

# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

# INTOUCH

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

\*The University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program comprises the Suzanne G. and Murray A. Valenstein Baltimore Incentive Awards Program and the Prince George's County Incentive Awards Program.



## CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

IAP supporters Terry and James Rubenstein in October opened the doors to their beautiful home to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Incentive Awards Program. More than 60 donors and friends accepted an invitation to acknowledge this milestone and the fulfillment of the vision of former university president C. D. Mote, Jr.

Brodie Remington, vice president of University Relations, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Jacqueline Lee, director of the Incentive Awards Program, hosted the event. Each offered reflections on the program and its impact on the university, Baltimore City Public Schools and the City of Baltimore.

The highlight of the evening was a small panel of alumni facilitated by journalist Connie Chung '69. As they shared their stories of challenges and triumph, they revealed how exceptional they are, why they were selected for the program and the

difference it is making in their lives. Each has nurtured the values of the program and has applied them in their personal lives and in the workplace, as intended. Janiceia Adams '07, program coordinator for Teach for America, said, "IAP helped me to fully realize my potential and go further than I'd ever thought I could." To that, Tiana Wynn '05, now a certified public accountant and senior associate at S.B. & Co., added, "We are proof that the program works. We are a reflection of the investment you've made in us." Other panelists were Deon Jackson '07, a 10th-grade biology teacher at Friendship Academy of Engineering and Technology, and Darian Scott-Carter '08, mass fatality planner for the City of Baltimore.

Connie shared her own reasons for being drawn to the IAP: Its values of persistence, hard work and optimism resonated with her and her husband, talk show host Maury Povich. They are inspired by the alumni and are impressed that

so many are finding ways to give back through teaching, mentoring and contributing to the community.

Embraced by new University of Maryland President Wallace Loh, the program remains a university priority and will continue to expand its reach throughout the State of Maryland as staff and funding permit. The challenge is to maintain the momentum that has been generated through the years, garner even greater community support and to raise funds critical to sustaining this university initiative.



**Top right:** Connie Chung '69 greets special guests  
**Middle right:** Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake with IAP Director Jacqueline Lee  
**Bottom right:** Vice President for University Relations Brodie Remington addresses the group  
**Left:** Deon Jackson '07 participates in a panel discussion facilitated by Connie Chung



## Taking the Road Less Traveled

by Lauren Robinson '12, Journalism

The road to success is not one that's smoothly paved. **Misbha Qureshi '06** is traveling that road today as she pursues a Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy. Misbha was originally a pre-medicine major at Maryland, reluctant to admit that she wasn't very interested in her science courses. But during her last semester of her undergraduate studies, she took a family science class that sparked her interest in helping troubled families.

Despite being pressured by her family to apply to medical school, she took a leap of faith by deciding to pursue marriage and family therapy in graduate school.

Misbha now spends the first half of her week in classes as a doctoral student at Drexel University. The remainder of her week, including weekends, is spent working as a counselor at the Crisis Unit at Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Cherry Hill, N.J. She acknowledges

that sleep and her social life have had to take a back seat because she's making sacrifices for her career.

Next month, she will begin co-teaching a behavioral couples' therapy course exploring how substance abuse affects relationships. Misbha believes that treating families together, rather than as individuals, will render healing powers to plagued relationships.

Misbha's busy schedule allows her just enough time to review literature for her assistantship with Kenneth Hardy, a family therapist who's been acclaimed for his publications on diversity and oppression. The next stage of her assistantship will involve compiling data on the effects of bullying in schools.

Nearly five years since Misbha graduated from Maryland, she attributes her accomplishments so far to having been an Incentive Awards Scholar. She credits the program with helping to develop her work ethic. "I got the support I really needed from Jackie. She reminded me to never slack off in my studies and she worked hard to create networking opportunities for us," says Misbha.

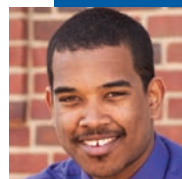
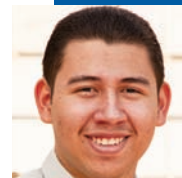
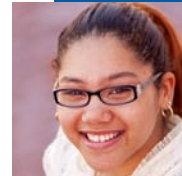
Because of her positive experience, Misbha remains an involved alumna of the program, speaking at the annual spring reception and attending the first *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* program.

Misbha hopes that staying the course will lead her to becoming an adjunct professor within the next year and obtaining her license to begin her own practice within the next five years. She is prepared for the journey because, as she says, "I don't think my life has ever slowed down!"



Misbha Qureshi '06

## NEW FELLOWS



Scholars, servant-leaders, role models. To this list of responsibilities, we add the title of Fellow to Katherine Coleman, Rafael Lovo and Juan Peralta, who joined the select group of students this winter. Incentive Awards Fellows are exemplary students who display positive attitudes and demonstrate strong character, while encouraging others to follow their lead. Most importantly, they are academic leaders who seek ways to augment their classroom experience with experiential learning and international travel and pursue the meaning-

ful ways to impact the campus through extracurricular involvement. They are expected to support the IAP leadership by serving on the student advisory board, participating in the annual selection process and coordinating social activities for the entire student group.

## GUESS WHO?

What happens when you put IAP alumni and current students in one place? New friendships form and valuable learning takes place. A new program implemented last spring, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*, provided the setting for rich discussions between two sides of the IAP community.

*Guess Who...*? evolved out of current students' curiosity: "What are the alumni doing today?" "What was it like for them to be students at Maryland?"



Jackie Lee with Misbha Qureshi '06 and Tiana Wynn '05

"How did they adjust to campus life coming from my community?" "What are they like?"

Yavona Williams Pirali '05 and Tiana Wynn '05 were among the first alumni to answer the call for hosts for two separate events, as they shared the students' curiosity and were eager to re-engage with IAP.

After a catered dinner and dessert, several alumni and students pulled up



**Above:** Sade Diggs '13 and VaRysa Williams '13 **Right:** Tiana Wynn '05 speaks with IAP students



## Baltimore's Hidden Historical Treasure

In December, students attended the "Freedom Sisters" exhibition at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History in Baltimore, highlighting 20 African American women activists, educators, politicians and entrepreneurs.

"I was impressed by their accomplishments and this (exhibition) served as an inspiration for me to strive to achieve what I want in my future," said Elizabeth Sorillo '14.



Seeing how many African-American women overcame adversity from slavery to the present moved several students. "Since men are given the spotlight more often than women," said VaRysa Williams '13, "it was good to see an entire exhibition dedicated to these influential women."

## MAKING THE GRADE

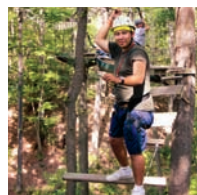
The University of Maryland Distinguished Dean's List acknowledges students who earn a semester GPA of 4.0. Congratulations to **Dekebra Arrington '10** for achieving this high honor for the Fall 2010 semester.

Congratulations to everyone who earned a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher! (*Students with Dean's List Academic Honors are noted in red and earned a 3.5 or higher*)

Jeanjuilet Alam '12  
José Arevalo '13  
**Sharina Ashton '11**  
**Brittany Atkinson '11**  
Jessica Blizzard '11  
James Bowman '13  
**Nancy Canales '14**  
Katherine Coleman '13  
Alexsis Davis '13  
**Maret Davis '13**  
**Ashley Hall '13**  
**Kori Hill '13**  
Chemia Hughes '12  
**Amy Hume '12**  
**Eberechi Ihezue '14**  
Lamara Johnson '12  
Kimberly Jordan '12

Ashley Lawrence '11  
**Malcolm Lewis '14**  
**Rafael Lovo '13**  
Jasmine Mays '14  
Camille Neysmith '12  
Juan Peralta '13  
Ashley Proctor '11  
Rhonda Roach '14  
Lauren Robinson '12  
Catherine Sayikanmi '14  
Djuan Short '12  
Elizabeth Sorillo '14  
Octavia Sykes '12  
VaRysa Williams '13  
Samuel Yirenkyi '14  
Diana Zolfaghari '14

## Here's what we've been up to...



Fall Retreat



Mentor Mixer



Community Service at the Boys & Girls Club



Hawaiian Holiday Party



Snowtubing at Whitetail Resort



IAP Finalists Visit Campus



Alvin Ailey Dance Theater at the Kennedy Center



## INTRODUCING THE CLASS OF 2014!

The University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program welcomes the Class of 2014. These students are our newest shining stars with bright futures ahead of them.



**BACK ROW:** *Elizabeth Sorillo* (Paul Laurence Dunbar High School), *Diana Zolfaghari* (High Point High School), *Ervin Bishop* (Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School), *Hamza Idris* (Northwestern High School, Baltimore City), *Eberechi Ihezue* (Baltimore Polytechnic Institute), *Victoria Gold* (Baltimore Polytechnic Institute), *Carlos Howard Gomez* (Northwestern High School, Prince George's County), *Rhonda Roach* (Fairmont Heights High School), *Malcolm Lewis* (Baltimore City College), *William Sama* (Northwestern High School, Prince George's County)

**MIDDLE ROW:** *Samuel Yirenkyi* (Parkdale High School), *Nancy Canales* (High Point High School), *Gabrielle Parson* (Oxon Hill High School), *Jasmine Mays* (Suitland High School), *Davian Morgan* (Potomac High School)

**FRONT ROW:** *Bria Hamm* (Western High School), *Catherine Sayikanmi* (Central High School)

## Summer 2010: Getting Oriented to the Program, the Campus and Each Other



**Clockwise from top left:** New students at IAP Orientation; Carlos Howard Gomez '14 working on ice breaker activity; current students sharing perspectives with new class; adventures at Castle Laser Tag; relaxing at Cold Stone Creamery; Catherine Sayikanmi '14 and her mother at IAP Orientation

## "JUST GO AWAY"

The University of Maryland encourages students to "Just Go Away..." and to start "Thinking Outside of Your Borders" through its Education Abroad programs. In January, six students did just that. Amy Hume '12 and Rhonda Roach '14 learned about the geography of nine islands in the Southern Caribbean. Djuan Short '12 studied child and adolescent development in India, Jessica Blizzard '11 explored the colonial history and culture of Ecuador, and Ashley Proctor '11 and Lauren Robinson '12 studied language, literature, art and architecture in Italy.

"The people there is what I fell in love with the most," Lauren said. "Their everyday lives are anchored in religion, family and love." Djuan said, "I was not expecting to have a life-changing experience as a result of this trip but I found a better understanding of what's important to me. This was the beginning of a personal journey that I hope takes me to new heights and experiences."



## Fundraising in Miami

by Lauren Robinson '12, Journalism

In November, I was presented with an amazing opportunity: to serve as a student ambassador for the university and participate in its *Great Expectations* scholarship campaign at a silent auction fundraiser. I traveled to Florida for the South Florida Terp Golf Outing at Shula's Hotel & Golf Club, followed by a cocktail reception at the W Hotel in South Beach.

Journalism icon Connie Chung '69 along with her husband, television host Maury Povich, hosted the event that raised more than \$150,000 for scholarships. At the golf tournament luncheon, Mrs. Chung shared success stories of former Incentive Awards recipients, and I was humbled that she asked me to share mine.

In the few minutes that I spoke with her, I was able to address some of the donors who invest in me and others in the program. I realized that individuals—some of whom I have never met—have a genuine interest in seeing me succeed. Knowing how important my success is to them gives me a remarkable sense of pride.

I live by the creed, *Lucem Accipimus, Lucem Demus*, meaning "We have received light, let us give light." The Incentive Awards Program, together with its donors, has given me the light that I need to succeed. As a proud ambassador of the program, I will shine my light for the benefit of those who follow me.



Maury Povich, Claire Cochrane, Lauren Robinson '12 and Connie Chung '69





# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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## SAVE THE DATE!

11th annual Spring Reception

Tuesday, May 3, 2011

4–6 p.m.

Samuel Riggs IV Alumni Center



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[www.facebook.com/UMIAP](http://www.facebook.com/UMIAP)

## Alumni Notes

### Class of 2005

**Ima Bassey** married Yemi Ibidapo on Aug. 7, 2010 at Trinity Assembly of God in Lutherville, Md. In July, they will move to New York City, where her husband will start his residency in radiology at New York University Hospital.

### Class of 2006

**Yavona Williams Pirali**, an International Baccalaureate health teacher at her alma mater, Baltimore City College High School, is part of a cadre of teachers who Baltimore City Public Schools train to instruct new teachers.

**JaNeé Jackson** is a probation officer at the Baltimore City Department of Juvenile Services. She is pursuing a master's degree in social work at Morgan State University and interning at the House of Ruth, one of the nation's leading domestic violence centers for women and their children.

### Class of 2007

After teaching fourth grade for four years in Bronx, N.Y., through Teach for America, **Janiceia Adams** returned to Baltimore City as a program director for the same organization. In this role, she will be supporting teachers and students in city schools and using data analysis to evaluate student achievement and teacher retention.

### Class of 2008

**Darian Scott-Carter** recently completed a master's degree in homeland security management with a concentration in health preparedness and a postbaccalaureate certificate in security assessment and management. He started a new position as the mass fatality emergency planner with the City of Baltimore in mid-February. Among many duties, he is responsible for advising city personnel on mass fatality preparedness issues, developing agreements with city partners and responding to emergency events.

**Jennifer Covahey** works for the CollegeBound Foundation as a College Access Program Specialist at Friendship Academy of Science and Technology in Canton.

### Class of 2009

In August 2010, **Dominic Smith** graduated from the University of Maryland's police academy and is now serving the campus as a police officer. UMD officers have all the same powers and authority as any other sworn police officer in Maryland and are empowered by state law to make arrests, investigate crime and carry firearms.

### Class of 2010

**Kareem Shakoor** teaches history and English to students in grades 10–12 at Mott Hall Bronx High School in New York through Teach for America. He writes, "Everything is going extremely well at my school. I've received a lot of praise from my principal, the administrators and other teachers and I am on track to receive tenure as soon as I finish my graduate program. ... I'm still getting used to living here and it definitely has its pros and cons but...I am enjoying the experience!"

**Amara Sillah** joined the Teach for America corps and now lives in Memphis, Tenn. He says, "I teach seventh-grade math at Soulsville Charter School. I am doing well during my first year of teaching and I enjoy my job, but I miss being home. Some of the kids can be a handful, but I love them all."