

ASCEND NEWSLETTER WINTER EDITION

Hi there,

*Check out
everything
we've been up
to all semester*





Dr. Jocelyn Turner-Musa
Program Director



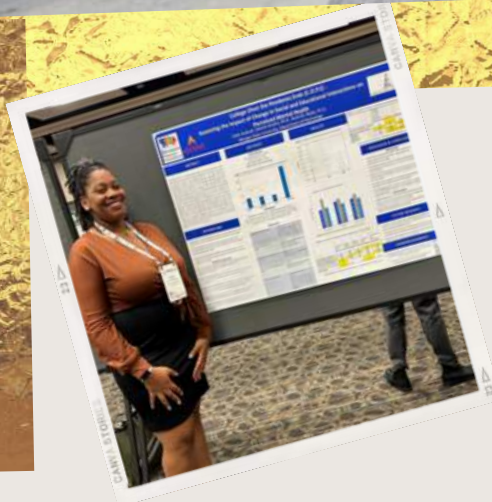
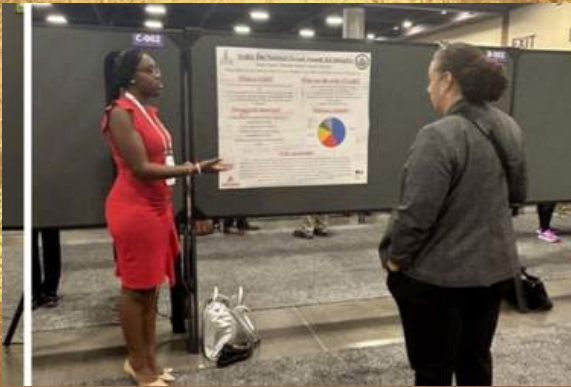
Dr. Cleo Hughes-Darden
Program Co-Director



Hello Everyone! This newsletter marks the end of the Fall 2023 semester. The semester began with the orientation of Cohort 9 Scholars. These scholars will be partially supported by the pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson. Read the newsletter to learn more about these scholars. We also participated in the Annual Biomedical Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS). Fourteen scholars and 2 Near Peer Mentors presented their research in the form of a poster or oral presentation. Congratulations to Cohort 8 Scholar Zya Spruell who won an award for her poster presentation. We are proud of all our scholars. To promote the ASCEND Scholars Program, we also created promotional videos where two Cohort 1 Scholars, Abdullah Abdul, MS and Oyesola Oluwafunmilayo (Funmi) Ayeni, PhD shared their ASCEND stories. Thank you, Abdullah and Funmi, for volunteering to support the program! Lastly, three Cohort 8 Scholars graduated during the Fall 2023 commencement exercises: Gabriela Hiciano, Alana Powell, and Kailyn Smith. Congratulations and continue to ASCEND! In this edition of the ASCEND Scholars Newsletter, we showcase Cohort 8 & 9 scholars, ABRCMS Recap, ASCEND Scholar Alumni and Ambassadors, the ASCEND Student Research Center, student resource page, and much more. This year is the last year of funding through the National Institute of Health. As we continue the program, we ask for your continued support as we focus on sustaining the ASCEND Scholars program. Please contact us to find out how you can assist. As always, please keep us posted on what you're doing as you continue to ASCEND!

ABRCMS

*Group pics
and Research
trips!*



*Presentation
time!*

This year's Annual ABRCMS Conference was held in Phoenix Arizona. ASCEND Scholars, Ambassadors, Near Peer Mentors, and faculty had a wonderful time presenting their research and immersing themselves in the wonderful seminars, workshops, and research presentations. We are pleased to share that 16 ASCEND representatives presented their research at the conference. Cohort 8 scholars Gabriela Hiciano, Zya Spruell, Amya Nance, Cherise Castello, Paityn-Amor Brooks, Kelly Mouling, Blessing Adedeji, and Anaya Van Heyningen gave beautiful poster presentations. Riveting oral presentations were given by Cohort 9 scholars Janae McDowell, Alana Powell, and Kennedy Sullivan. Jahari Nelson, Daniel-Ashley Lindo, and Monica Bandora are members of Cohort 9, who were selected to give poster presentations as well. For the first time, we had Near Peer Mentors present their research at ABRCMS. Christabelle Agyapong (Cohort 5) had an opportunity to present her research and Faith Hudnall (Cohort 7) participated in the ABRCMS Graduate Symposium. We are proud of all our presenters and would like to congratulate them on a job well done! We would also like to give a special shout-out to our award winner Zya Spruell who won for her poster presentation "Community- Engaged Research in Early Childhood Home Visiting Preliminary Findings from a Rapid Scoping Review". ASCEND is looking forward to attending the conference next year in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



This or That?

Back-to-School Edition

Synchronous Classes

Asynchronous Classes

Written Notes

Digital Notes

Laptop

Cellphone

Reading

Writing

Morning Classes

Afternoon Classes

Writing an Essay

Solving a Problem

Graded Recitation

Written Works

Video

Picture

SRC Fall Semester Recap



Executive Board

- Madina Diallo – President
- Iyana Gross – Vice President of Research Productivity
- Sophia Selenou-Yemgang – Vice President of Mentorship
- Kennedi Sullivan – Miss SRC
- Jahari Nelson – Mister SRC



The year 2023 was an eventful one for the SRC. There were some changes in the 2022-2023 executive board, as the president for that term graduated early (December) and the social media influencer became interim president for the Spring 2023 semester. The SRC continues to partner with the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). The OUR and SRC worked together to develop more innovative pursuits to recruit and engage members of the SRC via hybrid platforms. The SRC welcomed 27 new members this semester, with a total of 67 undergraduate members.

The 2023 – 2024 SRC Leadership Retreat is was held on Friday, August 11, 2023 – Saturday, August 12, 2023, which consisted of a team building exercise on the first day and a half-day leadership development and strategic planning session on the second day.

This executive board along with the SRC advisor and OUR directors went to Hawaii on August 26, 2023 – September 2, 2023, to co-facilitate a leadership retreat with the SRC's sister organization at Hawaii Pacific University, HUI SRC.





SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Zya Spruell

COHORT 8



Name of Project: Community-Engaged Research in Early Childhood Home Visiting: Preliminary Findings from a Rapid Scoping Review
Discipline: Public Health

Q: What was it like to give a poster presentation at ABRCMS?

A: "Honestly it was rather easy giving my poster presentation. I got the chance to present my poster this summer, so when it came to ABRCMS it seemed that everything just came back to me when I stood next to my poster!"

Q: How did you prepare for your presentation?

A: "I briefly prepared for my presentation about 30 minutes before it was time to present and did a quick run through of my poster via my IPAD. Prior to the conference, I also had the opportunity to practice my presentation in class and receive feedback from my mentor, classmates, and professor."

Q: What was your biggest takeaway from the experience?

A: "My biggest takeaway was to not be in my head to the point where I'd psych myself out from giving a quality presentation. Also, to expect the unexpected because getting an award was not something I planned to receive when gearing up for ABRCMS."

Q: What advice would you give to anyone presenting at a research conference?

A: "A piece of advice that I can provide is to have faith in not only yourself but your research as well. I feel that enjoying the research that I did played a major role in how I was able to effectively present my research due to having an in-depth knowledge of what my research is about."



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Jahari Nelson

COHORT 9



Jahari is a junior biology major with a minor in chemistry, hailing from the Bahamas. Jahari has not only exuded excellence in his academics but has taken on leadership roles serving as the President of the Ernest E. Just Biology Club, Mister and Community Service Chair of the Student Research Center, and Clara I. Adams Student Honors Council member. Jahari aspires to become a cardiothoracic surgeon and physician-scientist and hopes to develop a new technique that will save lives. Passionate about biomedical research, Jahari has been actively involved in a faculty lab since his freshman year. Recently completing an internship at Johns Hopkins University, he is already making waves in the scientific community. Jahari has presented his research at several conferences, including Morgan State University's Annual Undergraduate and Graduate Research Symposium (2022), the Center for Urban Health Disparities Research & Innovation (CUDRI) Inaugural Conference (2023), Johns Hopkins CARES Summer Symposium (2023), The Leadership Alliance National Symposium (2023), and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS 2023). Jahari Nelson is not just meeting but exceeding the standards of ASCEND, and his future is undoubtedly bright!

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH



The Office of Undergraduate Research, under the Division of Academic Affairs, is a great place to start when interested in research. Led by Director Dr. Lisa Brown, the OUR aims to “cultivate student success through innovative approaches to enhancing undergraduate research - meeting the diverse needs and interests of Morganites across all disciplines”.

With opportunities for research internships, presenting research at the Spring Into Research Week Symposium, and connecting with like-minded individuals in the Student Research Center, the Office of Undergraduate Research is your first stop on the journey to diving into the world of research at Morgan State University!

For more information, email OUR@morgan.edu

Cohort 9

Johnson & Johnson Scholars



Johnson & Johnson recently partnered with Morgan State University to support 10 ASCEND Scholars. This collaboration demonstrates the bold commitment Johnson & Johnson has made through its Our Race to Health Equity initiative to help eradicate racial and social injustice as public health threats.

“It’s an honor to partner with Morgan State University to help students of color become tomorrow’s leaders in biomedical/biobehavioral research through the ASCEND Scholars program,” said Shelina Ramnarine, PhD, Director of Our Race to Health Equity Community Engagement at Johnson & Johnson. “I look forward to seeing these talented scholars use the skills they develop to serve their communities, advance their fields and create a more equitable future for healthcare.”

Ascend thanks
Johnson & Johnson
for its continued support!

ASCEND INTERVIEW

SHAMARA MURPHY

Q: HOW DID YOU FIND ASCEND?

A: I WAS IN THE PROCESS OF LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB TRYING TO LEAVE BANKRUPTCY AND FORECLOSURE LAW WHEN ASCEND FOUND ME. THE POSITION POPPED UP IN MY INBOX. ONE OF THE BIG QUESTIONS THE APPLICATION ASKED ME WAS “DID I KNOW HOW TO BE A BIG SISTER?” AND I THOUGHT TO MYSELF “I AM THE OLDEST OF 13, I KNOW HOW TO BE A BIG SISTER!”. AND A COUPLE MONTHS LATER, I WAS HERE AT MORGAN.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN ASCEND/SRC?

A: AS A PROGRAM COORDINATOR, I WORK DIRECTLY WITH ASCEND SCHOLARS ENSURING ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS ARE COMPLETED. AS AN ADVISOR FOR THE SRC, I OVERSEE THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND MANAGE THE FACILITY.

Q: WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

SHAMARA: WATCHING MY STUDENTS FLOURISH AND DISCOVER WHO THEY ARE AND WATCH THEM WALK BOLDLY IN IT. THEY ARE THE REASON WHY I KEEP GOING.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN YOUR JOB?

A: BALANCING ADVOCACY FOR MY STUDENTS WHILE EMPOWERING THEM TO RISE ABOVE SYSTEMATIC DIFFICULTIES.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE SRC?

A: SRC IS GREAT HERE. I SEE IT BEING MORE OWNED BY THE STUDENT BODY AND SEE MORE REPLICATION AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES. NOT JUST HAVING IT AT HAWAII, AND PG COMMUNITY COLLEGE, BUT IT BEING REPLICATED IN ALL HBCU.

Q: WHAT SPECIAL QUALITIES HAVE MADE YOU PERFECT FOR THIS ROLE?

A: FOR ME, STROKING MY EGO, MOTIVATING, NURTURING, GENUINE, INTEGRAL, INSPIRING, “THE LIGHT IN THE MORNING AND AN IDEA THERE IN HOPE” DIRECTLY FROM A STUDENT IN THE OFFICE.

Q: HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE SUCCESS FOR THE SRC?

A: SUCCESS WOULD BE THE GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT OF THE STUDENTS AND THE IMPACT WE MAKE ON THE COMMUNITY.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS OF BEING A PART OF SRC AND ASCEND?

A: THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS OF BEING A PART OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS. THE SRC EXPOSES STUDENTS TO A PEER GROUP THAT SPANS ACROSS CAMPUS AND DISCIPLINES, WHEREBY THE ASCEND SCHOLAR MAKES YOU CLOSER TO YOUR RESEARCH PEERS.

Q: WHAT IMPACT HAS SRC MADE ON THE COMMUNITY?

A: A LOT! AT MORGAN, THE OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT (OSLD) HAS ADOPTED THE SRC’S MEMBER INCENTIVE PROGRAM (MIP) AND MADE A VERY SIMILAR INCENTIVE WHICH IS THE S.O.S. PROGRAM FOR THE ORGANIZATIONS ON CAMPUS. OFF CAMPUS, WE MENTOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AT PLEASANT PLAINS ELEMENTARY IN TOWSON.

Q: ARE THERE ANY UPCOMING PROJECTS OR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SRC THAT YOU’RE PARTICULARLY EXCITED ABOUT?

A: I AM EXCITED FOR SRC WEEK AND THE NEW EBOARD ELECTIONS. SRC WEEK IS ALWAYS A GOOD TIME AND IT’S LIKE A REUNION. THE NEW EBOARD ALWAYS BRINGS IN NEW IDEAS AND FRESHNESS TO THE ORGANIZATION.

CLOSING REMARK: “I AM THE SOUL OF SRC AND THE STUDENTS ARE THE HEART.” ~ MRS. SHAMARA MURPHY

Donating to ASCEND

When you donate to the ASCEND Scholars program you are contributing to the next generation of impactful research and great discovery. Your contribution funds scholarship, student research, and experiential learning opportunities for our students that build the foundation

Please consider donating!



Donate to ASCEND Scholar Program
Be a part of ASCEND milestone achievements

Use this link: <https://givetomorgan.org/>

(Indicate **ASCEND Scholar Program** as beneficiary for your donation)

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ASCEND



**DIVERSITY
PROGRAM
CONSORTIUM**

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