“Science serves our nation” was among the many signs displayed during the March for Science on Earth Day. Even though it was damp and cold on the National Mall in Washington D.C., thousands of scientists turned out in a spirited mood.

Like other march participants, I would describe myself as politically aware, but not politically active. The current political atmosphere, however, spurred me to leave my office and venture out onto the Mall.

Every administration has an agenda to fulfill, but I would hope that each would try to craft its policies based upon evidence. That was the essence of the 2017 March for Science; no matter your political persuasion, it is vital that scientific evidence be used to enact policies.

To forego this approach is not in the public’s best interest, may waste taxpayer dollars and, at the very worst, lead to harmful policies.

Taking inspiration from the many signs carried in other marches, I played around with different phrases that I would write on my sign. One of my first thoughts was, “If you’re not using evidence, then you must be following the money.”

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore has been awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant that will be used to bring digital technology to classes where fashion design and merchandising are taught.

The USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture notified Dr. Grace Namwamba, chairwoman of UMES’ Department of Human Ecology, that the university will receive $147,479 to purchase customized computer hardware used in the fashion industry.

Namwamba said the new equipment will enable the university to expand its curriculum as well as partner with a leading software provider she has approached about supporting the modernization of UMES fashion merchandising program.

“This grant will have far-reaching effects and allow us to apply technology across the curriculum,” Namwamba said.

About 90 undergraduates here major in fashion merchandising, and Namwamba sees the new computer-driven lab courses as a crucial selling point in growing enrollment.

“Our students will be more engaged,” Namwamba said, “and more in demand by the fashion industry.”

Namwamba joined the UMES faculty in July 2015 from Southern University in Louisiana where she was a professor and chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and was known for her success in writing grant applications.

At Southern, she procured generous funding used for a Computer Aided Design laboratory, a 3-D body scanning laboratory, a digital textile printing laboratory, two textile testing laboratories and a high-tech multi-media classroom.

Namwamba said one of her goals is to do the same at UMES.
UMES honorees for commencement exercises

Rushern L. Baker III, Prince George's County Executive, will address an audience of some 435 undergraduate and graduate degree candidates and their invited guests at the William P. Hytche Athletic Center May 26 for the university’s 130th spring commencement. A sizeable number of those seated are Baker’s constituents – approximately 22 percent of the university’s enrollment hailing from the executive’s county. Baker’s administration, in its seventh year, is known for “positive change in creating jobs, growing the economy and improving public safety and education.” He is a Howard University graduate of law.

John J. Allen Jr., a local utility company executive and chairman of UMES’ all-volunteer Board of Visitors, will receive an honorary degree. Allen was instrumental serving as a liaison between the university and Delmarva Power, an Exelon Co., which donated $1 million to the university in July 2016 to support energy conservation initiatives and instruction. As vice president of Delmarva Power, Allen, a 37-year veteran of the utility industry, provides executive representation to all levels of government on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Kent and Sussex counties in Delaware as serves as a lobbyist. He is a member of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, among other professional organizations, and was appointed by Gov. Larry Hogan in 2015 to the Governor’s Emergency Management Advisory Council.

Art Shell (Class of 1968) returns to his alma mater, which will present him with a presidential medallion as a gesture of gratitude for his five decades of support and loyalty. Shell, who played football and basketball for the Hawks during the mid-1960s when UMES was known as Maryland State College, was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1989 and in the College Football HOF in 2013. He was an eight-time Pro Bowl member and three-time Super Bowl champion with the Oakland Raiders, the franchise where he was head coach, becoming the first African-American in the modern day National Football League to do so.

Dr. Robert B. Dadson, a retired professor of agriculture and food sciences, and his wife, retired campus librarian Theresa E. Dadson, will be honored as faculty emeriti.

Robert Dadson joined UMES’ Soybean Research Institute in 1979 as a visiting research scientist and retired a year ago as a full professor in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Resource Sciences. He served as the acting director of the institute, supervising the development of control tactics to prevent soybean insect pest damage. Following that post, he served on USAID-sponsored research projects in Zambia and Cameroon and on legume food projects in Senegal, Togo, and Egypt. His recent research activities focused on the use of grasses as renewable bio feedstock and spices as additional crops that could be grown on the Delmarva Peninsula. Dr. Dadson wrote successful research grant proposals totaling over $60 million to support local and international agricultural development projects. He also served as acting department chair and assistant to the vice president for academic affairs.

Theresa Dadson’s career in library science spanned 45 years. She joined UMES in 1980 as coordinator of acquisitions and collection development in Frederick Douglass Library and retired as a senior librarian in 2015. Under a four-year subcontract arrangement, she also was head librarian of the NASA, Wallops Island Library. She searched for reading materials for the NASA engineers and scientists for their work. Prior to her UMES post, she worked in the Balme Library at the University of Ghana.

Brown will deliver student commentary

Jasmine E. Brown will represent nearly 300 members of the senior class at commencement exercises when she delivers the student commentary.

Brown, a member of the Richard A. Henson Honors Program, was the top choice of a panel of five judges who auditioned candidates who applied for the honor.

The kinesiology major from Pocomoke City said she was shocked when contacted about her selection.

“I’m really excited about the opportunity, and a little nervous, too,” she said.

In her application, Brown wrote that she was hopeful of getting an opportunity to “express my gratitude towards the university for making an investment in me and to encourage (members of) the graduating class to invest in themselves.”

Her final semester has been an eventful one; she traveled in January to the Dominican Republic with fellow Henson honors students on a service-learning excursion. It was her first trip overseas, an experience she called “amazing.”

In April, she was named the top student in UMES’ Department of Kinesiology. And to fulfill an internship requirement, she has been working at the Lower Shore Immediate Care office in Princess Anne, which helped her decide a career path.

She’s hopeful of being accepted into graduate school where she wants to study to be a physician assistant.

Her overseas trip “made me realize I want to work with medical clinics inside our country and outside our county so individuals can receive quality health care.”

She is a member of the campus Praise Fellowship and Kinesiology Club as well as two honor societies, Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Omicron Nu. Her 3.86 grade point average qualifies her to graduate with summa cum laude honors.
Ben Whiteley has the distinction of being the first engineering graduate (Class of 2017) to leave the University of Maryland Eastern Shore with virtual reality programming skills, much of it self-taught.

His senior-year design project has established a new standard that he and faculty adviser Dr. Lei Zhang are hopeful will become a template of learning for future engineering majors to follow.

“I was looking to create a roadmap for new students coming in and have a working program to show them it can be done,” said Whiteley, who grew up in Ridgely, Md., a small town in northern Caroline County.

A self-professed video game enthusiast, Whiteley estimates he invested two years – sometimes working 30-plus hours a week – creating his own version from scratch.

“Game-based learning” as the newest method and practice in teaching “is booming now,” according to Zhang.

Light-tight, wrap-around goggles with a special screen are connected to hand-held controllers. Together, they are guided by sensors around the room – in this case, a computer lab, which enables a user to move about freely in a three-dimensional environment visible through the goggles.

Whiteley was guided by “memory matching” strategy. His version features such tasks as identifying different colored boxes, lifting or tossing them aside; grasping an appropriate implement to knock apples one-by-one from a tree; and aiming a virtual bow-and-arrow at designated targets to answer multiple choice quiz questions.

Whiteley sees virtual reality having practical applications as well. Simulating dangerous scenarios, for example, can provide participants the training and experience dealing with emergencies such as putting out a fire.

“The idea … is to get lab safety into the minds of the students,” he told a TV journalist during a demonstration of an early version of his senior-year project. “Always wear (safety) goggles if required, closed toe shoes, what fire extinguishers to use … that sort of thing.”

By tapping students’ interests in video games, Zhang believes virtual reality instruction at the university level will become an increasingly more essential teaching tool.

“We are making games so the student can learn by playing them,” said Zhang, an assistant professor whose specialty is electrical and computer engineering.

Virtual reality, Zhang predicts, will play a key role in influencing an ever-expanding spectrum of real-life activities and uses, including medicine, manufacturing, national defense and public safety.

“This is the direction computer programming is going,” he said. “It’s the latest thing.”

Whiteley can pinpoint when computer programming became his career path.

Kevin Webster, a future teacher at North Caroline High School, visited Whiteley’s elementary school to make a presentation about the computers that fifth-graders could expect to encounter in middle school, and Whiteley came away enthralled by the possibilities.

Anxious to scratch that computer itch, Whiteley remembers skipping school one day just to help his father upload a Windows 98 program on a home computer.

“Ben Whiteley was one of the most inquisitive students that I have taught,” Webster said. “He has a desire to know how everything works. His solutions to problems were always more advanced than his peers.”

“His ability to visualize a solution and create it were uncanny,” Webster said. “He has the potential to conquer whatever he chooses.”

As Whiteley weighed his options for college to study engineering, UMES became his choice because of its size, the resources it provides students and the potential “to know all my professors.”

Zhang credits Whiteley with having “strong motivation—we just provided him the resources and the environment.”

That environment included the latest technology in labs on the third-floor of UMES’ $101.2 million Engineering and Aviation Science Complex, which opened in January 2016.

Prior to that, Whiteley said he did “a lot (of programming work and experimentation) in my dorm room. So, yeah, it’s been great to be able to work in this new lab. I feel it’s been a plus.”

Zhang said Whiteley has “exceeded expectations” and “has a very bright future.”

Whiteley thinks homes someday will have a dedicated “empty room with just the two sensors on the side … that will be the virtual reality room and you can watch a virtual reality movie, learn something in virtual reality – and also just play games in there.”
Blue skies and unseasonably high temperatures April 28 provided ideal conditions for high school students putting their Chesapeake deadrise crab boat models through the test in the second annual Eastern Shore Crab Boat Engineering Challenge in Cambridge sponsored by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

For Jeremy Novak, the 16-year-old Stephen Decatur High School team captain, the project touched on his woodworking hobby and background living on the water operating boats.

“ar part of making ‘Miss Decatur’ was working with local boat builder Mr. Joey Miller,” Novak said. “He is a salt-of-the-earth kind of guy and provided the wisdom, foresight, ideas and the humor needed to make ‘Miss Decatur’ look as realistic as it does. We built a beautiful boat and although it took a lot of time to build (and mistakes along the way, he added), the end result was well worth it.”

The proof—the local competitor took home the award for “Best Design.”

It was the culmination of the academic year’s work—one that had the aspiring engineers putting in “beyond the bell” time, according to Larry Ryan, faculty advisor for the SDHS team.

Participating teams were tasked with working through the engineering process like professionals do to design and operate “sea-worthy and functionally sound” remote-controlled watercraft, said Dr. Tyler Love, UMES’ coordinator for the event and an assistant professor of technology and engineering education. During the competition, the vessels raced in the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences’ boat ramp to collect the most miniature crab baskets in an allotted timeframe.

“Students applied their knowledge of STEM concepts such as environmental impacts of crabbing, the history and design of the deadrise (a wooden-hulled workboat characterized by a small cabin, open cockpit and a large open work area aft, buoyancy, stability, manufacturing processes, electronics and transportation technologies,” Love said.

Teams made their boats from scratch using computer software to design them to scale and guided by an online workshop UMES provided that discussed various materials teams could consider using, Love said. “Some used plywood, some used foam, some used sheet metal. That was the beauty of this activity, seeing the creativity and innovation of the students’ designs.”

The event grew from last year, Love said, with eight teams and some 50 students participating in the 2017 event; some traveling from Maryland’s western shore and Virginia’s Tidewater area. “The event aligns with the university’s outreach mission, providing valuable learning experiences for area high school students and teachers while serving as a recruitment tool for the university.”

Teams were judged on their boat designs and performance, a written report showing their mathematical calculations and addressing the environmental impacts of crabbing, and responses to questions, Love said.

Old Mill High School in Millersville, Md. came in first place with Virginia Beach City Public School’s Advanced Technology Center taking the number two spot and sportsmanship award.

UMES organizers collaborated with Kelvin® Educational, which donated the model boat motors, University of Maryland Extension 4-H STEM agents who judged entries and UMES faculty. Technology and engineering education students at UMES helped facilitate the event and manufactured the award plaques and souvenir 3-D printed keychains.
Aquatic resources and ecosystems symposium

Student leaders from the UMES subunit of the American Fisheries Society hosted the Delmarva Aquatic Resources and Ecosystems Research Symposium April 28. The event took place at the Assateague Island National Park Headquarters and the nearby Paul S. Sarbanes Coastal Ecology Center.

Students and faculty from the Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center along with guests from U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen’s office and the NOAA Office of Education took part in the day-long symposium organized to facilitate open discussions among stakeholders in Delmarva resources.

Keynote speaker Tom Horton shared his observations of changes in nature, species and the fishing industry on Delmarva, particularly in Somerset and Dorchester counties.

Horton is a professor of practice in environmental studies at Salisbury University and as a former newspaper journalist wrote extensively about Chesapeake Bay politics, culture and science. He is the author of eight books about the Chesapeake Bay and covered the environment for the Baltimore Sun for 35 years.

“There’s not much more pressing on Delmarva than climate change and sea level rise,” Horton said.

Posters and oral presentations highlighting student research related to the aquatic resources and ecosystems found throughout the Delmarva Peninsula were presented in the afternoon by students from UMES, Delaware State University, UMCES Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Exhibitors from the LMRCSC, Assateague Island State Park and Assateague Coastal Trust were also on hand.

Anne Dudley, communication specialist, NOAA Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center

Research Symposium winners

POSTER SESSION

UNDERGRADUATE

1st Place: Chiebuka Nwachukwu, Atinuke Akinlade, Dr. Mobulaji Okulate, Dr. Dia Elnaiem (Department of Natural Sciences, UMES)

2nd Place: Haileab Ghebrekidan, Deirdre Johnson, Baruch Volkis, Dr. Paulinus Chigbu (Department of Natural Sciences, UMES)

3rd Place: Benjamin Barnes, Uche Onuchukwu, Dr. Victoria Volkis (Department of Natural Sciences, UMES)

GRADUATE

1st Place: Isis J. Amaye (Ph.D. student, Pharmaceutical Science Program, UMES)

2nd Place: Marilyn Allen, Michael H. Zhang, Kelly Moynihan et al (UMBC)

3rd Place: Makenzie Worthington, Amauri Smith, Kyle Daugherty et al (Physical Therapy Program, UMES)

FACULTY

1st Place: Dr. Richard DeBenedetto, PharmD., School of Pharmacy, UMES

Oral Session

UNDERGRADUATE

1st Place: Richard Quackenbush (Salisbury University)

2nd Place: Princess Bolton (Department of Education, UMES)

3rd Place: Jelani K. Worrell (Department of Business, Management & Accounting, UMES)

GRADUATE

1st Place: Kristen Lycett (Ph.D. Marine Estuarine Environmental Science (MEES), UMES)

2nd Place: Jarbari Hawkins (Ph.D. Food Science and Technology, UMES)

3rd Place: Isis J. Amaye (Ph.D. Pharmaceutical Sciences)

FACULTY

1st Place: Yen Dang, PharmD., School of Pharmacy, UMES

Three Minute Thesis

PH.D. CATEGORY ($200) Isis Amaye (Pharmaceutical Science)

MASTER’S CATEGORY ($200) Chinedu Ahuchaoug (Toxicology)

PEOPLE’S CHOICE AWARD ($100) Isis Amaye (Pharmaceutical Science)
Two exciting “walk-off” wins by the UMES baseball team during this past weekend’s final home series of the 2017 season earned the Hawks a berth in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference post-season tournament.

Sunday’s doubleheader sweep of Norfolk State proved a fitting finale for a trio of UMES seniors, Jordan Martin, Justin Somerville and Jordan Wesley, all of whom contributed to the thrilling finish.

Somerville scored Martin to rally the Hawks from one down in the bottom of the ninth to take a 6-5 win in the first game. Wesley scored on a wild pitch to clinch the nightcap and the tournament spot. Somerville ended the doubleheader with a 4-for-8 day.

“I am extremely proud of our seniors,” head Coach Charlie Goens said. “Each of them had a part in our walk offs (Sunday)!”

UMES needed both wins on the final day of their MEAC regular season schedule to ensure a spot in the conference tournament, which will be held at Arthur W. Perdue stadium in Salisbury starting May 17. The Hawks finished their MEAC campaign with nine wins and 15 losses.

“We played well,” Goens said. “Our starters gave us quality starts and the bullpen gave us opportunities to win each game. Our offense came through with timely hitting.”

Other top performers on offense included a 3-for-5, two RBI opening game from sophomore Ryan Rotondo and a three-hit nightcap from junior Tyler Fris.

Pitching was also key for the Hawks throughout the day. Freshman Marty Tolson Jr. delivered a quality start of allowing just two runs over six innings and junior Toby Hoskins earned a win with an inning of scoreless relief. Sophomore Zach Mills pitched a complete game victory for game two, striking out eight Spartans along the way.

The wins were the Hawks’ first over the Spartans since the 2015 season.

“I couldn’t be prouder of how this team has been playing,” Goens said. “They did what they had to do to make the tournament. I am so happy for them and what they have done.”

Khalil Rmidi Kinini’s (top right) victories in the metric mile, steeplechase and 5,000 meter races earned him the Most Outstanding Runner at the 2017 MEAC outdoor track championships, the third time he has won the award. Teammate Noah Agwu won the discus throw and Jennaya Hield (left) won the women’s metric mile.
UMES promotes wellness

UMES’ seventh annual Hawk Walk took place April 29 with approximately 60 participants from the community and campus. The 2.5 mile walk aimed to “promote health and wellness and to inform the community about various initiatives to stay active and become physically fit,” said Beatrice Nelson, UMES Department of Kinesiology. Kinesiology Club members, she said, organized and staffed the event that added music, food and activities to the main event; the walk.

Beatrice Nelson serves as “Grill Master” during Hawk Walk festivities.

“Oleanna” first in Wilson Hall Black Box Theater

The Department of English and Modern Languages staged “Oleanna” by David Mamet on two successive April weekends in a brand new theater space on campus.

Interim Chair Dean Cooledge converted what used to be the Wilson Hall TV studio into a 25-seat performance space.

“It’s theater to talk about,” Cooledge said. “We’ll produce plays that question our values, challenge our institutions, incite debate and promote discussion. Mamet’s ‘Oleanna’ and its exploration of academic freedom and sexual harassment sets the tone for the theater’s mission.”

Marilyn Buerkle, professor, English and modern languages

SpringFest welcomes prospective and current students

It was a day made to order as sunny skies prevailed and smiling faces roamed the UMES campus April 28 for the traditional SpringFest open house and carnival sponsored by the offices of admission and recruitment, and campus life.

Nearly 1,000 prospective high school students arrived by bus to learn about the university and its programs. Visitors met with admissions and financial aid counselors, took a tour of campus and met current students, faculty and staff while enjoying a carnival with informational booths sponsored by student organizations and departments, rides, games and food vendors.

“It’s the largest recruitment event of the year for the university,” said Corey Newborns, UMES admissions counselor and campus visitation coordinator. “The goal is to have visiting students commit to becoming a UMES student by signing up for an Enrollment 101 session this summer.”

Students in UMES’ Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences Tresheena Bailey and Shahzaade Bledsoe offer-up some warm, fuzzy spring chicks for cuddling at the event.
Appreciation event honors UMES faculty
Dr. Lombuso Khoza, left, associate professor and director of UMES’ Center for International Education, and Dr. Bridgett Clinton-Scott, assistant professor, both in UMES’ Department of Human Ecology, were among university faculty members attending the president’s annual faculty appreciation luncheon May 4. The event theme was “UMES Facul-TEE: A Shore Hole-in-One. Participants could putt for a hole-in-one for special prizes. Honorees at the event included post-tenure review “Exemplary Faculty” and retirees.

THE UMES MISSION
The University of Maryland Eastern Shore, the state’s historically black, 1890 land-grant institution, has its purpose and uniqueness grounded in distinctive learning, discovery and engagement opportunities in the arts and science, education, technology, engineering, agriculture, business and health professions.

UMES is a student-centered, doctoral research degree-granting university known for its nationally accredited undergraduate and graduate programs, applied research and highly valued graduates.

UMES provides individuals, including first-generation college students, access to a holistic learning environment that fosters multicultural diversity, academic success, and intellectual and social growth.

UMES prepares graduates to address challenges in a global, knowledge-based economy while maintaining its commitment to meeting the workforce and economic development needs of the Eastern Shore, the state, the nation and the world.

School of Pharmacy building update
Maryland lawmakers approved a capital projects budget during their 2017 session that included a second allocation to fund planning for construction of a new School of Pharmacy and Health Professions building.

The General Assembly supported Gov. Larry Hogan’s request to include $3 million for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in the fiscal year that begins July 1, which moves the proposed project another step forward.

The governor successfully lobbied lawmakers a year ago to support his late-session request for $3.5 million to make a new health sciences building for UMES a top priority. The university got a chance to thank Hogan for his support in April 2016, when the campus welcomed him during a visit where he toured a classroom building and met with faculty and administrators.

That initial funding came after President Juliette B. Bell received the backing of Chancellor Robert Caret and the University System of Maryland’s governing board to place the new classroom building atop UMES’ construction-needs list.

The combined $6.5 million positions UMES to start the planning and design of the new building, which tentatively is slated for construction on the site of the decommissioned orchid greenhouse heavily damaged by fire in 2011.

UMES launched its graduate-level pharmacy program in the fall of 2010 and currently utilizes classrooms and labs spread among five buildings. The discipline’s national accrediting body has urged UMES to consolidate pharmacy instruction under one roof, and the university is hopeful of eventually relocating related academic units to the new building as well.

How quickly construction might begin hinges on at least two factors; getting the required USM regents’ and state-level endorsements for the design and cost, and then convincing state elected officials to fund it. Ideally, UMES is hopeful construction could begin in the fall of 2019.

THE HENSON
OPEN HOUSE
MAY
19
2 PM - 4 PM
Tour the newly renovated hotel on the third floor of the Richard A. Henson Center at University of Maryland Eastern Shore

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