

## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

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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.



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND

## LAUREN ROBINSON '12: BUDDING JOURNALIST AND ENTREPRENEUR

A fifth-grade field trip to the Newseum in Washington, D.C., sparked a passion for journalism in Lauren Robinson '12. She stopped at the news museum's "Be a TV Reporter" station where visitors can read from a teleprompter with a microphone in hand against the backdrop of their choice.

Back then, Lauren was struck by the glamour of the job, but over time her understanding of the field matured. Today, the sophomore journalism major views the work as a public service that carries with it a responsibility to make the news accessible and clear to the masses. "I love interacting with people in the community and telling their stories in a way that is honorable and dignified," she says.

In high school, she had a three-year internship at WMAR-TV in Towson. As a teen reporter, she researched, wrote and co-edited her stories and

co-anchored "Teen Perspective," a monthly program that aired them.

Lauren aspires to be a news reporter for a major network after graduation, but is trying her hand at radio broadcasting in the meantime. Through the University of Maryland's chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, she was tapped to host a weekly online radio show. Following a talk show format, it highlights current events and issues from a minority perspective. Her first show celebrated cultural diversity and focused on American Indian Heritage Month.

When she is not in the studio, studying or charting her professional course, Lauren is honing her entrepreneurial skills and work ethic. She has designed several sneakers, one of which is pre-patented, and has compiled at least 60 sketches for bridal gowns. She also works for Tell-a-Terp, renewing memberships in the alumni association and soliciting gifts.



## Rafael Lovo Speaks at Annual School System Address

Rafael Lovo '13 was a featured speaker at the third annual State of the System Address for Prince George's County Public Schools on Oct. 6, 2009. The address, delivered by Superintendent William Hite, highlighted student achievement and district initiatives as well as acknowledged challenges facing the school system.

Speaking to a standing-room-only crowd at Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High School in Upper Marlboro, Rafael spoke of his transition to the United States from El Salvador

and how he went from knowing little English to thriving in his Advanced Placement English class as a high school senior. With hard work and fierce determination, Rafael rose to the top of his class. Despite his retiring demeanor, he caught the attention of his teachers and guidance counselors—not to mention Hite, who met him during a visit to Parkdale High School.

An aspiring engineer, Rafael said that Parkdale prepared him well for the rigorous curriculum at Maryland. He is on track to

complete his degree in engineering, and is ahead of some of his peers, having earned college credits through the many AP classes he took in high school.

On being selected as an Incentive Award scholar, Rafael said, "I realize that I am living out a scenario that I once thought could only happen in my dreams. But... it is true and all I must do is keep working towards my goals. The path has already been created for me to follow."



*Left to right: Rafael Lovo, middle school speaker Taivion Boone, William Hite*



**Top to bottom:** Sharina Ashton, Kareem Shakoor, Amara Sillah

## SCHOLARS AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

As any professor can tell you, teaching is no easy task. Three of our scholars—Sharina Ashton '11, Kareem Shakoor '10 and Amara Sillah '10—know this firsthand. Each one has accepted the challenge of being a teaching assistant (TA) for several psychology courses at the university. Under the tutelage of their professors, they juggle class discussions, office hours and grading assignments and also attend lectures.

Their responsibilities have helped them become more effective at written and verbal communication and time management. Additionally, they have sharpened their interpersonal skills as they encounter different and, at times, difficult personalities. "Quite often, students believe that teaching assistants just grade papers, but there is so much more to it than that," says Sharina.

Perhaps most important is their relationship to the university community and its students. "Being a TA has increased my connection to Maryland. I feel more grounded now," says Kareem. "It is also a great networking opportunity and puts you in a better position to obtain faculty recommendations, advice and future opportunities both on and off campus." Says Amara, "The No. 1 benefit by far is the one-on-one interaction with students every day. I love it when I see the 'light bulb' go on."



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

**Top to bottom:** Kayaking at annual fall retreat; recruiting prospective students at area high schools; serving the hungry at *So Others May Eat* in Washington, D.C.; practicing skills at dining etiquette seminar; enjoying the annual holiday party; seeing a performance of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.



## Montgomery Inn of Court: A Program with Impact

Most people never want to see the inside of a courtroom, stand before a judge or have a reason to speak with a lawyer. Not so for the IAP students who sign up for just that opportunity each year through the Montgomery County Chapter of the American Inns of Court Foundation. For five years, interested students have accepted the invitation of IAP friend and supporter William T. Wood, Esq. to participate in an evening of learning at the Montgomery County Court House. Senior and junior attorneys together with judges convene nine times a year to network and facilitate the development of law students and recent law graduates through educational programs.

After a social hour and catered dinner, participants move to a courtroom to hear a presentation on topics like courtroom protocol, setting up a new practice, conducting depositions and pro bono service.

IAP students have the unique opportunity to be part of such discussions and enhance their understanding of the practice of law while interacting with the people who administer it. While the evening is always educational and entertaining, the goal is to pique their interest in law and help them to make informed career decisions.

## Creating a Community of Character

Each year, dozens of students apply for a coveted spot on Maryland's premier student governance organization: the University Student Judiciary (USJ). Comprised of six boards, the USJ educates students about university policies, holds them accountable to them and hands down sanctions, as appropriate.

This year, Antonio Tyson '10 was one of only 21 students chosen to serve on the USJ's Central Board, which adjudicates the most serious non-academic conduct cases at the university. Antonio and his fellow board members each demonstrated integrity, exemplary character and a strong code of personal ethics to be eligible for their seats.

When Antonio applied for the position, he hoped that it would yield great exposure, experience and an opportunity to connect with his peers. Now that he is a member, he is more concerned with helping students transform their thinking, recommit to their academics and aspire to be



Antonio (right) with fellow board member Robert Rosenthal

model campus citizens. Whether hearing cases on drug possession, assault or harassment, Antonio says, "There is great satisfaction in knowing I play a major part in upholding the university's standards."

Serving on the board has been a great learning experience for Antonio and has forced him out of his quiet and reserved shell to function as what he refers to as a "disciplinarian and educator." Equally important, he has become more proficient at persuasion, problem solving and communication, which he will apply to his future work as a clinical psychologist.

## Randal Brewer '10 Contributes to Winning Team

Last September, Randal Brewer '10 accepted an invitation from landscape architecture Professor and Digital Studio Director David Myers to compete in the Hillman Design and Development Case Competition, hosted by the Colvin Institute of Real Estate Development and Southern Management Corp. The challenge? To draft a proposal to develop 250 acres of the Bear Creek Mountain Resort & Conference Center in Macungie, Pa.



Randal was one of only two undergraduates on a team of graduate students and working professionals whose specialty areas ranged from historic preservation to real estate. She viewed an otherwise intimidating moment as an opportunity for great gain. "I learned how to work with different people of various ages outside of the field of landscape architecture," she said. "Additionally, I gained an understanding of how these disciplines are interrelated." Perhaps most important, the competition enabled her to network and meet many influential partners in her field, including David Hillman, founder and CEO of Southern Management.

After many late nights, practicing and three rounds of elimination, Randal's team placed third and received a \$5,000 prize to be split among the members.

To Randal, this competition was not just about completing a project; but rather about the benefits of teamwork, networking, invention and exploring possibilities.

## FOCUS ON MENTORING

For the past year, Millree Williams, senior director of public affairs strategy, has served as a mentor to journalism majors Lauren Robinson '12 and Octavia Sykes '12, and just recently, has accepted a third protégé, Kori Hill '13. "Everyone wants to change the world in some way. Mentoring gives us an opportunity to do that—one connection, one conversation at a time," says Millree. "Working at a university offers the privilege of seeing young people come in, learn, grow, and become who they want to be. So, when you have an opportunity to share something of yourself, your experiences, and your point of view, and they can take something of value from that, it is quite rewarding." Through their regular meetings, he offers a guiding hand on matters related to careers, academics, and social life. As these ladies can testify, his mentoring has gone a long way. Here's what they have to say:



"Because Maryland is such a big institution, it's easy to feel lost and alone, but having someone else outside of the program show genuine concern about my success makes this transition to college much smoother. In just a short amount of time, Millree has challenged me not to limit myself to just one aspect of journalism, but instead seek to be a well-rounded professional."—Kori



"Having a mentor like Millree is like having access to the university at your fingertips. Millree has really helped me understand the importance of not just thinking about doing something, but actually trying to do it. The best thing any mentor can do is help students understand their options and empower them to take the necessary action."—Octavia



"When I first came to college, I remember the only thing I ever did was study. Once Millree picked up on this he said, 'Lauren, the things you remember most about college aren't the homework or exams that you've completed, but those experiences with faculty and staff, friends, study abroad and organizations.' From that moment on, Millree really pushed me to think outside of the boundaries of the classroom—and every student needs that!"—Lauren

## Capitol Hill: Up Close and Personal

Last fall, IAP students accepted an invitation to visit Capitol Hill to meet with staffers from the offices of U.S. Reps. Elijah Cummings, John Sarbanes and Donna Edwards. Coordinated by the Office of the President at the University of Maryland, the trip gave students the chance to get a glimpse of the hectic, interesting lives the elected officials lead. In one of the many hearing rooms in the Rayburn Building, they enjoyed a lively conversation about everything from protocol to health care reform to the representatives themselves and their access to President Barack Obama.

Most enlightening was learning about the impact that the students, as constituents, could have on their own communities. They were encouraged to communicate with their representative or to visit their constituent offices to learn about the ongoing evaluation of policies and funding to make sure laws are effective and the funding is efficiently managed.

After meeting with the staffers, they were escorted to the U.S. Capitol for a tour and lunch in its cafeteria. Another trip will be scheduled for the spring semester.

**Back row:** Antonio Tyson '10, Kareem Shakoor '10, Kori Hill '13, Lauren Robinson '12, Chemia Hughes '12, Anastasia Hall '10, Maria Vasquez '12 **Front row:** Elizabeth Cerezo '10, Ashley Hall '13, Rachel Jackson '12, Gloria White '13







# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program  
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[www.umincentiveawards.umd.edu](http://www.umincentiveawards.umd.edu)

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## SAVE THE DATE!

10th Annual Spring Reception  
Wednesday, May 5, 2009  
4 p.m.–6 p.m.  
President's Residence

Watch for your invitation in April!

## Alumni Notes

### Class of 2009

**Brian Robinson Bowers** is a first-grade teacher at Lewisdale Elementary School in Hyattsville, Md. He wrote in, "Work is keeping me pretty busy, but I like my job, and my kids are amazing. It's definitely more work than I ever imagined possible, but it's worth it."

**Earl Schaffer** is a family group leader and fifth-grade substitute teacher at Community Academy Public Charter School in Washington, D.C.

### Class of 2008

**Olivia Coates** now works for Infohrm, an international business and human resources consulting company. She will start a dual master's program in business administration and international management in January at the University of Maryland University College.

**Anna Kalmykov** is still working at Paragon Bioservices Inc., where she is learning good manufacturing practices that guide the production of pharmaceuticals. She will soon be producing a pharmaceutical to be used in a clinical trial.

**Darian Scott-Carter** has returned to his alma mater, Paul L. Dunbar High School, as the college access program specialist for the CollegeBound Foundation. He recently completed his first marathon in Baltimore in 4:03:35. He says, "Completing the Baltimore Marathon was a huge accomplishment and an unbelievable experience. The months of training and early morning jogs were certainly worth it. ... Running 26.2 miles through the city has given me an entirely new perspective on Baltimore." Next on his list? Tackling the Breast Cancer Marathon in Jacksonville, Fla. in February.

### Class of 2007

**Deon Jackson** is a cheerleader for the Baltimore Ravens when he is not teaching 10th-grade chemistry or taking graduate school classes.

### Class of 2006

**James Brockington** is a special education teacher of fourth- and fifth-graders at Gilmore Elementary School in Baltimore.

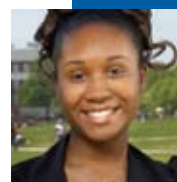
**Misbha Qureshi** works for Steininger Behavioral Care Services at Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Cherry Hill, N.J. She is a clinician in the psychiatric crisis unit, providing crisis intervention to its clients. She is concurrently working as an outpatient therapist in Philadelphia, where she provides individual, couples and family therapy. She is applying to the doctoral program in marriage and family therapy at Drexel University.

**Inga Ferguson Williams** is earning a master's degree in human services administration at the University of Baltimore.

### Class of 2005

**Reginald Jones** wrote in, "I have been working as a Baltimore City police officer since August 2007. I'm currently assigned to a plainclothes unit and sometimes work in an undercover capacity. I have been involved in several major narcotics and handgun cases and have been called to testify in Maryland's district and circuit courts. Ultimately, I'd like to transition to a federal law enforcement agency." Reggie also happily reported that he married the former

## NEW FELLOWS



Scholars, servant-leaders, role models. To this list of responsibilities, we add the title of fellow to Sharina Ashton '11 (top) and Djuan Short '12 (bottom), who joined the select group of students last fall. Incentive Award 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 meaningful 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.

Lacheryl Spence on May 21, 2009, at Fountain Baptist Church in Baltimore.

**Tiana Wynn** moved into her newly built home in Catonsville in October and serves as treasurer to the board of directors for her homeowners association.