tiffani Bright, M11
Secretary – Shawnielle Predeoux, M4
Treasurer – Torria Ellis, M4
Parliamentarian – Jason Lee, M3
Historian – Ahmad Ridley, M1

MAAB REPRESENTATIVES

M1 – Michael Haywood	M2 – Vacant!!
M3 – Angelique Blanding	M4 – Jattu Senesie
M5 – Jason McCullers	M6 – Jonta Williams
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

Officer's Corner

A few words from the Chairs of the MAAB Mentoring Committee.

During our call for mentors this past spring, we had a plentiful response of willing alumni - 80 alumni volunteered! As a result, we were able to pair each of the 70 M24's with his or her own alumni mentor.

Just two months into the Mentoring Program, we have already received excellent feedback from the M24's. By now, the majority of the cohort has been contacted by their mentors. M24's have described their mentor/mentee relationship as "open and personal" and some have already expressed that their mentor is "like a big brother/sister".

A testimony from an M24 on their alumni mentor:

"I have gained someone who can relate to the struggles I face and someone I can feel comfortable coming to with anything I need. ...Having that extra support makes a significant difference in your experience here. ...but even more so, this clings to the Meyerhoff wave of 'family' in the most genuine sense possible. This mentor of mine looks out for my best interest because they want me to be just as successful as they have been."

Another M24 commented that although she was first concerned about the fact that she and her mentor were not the same major,

"...I can honestly say I love the relationship we have because it is very open and personal. I feel comfortable asking my mentor everything from what kind of clubs and activities should I attend to how to resolve issues with my roommate. My mentor and I exchanged emails very frequently during Summer Bridge and even keep in touch now. She has given me great advice about how to manage my time and shared stories about what did and did not work for her during her own days at UMBC. This program really makes the aspect of family personal. I feel like my mentor is my big sister and I really enjoy talking to her."

We want to sincerely thank all of the alumni who have sacrificed their time, energy, compassion, and wise words to extend a hand to their younger brothers and sisters. We are extremely hopeful about the future of this program and we will be sure to keep the family updated on its progress. Efficacy will be monitored via pre- and post-assessment surveys so that we can make necessary changes to make next year even more successful than this year will be.

Sincerely,

Bruk Berhane, MAAB Mentoring Program Committee Chair
 Lydia Grmai, MAAB Mentoring Program Committee Co-Chair
 Marie Cox, MAAB Mentoring Program Committee Co-Chair



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:

"I am very interested in going into surgery after I complete medical school, but I am also sure that the lifestyle that comes with this profession is not what I want. Any advice on how to approach this career dilemma?"

Response 1:

Surgery can be very exciting and very demanding on your personal life, and so can many nonsurgical careers in medicine. My advice is to **1. Pick a non-surgical specialty**, 2. Pick a surgical sub-specialty, like ENT or Ophthalmology or, 3. Choose a surgical fellowship that has the lifestyle you might enjoy, like breast. Intern year is going to blow regardless of the specialty you choose. Also, keep in mind that the demands on your time do not end with residency or fellowship. If you join a practice, you will be working significant hours because you would be the most junior member. **It wouldn't be a bad idea to find a mentor at your school and ask them how they balance their professional and personal lives.**

Response 2:

There are different types of surgeons. The lifestyle depends on the type of surgery you choose as well as the schedule that you choose. **If you are already in medical school, then try to schedule interviews with surgeons affiliated with your school to get a better understanding of their schedules/lifestyle.** However, your understanding will come with the surgery rotations in 3rd and possibly 4th year medical school. The difficulty will be during the residency/fellowship training; but the hours are now limited to 80 hours a week while in training (perhaps less).

Good luck with this.

Response 3:

If you are in the process of applying to medical school, or thinking about applying, then you definitely don't need to worry about what residency you will do. This decision is not made until the 4th year of medical school, when you are applying for residency. Even when applying for residency, you can apply for multiple specialties. The final ranking during the residency match happens in January, as I recall.

Additionally, even some surgical subspecialties have better lifestyles. Two that come to mind are plastics and ENT, which tend to have fewer emergencies.

So bottom line, follow your heart and keep an open mind.

Response 4:

There are different types of surgical specialties that afford different lifestyles. The training is the same (lots of hard work, long hours) but it is finite... there is a foreseeable endpoint. **It's about selecting the TYPE of surgery that you want that will lead you to the lifestyle you want.** From being a Meyerhoff, you know that there is an expectation to put in time, effort and heart but once the training is over, you can "design" the job you want. Look into Otorhinolaryngology (Head and Neck surgery or **ENT**), Urology, Ophthalmology, or Orthopedic surgery if you're looking for a less limiting lifestyle. Shadow a few residents and junior faculty and ask about their lifestyle and how they chose their career. Anesthesiology may be another route to pursue, but if you really want to cut then really take time during your third year elective to tease out which surgeries you are most interested in and which lifestyles you'd be willing to have.

Good luck



ALUMNI NEWS

Kamau Collins (M4, Biochemistry) and wife Crystal welcomed a son, Christopher, on July 27, 2012.



Alexandra Harryman (M8, Biological Sciences) received a PhD in Biological Sciences from UMBC in July 2012. Beginning in Fall 2012 Alex will be teaching biology at the Friends School of Baltimore and teaching biology as an adjunct professor at Community College of Baltimore County.

Nkabuije "BJ" Maduiké (M9, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) received a PhD in Biochemistry from Duke University in July 2012.

Dr. Tiffani J. Bright (M11, Information Systems) recently published an article entitled "Effect of Clinical Decision-Support Systems: A Systematic Review" in the Annals of Internal Medicine and an AHRQ evidence report entitled "Enabling Health Care Decision-making Through Clinical Decision Support and Knowledge Management".

Olusimidele (Simi) Akinsiku (M11, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) married Kolawole Ayeni on April 20, 2012.

Amber Sallerson Jackson (M11, Mathematics) and husband, Marques Jackson welcomed a baby boy, Lucas, on May 8, 2012.

DeAnna Baker (M12) completed her MD/PhD from the Medical University of South Carolina in May 2012. She will be completing residency at Duke University in Internal Medicine.

Sean Colbert-Kelly (M13, Mathematics) received a PhD in Mathematics from Purdue University.

Aliya Frederick (M13, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) successfully defended her dissertation in July 2012. Aliya is in the MD/PhD Neuroscience Graduate Program at Vanderbilt University.

Kyla McMullen (M13, Computer Science) finished her PhD in May at the University of Michigan where she was the first Black female to complete the PhD program in Computer Science. She will be joining the faculty of the Clemson University School of Computing in January (see link below).

<http://www.clemson.edu/media-relations/4413>

Cynthia Davies-Venn, (M14, Biological Sciences) received a PhD in Translational Biology from Baylor College of Medicine.

Janet Tai Guedon (M14, Biological Sciences) successfully defended her doctoral thesis (Molecular Microbiology and Immunology) at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is currently exploring post-doc opportunities in Pittsburgh.

Donel Sequea (M14, Biological Sciences) successfully defended his doctoral thesis at the University of Michigan in July 2012. An MD/Ph.D. trainee, Donel will now return to medical school to complete his MD.

Aftin Ross (M14, Mechanical Engineering) has been selected as a Whitaker International Scholar. This competitive, national award is presented to students who have completed/or will soon complete their doctorate in biomedical engineering. The awards funds post-doctoral work abroad and those selected have demonstrated significant achievement in research, education, or other societal activity related to biomedical engineering. She will complete her postdoctoral appointment at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Marie Baronette (M16, Mechanical Engineering) completed her M.S. in Materials Science and Engineering from University of Maryland College Park in December 2011. She is currently enrolled at Howard University, pursuing her PhD in Mechanical Engineering. Marie also got married on June 9, 2012 to Ugo Okeke.

Nancy Chiles (M17, Biological Sciences) is engaged to Demetrius Shaffer.

Kezia Alexander (M18, Biological Sciences and Public Health) recently defended her Masters in Public Health thesis from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in July. Her presentation was titled "Reinvigorating the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in Latin America." She was also published in the September issue of the Journal of Cross Cultural Gerontology for research regarding social support and its impact on preventive health behavioral outcomes in elderly women.

FEATURED ALUMNUS

A Lifetime of Philanthropy - CRYSTAL WATKINS (M3)

Article written by Jattu Senesie (M4) after an interview with Crystal



Anyone who has spent any amount of time around the Meyerhoff Scholars Program is familiar with the phrase, "To whom much is given, much is required." Crystal Watkins, M3, is a living testament to that maxim. Since her graduation from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 1995 as a Biological Sciences major, she and her family have been regular donors to the Meyerhoff Scholars Program. Even before she arrived on UMBC's campus as a Meyerhoff Scholar, Crystal was familiar with the concept of giving back. Her parents established a spirit of philanthropy in her home by giving to their church and local charities. When she attended UMBC, they became active in the Meyerhoff Parents Association. This background helped set the tone for a lifetime of giving.

Crystal knows how fortunate she was to be the recipient of others responding to the call to give. In addition to the Meyerhoff Scholarship at the UMBC she also received financial assistance while completing the MD/PhD program at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Despite spending seven years in school before earning her first real paycheck as a psychiatry resident, Crystal always tried to give something back to the Meyerhoff Scholars Program. Sometimes she could only afford to donate \$25 annually. As most physicians can tell you, the amount of money one makes during residency is tantamount to minimum wage so even then giving was a sacrifice. However, Crystal realized that if she could just supplement the meal plan or book costs for a fellow Meyerhoff Scholar it would be a small step in repaying the financial, academic, emotional and career development support she received during her time at UMBC.

Crystal is currently employed as an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She continues to contribute to the Meyerhoff Scholars community annually. Now that her means are greater, she and her husband are establishing a scholarship fund at UMBC in honor of her parents. In addition to financial support, Crystal gives her time to the next generation through her work with several organizations. She is a distinctive mentor for Meyerhoff Scholars and medical students as one of small group of African American female physician scientists. She serves as Chair of the Scholarship Committee for the Baltimore Chapter of the Links, Incorporated as well as being active in their work promoting health and wellness to school-aged children. Crystal is also an active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, where she is involved with sponsorship of a local high school. She is culturally and civically active in the Baltimore community as a member of the Board of the Jewish Museum of Maryland and the Maryland League of Women Voters.

Crystal Watkins learned more than the fundamentals of biology during her time at UMBC as a Meyerhoff Scholar. In the true spirit of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program, she learned how to turn "to whom much is given, much is required" from a catchphrase into a way of life.



Health and Wellness



STRESS MANAGEMENT DR. JATTU SENESIE

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines stress as a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation. As former and current STEM students, most Meyerhoffs have an intimate knowledge of stress and do not need a formal definition. Some level of stress has been our constant companion as we have completed projects and papers over the years. Now that many alumni have moved past school and training into the world of careers and families, the sources of stress have changed but the level remains constant if not increased. Since the reality of life stressors is not going away any time soon, the important thing is to learn techniques to deal with stress effectively.

Stress is not always a bad thing. The body's reaction to acute stress leads to what we know as the flight or fight response. In the short term, this biological response makes one more alert and prepared to take on necessary survival functions. The type of stress that carries a negative connotation is chronic stress. In this case, the same chemicals that allow one to be ready for oncoming danger in a crisis situation can cause a breakdown in the body's maintenance activities when present for too long. Many times the effects of chronic stress are so insidious they are not recognized immediately. Most of us are so perpetually wound up we do not realize this is not a healthy state of being until some medical professional indicates we have a hypertensive disorder. The physical manifestations of stress can include headache, chest pain, fatigue, musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction of the gastrointestinal tract. The psychosocial ramifications can be sleep disturbance, anxiety, depression, irritability, rage, disordered eating, isolation behavior, lack of focus and substance abuse. The best way to counter these effects is to identify sources of stress and develop methods to manage it.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website suggests the following tips for coping with stress:

- Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day rather than what you have been unable to do
- Set priorities for what must get done now and what can wait
- Recognize signs of your body's response to stress
- Stay in touch with supportive people (family, friends, community groups, religious organizations)

- Avoid dwelling on problems
- Look into stress coping programs
- Schedule regular times for healthy and relaxing activities
- Exercise regularly
- Get proper health care for existing or new health problems
- Seek help from a qualified mental health professional if you feel overwhelmed and unable to cope without using drugs or alcohol

Input from Meyerhoff alumni echoes the suggestions from the NIMH. One alumna stated, "Being in DC, to relieve stress I head downtown to a monument or a museum. The change of scenery helps clear my head." Another said, "I use yoga to decompress. I describe it as moving meditation and it's a great way to take your mind off everyday things." Yet another alumnus indicated, "Weightlifting is the best stress management strategy for me. I lift five to six times a week for about an hour. Also, I find that good nutrition is essential for my overall stress management." I personally find being outdoors in the sunlight always puts me in a better mood.

Everyone has stress. Unfortunately, not every source of stress can be eliminated. However, developing healthy coping mechanisms makes stress more manageable. As this new academic year takes off and gives way to the busy holiday season try to find at least one stress management strategy that works for you. World Mental Health Day is October 10 so set aside a little time for self-assessment and decompression. Your body will thank you.



Jattu Senesie (M4) is a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist and certified personal trainer with a public health interest in health promotion.

2012 GIVING CHALLENGE



2012 Cohort Challenge Final Standings

Overall Participation 12.5%

1st Place Tie –

- M1 (28% participation; N=18);
- M17 (28% participation; N=47)

2nd Place –

- M6 (24% participation; N=38)

3rd Place –

- M2 (19% participation, N=16)
-

Congratulations M1s and M17s!!!

Thanks to everyone for their contributions!

Last fiscal year (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012) Meyerhoff alumni raised \$18,258 and overall 12.5% of alumni participated. Considering the challenges of the past year, this is a respectable result. However, we don't think this is the best that this group can achieve. Let's aim to do even better this year.

To the right you will see we have started a new fund. We hope that if you have never given before you will make this the year you start a new habit of giving. If you have already established that habit, we hope you will help to establish the endowment by giving just a little more this year.

Message from the Fundraising Committee

Dear Meyerhoff Family,

I am pleased and proud to announce that the **LaMont Toliver Alumni Memorial Scholarship Fund** is now active and receiving donations!! With your support, this fund will grow to become an endowment for Meyerhoff scholarships and operational support. The Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board feels this is an appropriate honor for a man whose legacy has undoubtedly impacted us all over time.

This is a culmination of efforts that started with a vote by the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board back in April and ending with our new scholarship fund. You can give to the fund by going to:

alumni.umbc.edu/mhoffgiving

Once you fill in your information (don't forget to choose "Meyerhoff Alumnus/a: Parent or Friend" beside "Your Affiliation") you will be able to choose the "LaMont Toliver Alumni Memorial Scholarship Fund" from the drop down menu beside "Designation".

You'll be hearing a lot from us about the fund in the coming months. In particular, you'll be hearing from our new fundraising co-chairs: Jason Lee (M3) and Raj Stewart (M9). You'll also be hearing from your cohort representative and from current Meyerhoff students who may be calling you on the phone. If it is at all possible please take a moment to talk to the student or cohort representative about the new fund. I hope you'll be as excited as I am and will consider making this fund part of your established or new habit of annual giving to UMBC.

Sincerely,
Kamili Jackson

To keep up with the latest updates on the new fund and all Meyerhoff alumni news follow the MAAB Twitter account (@MAAB_Comms), check the Meyerhoff Alumni Facebook page and make sure we have your current e-mail address.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEYERHOFF ALUMNI ONLINE STORE AND LOGO CONTEST

The MAAB is starting an online store where you will be able to purchase all kinds of items with Meyerhoff Alumni logos and images. But first we need your help.

We are looking for designs that can be used on various items (eg. clothing, mugs, cups, water bottles, etc) so we are starting a contest for the best that this group can generate. Here are the rules and information:

1. You **CANNOT USE** University of Maryland Baltimore County, UMBC, any of the retriever logos or the UMBC seal.
2. You **MAY USE** Meyerhoff Scholars, Cohort X, any sayings of the program (give credit for original authors), MX, and Meyerhoff Alumni.
3. You may have credit for the designs in the design and on the website but we will not be able to give any monetary compensation. We may give as yet undetermined prizes to the winners.
4. Designs should be in good taste.
5. All proceeds will be used for the activities of the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board but the goal is really to have paraphernalia available to alumni rather than raise funds.
6. We will use as many designs as exemplify the spirit of the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program. Humorous, uplifting or spirited messages are appreciated.
7. You may submit as many designs as you like.
8. You may create a design unique to your cohort, major, ladies, men, etc.
9. Acceptable image formats at jpg, tiff, png, tif, giff, bmp, and psd.
10. You don't need to be an artist to contribute! We are looking designs that tell people who we are. If your design fits the bill submit it!
11. You can have a T-shirt with a design on the front and back.
12. If you have any preference on how you want your design to be used please specify it. There are many, many items so check it out at cafepress.com
13. The deadline is **October 1st!**

The items will be available on cafepress.com. We'll set up a shop similar to the ones you can see here:

<http://www.cafepress.com/lilsquirttees>
<http://www.cafepress.com/snoopystore>
<http://www.geekyteez.com/>

If you have any questions about the rules please get in contact Kamili Jackson (M4) at kamilijackson@gmail.com. Your question is bound to be of interest to everyone.

Fall Happy Hour - Saturday, 11/24

Mark your calendars to join alumni as we gather to catch-up, celebrate the holidays, and the count down the last days of the semester. It will be going down in Maryland. Details to follow soon!

Meyerhoff Alumni Homecoming Event

Saturday, October 13, 2012

3-5 p.m., Room 106-C, Academic Services Bldg.

Reconnect with Meyerhoff and MARC U*STAR alumni and staff while catching "Retriever Fever" during Homecoming 2012. Join the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board (MAAB) to reminisce and meet the senior class (M21's). Attendees will be asked to participate in a community service project in honor of Mr. LaMont Toliver. Do not miss this opportunity of fun, fellowship and service.

Register by **September 30th** online at: http://alumni.umbc.edu/homecoming_register

We cannot wait to see you, but do not stop there—make sure to attend the other events like the *Outstanding Alumni of the Year Awards (Dr. Kimani A. Stancil- M1)*; Rob Magin 5K Dawg Chase; Community Picnic celebrating Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski's 20th anniversary as president of UMBC; Crab Feast; and RATT party.

For questions or more information, contact Erica Reaves (M12) at ereaves@gmail.com or Tiffani Bright (M11) at tiffani.bright@gmail.com.

Ron Shapiro Negotiation Workshop 12/14, 8am-12pm, UMBC

This amazing workshop will help you hone your negotiating skills for the workplace and in your personal life. Mr. Shapiro is a well-known attorney, sports agent, New York Times best-selling author, and expert negotiator. His proven method seeks a win for everyone involved and this will definitely be a dynamic event!

Spaces are limited! Reservations will open soon. See you there!

For questions or more information about the event, contact Tiffani Bright (M11) at tiffani.bright@gmail.com or Kamili Jackson (M4) at kamilijackson@gmail.com.

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

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