There were many accomplishments, milestones, and exciting activities since the last edition of Wingspan. Among these were the continued successes of our academic programs, student body and faculty. Student recruitment and emphasis on academic progression remain priorities. An exciting culmination of the latter was conferring academic degrees. For the 2014-2015 academic year, 103 and 156 degrees, respectively, were conferred during commencements in December and May for a combined total of 259. Nineteen of these degrees were awarded to doctoral recipients in either the Organizational Leadership (ORLD) or Education Leadership (EDLD) program. Further, our overall two-year, first-time freshmen retention rate increased. According to institutional data, SAP’s retention rate increased from 66 percent to 71 percent. To continue this level of success, an SAP Retention Committee was charged with monitoring retention and developing strategies to support the academic progression of our students.

The enormous talents of our faculty and students in the visual and performing arts was ubiquitous throughout the 2014-2015 academic year. Twenty-five Concert Choir members and their director, Dr. Sheila Harleston, traveled and performed in Kingston, Jamaica in May. Jamaica's Ambassador Curtis A. Ward summarized the tour as follows: “By all indications, it was a wonderfully successful tour and the university family can be proud of the remarkable representation of UMES…”

Fine Arts faculty and visiting artists continued to titillate our cultural senses by presenting numerous performances and exhibitions. This included performances by UMES' Faculty Jazz Ensemble. Also, SAP’s Drama Society, in collaboration with the Hospitality and Tourism Management Program, provided a night of entertainment and an exquisite meal to patrons attending the Jazz and Blues Cabaret. For this unforgettable event, faculty and students shared the stage to present what might be described as “The Entertainment of the Year at UMES.”

Our SAP Executive Board, chaired by Salisbury Attorney Kenneth Gaudreau, held its spring meeting in February. At the meeting, the Board welcomed its newest member, Dr. Carl Bryant, a UMES graduate and Associate Consultant at Lee Hecht Harrison. One of the exciting initiatives that was discussed during the Board meeting was the establishment of a Mentoring Program for SAP seniors and recent graduates. Led by Dr. Bryant, the Board has agreed to begin a pilot run of the program during the fall.

Finally, we expressed our adieu and farewell to three faculty members who retired from the university at the end of the academic year. Each member had contributed significantly to the school and will be highly missed. Retirees and the number of years of services to UMES included the following: Dr. Mary L. Agnew (15 years); Dr. Howard M. Rebach (43 years); and Dr. Karen A. Verbeke (25 years). Again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and best wishes throughout their retirement.

Attendees at the 62nd annual UMES Honors Convocation celebrated the academic success of the university’s undergraduates on April 2 in the Ella Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center. Students, family and friends heard a keynote address from Tyler Love, an Arts and Professions graduate, who had recently earned his doctoral degree at Virginia Tech. He offered six simple suggestions to his audience: mind your manners, value diversity, recognize the importance of mentors, set goals, don’t be afraid of failure and remember to give back. Those life lessons have paid off for Love.

He earned his UMES bachelor’s degree in technology education in 2009, graduating
summa cum laude. He won both scholar-athlete and sportsmanship awards as a member of the university’s baseball team. At Virginia Tech, where he completed a master’s degree and doctorate in curriculum and instruction, Love was one of three finalists for the Graduate Student of the Year award, two years in a row.

Nearly 300 students from the School of The Arts and Professions were recognized for their academic achievements at the convocation. They all had at least a 3.5—or higher—GPA in one of the two preceding semesters.

The various departments each singled out one student whose outstanding performance made them an academic role model for their colleagues. In the Department of Criminal Justice, departmental honors went to James Walker-Bey. The Department of Education recognized Mariah Crockett. Aundrea Townsend received the award from the Department of English and Modern Languages. Eunhea Cho was selected for recognition by the Department of Fine Arts, and Elizabeth Ranger earned the award from the Department of Social Sciences.

UMES students will be hearing more from Tyler Love. Months after the honor convocation, he was offered and accepted a faculty position here at his alma mater.
A writer’s goal is to be published. “It’s like having your name up in lights, but for an English major or a serious writer, even better,” according to Amy Hagenrater-Gooding, a faculty member in the Department of English and Modern Languages.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, Hagenrater-Gooding worked with an editor at the Gannett-owned newspaper, The Daily Times, in Salisbury, Maryland, to give both students in the department’s senior capstone class and members of the UMES English honor society, Sigma Tau Delta, the opportunity to have their opinions on current events and related issues published for a larger audience.

An honor society member and 2015 graduate, Briyana Hubbard, had three articles published in the spring semester of 2015. In “Social Media Can Be Unbearably Brutal,” Hubbard explored the treatment of Monica Lewinsky in light of Hillary Clinton’s run for the presidential nomination. Hubbard’s local article also was selected to appear in USA Today, another Gannett-owned publication, distributed nationally.

“A students use this opportunity to find their voice, and realize that their voice matters,” Hagenrater-Gooding said.

Sigma Tau Delta member Jessica Land reflected on race relations in her hometown in her May 3 piece, “Baltimore, Ticking Time Bomb.”

Chukwuemeka Duruji, a 2015 UMES graduate heading to seminary school, used his background on faith and religion to reflect on same sex marriage in his May 15 article, “How Do We Reflect God, Who Shows Us Mercy?”

“Some articles take a more confessional approach,” Hagenrater-Gooding said.

Daijah Johnson’s article “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star…” acknowledges her confusion about her future. “I love being able to say I am a soon to become a college graduate,” she writes. “But I can also say my dreams were deferred along the way … I have yet to define who I am.”

Ameera McLendon offered advice to college students trying to graduate on time in her April 30 article “Sacrificing for Six Classes.”

“Overall, the students enjoyed seeing the finished project. Who wouldn’t? But most importantly they learned about the writing process. They had to write, revise, write, edit, work with a deadline, secure photos for their piece and make their observations fit in the space allotted,” Hagenrater-Gooding said. “In class, we often ask for a ten-page paper. Here students realized the value of brevity and being succinct. They had to know their audience.”

UMES students are welcome to make unsolicited submissions to the newspaper. Hagenrater-Gooding hopes they will. “Voices matter. Words matter,” she said. “Make yours be heard.”
Here’s a riddle. How did Princess Anne and Moscow intersect in Guanacaste, Costa Rica?

It happened at the annual meeting of the International Association of Business and Society held in March. A faculty member in the UMES Organizational Leadership PhD program, Caddie Putnam Rankin, travelled 2038 miles to present a paper at the conference and to facilitate a doctoral workshop.

It’s the workshop that makes the Russian connection.

“Visioning and Revisioning,” developed by Rankin, was co-led by Rankin and Ryan Burg of the Higher School of Economics located in Moscow.

The workshop was attended by 20 doctoral students from across the globe who were preselected to attend a day full of events designed to help them navigate their doctoral journey. The program Rankin created allowed the students to explore what their research portfolio would look like in the year 2020.

Once students developed their goals individually, they met in groups to discuss and share publication experiences. Finally, the group met with faculty members to talk about challenges and opportunities in research and how to be realistic about their goals.

Students left the workshop with new peer groups and new faculty mentors who could support them as they moved forward in research.
Briana Fulton earned a bachelor degree in English at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in 2012 and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree at UMES in 2015. She’s employed now as a teacher in the Prince George’s County, Maryland, public school system. What follows is her description of how her campus experience helped her to succeed.

I heard about UMES at an event held by the university’s president at the time, Thelma Thompson, at Springfield High School in Montgomery County, Maryland. I had already been accepted to Howard University, but I had been looking for other schools to apply to, and UMES seemed like a nice choice. What stood out to me most was its size. UMES might be friendlier and a more fitting choice for a shy, timid student like me.

The day I came on a campus tour was the day UMES won my heart. The atmosphere of the campus made it clear that I would rather spend my four years at a smaller, close-knit school. UMES is the type of school that matches your effort; whatever energy you exert, you will receive in return.

As an English major, I had so many questions regarding which field to pursue directly out of college. Many professors suggested the UMES MAT degree program which certifies candidates to teach a specific subject area in Grades 7 through 12. Because of those professors, namely Amy Hagenrater-Gooding and Barbara Seabrook, I knew I had an option if I chose to go in that direction.

That’s the beauty of being at a smaller school; professors actually know who you are and understand how your strengths and weaknesses can contribute to your success in college and post-graduation. Not only were my professors there to write recommendation letters, they contacted me regularly to make sure that everything was going well and to help me in any way possible.

I made the decision to enter the MAT program in January of 2014. Although the program was strenuous, UMES provided me with all the help that I needed to be successful. When I was looking for a job on campus, my undergraduate professors helped me secure a position in the UMES Writing Center. If it had not been for those professors putting in a good word, I might not have landed the job, which ultimately helped me get through the program.

The biggest help from the school that I received was at the local teacher recruitment fair. Multiple school districts from all over Maryland, Delaware and Virginia were present. At the fair, the ladies from the UMES Career and Professional Development Center made sure that the three UMES teacher interns had first pick of interviews. It was because of that fair and being the first one at the table, that I was offered a position in Prince George’s County Public Schools. Now I am an 8th-grade language arts teacher at Buck Lodge Middle School in Adelphi, Maryland.

UMES has helped me tremendously in terms of helping me figure out which direction I wanted to take in my career. Being at a smaller school helped me gain recognition for my accomplishments and helped pave the way for me to land the job of my dreams.

If I had to do it all over again, I would choose UMES every time.

A group of criminal justice majors got an insider’s look at how 13 thousand people waiting for trial, on probation, or on parole are supervised each day in the District of Columbia. Twenty students visited the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) in early April.

CSOSA is an independent federal agency that provides community corrections services in the District. The field trip was a part of an ongoing institutional collaboration between CSOSA and the UMES Department of Criminal Justice to enhance the student’s practicum experience. The visit provided an opportunity for hands-on interaction as the group role-played scenarios both as offenders and as CSOSA officers.

The students started the day by reporting to intake for processing. Next stop: simulated drug testing. Then, they reported to a community supervision officer who provided an overview of supervision, reviewed requirements, and discussed risk assessment. The students were also briefed on CSOSA’s cognitive behavior intervention model known as CALM (Controlling Behavior and Learning to Manage It). At the end of the visit, the group was offered the opportunity to apply for internships at the agency.

The students were accompanied on the trip by Kingsley Ejiogu, a faculty member in the UMES Department of Criminal Justice, and Wayne Jearld and Michael Taylor from the university’s Division of Institutional Advancement.

“The students enjoyed the visit,” Ejiogu said. “We hope the CSOSA experiential learning program will become a continuing practicum experience for our students.”
The spring 2015 semester brought another example of the productive partnership between the Art League of Ocean City and the UMES Department of Fine Arts. On April 10, an exhibition of the work of students, alumni, and both current and former faculty members went on display in the balcony gallery of the organization’s Center for the Arts.

Featured artists included Hawa-Maya Bangura, David Brame, Josh Canty, Alicia Critchfield, Michel Demanche, Chris Harrington, Susan Holt, Brad Hudson, Lydell McKissic, Josh Nobiling, Ryan Philoche, Ernie Satchell, Desmond Smith, Quinten Walker and Joanna Webb.

Rina Thaler, the league’s executive director, publicly thanked UMES at the show’s opening reception and expressed her continued commitment to the university’s art program, including similar future shows.
As part of campus events celebrating Black History Month, the Mosely Gallery presented an exhibition of the art of Bryan Collier. An award-winning illustrator and writer, Collier displayed his unique style of watercolor and collage in over 20 original works of art.

Most were made as illustrations for children’s books honoring African American history from a personal point of view. Collier’s style is often compared to that of Romare Bearden, an innovative African American artist of the post Harlem Renaissance era who also combined collage and traditional illustration techniques.

To Collier, his technique contains symbolic meaning as well. “Collage is more than just an art style. Collage is all about bringing different elements together. Once you form a sensibility about connection, how different elements relate to each other, you deepen your understanding of yourself and others,” he said.

Collier is well known to the UMES community. He grew up in Pocomoke City and spent many afterschool hours in the library with his aunt, Jessie Smith, the first dean of the university’s library. “At home and at school, I was encouraged to read. I remember the first books with pictures that I read by myself were “The Snow Day” by Jack Keats and “Harold and the Purple Crayon” by Crockett Johnson. I liked the stories, but I really liked the pictures.”

As a teenager he began to paint the world around him – the bay, the ducks, water and marshland. While he loved the illustrated books he read as a child, he was disappointed that he never saw books with stories and depictions of African Americans. He was determined to change that.

A Pocomoke City High School art teacher recognized his talent and pushed him to work hard. In 1985, the strong work ethic he developed led to Collier’s winning first place in a congressional competition; his work was displayed in the U.S. Capitol.

His promising talent and hard work was keenly noted locally. Ernie Satchell, former chair of the UMES Department of Fine Arts, tried in vain to entice Collier to study here at home. But when he won a scholarship to the Pratt Institute in New York—one of the nation’s top art schools—Satchell would congratulate him.

While in school, Collier volunteered at the Harlem Horizon Art Studio in the Harlem Hospital Center and discovered a passion for children’s books. His work has earned many honors, including Caldecott Honors, Coretta Scott King awards and the 2014 U.S. nomination for the biennial, international Hans Christian Andersen Award.

While on the UMES campus, Collier spent much time in the gallery with different groups of students of all ages. He is a very engaging speaker whose passion for his subjects translates directly from his readings.

Several groups of wiggly but enthralled toddlers came to the gallery from the campus day care center and enthusiastically responded to his analogy that making a collage is similar to making a pizza.

The group of middle school students from the UMES-Garland Hayward Youth Center afterschool program followed his every word as he recounted the story of Pullman porters depicted in his book based on the Langston Hughes poem “I, Too Am America.”

UMES art students got tremendous benefit from his input. He especially encouraged them to persevere, telling them he went every week for seven years to book publishers before he finally got his break. He also emphasized the importance of research in his artistic process, recounting how he traveled and did interviews and sketches on site to gain the necessary personal knowledge.

“The experience of making art is all about making decisions,” he said. “Once the kids really get that, you see them making the connection. They go from saying, ‘That’s not about me’ to ‘Hey. Look at me. This is who I am.’ ”
Members of the UMES Drama Society, led by English faculty emeritus Della Dameron-Johnson, joined their colleagues in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management to produce two nights of delicious food and engaging entertainment.

This year, the traditional dinner theater format was revised. Instead of a scripted dramatic presentation, talented members of the campus community performed in a cabaret atmosphere and, for the first time, a dance floor was provided for the audience.

The university’s Jazz & Blues Cabaret was staged on April 17 and 18 and featured music which ranged from ballads made famous by Etta James, Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett to the more contemporary tunes of Aretha Franklin and Al Green.

The performers played to a packed house both evenings.

FOOD AND FUN
The February death of Leonard Nimoy, the actor long remembered as Star Trek’s Mr. Spock, provided the inspiration for a temporary municipal art display created by UMES students on the Downtown Plaza in Salisbury, Maryland.

It’s part of an ongoing project arranged by Mosely Gallery Director Susan Holt. She serves as chair of the public art committee for the city’s Arts and Entertainment District.

With the blessing of Salisbury’s Historic District Commission, the students attached their art to the north wall of what’s known as the Powell Building on April 17. They used a form of biodegradable wheat paste and joined some 30 individual pieces to create the larger portrait.

“It comes from the tradition of graffiti and street art. It disintegrates with time,” Holt said. “Works like these have been put up all over the world.”

Students enrolled in Brad Hudson’s spring drawing classes each created an 18 x 24 inch piece of the Spock mural. It was an exercise in teamwork.

“It was a collaborative project,” Hudson said. “Each artist created one little bit of the whole picture. They had never seen the entirety of the image until it was assembled.”

This isn’t the first time UMES students have used the Powell Building as their canvas, and it won’t be the last. Hudson’s fall semester drawing classes will create a new mural with a Star Wars theme.

Holt says the reaction to the work has been wonderful. “It’s a great showcase for UMES,” she said. “It builds community.”

Members of the School of The Arts and Professions shared their talent and expertise around the region during the 2015 celebration of Black History Month.

Two faculty members from the social sciences department, both historians, were featured speakers at community events.

Kathryn Barrett-Gaines visited New Dimensions Family Ministries in nearby Salisbury, Maryland, on February 8. The theme of the event was “Connecting to Our History.”

“Getting to know history can change our lives and those around us,” Barrett-Gaines said. “Ignorance reinforces prejudice, racism, xenophobia and violence. Knowledge gives us vocabulary, fact and evidence. Those are so much more powerful than guns.”

Joshua Wright addressed an interracial group of African American and Jewish American senior citizens as the keynote speaker for the annual Black History Month event, March 7, at the Weinberg Village in Owings Mills, Maryland.

Wright discussed the controversial 1950s era television program, “Amos ‘n' Andy.” It was the first prime-time television series to have an all-black cast. However, the NAACP boycotted the show because the organization alleged that the show perpetuated negative stereotypes of African Americans. Wright’s presentation was an excerpt from a forthcoming book chapter that will be published in 2016.

The event was described as “engaging and thought provoking” by Charle Childs, a resident at the Weinberg Village. “Dr. Wright provided an outstanding platform for a discussion on Hollywood, race and the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s,” she said.

The Department of Fine Arts also contributed to community events during Black History Month. The university’s concert choir, under the direction of faculty member Sheila Harleston, took to the road in February to offer seven different regional performances.
Sometimes putting an idea into words makes an issue much easier to understand and share.

The Organizational Leadership PhD program at UMES has launched the Faculty and Student Writing Collaborative to support its scholarly community and development. The initiative provides an opportunity for members of the ORLD community to write about relevant leadership issues from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

The project is designed to make the writing process an active and consistent activity that reinforces idea generation, knowledge dissemination and collaboration — hallmarks of scholarly productivity and creativity.

Because good writing takes practice, the effort includes the launch of the UMES OrgLeadership Blog (https://umesorgleadership.wordpress.com/).

In addition to the faculty and students collaborative writing efforts in ORLD courses, peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations, the blog provides a dedicated space for both scholarly and editorial conversations about organizational leadership in ways that are informative and accessible.

In addition to faculty and students contributing to this collaborative, industry experts are invited to share timely, critical perspectives on some of the leading issues facing organizational leaders today.

The writing activities also serve as an opportunity to build community with the ORLD alumni – existing scholars and practitioners who have made tremendous contributions in a variety disciplines and industries. Their contribution to this initiative is viewed as an invaluable tool to enhance continued programmatic development and the academic success of students.

“"The Role of Media in a Changing Society""—amidst the backdrop of a network anchorman’s suspension, troubling video of police in action and the rise of so-called ""citizen journalists"" around the world—was a timely topic for the School of The Arts and Professions lecture series during the spring semester.

Michael Kilian, executive editor of the Delmarva Media Group, was the featured speaker on February 12 in Hazel Hall.

An audience of both faculty and students heard Kilian describe the role of the media as a mirror on the world, though he acknowledged it is often a “highly imperfect mirror.” He stressed the need to consume many different information sources to get what he called a “3-D picture of what is going on.”

Kilian reminded the audience that everyone has the ability to become a producer of media through the use of Twitter, Facebook or Snapchat. “News is delivered in real time,” he said. “We expect that now.”
Just a day after a rousing performance at the university's spring commencement ceremony, the UMES Concert Choir boarded a plane for its eleventh trip under the direction of Fine Arts faculty member Sheila Harleston. Other destinations have included Honolulu, London, Paris and Trinidad—this time the choir was headed to Kingston, Jamaica.

The group's week-long summer performance tour, including venues in Kingston and its surrounding vicinity, was hosted by the Jamaica National Building Society. Audiences assembled in churches, retirement homes and at an all-boys high school. Additionally, the choir sang during an interview session with a local radio station and recorded five selections for the “Smile Jamaica Show,” a daily national televised morning show — similar to “Good Morning America” here in the States.

“The tours allow the students to experience different cultures while serving as ambassadors for the university,” Harleston said. “Invariably, the audiences’ responses have been overwhelming and have served as a source of motivation and recognition that hard work has its rewards.”

The 25-member choir stayed in Elsa Leo-Rhynie Hall on the campus of the University of the West Indies. Sleeping in the dormitory and eating in the cafeteria gave the UMES students a real sense of the college life their Caribbean colleagues experience. There was no air conditioning in the dorms, but breakfast was a multi-course affair that included jerk chicken, plantain, dumplings, boiled bananas, curried goat and other local delicacies.

The food impressed Dré Tingle, a native of Worcester County, Maryland, majoring in music education. “As someone with Caribbean heritage I have always loved plantains, fried, boiled, or raw, but in Jamaica I experienced a lot of wonderful food I’d never had before,” he said. “There was an abundance of fruit—papaya, pineapple, mango, starfruit, all fresh! I even tasted pure sugar cane.”

In between performances, the students enjoyed the beach at Ocho Rios, visited Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kingston, and toured the Institute of Jamaica, a national museum.

The choir's fall concert at UMES will offer a glimpse of the trip to a campus audience. “Sights and Sounds of Jamaica” is scheduled for Sunday, November 8.
If study abroad isn’t an option, how about a virtual visit? Some UMES students are connecting with their peers around the world via a virtual exchange program called Soliya Connect.

“Soliya facilitates live, moderated, online discussions with groups of eight to ten students from around the world,” said Tammy Gharbi, program coordinator for the Foreign Language Instructional Center in the Department of English and Modern Languages. “These two hour weekly chats focus on issues that promote cross-cultural understanding in a way that is second only to international travel.”

Certain courses in English and in Rehabilitation Counseling participated in the spring 15 semester. A freshman honors seminar piloted the program in fall 14.

“FLIC has partnered with the Honors Program, directed by Dr. Michael Lane, to make this a reality because we believe in the importance of global competence in our graduates,” Gharbi added. “Whether a student is doing this for an Honors notation or as part of their regular course work, we believe it has the potential to broaden horizons for all students.”

Ameera McLendon, a senior in the English Capstone course taught by Amy Hagenrater-Gooding, wasn’t sure what to expect.

“When I first started the Soliya project, I was nervous about interacting with different people because I am a very shy person … but then we all got out of our comfort zone and discussed numerous topics about stereotypes, discrimination, and social media’s influence on different cultures,” McLendon said. “People from Morocco, Indonesia and Italy joined our conversation, and it was an exciting experience.”

“Having the ability to interact with others in a global context and to engage in issues that impact the world we live in is just as important as writing and speaking clearly,” Hagenrater-Gooding said. “In fact, it goes hand in hand.”

Another of Hagenrater-Gooding’s students, Dajjah Johnson, was equally enthusiastic. “Soliya was so much fun. It was nice meeting people from all different places, sharing parts of their lives and experiences.”

Students can attend the chat sessions using their own computer and webcam or by coming to the Foreign Language Instructional Center’s classroom. Soliya also assigns readings which complement the discussions.

Soliya has partnered with MIT to assess the impact that the Connect program has on students at over 100 institutions of higher education in 27 countries. Results of their studies show that 90 percent of participants are glad they took part in the program and would recommend it to their peers. The research also showed that there was a 25 percent increase in the participants’ recognition that they have a lot in common with their peers around the world.
For more than 40 years, Howard Rebach has been a fixture in the Department of Social Sciences. When he announced he would retire at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, at least one of his former students thought he was making a joke. Michael Taylor, who graduated with a sociology degree in 2014, found it hard to imagine UMES without one of his favorite instructors.

“Dr. Rebach, for me, was more than a teacher. He was a mentor,” Taylor said. “He helped me grow, not just as a student, but as a man.”

Taylor’s sentiment is not unique. Thousands of students have enrolled in classes taught by Rebach. Many of them believe he played a critical role in their success.

Thomas LaVeist, a professor of health policy and the director of the Center for Health Disparities Solutions at Johns Hopkins University, was an undergraduate at UMES in the 1980s. He changed majors at least three times. He credits Howard Rebach with helping him to decide what he wanted to do.

“He really helps you figure out what your talents are,” LaVeist said. “He’s not a warm and fuzzy guy. He operates on tough love—but, ultimately, it is love.”

Rebach, who earned his PhD at Michigan State in 1968, was an assistant professor at the University of Maryland College Park when UMES President Archie Buffkins approached him in 1971 about serving as chair of the social sciences department at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

“He was attempting to bring this little school into the 21st century,” Rebach reminisced recently. “It was a pretty insular culture.”

He described the coursework in his department when he arrived in the fall of 1972 as “very thin soup.” While he is reluctant to take credit for his impact on his students, he does acknowledge that there were dramatic changes in curriculum after his arrival. “By the end of my first year as chair, we had completely revamped the curriculum,” he said.

He wanted students who took sociology courses to understand society is something that can be studied with a scientific attitude, and the social facts that are studied—things like infant mortality, poverty, literacy—are a very powerful influence on the kind of person one becomes.

“Have we gotten that across to our graduates? Yes, I think we have,” he said.

That social awareness is an achievement in itself, but Rebach believes his greatest accomplishment has been convincing some of his most promising students to pursue doctoral degrees and to continue their careers in college classrooms.

“I’m very happy to report to you that there are probably a dozen or more college professors, who got their PhDs at fine institutions, teaching now, who got their start here,” he said.

A group of alumni returned to UMES to say thank you to their mentor, surprising Rebach at his last class. The scheme was conceived by Leroy Maddox, Class of 1986, and managed with some behind-the-scenes help from Rebach’s wife, Katherine.

Maddox, who went on to law school, helps craft health policy as a legislative officer for the county council in Prince George’s County, Maryland. He said Rebach has remained a mentor to many of his students. “He’s still an integral part of our lives,” Maddox said. “We wanted to show up all of sudden to surprise him, so he would understand how much he meant to us.”

Rebach describes himself as “pushing 80,” but he’s not planning on settling into a rocking chair in his retirement. In addition to his teaching credentials, he’s also a licensed psychotherapist. “I’m very concerned about veterans,” he said. “The suicide rate is enormous. I’m trained to help.”

He won’t be able to devote all his time to that endeavor; he’s been convinced by the current social sciences chair, Joyce Bell, to return in the fall as a part-time professor.
HOMETOWN PRIDE

Watching television coverage of the riots in Baltimore in the aftermath of Freddie Gray’s death was difficult for anyone who calls the city home, but it was particularly tough for Brandon Bazemore.

Bazemore, who earned a UMES English degree in 2005, has always felt that his hometown is unfairly pegged as a crime capital; this coverage would only make Baltimore’s reputation worse. “I was hurt. It was really an emotional moment,” he said. “I was upset.”

His concern about how others perceived his city had been building over time. While he acknowledges that the HBO series “The Wire” and the 1990s NBC drama “Homicide: Life on the Street”—both shot in Baltimore—were critically acclaimed, he worried about the negative image they portrayed.

“I was getting tired of people thinking Baltimore was only “The Wire.” That’s all they think of,” he said. “We have crime just like other places, but there’s more to the city … I wanted to show people a different perspective.”

In fact, Bazemore—a budding filmmaker—had just finished a project designed to do that. Just three weeks before the violence erupted, he posted a 25 minute project, titled “B-More Creative,” to his YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/BSideMotionPictures). He describes it as a blending of documentary and fiction with a semi-autobiographical narrative.

The project takes viewers well beyond inner city crime and introduces them to the Baltimore he knows and loves. “The only thing I can do is showcase the positive,” he said.

Bazemore has always wanted to make a career in the film industry. “It’s been a passion of mine since I was 8 years old,” he said. “I was always infatuated with movies and great stories.”

At 14, he penned a screenplay on notebook paper and sent it off to the Maryland Film Commission. It was one of his many efforts to follow in the footsteps of award-winning storytellers like Spike Lee.

The UMES English degree was the first step in garnering the appropriate credentials. He is quick to credit a list of faculty members here who helped him fine tune his ideas. Next, he went on to Towson University to earn a second bachelor’s degree in electronic media and film studies. Since then, he’s also earned a certificate in digital communication from the University of Baltimore.

He’s been busy beyond the classroom as well. “B-More Creative” is his sixth short film. He’s built a versatile resume appearing as an extra in major motion pictures shot in Baltimore, serving as a production assistant for live theater productions, performing at local open mic nights and surrounding himself with other members of the city’s creative community.

Bazemore is actively shopping his most recent film, hoping—with its timely subject matter—it will be accepted at a major film festival.

See you at Sundance, Brandon!
UMES sequential arts students celebrated Free Comic Book Day, on May 2, by creating sketches for the patrons of Phoenix Rising Games and Comics in Salisbury, Maryland.

Free Comic Book Day began in 2002. Since its inception, comic book shops nationwide have been giving away comics on the first Saturday in May. The UMES art students have been attending this event at local shops for the past few years.

This year, five students joined fine arts faculty member Brad Hudson for the day, drawing free sketches for those who came to claim their free comics.

“(The event is) great practice for the students,” Hudson said. “People are very appreciative.”

Josh Canty, Gabrielle Lang, Sean Milbourne, Kristina Miller and Joanna Webb drew for over five hours. Attendees who came in costume were also given a bonus graphic novel.

Free Comic Book Day isn’t the only event where UMES sequential art students can be found at the local shop doing drawings. They also have attended the Halloween celebration at Phoenix doing free sketches and face painting.
Service above and beyond the call of duty is clearly what English faculty member Courtney Harned provides as an academic advisor. Just ask English major Jessica Land.

"Ms. Harned is more than an advisor. She is a hero, tying severed strings behind the scenes in her brisk, efficient way so that her students may receive the best care and education available at this institution."

That’s just a portion of the praise Land supplied when she nominated her advisor for the inaugural Aundrä C. Roberts Award for Excellence in Honors Student Advisement. The award, named for a recently retired UMES Honors Program staff member, seeks to recognize one faculty or staff member who has most significantly and positively impacted the performance and professional development of an honors program student.

Harned has certainly had an impact on Land, a senior from Baltimore, Maryland. “She gave me all the tools I needed to succeed as a student, taught me how to navigate the undergraduate system, helped me edit and kick start a new literary magazine, and pulled me through one of the most . . . devastating periods of my life,” she said.

Land’s nomination persuaded a five-member committee of faculty and staff who serve on the Honors Council to select Ms. Harned for the award, which was announced in May at the Honors spring graduation medaling ceremony.