



THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

# 2021

## YEARBOOK



"IAP is a chance for me to not only leave my footprint, but to truly make a difference."

**LEANDRA WILLIAMS '25**



"As an IAP scholar, I will bring my motivation, drive and past relevant experience to share and expand with my fellow peers."

**LIXANDER GUZMAN RICHARDSON '25**







"I know that I can accomplish all my goals and persevere through obstacles because I have the motivation and lives of all of my family and community to guide me."

**BRYAN CARRILLO '25**



"IAP will allow for my education and my growth to be solely based on who I am, not what I don't have."

**ALANA HINES '25**

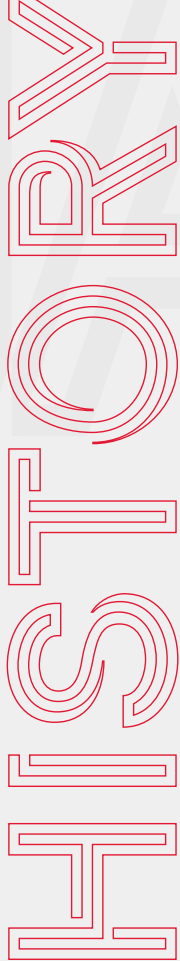


"In the face of challenges, many IAP students did not let their environment control their future. I have this exact mindset. Although I know I had limitations regarding my financial status, I never stopped exploring and learning."

**JHENNIFER CELESTINO-ALVA '25**

Then-UMD President C.D. Mote, Jr. (right) with students from the inaugural IAP cohort.





In 1998, soon after he began his tenure as president of the University of Maryland, C.D. Mote, Jr. noticed a glaring problem that required urgent attention. An abysmally low number of students from Baltimore—by far the largest city in Maryland—were applying and enrolling at the state’s flagship university. And among the few students from Baltimore’s public high schools studying at UMD, the overwhelming majority came from just three schools: Baltimore City College, Baltimore Polytechnic and Western High. Representation from all the other public high schools in Baltimore ranged from little to zero.

Mote had dealt with a similar problem before while serving as vice chancellor for university relations at the University of California, Berkeley. He led the effort at UC Berkeley to raise \$22 million for a highly successful program aimed at attracting and nurturing students from underrepresented areas. He set out to put in place a similar model at Maryland. In 2000, Maryland created a program based on the Berkeley model: **THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM.**

The Incentive Awards Program is designed to recognize and promote scholarship, leadership and community responsibility among students from select high schools, and to make it financially possible for these students to enroll at the University of Maryland. The program identifies and selects students who have demonstrated uncommon **PERSISTENCE, INGENUITY** and **MATURITY** by maintaining good academic performance in the face of challenging circumstances.



Launched as a pilot program in Baltimore, the Program was designated The Suzanne G. and Murray A. Valenstein Baltimore Incentive Awards Program in 2006, and was expanded to select schools in Prince George's County a short time later. A generous gift in 2012 allowed further expansion to KIPP public charter schools in Maryland and Washington, D.C. In 2019, another gift enabled the program to include students from select private schools in Baltimore and, most recently, a significant investment allowed for expansion to Montgomery County. Each IAP student is awarded financial support for four years and benefits from a strong, nurturing community of advisors, mentors and administrative staff while at Maryland.

However, the program is not defined by its scholarship component. The distinguishing characteristic of IAP is its focus on developing **CHARACTER**, **CRITICAL THINKING** skills and **LEADERSHIP** in the context of an intimate community of peers. This "community within a community" sustains IAP students and challenges them to develop lifelong skills, not just to benefit themselves, but their communities as well. In addition to the advising network, the mutual support provided by the peer group encourages students to persist. IAP students are empowered to assume leadership roles within the group. They exercise autonomy in planning social and community-building activities. They're also encouraged to shape the culture of the group, with each new cohort making its unique impression on the community.





*Top: Alumni at the annual spring reception | Bottom: IAP students participate in a community beautification project.*



The University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program values a spirit of **RECIPROCITY**. IAP scholars embrace this spirit by maintaining strong ties to their home and school communities, regularly returning to their high schools to serve as role models for younger students. They engage in discussions with students in their high schools, sharing with them their experiences at UMD and the importance of proper academic preparation for college. The intent is for their success—attained through hard work—to be an incentive for others to persist toward high school graduation, pursue higher education and achieve in the face of adversity.

Twenty years after the program's inception, the university's commitment continues under the leadership of President Darryll J. Pines. "**EDUCATION IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER**," President Pines says. "It is by far the best and most rewarding investment anyone can make in the future of a young person, our local communities, our state, our nation and our world. The Incentive Awards Program is a vital part of this mission, providing opportunities for some of the most talented and dedicated students in our community to excel. **WE ALL BENEFIT FROM THIS INVESTMENT.**"

As IAP students graduate and the alumni base continues to grow, the positive impact will be even more profound on the communities these students call home. Throughout all future endeavors, they will hone the skills nurtured through the University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program and use them in every aspect of their lives. ✳



INTRODUCING  
THE CLASS OF







Another cadre of outstanding high school students has been selected to participate in the University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program, designed to recognize and promote academic excellence and leadership among exceptional students from our partner high schools. In this, the 21st year of the program, we are proud to welcome this new cohort of scholars—now the largest in IAP’s history.

**MARK AGUILAR**  
Surrattsville High School

**BRYAN CARRILLO**  
Gaithersburg High School

**JHENNIFER CELESTINO-ALVA**  
Eleanor Roosevelt High School

**ISAIAH CHAPMAN**  
Baltimore Polytechnic Institute

**JOHN DJEUF**  
Baltimore Polytechnic Institute

**KERRA DUKES**  
Western High School

**ROZHIN FADAE**  
Thomas Sprigg Wootton  
High School

**ALEXA FIGUEROA**  
Northwestern High School

**JUSTIN GUZMAN**  
Mergenthaler Vocational-  
Technical High School

**LIXANDER GUZMAN  
RICHARDSON**  
Potomac High School

**DEVIN HARRIS**  
Paul Laurence Dunbar  
High School

**ALANA HINES**  
Baltimore Polytechnic Institute

**TISHANIQUE JOHNSON**  
Academy of Health Sciences  
at PGCC

**JUDITH LIN**  
Northwestern High School

**MICAH MCCREADY**  
Bowie High School

**MAY SOE MIN**  
Richard Montgomery  
High School

**REBECCA OLUWASANMI**  
Academy of Health Sciences  
at PGCC

**ARACELY PEREZ**  
Albert Einstein High School

**ABEL SHIFERAW**  
Springbrook High School

**ADERO WILKES**  
Mergenthaler Vocational-  
Technical High School

**LEANDRA WILLIAMS**  
Mercy High School

**JANAE YOUNG**  
Baltimore School for the Arts





"I want to be surrounded by a group of people who inspire me and push me to be the best that I can be."

**KERRA DUKES '25**



# MARK AGUILAR

SURRATTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

“ Whenever I decide to do something, I always stay to it and I believe your word is one of the strongest things someone can have. I don’t give up when things get hard because I always remind myself that things can only really get better than worse. Giving up is something I hate doing and it is definitely something I don’t plan on doing while I’m in college. I believe I have this trait in me because both of my parents taught me the values of persistence and perseverance. I want to one day show my parents my true potential that I know I have and there isn’t much in this world that is going to stop me from achieving what I want to achieve.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars







## BRYAN CARRILLO

GAITHERSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

“ I know that...IAP will help me maintain a high academic standard that will motivate me to learn as much as I can throughout college. It will also help me establish meaningful connections with peers that have similar interests as I do in bettering their own communities. I know that I can accomplish all my goals and persevere through obstacles because I have the motivation and lives of all of my family and community to guide me.”

### **SPECIAL HONOR:**

University Honors

# JHENNIFER CELESTINO-ALVA

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL

“Earning a degree is very significant! In my podcast, “¿Qué dijiste?” I hope to motivate the Hispanic/Latinx community to believe in its talents and voice. I hope that as an IAP scholar and even alumni I can tell my story of how I earned my bachelor’s degree as a first-generation, Hispanic and female student in my podcast and other platforms. Hopefully, this will motivate more Hispanics and Latinos to enter the medical or STEM field.”

## **SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars







# ISAIAH CHAPMAN

BALTIMORE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

“ An important short term goal for me is to expand my network and graduate with lifelong friends who challenge and inspire me. IAP will offer me a family away from home...a feeling of belonging and a solid support group. It will also provide me the opportunity to gain a trusted, reliable mentor that may guide me when I am stuck or troubled with making a decision. IAP will allow me to connect with other students with a similar background, allowing me not to feel out of place or alone.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars

# JOHN DJEUF

BALTIMORE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

“ Beyond anything that my grades and recommenders may say about me, I am able to identify problems and act on them. Furthermore, I push myself to expand from my comfort zone to learn and solve problems. In a program like IAP that is grounded in community involvement and improvement, being responsive and able to act on the problems in your surroundings is essential to accomplishing this mission. My open mind...has allowed me to make meaningful contributions in any environment I’ve found myself in, and I look forward to bringing these skills to my IAP cohort.”

## **SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars







## KERRA DUKES

WESTERN HIGH SCHOOL

“ My academic pursuits are guided by my love for my community and my commitment to social justice. Throughout high school, I’ve worked in the community and volunteered at local nonprofits. My earliest memory is helping my community feed the homeless with my church. In this moment, I remember feeling a sort of validation, like I knew my purpose. I continue to volunteer at the homeless shelter by supporting the soup kitchen, knitting blankets and making family health packets for the homeless. Lending a helping hand to build bonds with community stakeholders and neighbors is a passion I hold dear and will continue to cultivate in the Incentive Awards Program.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

University Honors

# ROZHIN FADAE

THOMAS SPRIGG WOOTTON HIGH SCHOOL

“ Every single core value of the program is exactly what my dad taught me. As I read through what the program promotes—persistence, self-awareness, leadership and civic responsibility—I realize that this program embodies every characteristic of who I am and hope to be. The resources offered by IAP are limitless, with priceless tools that will enrich my college experience. In college, I aim to foster as many relationships as possible and absorb brand new perspectives. IAP hosts monthly community meetings, where I could connect with fellow students who share the same values as me, and have a family by my side for four years.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars







# ALEXA FIGUEROA

NORTHWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL  
(PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY)

“ I have always gotten good grades, but that is not enough for me. I want more. I want to be challenged beyond my limits. I want to be pushed in a way that the educational system has never pushed me before. I stand out because I do not take no for an answer when it comes to my academics. I will never let someone tell me that I cannot speak up for my education. Grades are important, but I have much more to offer. I want IAP to bring on the challenges. I am ready to face anything that is thrown my way. I am resilient and that will continue throughout college and through the IAP Program.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**  
CIVICUS

# JUSTIN GUZMAN

MERGENTHALER VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

“ I am a huge advocate for teamwork. I love being able to work with other people. It does not only enable me to interact with other people, but it allows me to learn from others as well. I bring charisma into the groups that I work with. I encourage my teammates to put their best foot forward and stay positive. I can demonstrate my ability to work on a team and offer creative solutions to help build a positive community within IAP.”







# LIXANDER GUZMAN RICHARDSON

POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

“ By being a member of IAP, the financial burden of a university degree will be lifted off my shoulders, therefore allowing me to focus on other far more important aspects of life such as creating cool and innovative technologies that could perhaps revolutionize humankind. One of my goals is to work alongside individuals who share a common interest with me. Perhaps being part of IAP will open doors I never dreamed of, and optimally, lead to my success.”

# DEVIN HARRIS

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL

“ Within IAP I am positive that I can gain a strong network, valuable advice from IAP peers and mentors, and also engage in internship opportunities to tether me to the world of research and the medical field. I am optimistic about the plethora of ways IAP can aid me in my future that will catapult me in my journey of life. I learned to keep striving for my dream to be a successful surgeon despite the barriers I may face...I remind myself that I never know how my success will impact future generations.”

## **SPECIAL HONOR:**

First Year Innovation & Research Experience





## ALANA HINES

BALTIMORE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

“ I have always dreamed of being the person that changed someone’s life for the better. Being able to be a part of an organization centered around community leadership and growth would not only allow me to become that change but would also become a moment that changed my life. As a first-generation student, attending college means everything to me. It represents everything my family has sacrificed so I could stay home and study. It represents the tears, the happy moments, but most importantly, my success represents something to everyone that has watched me grow and develop throughout my school career.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

Carillon Communities



# TISHANIQUE JOHNSON

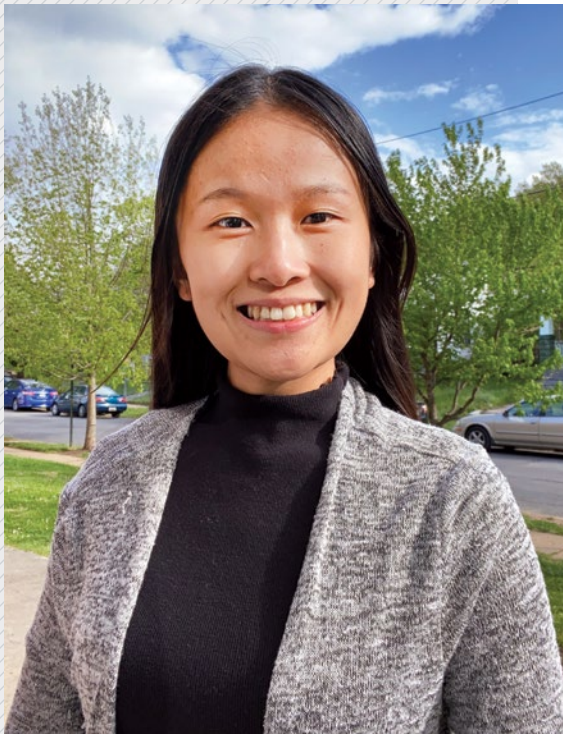
ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES AT PGCC

“ The Incentive Awards Program offers a mentoring relationship and a community that will allow me to gain experience and learn how to interact with people from different backgrounds. If I want people to trust me with their children in the future I must excel at forming healthy relationships. The mentorship I will receive in this program will also be important to finishing my college career with a high GPA. Knowing that I have a community I can depend on will definitely be a major advantage and a great resource on the path to success. I believe I am exactly the kind of person you want to have in the Incentive Awards Program.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars





## JUDITH LIN

NORTHWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL  
(PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY)

“ I believe that if my teachers had to describe me, they would say that I am compassionate because I am always actively involved in the community and committed to helping my peers. Another description would be tenacious because I am determined to handle situations and tasks to the best of my ability and my determination never diminishes regardless of the difficulty of the task. Therefore, I believe my determination, values, persistence, and passion will greatly contribute to the Incentive Awards Program.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

Carillon Communities

# MICAH MCCREADY

BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

“ I know I will make lifelong relationships and priceless connections with others through this program that will have an outstanding impact on all of our futures. These connections will help me years down the road as I build a name for myself within the music industry and need references, or people who can attest to my abilities. It will also allow me to share what I have experienced and learned with others to help them move forward in their career endeavors.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars







# REBECCA OLUWASANMI

ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES AT PGCC

“ IAP will not only assist me financially in completing my bachelor’s but also by providing me a community within a community. In college, it is very important to develop strong and meaningful relationships in which you feel supported and challenged to do your best. Having IAP as a support system will give me people to rely on and embark on the journey to success. IAP also will help me accomplish my long-term goal of inspiring my community and others. The Incentive Awards Program maintains strong ties to their community by giving back and that is something I admire. I would like to motivate others to strive for success despite hardships and difficulties.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars

# ARACELY PEREZ

ALBERT EINSTEIN HIGH SCHOOL

“ My commitment to education stems from my acknowledgment of my own abilities and being the first in my family to graduate high school and go to college. I plan to take advantage of all the opportunities that are available to me, including this scholarship, to obtain the education and experiences that my family was incapable of having...I have learned to embrace my abilities and talents which has encouraged me to push myself for the rigorous classes and opportunities that others may avoid. I have learned throughout my four years of high school to take risks, even if all odds are against me.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

Carillon Communities





# ABEL SHIFERAW

SPRINGBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

“ I value community and camaraderie which are important when forming relationships and overcoming obstacles with others. I take other people’s inputs and opinions seriously no matter their background, and I’m always willing to support friends in their endeavors whether it’s in or out of the classroom, or whether it’s just lending them an ear to listen or a hug after a hard day. I believe it’s important to possess these traits as they are the building blocks of a community...I believe I possess the traits to impact the IAP cohort in a genuine and positive way.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

College Park Scholars



# MAY SOE MIN

RICHARD MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL

“ The Incentive Awards Program will not only allow me the opportunity to attend a wonderful university, but will also provide me with the support I need to succeed through advising, mentorships and a wonderful cohort of like-minded students who can help me achieve my goals. I demonstrate leadership, passion and a sense of community. I will continue to work as a student activist and advocate on campus. With the help of IAP, I believe that I can make an impact on a global scale.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**  
CIVICUS





## ADERO WILKES

MERGENTHALER VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

“ The Incentive Awards Program needs students who are capable of stepping up to leadership and that’s what I have to offer. The mentoring and career opportunities introduced through this program will be something tangible for me to grasp. Mentoring students who are both in and outside of UMD will allow me to share my knowledge gained from this program, along with the intelligence I already have. As far as optimism, my positive outlook on life is something I’m more than willing to share with the entire family found within the Incentive Awards Program.”

# LEANDRA WILLIAMS

MERCY HIGH SCHOOL

“ IAP is helping me do more than accomplish goals, but also my dreams of being able to pursue an education at this prestigious university while training to become a part of the next leaders of this world. I want to reshape the medical world, tackling racial disparities in the health system and opening my own nonprofit tasked with providing safe and fair health care outreach programs in urban areas. I have big goals, including double majoring and obtaining my doctoral degree. IAP’s mentorship and academic assistance are exactly the support I need to make my dreams a reality.”







## JANAE YOUNG

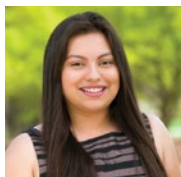
BALTIMORE SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

“ When applying to colleges, I knew I did all that I could academically to put myself in the best position possible to achieve my goals. However, my academic achievements could only take me so far. The IAP program will allow me to fully focus on my academic goals without worrying about a financial burden. Being surrounded by a cohort of students who are just as hardworking as I am will put me in the best position possible to push myself. I will have a community backing me and with me every step of the way.”

**SPECIAL HONOR:**

First Year Innovation & Research Experience





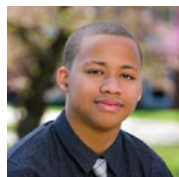
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MEDRANO**  
Biological Sciences  
(Physiology &  
Neurobiology)

**MENTOR**  
Jazmin Pichardo,  
Office of Diversity &  
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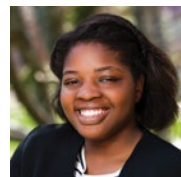
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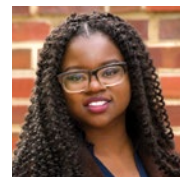
**JOSHUA  
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American Studies*

**MENTOR**  
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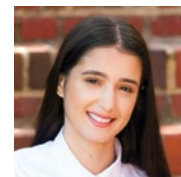
**SHEANICE  
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**MENTOR**  
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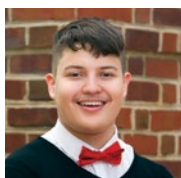
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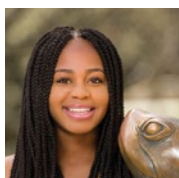
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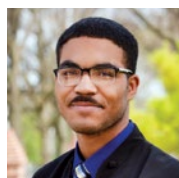
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**MENTOR**  
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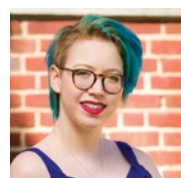
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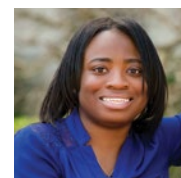
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*\*IAP ALUMNI*

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It is the power of education and the contributions of many that will help transform students' lives and secure the future of the University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program. We are grateful to the friends who have joined with us to make this life-changing opportunity for our students a reality through named scholarships and other support.

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