



INTERNSHIPS

Summer Programs

Undergraduate

Maternal and Child Health Careers/Research Initiatives for Student Enhancement-Undergraduate Program (MCHC/RISE-UP) is a summer public health leadership program funded by the CDC that provides (1) clinical, (2) research, and (3) community engagement and advocacy experiences for undergraduate juniors, seniors, and scholars within 12 months of their baccalaureate degree. Sites include (1) Kennedy Krieger Institute, (2) University of California-Davis, and (3) University of South Dakota. Application site is OPEN. To learn more click [here](#).

Summer and Academic Year

Undergraduate

The Maternal and Child Health-Leadership Education Advocacy Research Network (MCH-LEARN) program, funded by the HRSA, provides the scholar with maternal and child health and public health research, clinical, and advocacy experiences. The MCH-LEARN is full-time during the summer and monthly during the academic year. Application site is OPEN. To learn more click [here](#).

Here is a video about the entire program:

Center for Diversity in Public Health Leadership Training Youtube Link: https://youtu.be/Dj_13s3zG0c

The deadline is January 31st.



Dr. Jocelyn Turner-Musa

Greetings ASCEND Scholars! This is the fourth issue of the ASCEND Scholars Newsletter. Thanks to those of you who contributed. The newsletter is our way of sharing information about the program and about YOU. Over the past 6 months we have selected our 7th Cohort of scholars and returned to campus. For Cohort 6, it was the first time meeting the ASCEND team "in-person". We also attended another virtual ABRCMS conference where one of our Cohort 6 scholars won an award! We continue to be proud of all our scholars and your many accomplishments. In this issue, you will learn more about our scholars and what they've been up to. Remember to keep in touch and KEEP ASCENDING!

ASCEND PROGRAM UPDATES

This fall we returned to in person and "high-flex" learning at Morgan fully vaccinated and masked after more than a year of virtual learning. It turned out to be another monumental transition. Our ASCEND entrepreneurs have borne up well and continued to make us very proud. Cohort 6 and yes, even some members of our brand-new cohort 7 scholars have presented their work locally, regionally and nationally and returned with awards. Cohort 7 had a wobbly start among all the changes on campus; none of it their fault! They stuck it out and successfully concluded their first semester in the program. They are an eloquent group of young scholars, who are well underway to do great things in future!

Beyond our students' individual accomplishments, our biggest success story this year has been the brand-new Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), brought to life by ASCEND over the past year and now widely embraced (and funded!) by the University's academic leadership. Along with the Student Research Center (SRC), OUR will be the backbone of institutionalization of the ASCEND training model at Morgan but also reach beyond to serve all research interested undergraduates at the University in due time. We want to thank Dr. Lisa Brown (Director), Mr. Thomas Waters (Assistant Director), and Ms. Shamara Murphy (SRC Coordinator) for all their amazing work.

Drs. Christine Hohmann and Payam Sheikhattari serve as Principal Investigators for the ASCEND Center for Biomedical Research.



Payam Sheikhattari, MD, MPH

School of Community Health and Policy



Christine Hohmann, PhD

School of Computer, Mathematical and Natural



SCHOLAR PROGRAM MENTORS

ASCEND pairs faculty lead mentors and near-peer mentors with Scholar research teams to ensure the students become exceptional biomedical researchers. The mentors guide and assist the Scholars with their team-based projects and also guide the Scholars in professional development and in enhancing their critical thinking, strategic planning, organizational and leadership skills.

Lead Mentors

Melanie Bennett, PhD
Robert McCann, PhD
Ingrid Tulloch, PhD
Andreas Wulff, PhDcandidate

Near- peer mentors

Oluwatoyin Ajayi (MPH)
Givania Griffin (MPH)
Deja Caton

Ambassadors

Deja Caton

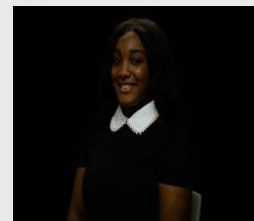
INTRODUCING COHORT 7 SCHOLARS



Ajenne
Williams
Biology
Junior



Fopofoluwa
Atanda
Biology
Junior



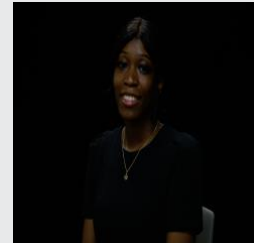
Heaven
Washington
Biology
Junior



Alexis Carlon
Psychology
Junior



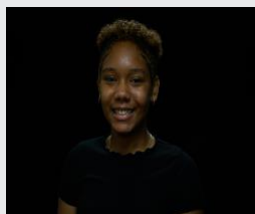
Jadyne Giles
Actuarial
Science
Senior



Jordin
Walters
Biology
Junior



Brooklyne
Chaney
Biology
Sophomore



Kayla Mack-
Easley
Computer
Science
Junior



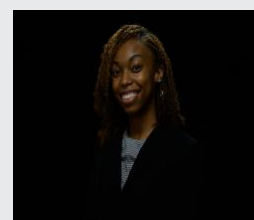
Keany
Rodriguez
Computer
Science
Junior



Emma
Gudmundson
Nutritional
Science
Junior



Kayra Hall
Biology
Junior



Madison
Pleas
Biology
Senior



Faith Hudnall
Biology
Junior



Pamela
Osseyi
Psychology
Junior

STUDENT RESEARCH CENTER HIGHLIGHT



The Student Research Center is a registered Morgan State University undergraduate student organization, partially run by students with the support of the SRC Coordinator/staff advisor and faculty advisor. The SRC encourages networking and health research enrichment for the students by engaging students in a vibrant research environment, where they will be surrounded by and can exchange research ideas with peers and near-peer mentors. It is a place where students will have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of biomedical research and to interact with other students who have a shared interest in biomedical research. The goal is for students to be motivated, trained, and empowered to conduct their own research.

This semester the SRC focused on research productivity and community engagement aims. SRC activities for the Fall 2021 semester consisted of a few Speaker Series with research presentations with faculty and a slew of community service events, including pumpkin carving, NAMI #IWillListen events, and several drives. The SRC also hosted its first alumni outreach event. For the next academic year, the SRC will have their election for a new e-board and activities for SRC week.

There have been five executive boards since the inception of the SRC. The current 2021-2022 executive board consists of:

- Madison Pleas, *Biology Major*, President
- Micaela Fleetwood, *Biology and Psychology Double Major*, Vice President
- Abena Darkwah, *Biology Major*, Secretary
- Alexis Carlon, *Psychology Major*, Miss SRC
- Caleb Wiggins, *Biology Major*, Mister SRC
- Autumn Taylor, *Biology Major*, Social Media Influencer



ASCEND IN THE NEWS

The Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) (11/10/21 – 11/13/21)

The 20th Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students was held on November 10th – 13th virtually. ASCEND Scholars Emmanuela Kodjo (Cohort 6), Ayanna Henry (Cohort 6), Chyna Roger (Cohort 6), Dai'Shona Jones (Cohort 6), Jaden Dawson (Cohort 6), Kamilah Degrahenreed (Cohort 6), Madison Pleas (Cohort ...), Phylicia Cooper (Cohort 6), and Ezinne Onyedum (Cohort 6) presented their research projects at the conference. The presentation titles were:

- Preclinical Studies on the Antidepressant Effects of Psilocybin: 5HT1B Receptor Activation and Antidepressant Mechanisms – **Emmanuela Kodjo**
- Maintaining Mental Health Through Media – **Ayanna Henry**
- Functioning and Quality of Life During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Differences Between Heavy and Non-heavy Drinkers- **Chyna Roger***

- The Comparison of Age During Cannabis Withdrawal- **Dai'Shona Jones**
- Validation of a Histological Cortical Layer Segmentation Algorithm- **Jaden Dawson**
- In Pursuit of Pleiotropy – **Kamilah Degrahenreed**
- Investigation of CDK4/6 Contribution to Melanoma- **Madison Pleas**
- Do Children Use Continuous Visual Features to Estimate the Number of Objects in Visual Scenes- **Phylicia Cooper***
- Assessing the Use of Communications Strategies to Increase Interaction Between an Organization and Its Audience- **Ezinne Onyedum**



ASCEND SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Phylicia Cooper is a Psychology major senior at Morgan State University. She is a Cohort 6 Scholar in the ASCEND program and serves as the Social Media Coordinator in the Gilliam Jr., College of Liberal Arts Student Advisory Committee at Morgan State University. She is also a proud member of the National Council of Negro Women and the Student Research Center. Phylicia is a Clara I. Adam's Honors College student and has been on Dean's list for every semester during her matriculation at MSU.

In the near future, she hopes to begin her Ph.D. in a Neuroscience program and utilize her graduate studies to one day lead clinical trials on novel antidepressants with a focus on improving their efficacy in marginalized people.

Alumni Spotlight



Thelma Ejimofor MSN, RN is an ASCEND Scholar Alumna and a recent graduate of the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing. She is currently a psych nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital who aspires to become a licensed psychiatric nurse practitioner and also conduct research in the field of Public Health.

Celebrating Scholars.....

- 2021 Graduates – Christabelle Agyapong, Seanasia Baronette, Layshel Kemp, Destinee Young, Kayla Mercer, Jordan Dawson, Maya Purnell, Devin Saunders, Nashae Prout, Alexis McKoy.
- Award winners at conferences: Phylicia Cooper (Cohort 6) is an ABRCMS 2021 Presentation Awardee in Social and Behavioral Science and Public Health. Chyna Roger (Cohort 6) received a \$100 honorarium for her Student Lightning Talk oral presentation at ABRCMS 2021.
- Graduate School acceptance & admission: Alexis McKoy (Cohort 6)- School Psychology/Eds at College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA; Christabelle Agyapong (Cohort 5) – NIDDK program at National Institutes of Health; Destinee Young (Cohort 6) – M.S program in Human Computer Interaction at DePaul University in Chicago, IL; Devin Saunders (Cohort 4) – Nutritional Science program at University of Arizona; Ismael Bouso – Biomedical Engineering/ PhD at UC Davis; Jordan Dawson (Cohort 4) – MS in Applied Anatomy at Case Western Reserve University; Maya Purnell (Cohort 4) – Masters in Nursing at the University of Maryland; Nashae Prout (Cohort 5) – Toxicology (Ph.D.) at the University of Rochester.
- 2021 Summer Internships: Ayanna Henry-Focused Physio (Milburn, NJ); Chyna Roger – Umaryland SOM; Dai'Shona – JHU School of Medicine; Deja Caton – Cornell University, Emmanuel Kodjo – Umd SOM; Ezinne Onyedum – Maryland DNR, Jaden Dawson – JHU Institute for Computational Medicine; Kamilah Degraphenreed – University of Maryland Baltimore County; Myia Robinson – Morgan State Univeristy; Phylicia Cooper – Johns Hopkins University.
- Cohort 7 Scholars- Brooklyne Chaney, Alexis Carlon, Pamela Osseyi, Madison Pleas, Keyra Hall, Jordin Walters, Emma Gudmundson, Jadyn Giles, Ajenee Williams, Heaven Washington, Faith Hudnall, Fopefoluwa Atanda, Kayla Mack-Easley.



Cohort 7 Scholars



Cohort 6 Scholars





Professional Development

- [Morgan State online professional/personal enrichment courses](#)
- [Grad School Center](#)
- [Workshops and Development Series](#)
- [UNC Professional Development Resources](#)
- [Doctoralnet- Masters and doctoral professional development services](#)

Where are they now?



Devin Saunders is an **ASCEND Scholar Alumni**. He is currently enrolled in the Nutritional Science program at University of Arizona.

Have content you want to be featured in the newsletter? We want to hear from you!

Submit to ascendscholarnewsletter@morgan.edu



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Editors of Newsletter: Givania Griffin & Oluwatoyin Ajayi