

# ASCEND

ASCEND, which stands for A Student-Centered Entrepreneurship Development Training Model, is a program to strengthen Morgan State University's infrastructure for training in and conducting biomedical research, with the ultimate goal of training undergraduate students to become outstanding biomedical researchers and attend doctoral health-research programs.

Morgan State University was awarded \$23.3 million from the National Institutes of Health to establish the ASCEND program.



*The first cohort of ASCEND Scholars (August 2015).*

ASCEND uses a student-centered **entrepreneurship** (as opposed to apprenticeship) training model to develop students' health research skills.

ASCEND partners with institutions such as **Johns Hopkins University**, the **University of Maryland** and the **NIH Intramural Program** to expand student training opportunities and foster faculty research collaborations.

# ASCEND SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

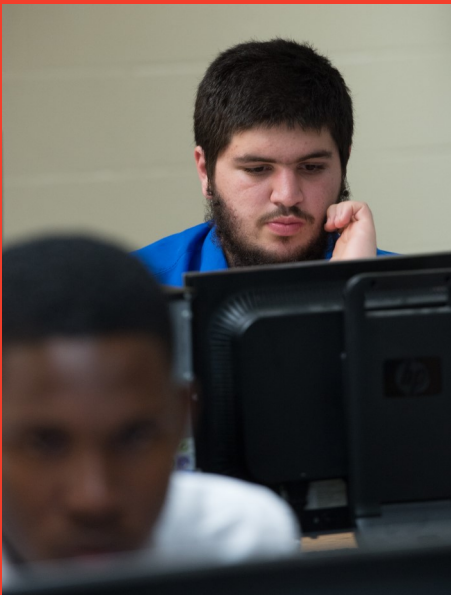
## What should I expect from the SRI?

- A health research training camp introducing students to health topics and disciplines pertinent to health research.
- An eight-week residential (on-campus housing) summer program.
- SRI participants will be provided a stipend, part of which has to be used to cover on-campus summer housing.
- Students participate in a series of innovative seminars and workshops that provide:
  - > An overview of health and biomedical disciplines.
  - > Training in critical thinking, the scientific method, and basic research methodology.
  - > Skills for developing a team-based research proposal; funding will be provided to carry out successful proposals.
- Attend field trips and visit public health sites and clinics.
- We expect to enroll 30 students.



## Selection Criteria:

- MSU rising sophomores or juniors, with at least two full academic years remaining.
- Community college students with at least 20 credits, and who are transferring to MSU for a four-year degree in STEM or social behavioral sciences disciplines.
- Cumulative GPA of at least 2.8.
- U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Strong interest in biomedical or behavioral/social science research, in attending graduate school in a biomedical or behavioral/social science discipline, in a health research career, and in improving community and/or national health.



# ASCEND SCHOLARS PROGRAM



The ASCEND Scholars Program is designed to prepare students for the important transition from undergraduate studies to graduate-level training, requiring the Scholars to incorporate higher-order thinking in addition to learning the basic skills and concepts from their undergraduate courses.

## Program Highlights:

- Extramural research experiences designed to provide skills for successful transition into a research-intensive graduate school program in the biomedical, behavioral or social sciences.
- Two years of mentoring, career development, and research training.
- Two-year paid traineeship (i.e., partial tuition, monthly stipends, & travel funds).
- Quantitative methods coursework and training modules.



ASCEND Scholars Program Directors, Dr. Jocelyn Turner-Musa (left) and Dr. Cleo Hughes-Darden (right).

- Development of an Individual Development Plan that specifies the scholar's learning objectives, training experiences, and timeframe for completing objectives.
- Present individual or team projects at the MSU Annual Undergraduate & Graduate Research Symposium.
- Present research at undergraduate and professional conferences.

# ASCEND SCHOLARS PROGRAM (CONT'D)

## Program requirements include:

- Ten hours per week engaged in research, mentoring, and skill-building activities.
- External summer research training experience.
- Four two-credit-hour ASCEND program courses (one per semester).
- Participation in workshops and seminars.
- Taking a GRE prep course and the GRE exam.
- Applying to at least six biomedical or behavioral/social science doctoral programs.

## Selection of ASCEND Scholars:

- Twenty Scholars are selected from the thirty Summer Research Institute (SRI) participants. Key factors include:
  - > Have and maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA (based on a 4.0 scale).
  - > Scores on an "attitude toward research" measure.
  - > Assessment of weekly reflection papers.
  - > Team research project selected for ASCEND funding.
  - > Ratings by advanced peers and program directors.

*Students who are not selected as ASCEND Scholars may be able to become ASCEND Associates and are encouraged to participate in other ASCEND activities.*

---

## STUDENT RESEARCH CENTER

---

The Student Research Center (SRC) is a vibrant research environment for students (and partially run by students), where they 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.

Through participation in the SRC, students will be able to expand their leadership skills, and share their ideas about research and their life experiences, in an environment that will foster development of novel ideas and peer support for conducting biomedical research.