

Issue

05

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Semester



NEWSLETTER



DR. JOCELYN TURNER-MUSA

Greetings ASCEND Scholars! We are approaching the 8th year of the ASCEND Scholars program and to date, have worked with over 100 scholars! ASCEND Scholars are leaders, recipients of research and academic awards, graduate students, and mentors. This spring, nine Cohort 7 Scholars completed program requirements and are moving onto the next phase of their life journey. Scholars research projects focused on mental health, food insecurity, breast cancer and racialized sexual violence. We are excited about what the future holds for these scholars. In this issue of the ASCEND Scholars Newsletter, you will learn more about what the scholars have been up to. For example, Cohort 1 Scholar Olufunmilayo "Fumi" Ayeni recently received her PhD in Ecological/Community Psychology from Michigan State University. She is the 2nd ASCEND Scholar to receive a doctoral degree. We are very proud of Dr. Ayeni and all of YOU! Please share information with us as you continue to ASCEND!

ASCEND Program Updates

The ASCEND Center for Biomedical Research was established in 2014 based on a transformative vision about the future of biomedical workforce training. The main philosophy of ASCEND's vision rested on the important assumption that our undergraduate students could be trusted to develop their own research agendas aligned with their interests and core values and successfully complete their projects. We believed that with proper support and encouragement - mainly through peers, near-peers, and faculty mentors - our students can design and implement research of impact to their communities while learning how to think and act like scientists.

This spring the 6th cohort of ASCEND Scholars completed their two-year program, trained in the novel ASCEND entrepreneurial research training model and our students have firmly established that what we envisioned does not only work but can become a model for others to follow. This is a model that does not simply "feed" into the proverbial pipeline but has the potential to alter its flow by preparing students from underrepresented minority populations to set their own goals and objectives for what research is important for them and carry it out. Every year now a few more of our former Scholars complete their post-graduate training. Our graduates continue to seek out research areas and careers in behavioral health, public health and biomedicine that have a direct impact on the well-being of communities of color and ultimately all Americans.

As the NIH BUILD program enters its final two years, the challenge has shifted from proving that the ASCEND model can work to ensuring that this training approach will continue at Morgan once the funding ends, embedded into the fabric of the institution, and whether this approach will be used beyond Morgan, as an option for other training programs across the country. The responsibility for this rests heavily on our minds and we are counting on the entire ASCEND team as well as our graduates to help us make it happen.

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

CELEBRATING OUR SCHOLARS!

Our scholars have worked very hard this year, join us in celebrating their accomplishments below

ASCEND 2022 GRADUATES



AYANNA HENRY

CHYNA ROGER

DAI'SHONA JONES

DEJA CATON



KAMILAH

DEGRAPHENREED



MADISON PLEAS



PHYLICIA COOPER

ASCEND ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

[Dr. Oluwafunmilayo Oyesola Ayeni](#)



Oluwafunmilayo "Funmi" Ayeni attends Michigan State University in the Ecological-Community Psychology PhD program. Dr. Ayeni defended her doctoral dissertation entitled "A longitudinal analysis of Black women's experiences with a domestic violence housing first intervention" in April 2022. Her research interest includes global research on violence against women and children in developing countries to develop prevention and intervention models that will influence policy and practice. Funmi was a 2017 MSU Psychology honor graduate, Cohort 1 ASCEND Scholar, a founding member and 1st President of the Student Research Center.



CONGRATULATIONS

2022 AWARD WINNERS

ALEXIS CARLON
AJEÑEE WILLIAMS
AYANA HENRY
BROOKLYNE CHANEY
CHYNA ROGER
DAI'SHONA JONES
EMMA GUDMUNDSSON
EMMANUELA KODJO
FAITH HUDNALL
FOPEFOLUWA ATANDA
JADEN DAWSON
JADYN GILES
KAMILAH DEGRAPHENREED
KAYLA MACK-EASLEY
KEYRA HALL
MADISON PLEAS
PAMELA OSSEYI
PHYLICIA COOPER

2022 INTERNSHIP RECIPIENTS

ALEXIS CARLON
AJEÑEE WILLIAMS
BROOKLYNE CHANEY
EMMA GUDMUNDSSON
FAITH HUDNALL
FOPEFOLUWA ATANDA
JADYN GILES
KAYLA MACK-EASLEY
KEYRA HALL
PAMELA OSSEYI





THE STUDENT RESEARCH CENTER



ALL ABOUT THE SRC

The Student Research Center (SRC) started the 2021-2022 academic year hitting the ground running. While the COVID-19 pandemic was still on the rise, the SRC held events such as Speaker Series, House of Ruth Donations, Love & Research, STEM Internship List & Handshake Event, SRC Week, and many more events. These events exposed our students to the various areas of research and captivated the minds of students who did not think they were cut out for research. Our scholars put the needs of others first by hosting events for the local Baltimore City Community. One of the pillars of the SRC is community service, and our scholars went above and beyond to help the people in their community by assisting the homeless, distributing women's hygiene products, and promoting health awareness at Lake Montebello. At OSLD Stars Banquet, the SRC won Organization of Merit Award, many of our students received various awards, and our "Wonder Woman", Mrs. Shamara Murphy won the Advisor of the Year Award. As the current E-board passes on the torch to the upcoming E-Board, the desire to "answer the big questions" will be a part of this new legacy to expand the knowledge of biomedical/health-related research. The new E-Board will begin their journey in July 2022.

Farewell Message from 2021-2022 SRC President Madison Pleas



Although I was only a scholar for a year my experience in ASCEND was a long journey. Being fully immersed in research and leadership for the first time put me in a position to learn things about myself that I never would have known. My social, academic, and professional skills were all tested, broken, and rebuilt anew with a stronger foundation than ever before. Looking back, I have grown so much from the budding scientist that was first interviewing with the ASCEND leadership team.

My best advice for the next executive board of the Student Research Center is to never forget that in leading, align your passion for the SRC with its purpose.



ASCEND IN THE NEWS

COHORT 6 SCHOLARS



37TH ANNUAL MAE P. CLAYTOR/MARTIN D. JENKINS BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH CONFERENCE (4/26/22)

ASCEND COHORT 6 GRADUATION CEREMONY (5/5/22)

The 37th Annual Mae P. Claytor and Martin D. Jenkins Behavioral Science Research Conference was held on April 26th via Zoom. Students in the Behavioral and Social Sciences presented their original research or community organization program evaluations. The keynote speaker was clinical psychologist Dr. Christina Watlington. ASCEND Scholars Phylicia Cooper, Kamilah Degraphenreed, Chyna Roger, Alexis Carlon, Ayanna Henry and Dai'Shona Jones presented at the conference.

A celebration of Cohort 6 and farewell took place on May 5, 2022. The graduation ceremony was hybrid this year and welcomed parents, family, friends and ASCEND affiliates to view presentations of all the research projects. The event concluded with awards and remarks from the program administrators and directors. The graduating scholars were: Phylicia Cooper, Ayanna Henry, Kamilah Degraphenreed, Dai'Shona Jones, Emmanuela Kodjo, Ezinne Onyedum, Jaden Dawson, Chyna Roger and Madison Pleas.



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For this segment let's take a look back at a few of the many accomplished ASCEND scholars to see what these student researchers are currently working on to this day.



RETROSPECT: A LOOK AT ASCEND-ALUMNI TODAY

NASHAE PROUT | B.S. IN HEALTH EDUCATION

*Toxicology Ph.D. Student at University of Rochester
2021 Cohort 5 Graduate*

Nashae Prout, a member of ASCEND Cohort 5, graduated from MSU with a BS in Health Education with a concentration in Environmental Health & a minor in biology.

Upon graduating, she founded *Us Black Girls In Science*, a social media /internet-based page focused on increasing the visibility of black women and femmes in the STEM/medicine field. For future research, Nashae aims to work in a laboratory combining both basic bench research & surveillance techniques.



LAYSCHEL KEMP | B.S. IN PSYCHOLOGY

*Clinical Research Assistant University of Maryland
School of Medicine
2021 Cohort 5 Graduate*

Layschel Kemp, another member of ASCEND Cohort 5, earned a BS in Psychology. Her ASCEND research contributed to mental health awareness.

For the past year, she has been vigorously working as a clinical research assistant in College Park Maryland at University of Maryland. She currently holds an interest in anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, & health disparities.

STAY TUNED FOR THE LATEST UPDATE ON ASCEND-ALUMNI



HELP US HELP YOU

Take our short survey

Please complete the survey from the Enhance Diversity Study. This is part of the BUILD program and is required. YOU CAN RECEIVE \$50 FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY. Here is the link and QR code for the DPC Survey:

<https://www.diversityprogramconsortium.org/enhancediversity/pages/>



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CONSORTIUM**

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