

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.



## SCHOLARS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

It was a teacher who discovered Jasmine Mays '14 singing talent at Valley View Elementary School. One of Kendra Browne's '15 middle school teachers steered her away from dance and toward vocal performance after hearing her sing. And Carlos Howard '14 joined multiple choral ensembles at Northwestern High School in Prince George's County after a teacher noticed his singing ability. These vocalists are part of a cadre of performing artists who have added another dimension to the Incentive Awards Program over the last year. This influx of artistic talent includes actors Malcolm Lewis '14 and Christopher Lane '15, who are due to perform in plays this spring—the latter in a leading role. Here's what they have to say about their passion for the performing arts and their professional goals:

**Christopher, you attended the prestigious Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA). Why did you decide to attend a large public research university?**

**Christopher:** Having attended BSA, I felt as if I'd already been in a conservatory and that I wanted a different educational experience for college. While it was an experience I wouldn't trade, there were some things that BSA could never offer, given its nature. I wanted a more diverse curriculum in college and wanted a traditional college experience that would include sports, clubs and other things like that.

**Malcolm and Christopher, you are both psychology majors. Do you see any parallels between the academic and artistic disciplines?**

**Malcolm:** Both require that one tries to get inside a person's head for the purpose of understanding. You need to get a sense of where your character or client is coming from and what they're thinking. In acting, I don't aim for a perfect depiction of the character but rather, I strive for relatability. I put some part of myself in every character. To be a successful psychologist, I imagine I'll have to step outside of myself a bit and try to identify with my clients.



From left: Kendra Browne '15, Carlos Howard '14, Christopher Lane '15, Malcolm Lewis '14 and Jasmine Mays '14



**Christopher:** Psychology and acting complement one another—one informs the other. Both disciplines teach you to observe and try on different emotions. You have to be perceptive and intuitive to succeed in both.

### Why pursue acting?

**Christopher:** Acting is the opportunity for me to be free. Outside of acting, I am calm and relaxed but in my classes, I come alive. I get excited. I love this profession and consider myself an actor, not just playing a role, when I'm on stage.

### Being in the Center for the Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) at Suitland High School must have provided some amazing opportunities. Can you share some of the highlights?

**Jasmine:** Kendra and I had the chance to participate in choral competitions, high school invitationals, international festivals and an HBO special, "Christmas in Washington," and even perform at President Obama's inauguration. Through VPA, we were trained by and worked collaboratively with teachers who were seasoned performers. It was great to have such access to such talent.

**Kendra:** We really had the best of both worlds. We had a solid college prep curriculum and a fantastic opportunity to grow as vocalists.

### What are your recent projects?

**Christopher:** In February, I played Husband Witherspoon, the only male role in "The Old Settler," which had a cast of just four. It's a story about one man's pursuit of love. I learned a lot from this role because it was a step up from what I've done before, and I was challenged in new ways.

**Malcolm:** I have two key roles in the Kreativitey Troupe showcase in May. I also auditioned for the "Introduction to Musical Theatre" workshop with Professor Scot Reese, which I would take in the Fall 2012 semester. This class will give me insight into the business of musical theatre and prepare me for auditions.

### What are your professional goals?

**Carlos:** I am double majoring in music education and music because I'd like to become a choral conductor at a college or university. I prefer teaching large groups rather than soloists. After Maryland, I plan to attend graduate school for a master's degree in choral conducting.

**Christopher:** I want to become a famous actor but I'm majoring in psychology as a backup in case I don't achieve success in acting. I know people that are willing to take a risk and live as an actor—poor—but I'm not as willing. I want to have a comfortable lifestyle and eat something besides beans and rice!

**Jasmine:** My goal is to be a performer, but my challenge is to select the kind of genre I want to focus on. There are so many directions my career can take. At some point, I also want to work in the business side of the industry. Perhaps I'll own my own studio, become a solo voice teacher or manage programs at an opera house.

**Kendra:** I'm double majoring in music and hearing and speech sciences. My plan is to become a vocal therapist for vocalists who have experienced trauma that affects their ability to perform. Vocalists' needs are different and very specific, so I want to provide support that meets those needs. I will bring more insight to the profession because of my musical background. I'm still open to being a performer, but I know it's not easy to be discovered.

### If plans for a professional career fall through, how do you plan to incorporate the arts into your life?

**Malcolm:** I will always act—I can't see stopping. I love being on stage! I get such a rush that I could never get from merely attending a performance. Besides, I never want to get so wrapped up in my own thinking that I fail to understand how people feel and experience the world.

**Jasmine:** I envision being an advocate for the arts. I'm most interested in bridging the divide between musical genres. I would love to help people understand what is great about each type of music, and why it is important to learn from them all while studying music. I'd also like to set an example for musicians; they do not have to choose one side. It is possible to explore all the elements of the art that one loves.

**Christopher:** I would consider teaching acting but only after I've explored all my other options!

### What do you want people to understand about a performing arts major?

**Carlos:** It's hard! The rigor and the pace at which we have to learn information, instruments, diction and languages are tougher than people think. Not to mention that it's physically challenging to stand for several hours at a time singing during rehearsal. It's nothing like being in the chorus in high school.

**Malcolm:** I agree. There's a lot more to it than people think. It takes a lot of preparation and an emotional investment since you have to put yourself into a role to tell a story. It's not just a craft. It's work.



VaRysa Williams '13

## WILLIAMS IS MCNAIR SCHOLAR

Hearing and speech sciences major VaRysa Williams '13 is a scholar in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. She is one of only 35 students from the University of Maryland who received this distinction last year. The program, designed to prepare participants for doctoral studies through research and other scholarly activities, requires students to complete a summer research internship under the guidance of a mentor.

Williams studied the effect that autistic children have on their siblings, and her 26-page paper will be published in an upcoming issue of *The Ronald E. McNair Undergraduate Research Journal*. "There was a lot of work that had to be completed in six weeks," she said, "and without discipline, it would have been easy to fall behind. . . . Although it was very time-consuming, a lot of that time was spent creating lifelong relationships with other McNair scholars who were all very driven."

Williams described the program's ongoing mentorship as valuable and "a blessing." She explains, "By graduation, I will have met my three goals: being published in a journal, having research experience with a mentor, and presenting my own research at multiple conferences." Williams also credits the program with educating her about graduate school and preparing her for the rigorous application process.

Ronald E. McNair was the second African-American to fly in space. He was accepted into NASA's space shuttle program in 1978, and he orbited the Earth 122 times before his death in the 1986 *Challenger* explosion. The memorial Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program operates on 200 campuses nationwide. For more information, visit [www.aap.umd.edu/mcnairprogram.html](http://www.aap.umd.edu/mcnairprogram.html).

## Sharp Imagers: Two Scholars Named Campus Guides

Last fall, Charmaine Wilson-Jones '15 and Malcolm Lewis '14 were accepted into Maryland Images, the university's official tour guide organization. The student-led group works within the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and coordinates recruitment activities such as high school outreach events, panel discussions and the Terp for a Day program.

The guides, known as "Imagers," are easily identifiable because they walk backward as they lead visitors in 1.5-hour tours of the campus. "At first, it's really awkward to walk backwards, but I've gotten used to it,"



Malcolm Lewis '14

Wilson-Jones said. "Surprisingly, it's almost become second nature."

She said becoming an Imager has helped her learn the history of the school and refine her speaking and people skills. "I love answering questions from parents and prospective students. You can really see how much they value your opinion. They're very appreciative," she said.

Images strives to recruit guides from many different backgrounds in order to reflect the diversity not only within the university community, but also among the pool of prospective students. "Diversity is one of the reasons why I applied," said Lewis. "I felt there was a need for more people of color on the Images staff. I recognize the impact I can have on encouraging students from diverse populations to apply to the university."

Being accepted to the University of Maryland and the Incentive Awards Program has been a life-changing opportunity for Lewis and provided him with a sense of community. He said the most rewarding part of Images is sharing a similar sense of belonging with visitors. "I want prospective students to know that Maryland isn't just a great university, but a place where they can find their niche," said Lewis.



Charmaine Wilson-Jones '15







Clockwise: Christopher Lane, Jade Johnson, Mercy Eke, Christine Oliveros, Mykia Smith, Thomas Tripline-Hammond and Ahmed Idris

## Minding Their Manners

IAP freshmen and seniors attended the Maryland Alumni Association's Etiquette Dinner in November. The meal of salad, wild rice, roasted vegetables, chicken and chocolate cake was served in French style; diners made selections from a large platter, and servers then plated those items. Students received a refresher on table manners and learned about the use of flatware and the meaning of its placement on a dish. Alexandra Kovach of Alexandra & Company was the guest speaker and etiquette coach for the event.

## Freshmen Jump-Start Year with Summer Sendoff

By Lenaya Stewart '15

Just days before the start of the Fall 2011 semester, IAP freshmen attended the first IAP Summer Sendoff at the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore. Jointly coordinated by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Division of University Relations, Summer Sendoff is a series of welcome receptions for newly admitted freshmen that are organized by geographic region. Longtime IAP donors Arnold I. '69 and Alison L. Richman '69 sponsored the new event because of their strong affinity to the program and its students. Mrs. Richman is a veteran member of the Baltimore City selection committee.

At the event, students and staff met donors, volunteers and family members and connected with IAP alumni. Freshmen appreciated the opportunity to get advice and an early start on networking and enjoyed hearing alumni talk about their work experiences and goals.

"I thought that planning for my future was something I could wait to do, but after attending the Summer Sendoff, I realized that my future starts now," said Kendra Browne '15.

One of the highlights of the evening was when Michelle Cooper, mother of IAP scholar Thomas Tripline-Hammond '15, stood before the group and shared that she and her husband, Daymond, were inspired to go back to college because of Thomas' encouragement. Mrs. Cooper earned an associate's degree in August and is pursuing a bachelor's degree at the University of Baltimore. Mr. Cooper is enrolled at Baltimore City Community College.

"I took away a wonderful feeling about the many opportunities these students have," Mrs. Richman said, "and I am so happy to see the IAP program flourish."



Clockwise from top right: Christine Oliveros, Mercy Eke and Jade Johnson; Afia Yeboah, Lenaya Stewart, Taylor Thomas and Kendra Browne; José Granados, Thomas Tripline-Hammond and Tochi Ukwu; Arnold I. '69 and Alison L. Richman '69



## FOCUS ON DONORS

### PRANAV SAHA



Pranav Saha '02

Pranav Saha '02, M.B.A. '09 has pledged his financial support to the Incentive Awards Program for the next five years. Saha earned a double degree in computer science and general business as an undergraduate, then returned for a master of business administration degree. An expert in information security and cryptography, he works as a lead associate for Booz Allen Hamilton in Baltimore.

The young donor said his desire to give back comes from a combination of values acquired from his parents, an appreciation for the opportunities afforded by his UMD education and his affection for the city of Baltimore. "I am a big believer in the public education system at the primary, secondary and university levels," he said. "I believe that having a quality, accessible school system is crucial to the success of our local communities as well as the nation as a whole. I attended public

schools at all levels, and believe the students the system produces can compete or out-compete anyone in the workforce."

Saha also supports public schools through the Baltimore chapter of Mustaches for Kids (M4K), which he founded in 2008. Participants, dubbed "growers," commit to growing mustaches during November and solicit financial pledges from friends, family, co-workers and community members. Proceeds go to DonorsChoose.org, a nonprofit that allows donors to directly fund projects and supply requests that individual teachers have submitted.

Saha's chapter set a nationwide record for most money raised in its first year, and in just four years, M4K Baltimore has raised more than \$100,000 for local classrooms. To learn more about M4K Baltimore, visit [m4kbaltimore.org](http://m4kbaltimore.org).

### STEVE AND MIRIAM DUBIN

Thanks to a generous gift from Steve and Miriam Dubin, Juan Peralta '13 can breathe a little easier. The couple created the Dubin Family Scholarship for an undergraduate in the A. James Clark School of Engineering who has persisted despite obstacles.

Awarding it to Peralta, a talented mechanical engineering student, provided a new opportunity for a student to enter the University of Maryland and participate in the Incentive Awards Program.

The scholarship will cover the cost of his tuition, fees, room and board, plus other educational expenses until he graduates. Then, it will be awarded to a new incoming freshman. Peralta is enjoying the rigorous engineering curriculum, thriving in campus activities and plans to study abroad, something that would have been difficult without the aid of the Dubin scholarship.

"The news was most unexpected but welcome, indeed," he said. "Their gift is enabling me to complete my education and live out my personal and professional dreams, and I am so appreciative of it. I cannot thank them enough."



Miriam Dubin and Juan Peralta '13





## On Track for Success

For Ahmed Idris '15, the simple act of helping his family turned into a serious interest in competitive running and gave him Olympic dreams.

Idris became aware of his fleet feet four years ago when his parents realized he could run errands much faster than his siblings. "My mom knew she could count on me to bring back groceries quickly even though the store was a mile away," Idris explained.

Idris, who joined the track team at Baltimore's Northwestern High School, quickly became one to watch, and last August competed in the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Junior Olympic Games in New Orleans. In preparation, Idris trained six days a week, focusing on long runs for stamina, plyometrics for explosive power and weight training for overall strength. For mental toughness, he listened to music, meditated and prayed.

He placed sixth in the 1500-meter race, setting a new personal record, and 10th in the 4x800 meter relay at the competition, a training ground for former Olympians such as Allyson Felix, Tyson Gay and Sanya Richards.

This summer, Idris will again compete in the AAU Games in Houston and as well as the National Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships at Morgan State University.

Running remains an integral part of his routine for reasons beyond general fitness. Distance running has given him the tenacity to persevere through hardships, and he relates hurdles to approaching problems head-on. Handing off the baton in relays, however, is the most meaningful to him. "It represents giving back and passing on an experience to someone else," Idris said. "Coincidentally, that's what the Incentive Awards Program is all about."



Ahmed Idris '15



# CLASS NOTES

## Class of 2005

**Myron Goldstein** earned his M.B.A. from Strayer University in December.

**Ima Bassey Ibadapo** was admitted to the Maryland State Bar Association last June. Within days, she and husband Yemi moved to New York City, where he will complete his residency in radiology at New York University. She is an assistant adjunct professor at University of Maryland University College, where she teaches cybersecurity classes. Additionally, she is an immigration legal officer at the International Rescue Committee and has started her own law firm, focusing exclusively on immigration and naturalization law. Check out her website at [www.ibidapolaw.com](http://www.ibidapolaw.com).

**Tiana Wynn** and **Kelly Smith '06** joined IAP staff and students as they visited Baltimore City high schools to make presentations to prospective high schools students.

## Class of 2007

**Latoya Felder** expects to graduate with her master's degree from the University of Maryland School of Social Work in May. She is a claims service representative for Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. She is also active in the annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership, and is a mentor and motivational speaker with Imagine Me Ministries, Inc.

## Class of 2008

**Darian Scott-Carter** completed the Baltimore Marathon for a third time in October after only a few weeks of training. Afterward, he headed to campus and played trombone with the alumni marching band at Capital One Field at Byrd Stadium. Scott-Carter is the instructor for an internship program at National Institutes of Health and an adjunct professor of criminology and homeland security at Anne Arundel Community College.



## Class of 2009

**Randal Brewer** is an admission counselor in the Office of Undergraduate Admission & Recruitment at Morgan State University. She reports to Charlene Cooper, former IAP associate director.

## Class of 2010

**DeAngela Boone** is a management and program analyst in the Office of International Affairs at U.S. Customs and Border Protection. "Through my work, I help provide necessary capacity building training and assistance to foreign border control agencies to strengthen global supply chain and travel security," she writes. "When I am not on travel, I assist in the research and analysis of training and course materials to support International Affairs programs in border security."

When **Kareem Shakoor** is not teaching government and history at Mott Hall Bronx High School (through Teach for America), he is pursuing a master's degree in organizational psychology at Hunter College in Manhattan.

**Amara Sillah** is teaching American government and economics to 11th and 12th graders at Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering in Tennessee.

**Antonio Tyson** is a project coordinator for a behavioral economics research project at the Center for Addictions, Personality, and Emotion Research at the University of Maryland.

## Class of 2011

**Dekebra Arrington** is a human resources assistant at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, D.C. She is concurrently pursuing a master's degree in project management at University of Maryland University College.

**Sharina Ashton** is the project manager of the Black Families Research Group in the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland. Last summer she presented at the 43rd annual Convention of the Association of Black Psychologists.



Darian Scott-Carter '08

**Brittany Atkinson** is a graphic designer for CPS Gumpert in Hunt Valley, Md. She writes, "I landed an interview the day after graduation and was hired two weeks later. I design everything from business cards to banners, fliers and even wedding stationery and am managing several dozen clients at the moment. I love that I can be creative on a daily basis. I am truly loving this job!"

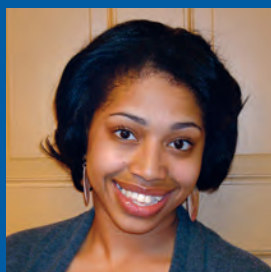
**Ashley Lawrence** is working on a master of public health degree with a concentration in social and behavioral health sciences at Morgan State University. She is a graduate assistant in the Community Engaged Research Center in the School of Community Health and Policy.



## NEW FELLOWS

Scholars, servant-leaders, role models. To this list of responsibilities, we add the title of Fellow to Jose Arevalo, Nancy Canales, Hamza Idris, Kori Hill, Davian Morgan, Tamicka Smithson and VaRysa Williams (pictured clockwise from top left), who joined the select group of students last fall. 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 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.





# 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



Amy Hume '12 (center) and her family at the 2008 Spring Reception.

### 12TH ANNUAL SPRING RECEPTION

TUESDAY

MAY 1

4-6 P.M.

Gossett Football  
Team House