

Fall 2008  
Volume 2, No. 1

# AG VOICE

Department of Agriculture News

University of Maryland Eastern Shore

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## Preparing for the Future



The UMES MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resource, and Related Sciences) Chapter attended the 2008 Region I Workshop November 1-2, 2008 at the University of the District of Columbia. The theme of the workshop was “*Expanding Our Horizons, Embracing the Challenge, and Preparing for the Future*”. Dr. George Shorter (Associate Professor and MANRRS

Advisor) and Mrs. Lisa Purnell (1890 USDA Liaison Officer and Co-Advisor) took thirteen students to this excellent workshop that focused on networking, professionalism, leadership, growth, teamwork, advancement, and cultural awareness and diversity. Workshops were offered on Parliamentary Procedures, The Interview Process, Researching Companies, Public Speaking and Table Topics, and the MANRRS Constitution. Some of the social activities included a fashion show on Professional Dress & Etiquette and a party. A Career Fair was held on Sunday and students were given the opportunity to network and interview with various industry and government entities. It was an excellent workshop for both professionals and students. The skills developed at this workshop will help prepare students to successfully represent the society. The UMES MANRRS Chapter plans to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual MANRRS Career Fair & Training Conference in Indianapolis, IN March 26-29, 2009 and compete in various conference contests. ♦

## Letter from the Chair

Greetings! I hope this news letter finds you in good health and spirits despite the difficult economic times. The department continues to forge ahead as programs, resources, faculty, staff and students change. We continue to focus on recruiting, retaining and training students for careers in agriculture food and resource sciences.

In this issue, we have included a bird's eye view of our students' engagement in leadership, professional, and networking activities to prepare them for the career needs of today and the future. You will also find a faculty and staff update as the faces and voices have changed in recent years.



Last summer, the department said farewell to Ahmad Jilani, USDA Liaison Officer, Iqbal Javid, Research Associate, and Niki Whitley, Associate Professor who moved on to new opportunities, and to George Heath, Associate Professor, who retired. We wish them well at their new jobs and retirement. We welcome Mrs. Lisa Purnell our new USDA Liaison Officer and UMES alumnus, and Dr. Maurice Clarke, Assistant professor and veterinarian.

Please contact us to share your experiences since graduation. I welcome your questions and look forward to hearing from you.

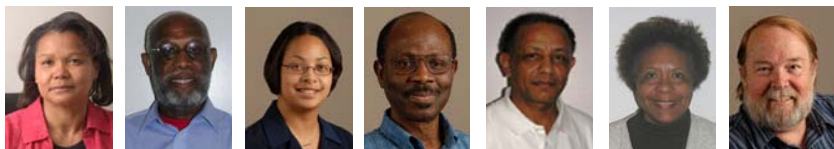
Sincerely,  
Lurline Marsh, Ph.D.



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND  
EASTERN SHORE

A Smart Place to Grow!

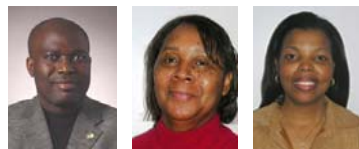
## Meet the Faculty



Marsh Allen Cotton Dadson Demissie Green Handwerker



Harter-Dennis Hashem Mollett Parveen Schwarz Shorter Suvanich



Tubene Pugh Sykes

### Lurline Marsh, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Winter 2004  
*Expertise:* Horticulture & Plant Breeding  
*Current Research:* Food Safety & Culture of Vegetables. Ornamental Horticulture  
*Hobbies:* Gardening and Reading

### Arthur Allen, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Winter 1996  
*Expertise:* Soil Chemistry/Plant Physiology  
*Current Research:* Nutrient Management, improving health of Chesapeake Bay  
*Hobbies:* Thoroughbred horseracing

### Corrie Cotton, M.L.A.

*Year Started:* Summer 2004  
*Expertise:* Landscape Architecture  
*Current Research:* Food Safety, Water Quality, Ornamental Horticulture  
*Hobbies:* Reading, watching movies, spending time with family and friends

### Robert Dadson, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 1979  
*Expertise:* Agronomy, Plant Genetics  
*Current Research:* Biofuel, Insect Pest Resistance, Forage Grasses  
*Hobbies:* Traveling, walking, reading, Music, spending time with family

### Ejigou Demissie, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Winter 1987  
*Expertise:* Agriculture Economics  
*Current Research:* Food Security, Market Development, Micro-Finance  
*Hobbies:* Reading, spending time with family, wood work

### Bessie Green, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 1979  
*Expertise:* Biotechnology  
*Current Research:* Food Safety & Plant Safety  
*Hobbies:* Reading, crafts, gardening

### Thomas Handwerker, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Winter 1987  
*Expertise:* Horticulture, Aquaculture, Rural Economic Development  
*Current Research:* Sustainable Greenhouse & Small Farm Technology  
*Hobbies:* Sailing & camping

### Jeannine Harter-Dennis, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* 1981  
*Expertise:* Animal Nutrition  
*Current Research:* Improving nutrient utilization & reducing ammonia emissions from broiler facilities  
*Hobbies:* Raising & showing English cocker spaniels

### Fawzy Hashem, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 2002  
*Expertise:* Microbiology & Biology Control  
*Current Research:* Food Safety, Plant-microbe Interactions, Bioremediation  
*Hobbies:* Reading, soccer, travel, spending time with family

### Theodore Mollett, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Animal Science  
*Expertise:* Animal Science  
*Current Research:* Growth, Lactation, & Reproduction  
*Hobbies:* Reading, music, horses, fishing, farming, spending time with family

### Salina Parveen, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 2002  
*Expertise:* Food Microbiology & Safety  
*Current Research:* Safety of seafood & poultry; food & water-borne pathogens

### Jurgen Schwarz, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 2002  
*Expertise:* Food Science & Technology  
*Current Research:* Food Safety, Food Defense  
*Hobbies:* Outdoor activities, spending time with family

### George Shorter, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 1984  
*Expertise:* Agricultural Educations & Mechanization  
*Hobbies:* Cooking, fishing, hunting

### Stephan Tubene, Ph.D.

*Year Started:* Fall 2004  
*Expertise:* Agricultural Economics & Small Farms  
*Current Research:* Internationalizing Education, National Immigrant Farming Initiative, Ethnic and Specialty Crops  
*Hobbies:* Play soccer & tennis, Congolese community organizer and advocate

### Gloria Pugh, Administrative Assistant

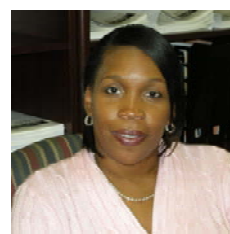
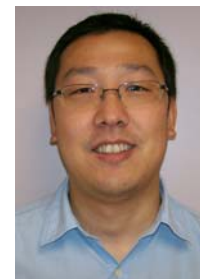
*Year Started:* 1995  
*Hobbies:* Traveling & spending time with family and friends

### Gail Sykes, M.S. Plant Science Secretary

*Year Started:* 1987  
*Hobbies:* Reading, traveling, singing with family

## New to the Department

Dr. Tao Gong is a new faculty member in the department (Fall 2008). Prior to coming to the department, Dr. Gong worked as a research analyst in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment at UMES. Dr. Gong earned his Ph. D. degree in economics from Middle Tennessee State University in 2005. His current research interests include applied microeconomics, labor economics, and college student experiences and learning.



Lisa C. Purnell is the newly appointed USDA/1890 Agricultural Liaison Officer at UMES. Ms. Purnell has been employed by the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) since 1997. Prior to her appointment as Agricultural Liaison Officer, Ms. Purnell served as the ARS Headquarters Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity Program Manager. As an Agricultural Liaison Officer, Ms. Purnell promotes the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program, recruits high school students to attend UMES, counsels students, faculty, and staff on USDA employment opportunities (internships and permanent employment), advises and mentors students, and develops new approaches for USDA to reach small-scale, limited-resource, and minority farmers. Ms. Purnell resides in Salisbury, MD with her husband and two children. Students are encouraged to visit Ms. Purnell, who is located in Trigg Hall, Room 1137. She can also be reached at (410) 651-6313 or via e-mail at [lcurnell@umes.edu](mailto:lcurnell@umes.edu).

## AFA Leaders Conference

By Nicole Hucke (Jr. Agribusiness)



The AFA Leaders Conference was held in November 6-9 in Kansas City, MO. Among all the applicants from different Universities throughout the U.S., I was selected and sponsored by the Monsanto Company to attend this conference.

The AFA Leaders Conference is designed to be a highly interactive conference; bringing together the highest caliber students and speakers to explore, discuss and prepare for the agriculture industry. Its main objective is to support college men and women preparing for

careers in agriculture related fields while supporting the development of human capital for the agriculture and food industry.

The theme of this year's conference was "I define Agriculture." These three simple words embody what it means to be a part of the agriculture industry today. While the word "agriculture" has been historically synonymous with farming, it has evolved into much more. The agriculture industry is responsible for the food you eat, the clothes you wear, environmental well-being and preservation, biofuels that propel your car, medicine that may save your life, and technology that has changed the way you and the rest of the global population is fed on a daily basis. Everyone defines agriculture in their own unique way, and the 2008 Leaders Conference theme was intended to inspire people to consider what agriculture means to them. So my question to you now is: How do you define agriculture?

The conference was divided into three separate programs called "Track One", "Track Two", and "Track Three." I was part of Track Two which is a program designed for sophomores and juniors who have participated in a previous AFA Leaders Conference, or who have intern experience. Training focuses on communications skills, agriculture issues and preparation for employment. Dressing for success, positive first impressions, critical thinking and team leadership roles were addressed.

During the AFA Opportunity Fair I had the opportunity to meet with recruitment representatives from agriculture businesses, associations, and organizations. I interacted with business and organization leaders to discuss career issues while learning about intern and full-time opportunities. The company Syngenta already offered me a full-time job upon graduation in 2010.

## MANRRS 2008 Contest Winners

By Corrie Cotton



Catherine Katambo receives 3rd place award for the Oral Research Undergraduate Division II Contest, far right.



Kimberly Braxton receives 3rd place award for the Poster Research Contest, far right.

The UMES MANRRS Organization attended the MANRRS 23rd Annual Career Fair & Training Conference in Denver, CO March 27-30, 2008. Ten undergraduate and one graduate student participated in the National Contest which include Public Speaking, Chapter of the Year, Written Essay, Poster Research, Oral Research, Research Discussion and Theme Contests. Catherine Katambo (Sr. Agribusiness) won 3rd place in the Oral Research Undergraduate Division II Contest. She received \$200 and a certificate on her presentation titled "Use of Cooperative/Collaborative Learning and Teamwork Skills in University Level Science and Math Instruction". Kimberly Braxton, a recent graduate in Animal Science/Pre-Veterinarian, won 3rd place in the Poster Research Contest. She too received \$200 and a certificate on her research titled "Prevalence of IGg Antibodies to Toxoplasma gondii in Dogs from Virginia". Ms. Braxton is currently attending the School of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University. The UMES MANRRS Organization plans to attend the 24th Annual Career Fair & Training Conference in Indianapolis, IN March 26-29, 2009. The students are currently working on their 2009 contest submissions.



## Congratulations Graduates

December 2007

Rachel Andrews, Baltimore MD  
Margaret Stockslager, Hebron MD  
Sharif Walker, Baltimore, MD

May 2008

Brittany Butler, Springdale MD  
Dana McNair, Salisbury MD  
Jessica Renshaw, Eden MD  
Brett Smith, Princess Anne MD  
Kristen Walker, Baltimore MD  
Samuel Mwangi, Princess Anne MD



## The Power of Networking

By Rosalyn Smith (Sr. Agricultural Studies)



Rosalyn Smith, fourth from the left; Simon Tomlinson, forth from the right

Simone Tomlinson (Sr., Animal Science/Pre-Veterinarian) and I were selected to attend the Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute Conference located in the heart of midtown New York, New York during the third week of October

2008. This conference served as recruitment as well as a career fair. The theme for this year's conference was "Investing the Power of Knowledge". This powerful four day conference ensured Thurgood Marshall's legacy of having equal access to higher education by supporting exceptional scholars that currently attend historically black colleges and universities. We participated in executive workshops, discussed issues, and discovered opportunities unique to historically black institutions. A major focus of this conference was the power of networking. We had the opportunity to meet and fellowship with companies from both the corporate and government sectors of the workforce. At the Thurgood Marshall Leadership conference, we truly learned that sometimes it's not what you know, but who you know.

# Alumni Highlights

**Ginny Rosenkranz** has worked for the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension since 1994, acting as an Area Specialist for Commercial Horticulture for Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties. She has her BS in Botany from the University of Maryland, College Park (1994) and her MS in Extension Education from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (2006). Ginny said "From registration through graduation, all of the professors and the administrative assistants were helpful and friendly during my learning experience at UMES". Ginny assists greenhouse growers, nursery growers, landscape contractors, garden center operators and golf courses with their pest management and production issues. She

teaches an annual Master Gardener course that attracts 20 interested citizens a year. She also produces Delmarva Gardens, a 30-minute garden show that is available on public access channels in many Maryland counties. Delmarva Gardens offers up-to-date monthly gardening information. Ginny also has a weekly segment on plant care and gardening on the local CBS station. Ginny and her husband, George, started a landscape business and she operated their six greenhouses, the nursery and a small garden center for 20 years before joining the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. Ginny and George live on the Eastern Shore while their son Scott, who is a graduate of University of Maryland University College in Computer

Information Systems and Technology, lives and works in the Columbia, Maryland area. ♦



George and Ginny Rosenkranz



Ms. Cotton and Mr. Plummer share a laugh at the 2008 National MANRRS Conference in Denver, CO

**John Plummer** attended UMES and received his B.S. in Agribusiness in May 2001. He currently lives in Hemet, CA where he works for ConAgra Foods in Colton, CA. John is a Plant Manager for a ConAgra Flour Milling Plant. He oversees the safety, quality, productivity, cost, and profitability objectives of the plant, which employs 30 people including salaried and hourly employees. John attended a National MANRRS Conference in Des Moines, Iowa in 1998. At the conference career fair, he was introduced to ConAgra Foods and secured an internship after his freshman year. He continued to return for summer internships for the next 3 years. After graduation, John secured a full-time position with ConAgra Foods in Colorado. "My desire to make a contribution to the Company's objectives allowed me to move up into positions of increasing responsibility. You have to be willing to work harder and longer than you have before to establish yourself with an employer. You have to be willing to establish yourself as a team player that can align their personal development goals with the goals of the team" said John. In addition to his education at UMES, John met his wonderful bride Elaine and they have been married for 8 marvelous years. They have three kids, Kaya (5 years old), Alicia (4 years old), and John Robert Plummer (2 years old). "I greatly appreciated my time at UMES. The University and the Agriculture Department were very instrumental in preparing me for the work world. The faculty were always very supportive of student development, each faculty member I encountered played a special role in my personal development. I would encourage the University and the Department to continue to challenge the students to meet and exceed higher standards. I feel that the education I received at UMES has allowed me to compete well in the food industry" said John. ♦

**AG VOICE** is a publication of the UMES Department of Agriculture, Food, and Resource Sciences. Article ideas, contributions, corrections, and suggestions should be directed to Ms. Corrie Cotton, [ccotton@umes.edu](mailto:ccotton@umes.edu) or Dr. Bessie Green, [bmgreen@umes.edu](mailto:bmgreen@umes.edu)

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