POLITICS: UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

English Major Selected for Prestigious Annapolis Internship

When Maryland legislators are gathered in Annapolis creating next year’s budget and making other important decisions about the state’s future, a UMES English major will be in their midst.

Quanika Lewis has been selected as a legislative intern for the upcoming Maryland General Assembly session. A senior from Laurel, Maryland, Ms. Lewis will spend her final semester working in the office of Delegate Henry Heller, a democrat from Montgomery County.

“This is going to be a great experience,” she said. “I’m going to learn so much.”

Ms. Lewis will earn twelve academic credits. She will also receive $2,500 to cover her expenses; more than half of that stipend has been contributed by a generous friend of UMES who wishes to remain anonymous.

Her internship will be supervised by a faculty member in the Department of Social Sciences, Kathryn Barrett-Gaines. “This is a great opportunity to develop leadership skills, to network with legislators and interns from other universities, to learn about the state political process from the inside, and to explore future career paths,” Dr. Barrett-Gaines said.

Ms. Lewis plans to pursue a career as a civil servant following her graduation in May. “I think this (internship) will make me resourceful and confident,” Ms. Lewis said.

She has already demonstrated her resourcefulness. According to Dr. Barrett-Gaines, Ms. Lewis “sought this opportunity on her own, completed the application process herself, secured an interview, and was hired within 24 hours...She makes things happen.”

Ms. Lewis is a member of the UMES chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, a national English honor society. She also serves as a tutor in the University’s writing center.

To apply for the Annapolis internship, Ms. Lewis was required to complete an application, submit a resume, and write an essay describing why she should be selected.

Students who are interested in a similar experience in 2011 should contact Dr. Barrett-Gaines.

AFTER GRADUATION, WHAT NEXT?

UMES English Majors Learn More About Graduate School

Three English majors joined two department faculty members for a trip to College Park, Maryland, recently. The group attended the University of Maryland’s Graduate School Preview Day.

Renardra Brown, Cherish McMillan, and Angela Onley were accompanied by Department Chair Betty Taylor-Thompson and communications instructor Marilyn Buerkle. The students spent the day getting valuable advice about how to successfully apply to graduate school and tips on where to find the funding they’ll need. They also toured the campus with representatives of specific University of Maryland programs, learning about what those programs have to offer. In addition, they heard from a panel of current doctoral students about the challenges they face trying to excel academically while maintaining a semblance of balance in their lives.

Dr. Taylor-Thompson said it is critically important to expose students to the myriad of options available in higher education.
When Florida A&M University’s (FAMU) women’s volleyball team defeated UMES in the final round of the MEAC championship to win its ninth conference title in a row, it was a loss that hit home in the UMES English department. The department’s technical associate, Eric Hammond, serves as assistant coach to the Lady Hawks’ team. The 2009 MEAC championship was a replay of 2008 when UMES went undefeated in conference play only to have FAMU capture the title. “I still feel successful,” Mr. Hammond said. “I’m proud of what we accomplished.”

As well he should be! Head coach Don Metil was named the MEAC coach of the year for the second time in three years. Bella Jade Romero was named this year’s MEAC rookie of the year. The UMES team has not lost a conference match during the regular season for the last three years.

The best sales pitch always comes from a satisfied customer. Members of the UMES English Honor Society proved that old adage true when they served as recruiters for the department at the University’s eighth annual Tri-County College Fair. Some 1,500 high school juniors and seniors met with representatives from more than 100 different colleges and universities on the UMES campus.

The UMES Gospel Choir, under the direction of English faculty member Della Dameron-Johnson, has been invited to perform at the “Collegiate Gospel Spotlight” which will be held at the board meeting of the Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA) at Loew’s Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada, next March. GMWA is the largest organization in the country specializing in gospel music with over 185 chapters in the United States and abroad.

“This is an opportunity for our students to gain further exposure, network with professionals in the gospel music industry, and sing before legendary Grammy and Stellar award winners,” Dr. Dameron-Johnson said.

The choir is seeking financial support to make the trip a reality.

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The English department was called into service when President Thelma Thompson invited a group of doctoral students from her alma mater, Howard University, to visit our campus in November.

The event, “Preparing Future Faculty Scholars,” coordinated by Jennifer Keane-Dawes, Dean of Graduate Studies at UMES, was designed to encourage the students to consider careers in higher education when they complete their degrees.

When scheduling conflicts forced the President to record a welcome message for the group, English major Emmanuel Hall assisted Video Services Coordinator Jim Glovier in recording and editing the president’s remarks.

Department Chair Betty-Taylor Thompson and faculty member Marilyn Buerkle were also involved in the event. They were part of a group of UMES deans, chairs, and faculty members who discussed their jobs with the students over lunch.

Dr. Keane-Dawes reports several of the Howard students expressed interest in becoming UMES faculty members following their visit.

SIGMA TAU DELTA

English Honor Society Holds Interest Meeting

UMES’s Psi Mu Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, a national English honor society, held an interest meeting for prospective members recently. Students who major or minor in English and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better are eligible to apply for membership.

The meeting gave current honor society members the opportunity to discuss the organization’s mission with eligible students. The group’s academic advisors, Nicole Taylor and Dean Cooledge, also attended the meeting.

Twenty eligible students have since formally applied to join the organization. Now the members will conduct personal interviews with those applicants.

A formal induction ceremony for the new members is scheduled for February.