THE BEST OF THE BEST
Annual UMES Honors Convocation Salutes Academic Achievers

UMES had prepared her to be both competent and competitive. Every year at the event, a student from each academic department is recognized for outstanding achievement. This year the outstanding student from the Department of English and Modern Languages was senior Lauren Holmes. Ms. Holmes faced unique challenges as a legally blind student. She currently holds a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.621. The department was also proud of a member of its extended family. Nicholas Washington won the $5000 Richard Bernstein Achievement Award for Excellence. He is an accounting major, but he is also an experienced peer tutor in the University’s writing center administered by the English department.

TITLE III MONEY IS WELL SPENT
Telecommunications Students Impress Federal Evaluator

A focus group that included nearly a dozen students expressed support for the English department’s telecommunications program when queried by a federal consultant who visited UMES recently.

Retia Walker came to campus to evaluate how UMES was using federal dollars provided by Title III of the Higher Education Act. Those funds are made available to nearly 500 colleges and universities nationwide who have demonstrated a desire to strengthen and improve themselves. Title III dollars have enabled the English department to purchase sophisticated telecommunications equipment and to augment the faculty and staff with individuals who have professional experience in the radio and television industry.

Tiffany Salmon, who serves as general manager of HawkRadio, told Dr. Walker, “I didn’t know what I wanted to do when I came to college. Now I know this is something I want to do for the rest of my life.” Senior Jessie Douglas said his experience as a student media manager has given him the tools he needs to succeed. “I describe the program as a character builder,” he said.

Dr. Walker was impressed by the students’ input. “I can hear the passion in your voices,” she said. “It’s exciting.”
GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

English Major Behind the Scenes during Maryland Legislative Session

By Quanika Lewis

Editor’s Note:

Ms. Lewis, a native of Laurel, Maryland, is an English non-teaching major who will graduate this month. She is a member of the UMES chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, a national English honor society, and has served as a peer tutor in the UMES Writing Center.

The successful completion of the internship she describes in this article earned Ms. Lewis twelve academic credits. Other students interested in pursuing a similar experience during the 2011 Maryland General Assembly session should contact Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines in the University’s social science department.

This semester I had the opportunity to do an internship with the Maryland General Assembly at the House of Delegates in Annapolis, Maryland. I applied through the General Assembly’s intern program and was interviewed and selected by Delegate Henry B. Heller from Montgomery County.

Interns work four days a week during the ninety day legislative session that takes place every year from January to April. I received a stipend from the state program and a very generous gift from a UMES donor to help with my expenses.

As an intern at the Maryland General Assembly, I learned much more about state government than I ever thought I would. I had the opportunity to experience law making and the legislative session first-hand.

I attended committee meetings, bill hearings, delegation meetings, and—most importantly—the legislative deliberations which are held in the chambers of the State House each morning while the General Assembly is in session.

I have witnessed people testifying for or against a bill, legislators voting on a bill, and the actual process that a bill has to go through to become a law.

Inside Delegate Heller’s office, my duties included writing constituent letters, researching and writing testimony, bill research, and other clerical duties.

I really enjoyed this internship and all of the great opportunities that I had. I experienced a lot, learned more than I could have imagined, and met some very nice and intelligent people that I will never forget. This internship also gave me the chance to meet my state officials including Governor Martin O’Malley, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, and Attorney General Douglas Gansler.

This internship has given me a better understanding of state and local government, and it has opened me up to new ideas. Not only did I get a great educational experience, but also a great real-life experience.

CONNECTING AT C.L.A.

Student Poet Recognized for the 2nd Year

The College Language Association held its 70th annual convention at Brooklyn College in Brooklyn, New York, last month and, for the second year in a row, a UMES student was recognized for her poetry. This year Chantel Mitchell won an honorable mention in the group’s annual writing contest; last year she took first place in the national competition.

“We should all be very proud of her,” said English Department Chair Betty Taylor-Thompson.

Dr. Taylor-Thompson is a longtime member of C.L.A. and was active at the convention again this year. The theme for the event was “Freedom’s Visions and Urban Landscapes: Spaces and Places in Language and Literature.” Dr. Taylor-Thompson presented a paper entitled “Growing Up in Fort Worth, Texas, A City Within a City: an Excerpt from an Unpublished Novel.”

Last year UMES served as host for the C.L.A. convention.

YOU’RE INVITED:

Join the department’s Spanish language students for a traditional celebration of Spanish and Latin American holidays.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 12
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
WHERE: Food Science Exhibition Hall

Mark your calendars for music, food, and fun!
Students in the English department’s broadcast management class got a rare opportunity to talk about TV sales with someone who makes a living selling advertising when the general sales manager of a commercial television station visited their class recently.

David Speicher, the general sales manager for WBOC TV and FOX21 in Salisbury, was a guest speaker in a class taught by his former colleague, Marilyn Buerkle. Before joining the UMES faculty, Ms. Buerkle served as news director and station manager at WBOC.

Mr. Speicher outlined the sales and marketing staff at his station and discussed the department’s operation with the class. His secret to success? “You have to be willing to listen to find out what the client really wants,” he advised the students. “They have to know that you care before they care what you know.”

The students are studying the business of broadcasting, and Mr. Speicher’s presentation was timed to coincide with a sales and marketing chapter.

They heard Mr. Speicher describe the differences between a “branding” campaign and a “call to action” campaign. They also learned the components of what Mr. Speicher described as the “marketing trinity”—reach, frequency, and message.

Mr. Speicher also offered some advice for a successful job search. “Whatever you do, be passionate,” he told the class.

Even though not all the students envision a career in sales, Mr. Speicher reminded them of the interdependent nature of the departments inside a television station. It’s the sales department that raises the money that all of the other departments use to create and present programs, but his sales team can’t be effective if the programs don’t attract an audience. Each department’s success is dependent on the other.

“MOTOWN N’ MUCH MORE!” is a Hit

Countless hours of rehearsals paid off as the UMES Drama Society, under the direction of English faculty member Della Dameron-Johnson, presented yet another successful annual dinner theater production in partnership with the Department of Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM).

This year’s show, a Motown review entitled “Motown N’ Much More,” was created by Dr. Dameron-Johnson and featured such popular oldies as the Temptations’ “Just My Imagination,” Smokey Robinson’s “Tears of a Clown,” and classics by, among others, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, and Michael Jackson.

“The students really did their best,” Dr. Dameron-Johnson said. “I was very proud of them.”

More than 200 students collaborate on the production and the dinner that accompanies it. This year, in addition to the drama society’s musical trip down memory lane, guests were treated to a HRM buffet of more than twenty-five different hot and cold selections. If patrons hadn’t reached their gastronomic limits at dinner, intermission brought a dessert buffet with another fifteen choices!
Taking an Educational Adventure

English Major Will Travel to Uganda this Summer

“It think it’s really going to change my priorities.” That’s what Naeemah Kitchens expects a month, living with a family of pineapple farmers and volunteering in a rural village school in Uganda, will do. She believes it will be life changing.

Ms. Kitchens, an English major who will begin her senior year at UMES this fall, is a native of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. She’s never been to Africa before, but she became intrigued when she took a course in Swahili culture taught by social science faculty member Kathryn Barrett-Gaines. “To learn about Africa, we studied literature,” she said.

Ms. Kitchens has convinced a high school friend to join her. “My mother didn’t believe me until it was time to buy the ticket,” she said.

She plans to use her love for literature at the school where she’ll work. She’s already planning to get the children to write, and then act out, plays about their history and culture. “I know it’s a great way to connect with other people, so that’s how I got the idea to have them write plays,” she said.

This isn’t the first time Ms. Kitchens has chosen a hands-on approach to learning. Over the winter term, she joined a group of students on a mercy mission to New Orleans, helping to continue the rebuilding process following Hurricane Katrina. “My mom is always supportive of academic adventures,” she said.

Ms. Kitchens plans to attend law school after she earns her English degree, and she wants to continue to travel. “I want to study the politics and culture of being second-class in other places in the world,” she said.

Ms. Kitchens

The Business of Sports

English Major Participates in Discussion

Nationally known sports journalist Kevin Blackistone served as the moderator of a provocative roundtable discussion—“Who Really Prosper from Sports?”—on the UMES campus recently. Panel participants included Elliott Alston, a junior from Colorado majoring in English and a member of the University’s varsity baseball team.

The discussion, which drew a large crowd to the Hytche Athletic Center, was part of a multi-event, semester-long symposium entitled “Sports and the Struggle for Peace, Justice, and Prosperity.”

Mr. Blackistone

“I thought it was awesome,” Mr. Alston said. “We’re a pretty small university, and it’s pretty cool to have somebody with a national reputation come here.”

He took the opportunity to seek some career advice. Mr. Blackistone, who currently teaches in the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, told Mr. Alston, in order to be competitive, he should participate in campus media, and he should get an internship before he graduates.

Mr. Blackistone moderates UMES panel; Mr. Alston is seated second from right.

Photos by Joey Gardner

Making a Difference

When hundreds of volunteers gathered at the starting line of a recent charity fundraising walk, the March of Dimes’ annual “March for Babies” walkathon in Salisbury, you might have spotted Pat Jones-Bailey, administrative assistant to the Department of English and Modern Languages.

Ms. Jones-Bailey volunteered her time and her energy to raise money that will be used for research and programs to help mothers have healthy, full-term pregnancies.

While Ms. Jones-Bailey physically walked the five miles of the event, she had a team of English department colleagues supporting her effort. Nearly two dozen of her colleagues pledged their dollars to help make her participation a success. Their donations, combined with other friends and associates of Ms. Jones-Bailey, enabled her to raise $567.

Ms. Jones-Bailey was grateful for their support. “The walk was a huge success because there was so many walkers, volunteers and sponsors,” she said.
Two members of the English department faculty traveled to Newark, Delaware, last month to attend the 21st annual convention of the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association held on the campus of the University of Delaware.

Dean Cooledge, Interim Director of the UMES Writing Center, and Terry Smith, a specialist in technical writing and coordinator of the University’s English proficiency exams, made the trip to participate in the two day conference. The theme for this year’s event was “Individuals Shaping Writing Centers/Writing Centers Shaping Individuals.”

There were nearly forty different concurrent discussions with wide-ranging topics including how to meet the needs of second language learners, whether writing center sessions should be mandatory, and how to best promote writing center services to the campus community at large.

“This conference enables me to collaborate with faculty members from all over the region who face similar challenges and who are eager to brainstorm innovative solutions,” Dr. Cooledge said.

Participants represented more than forty different institutions from Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Dr. Smith moderated a panel of peer tutors from the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia who discussed the impact of their work on their own writing, speaking, and decision making. She also delivered a paper entitled “Special Tutors for Special Tutees: The Case for Course Specialization in Writing Center Tutoring.”

Dr. Cooledge and the director of the writing center at Salisbury University, Nicole Munday, are discussing the possibility of co-hosting the association’s 2012 convention here on the Eastern Shore.

The Chair of the Department of English and Modern Languages, Betty Taylor-Thompson, conducted a writing workshop recently for UMES graduate students.

Dr. Taylor-Thompson was asked by the University’s School of Graduate Studies to hold a forum to assist current graduate students as they write their thesis.

“Sometimes students who are brilliant in their field of expertise may not be as skilled as they would like to be in communicating their ideas in writing,” Dr. Taylor-Thompson said. “I offered some strategies to help them bring clarity to the process of thesis writing.”

Graduate students are also welcome to seek advice in the University’s writing center located in Wilson Hall.

The staff of HawkRadio, the student managed Internet radio station supervised by the English department, used the recent Springfest celebration to recruit new members. Student D.J.s manned a table where they played music and conducted a CD raffle.

**INSIGHTS**

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