

Newsletter

MEYERHOFF PARENTS ASSOCIATION



GROWING STRONG, TOGETHER: 2025 SUMMER BRIDGE

Through interactive games that sparked creativity and team-building challenges that strengthened friendships, the 2025 Summer Bridge Stress Buster, held on Saturday, July 19, 2025, became a true celebration of growth and learning through play. With the help of parent volunteers, Meyerhoff Office staff, MPA Board members, students, and generous donations from many, summer fun and games were provided to incoming freshmen.

Our sincere thanks go to everyone who supported this event, with special recognition to the MPA parents for their leadership in organizing the activities.



FEBRUARY 2026



UMBC

Newsletter Highlights

**Growing Strong, Together:
2025 Summer Bridge**

**Powered by Purpose:
UMBC Trio Honored with
Goldwater Scholarships**

**MPA Town Hall and
Scholar Research
Exhibition**

**Research Exhibition
Presenters**

**2025 Meyerhoff Fall
Retreat**

**Annual Biomedical
Research Conference for
Minoritized Scientists
(ABRCMS)**

**UMBC NSBE Students
Shine at the 2025 Fall
Regional Conference**

Stress Buster Highlights

**Your Support Makes a
Difference**

MEYERHOFF
PARENTS
ASSOCIATION

HELPING OUR STUDENTS
HOLD FAST TO THEIR DREAMS.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

POWERED BY PURPOSE: UMBC TRIO HONORED WITH GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to Jariatu Kargbo (M34), Biological Sciences, Caly Ferguson (M34), Mechanical Engineering, and Lea-Pearl Njei, (M34), Biological Sciences, who have been named 2025-2026 Goldwater Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for undergraduate STEM researchers. Selected from a highly competitive national pool, these scholars exemplify academic excellence, innovation, and perseverance.

Njei (M35) is conducting colorectal cancer research at the University of MD School of Medicine, inspired by an internship in Yale that sparked her interest in gastrointestinal research. She credits strong mentorship and the Meyerhoff Scholars Program for helping her grow in confidence and clarity of purpose.

Ferguson (M34) is developing an affordable, machine-learning-driven prosthetic arm, combining engineering and computer science to improve accessibility for individuals with limb differences. Inspired by his own lived experience, his work reflects a deep commitment to using technology for meaningful social impact.



Left to right: Jariatu Kargbo (M35), Caly Ferguson (M35), and Lea-Pearl Njei (M35).

Kargbo (M34) is studying melanopsin, a protein in the eye, and values the supportive research environment that has allowed her to learn, take risks, and grow as a scientist. She encourages other students to pursue research boldly and believe in their potential.

Together, these scholars highlight the power of mentorship, community, and curiosity in shaping the next generation of STEM leaders.

"Never be limited by other people's limited imagination." - Dr. Mae Jemison

MPA Town Hall and Scholars Research Exhibition

On September 20, the MPA hosted its annual Town Hall Meeting and Scholar Research Exhibition in the University Center Ballroom, bringing together scholars, parents, and guardians for an evening of connection and celebration. The event opened with inspiring remarks from Dr. Temi Ibitoye (M27), Visiting Fellow at Brown University Pandemic Center, who encouraged scholars to “begin with the end in mind” and reminded them that as they pursue greatness, they do so by standing “on the shoulders of giants.” The evening also included a review of MPA business, the election of the 2025-2026 MPA Board Officers, annual program reports, and dynamic research presentations from the scholars. Program remarks were shared by Earnestine Baker, Executive Director Emerita, Mr. Keith Harmon, Sr. Director, and Dr. Mario Sto Domingo, Associate Director of Research and Evaluation. The event was a resounding success and a meaningful reflection of the strength of the MPA community.

2025-2026 MPA Board Officers

President: Margarita Bohorquez (M35)
Vice President: Anthea Seymour (M35)
Assistant V. President: Brandi Carter (M36)
Recording Secretary: Zari Zavala-Ruiz (M37)
Corresponding Secretary: Yani Peyton (M34)
Treasurer: Arvind Mistry (M35)
Assistant Treasurer: Laura Watt (M37)
Editor: Rochelle Matthews-Somerville (M33, M36)
Historian: Jill Bispels (M33)

2025-2026 Cohort Representatives

M34: Tiffany Byrd, Valerie Shelton
M35: Akpene Banini Ameko, Alessandra Aloisi, Melonise Battle,
M36: Sheila Diaz, Elizabeth Ndiritu, Candace Philip, Lisa Ruth
M37: Richard Gyamfi, Teresa Hanyok, Beatrice Oluwabuyi



Alumni Cohort Representative

Sherene MaitInd (M32), Darlene Pernell-Bunkley (M31), Alisa Wallace (M29), Darlene Walker Brooks (M29), Kenneth Dixon (M27), Regina Bracey (M25), Karen Furman (M25), Carolyn Sanders (M23, M16), Deborah Nazon (M23), Edie Windsor (M13)

RESEARCH EXHIBITION PRESENTERS

Shane Borowski (M36) - “Designing Structural Members Using Bio-Inspired Primitives”

Nathan Bolima (M36) - “Programmable Ionic Circuitry using Photonically Conductive ‘Silly Putty.’ A Gel Characterization Study”

Sydney Hofstetter (M34) - “Sucrose Density Gradient Ultracentrifugation Versus Exchange for Exosome Sample Purification”

Deeya Mistry (M35) - “Sex Differences in Stress Susceptibility and Synaptic Protein Expression”

Mia Coon (M36) - “Anchor Gene in *Drosophila Melanogaster*: An Underlying Mechanism of Ethanol Sedation”

Jessica Ndiritu (M36) - “The Impact of Sir2 on Innate Immune Response in *Drosophila Melanogaster*”

Narah Obas (M36) - “Comparative Growth Analysis of Wild-Type and Rhizoferrin-Overexpressing *Mucor Lusitanicus* Strain Enhanced Bioleaching Applications”

Dzifa Ameko (M36) - “Effects of Personal Lubricants on Vaginal *Lactobacillus Crisatus* and *Porphyromonas Somerae*”

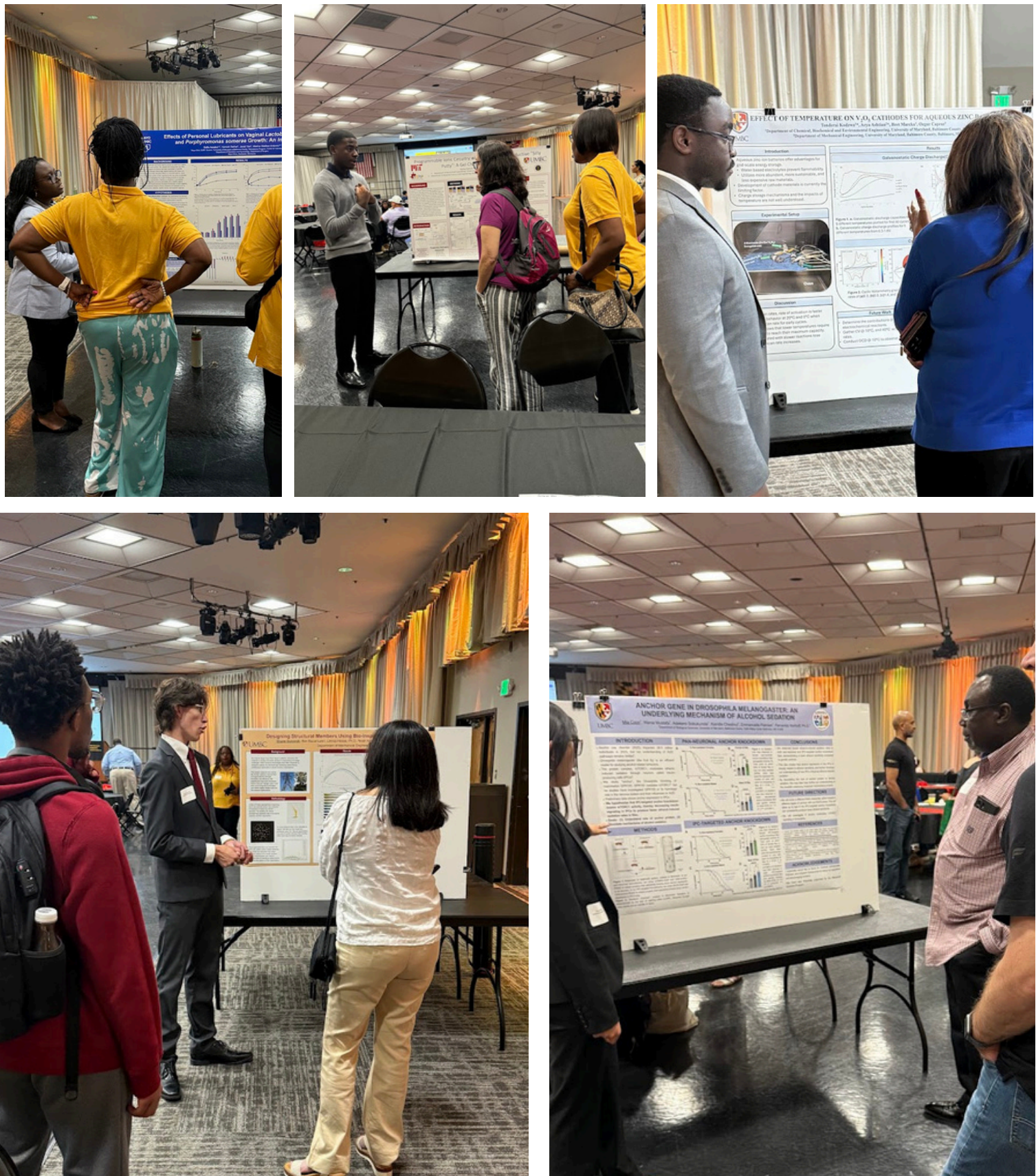
Tonderai Kodzwa (M34) - “Effects of Temperature on V205 cathodes for Aqueous Zinc Ion Batteries”

Kayla Magruder (M34) - “Gecko-Inspired Adhesive Lasso for De-tumbling Orbital Space Debris”

Well done Scholars!

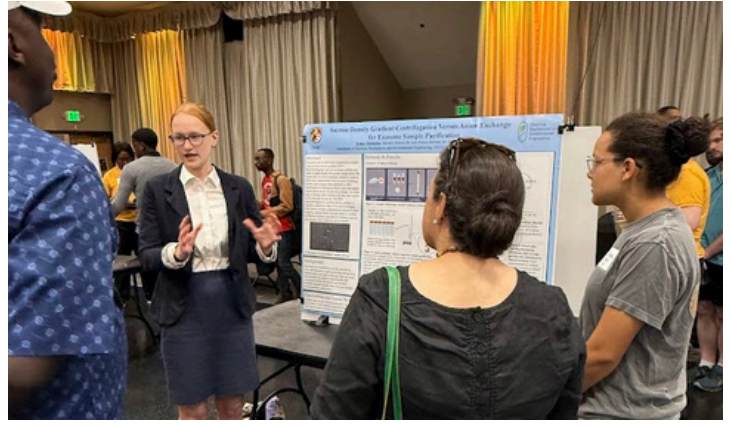


2025 MPA Town Hall and Scholar Research Exhibition Presenters



2025 MPA Town Hall and Scholar Research Exhibition

FEBRUARY 2026



2025 MPA Town Hall and Scholar Research Exhibition

With Grateful Thanks!

We are deeply thankful to all who helped plan, coordinate, and participate in the MPA Town Hall and Meyerhoff Scholars Research Exhibition. Your dedication and teamwork continue to build the strong, connected community we are so proud to serve. If you would like to get involved with future MPA events or support the Meyerhoff Program, please send an email to umbcmpa@gmail.com with the title "VOLUNTEER." We welcome your time, talents, and continued support.

2025 MEYERHOFF FALL RETREAT

On September 6, Scholars came together for another unforgettable visit to Centennial Park for the 2025 Meyerhoff Fall Retreat. This immersive experience was designed to build community, spark intellectual curiosity, and strengthen meaningful connections. The day kicked off with an inspiring conversation with the Meyerhoff Program staff and continued with a full schedule of food, fellowship, and fun. We thank everyone who contributed to making this day a success for our Scholars.





2025 MEYERHOFF FALL RETREAT





2025 MEYERHOFF FALL RETREAT





2025 MEYERHOFF FALL RETREAT

2025 Meyerhoff Scholars



NEWS YOU CAN USE

For over 20 years, the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS) has served as a premier national conference empowering historically underrepresented community college, undergraduate, and post-baccalaureate student in STEM. On November 19, 37 outstanding Scholars traveled to San Antonio, Texas, for five days of dynamic learning, research presentations, and professional growth. They proudly showcased their innovative work, connected with peers and mentors from across the country, and engaged in meaningful conversations about the challenges and opportunities facing diverse scientists in STEM. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and the excellence they continue to represent.



Congratulations!

ABRCMS Winners

Cancer Biology

Emmanuel Omole

Chemistry

Nahom Getachew

Microbiology

Dzifa Ameko

Engineering, Math, Physics

Amir Walton-Irvin

Zach Glover

Prince Michael Kimani

Jalynn Somerville (oral)

Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

Aryan Srivastava

Computational & System Biology

Sanjama Srimath (Non-M)

Neuroscience

Silvi Shah

Alice Yacubovich

Nathan Dayie (oral)

UMBC NSBE STUDENTS SHINE AT THE 2025 FALL REGIONAL CONFERENCE



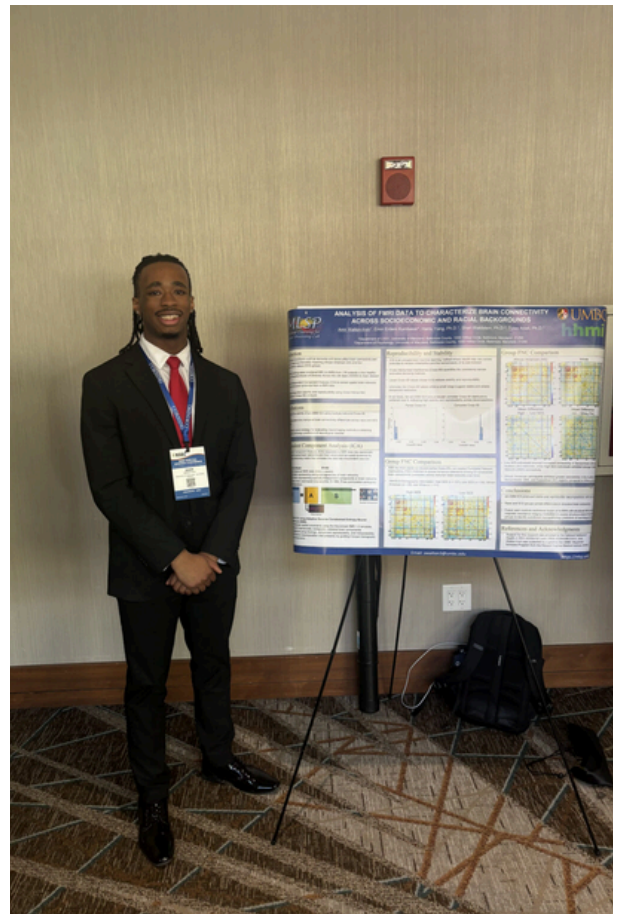
In November, members of UMBC’s chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina, to attend the Fall Regional NSBE Conference. During the event, several students showcased their work. Amir Walton-Irvin (M36), a computer engineering major, a Meyerhoff and Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Scholar, earned first place for his research presentation.

From left to right: Amir Walton-Irvin (M36), Glen Larbie-Mensah (M35), Jessica Slaughter (M35), Nathan Bolima (M36), Kayla Magruder (M34), and Caly Ferguson (M34).

Walton-Irvin (M36) researched brain connectivity and health disparities using advanced techniques to identify early neurological biomarkers, such as strokes and dementia. He delivered a five-minute technical talk followed by questions from judges and attendees.

Senior mechanical engineering student and UMBC NSBE Vice President Kayla Magruder (M34) also presented her work, emphasizing the importance of research communication in engineering. Other UMBC students in attendance included Caly Ferguson (M34), Nathan Bolima (M36), Glen Larbie-Mansah (M35), and Jessica Slaughter (M35).

UMBC’s NSBE chapter continues to support students through conference preparation, mentorship, leadership development, networking, and community outreach.



Amir Walton-Irvin (M36)

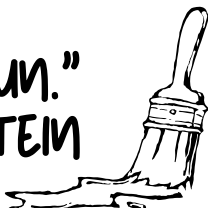
STRESS BUSTER HIGHLIGHTS

On December 9th, the University Center Ballroom was buzzing as the MPA hosted a ***Pajama Party Game Night Stress Buster*** for Scholars. The evening featured a lively mix of games and activities, including a slime-making station, life-size Jenga, double-deck UNO, *Grab That Ball*, an art station, and *Hot Potato*, creating an atmosphere filled with laughter, connection, and well-deserved relaxation. A fan-favorite hot cocoa bar added that perfect cozy touch! It was a refreshing break that energized Scholars for the upcoming finals.





"CREATIVITY IS INTELLIGENCE HAVING FUN."
- ALBERT EINSTEIN





“PLAY IS NOT A BREAK FROM LEARNING. IT IS LEARNING”
- MARIA MONTESSORI



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

MEYERHOFF SCHOLARS PROGRAM

UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program, which was established in 1989, has supported more than 1,750 scholars in the STEM fields. With the numbers growing and the goal of increasing diversity amongst future leaders, the success of the program is built upon the support of family and friends who understand the value of the program.



Make an Annual Gift

You may make an annual gift to the UMBC Foundation to benefit the MPA via check, postal mail or [online](#).



Show your MPA Pride
[order a polo shirt!](#)

Volunteer Your Time

If you are interested in volunteering to support any of the upcoming MPA-sponsored activities or the Meyerhoff Program in any way, please send an email to out to umbcmpa@gmail.com with the title *VOLUNTEER*.



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All funds raised will be administered by the UMBC Foundation, Inc., for the benefit of UMBC.