

IMSD TODAY at UMBC and UMB



The Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows Program at UMBC and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)

Volume 2

First IMSD Meyerhoff Fellow Hired to Teach at UMBC! Dr. Tashauna Felix /Adjunct Lecturer – *An Unpaved Path*



Dr. Tashauna Felix earned her undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences from Bennett College in North Carolina. Tashauna entered UMBC in 2003 in the M.S. program in Applied Molecular Biology (APMB) an intensive 9-month Master's Degree program. Upon completion of the AMB program, Tashauna was encouraged to continue on to the Ph.D. Tashauna began her PhD in Biological Sciences in 2004. As a doctoral student, Tashauna worked in the laboratory of Dr. Jeff Leips where her research focused on understanding the genetic basis of the age related changes in the immune response using drosophila melanogaster. Upon completion of her doctoral degree in 2010, Tashauna remained in the Leips lab for almost a year. Later, Tashauna was offered a position on UMBC's campus with the "new" UMBC iCubed Program, an NSF funded study examining the relative effectiveness of four student success interventions in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). While working with the iCubed program, Tashauna also taught Anatomy and Physiology at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). In August 2014, while Tashauna was considering her next career move, Tashauna was offered an Adjunct Lecturer position in the Biological Sciences Department. What was most exciting about this offer is that the course that Dr. Felix would teach (Approaches to Molecular Biology – BIOL 626) is a course that she thoroughly enjoyed as a Master's student! Less than a week later, Tashauna was offered a full-time faculty position at the Community College of Baltimore (CCBC). Dr. Felix has already conveyed that she will pursue research positions in the next year or two.

Meyerhoff Fellow Accepts Postdoctoral Position at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital



Former IMSD Meyerhoff Fellow Dr. Peter Mercredi (Biochemistry) came to UMBC back in 2006 as a participant in the UMBC Summer Biomedical Training Program (SBTP). As an undergraduate, Peter attended the City College of New York (CUNY). As participant of the SBTP, Peter was a part of the HHMI EXROP (Howard Hughes Medical Institute – Exceptional Research Opportunities Program) where he worked with Dr. Michael Summers.

Dr. Mercredi began graduate school in 2008 and worked in the laboratory of Dr. Michael Summers where his research focused on the myristylated matrix. Studies have shown that subtle mutations in HIV-1 MA can retarget Gag assembly to intracellular compartments. Structurally characterizing how these mutations result in atypical membrane targeting may elucidate key features in MA for the development of novel HIV inhibitors. Over the years, Peter mentored several undergraduates and presented his research at several conferences. Dr. Mercredi began his postdoctoral fellowship at St. Jude in October 2014.

Former IMSD Meyerhoff Fellow Received 1st Distinguished IMSD Alumni Award The Mid-Atlantic PREP & IMSD Research Symposium



Dr. Dawn Ward earned her B.S. degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and in 2003 entered the Chemistry PhD program at UMBC where she worked in the laboratory of Dr. Paul Smith. Dr. Ward's research focused on synthesizing medical agents that have anticancer and/or antiviral properties. While completing her doctorate degree at UMBC (2009), Dawn became an Adjunct Professor at the Community College of Baltimore (CCBC). She was later hired as an Adjunct at Stevenson University. In 2010, Dr. Ward's title changed to Visiting Professor and in 2011 she was hired as a full-time Assistant Professor at Stevenson University. Accolades for Dr. Ward include a first-authored publication in *Bioorganic and Medicinal Chemistry Letters* (2014), 24 (2), 609-612 and a U.S. Patent.

The mission and goal of the Mid Atlantic PREP and IMSD Research Symposium is to bring together institutions from the region with shared interest in increasing both undergraduate and graduate students pursuing careers in Biomedical, Behavioral and Engineering fields. The participating institutions include Johns Hopkins, Wake Forest, UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke University, North Carolina Central University, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland, Baltimore and Virginia Tech.

Recent Graduates

Dr. Malachi Tatum, first Meyerhoff Fellow to complete a PhD in Physics received his B.S. degree in Physics from Morgan State University. Malachi completed his doctoral degree in November 2013 at UMBC in the laboratory of Dr. Tracey Jane Turner where his research focused on Modeling of Outflows in Active Galactic Nuclei using X-Ray Data. As a graduate student Malachi received the NASA Graduate Fellowship. He is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at NASA Goddard, Oak Ridge Associated Universities with Dr. Andy Ptak. **Dr. Valerie Huse** completed her PhD in Molecular Medicine at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in the laboratory of Dr. Patrik Bavoil in October 2013. Dr. Huse is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at the United States Army Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. **Moradeke Bamgboye** completed her PhD in Molecular Medicine at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in the laboratory of Dr. Jonathan Lederer in November 2013. Mora continues to work in the Lederer laboratory while seeking postdoctoral opportunities. **Dr. Ekemini Udofa-Riley** completed her PhD in Molecular Medicine at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in April 2014 and she is currently working as a Senior Associate with FasterCures. **Dr. Nancy Chiles Shaffer** completed her Ph.D. in Gerontology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore in July 2014 and she is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Aging. **Dr. Tatiana McDougall** completed her Ph.D. in Psychology at UMBC in July 2014 and she is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at the Long Beach Veterans Administration. **Dr. Noel Burns Quinn** completed her PhD in Psychology in September 2014 at UMBC and she is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at the Yale West Haven Veterans Administration. **Melissa Liriano Vyfhuis, MD/PhD** completed her terminal degree (PhD in 2012) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in May 2014. Dr. Liriano Vyfhuis is currently doing a residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Minority Speaker Series

NIH Mini Symposium featuring NCI Investigators



On April 23, 2014 the IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows Program hosted a mini symposium featuring women investigators from the **National Cancer Institute (NCI)**. The topic was HIV-1 and **Dr. Wei Shau Hu** (*left*) talked about virus replication and **Dr. Cheryl Winkler** (*center*) on the influence of the human genome diversity on

pathogenesis and **Dr. Lauren Wood** (*right*) concluded the talk on treatments and clinical research. Following the symposium, the speakers participated in a small “chat and chew” with the graduates where the investigators shared their personal stories of life/work balance, their path and life at the NIH.



On September 29, 2014, the IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows and the Chemical, Biochemical and Environmental Engineering hosted a departmental seminar featuring **Dr. Corey Wilson**, an Associate Professor of Chemical & Environmental Engineering, Biomedical Engineering & Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry at Yale University. Dr. Wilson gave a talk on Investigating Protein Structure-Function Relationships via Rational Design. Following his talk, Dr. Wilson

participated in an informal “chat and chew” where he shared his path to the Ph.D. and the professoriate.

On October 9, 2014, the IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows in collaboration with the UMBC MARC*U*STAR Program and the PROMISE AGEP Program participated in a Mentoring Moment with **Dr. Lola Enolia-Adefeso**. Dr. Enolia-Adefeso was a graduate of UMBC and a participant and in the first graduating class of MARC scholars at UMBC. Dr. Enolia-Adefeso is currently a tenured professor at the University of Michigan in the Chemical Engineering program. A few of the IMSD Meyerhoff Graduates participated in a roundtable breakfast with Dr. Enolia-Adefeso where she talked about preparing and applying for faculty positions, the tenure process, understanding faculty expectations and resolving issues in the lab.

Community Outreach

High School Students from The SEED School of Maryland Conduct Summer Research with IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows

This past summer 2014 four high-school students from the SEED School of Maryland, a statewide, public college-preparatory boarding school worked in research laboratories alongside IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows conducting cutting-edge research. At the end of the summer, these students presented posters at the 18th Annual Summer Undergraduate Research Festival (SURF). During the academic year, IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows participated in monthly WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) talks at the SEED School where they talked about their research and why they have selected to pursue a Ph.D. degree in STEM. Two of the high school participants have been nominated for the undergraduate Meyerhoff Scholars Program at UMBC. One of the students has already been accepted at Virginia Tech.



Beginning December 2014, IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows will participate in a monthly speaker series to inspire students in the **Riverview Elementary School STARS Program**. The request to support the speaker series was initially received by the Presidents office at UMBC and then forwarded to the IMSD Graduate Fellows Program for support. The IMSD graduates embraced the opportunity to “give back” to students in the community and will participate in talks through May 2015. The goal of these talks is to encourage students to do well in school and to set college as a future goal.

In November 2014, a few IMSD Graduate Fellows (*pictured left*) participated in Career Week at Govans Elementary School, located in Baltimore City. The IMSD Meyerhoff Graduates are committed to giving back to the community.

Kudos – IMSD Meyerhoff Graduates on the Move!

Ekemini Udofa Riley, President of the Association of Women in Science (AWIS), Greater Baltimore Chapter was invited to speak at the TEDxBaltimoreWomen Conference that was held December 2013. Ekemini's talk focused on AWIS supporting women in STEM and the challenge of being a woman in science. **Dr. Ekemini Udofa Riley** completed her PhD. in April 2014 and is currently a Senior Associate with FasterCures.

DeLauren McCauley, (Chemistry) won in her category for her TED-style talk presented at the PROMISE Research Symposium in February 2014 at the University of Maryland, College Park. The PROMISE research symposium seeks to provide a venue that allows students to present their work at any stage and receive feedback in preparation for presenting at larger venues. **DeLauren** also recently received the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) graduate fellowship.

Lathiena Manning (Biology) presented an oral talk at the American Society for Cell Biology 2013 and won a graduate travel award to attend the American Society for Cell Biology Meeting in New Orleans, LA in December 2014. **Lathiena** also won the 2014 Biology Department Graduate Teaching Assistant award.

In October 2013, **Peter Mercredi** (Biochemistry) and **Cedric Uytingco** (Neuroscience) attended the Leadership Alliance Regional Research Conference at Howard University This conference was co-sponsored by Howard University, Johns Hopkins University, Morgan State University and UMBC. The conference theme was Cultivating Faculty Conversation within the Leadership Alliance. Both students presented a poster at this conference and **Peter Mercredi** won a Kindle for his poster presentation.

Brittany Davis (Chemistry) was accepted and participated in the Faculty Reach Out Program (F.R.O.P) at Washington University in St. Louis. The F.R.O.P is a two-day series of workshops for women and underrepresented junior faculty who demonstrate potential to succeed in academic medicine. **Brittany** was the only graduate student participant.

Bre-Onna DeLaine (Molecular Medicine) won for her poster presentation at the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Medicine Graduate Research Conference and **Kayla Lemons** (Neuroscience) won for her poster presentation at the UMBC Graduate Research Conference.

Florika "Flaire" Macazo (Chemistry) was nominated and selected to receive the Jessica Soto-Perez Award and was honored at the UMBC GSA Awards Reception in May 2014. This award was created in dedication to the spirit of Jessica Soto-Perez, a graduate student whose life tragically ended in 2004. This award honors a graduate student who strives during their time at UMBC to support graduate students in their academic and professional pursuits. The recipient of this

award receives a \$250 honorarium and their name on a plaque showcased in the Graduate Student Office.

Rasheeda Johnson (Gerontology) won the Otani Award. Elaine Miye Otani was a 26 year old PhD student who attended UMB between 1980 -1984, when her life came to an abrupt end. As a graduate student she stood for hard work and perseverance with an intense interest in her field of study. This living memorial set up by her family as a tribute to her aspirations is awarded to any graduate student in the Graduate Program in Life Sciences (GPILS) of outstanding character who demonstrates superior academic performance and who shows outstanding promise as an independent investigator.

Ozell Sanders (Physical Rehabilitation Science) was accepted in to the Presidents Student Leadership Institute (PSLI) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. PSLI is a self-driven certificate program focused on exposing UMB student leaders or aspiring student leaders to contemporary issues in leadership in order to prepare participants for professional leadership in a diverse and global society. PSLI candidates are responsible for completing 30 hours of service, taking 4 core sessions and 5 elective seminars. At the end of the yearlong program, candidates are required to submit a reflection paper to reflect on the learning over the course of the program.

Jesse Fox (Biological Sciences) won the Donald N. Langenberg (Chancellor Emeritus, University System of Maryland) Scholarship. As a graduate student Jesse has served on the UMBC Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the University System Maryland (USM) Student Council. As president of the Student Council, Jesse provided the leadership needed – in partnership with the USM Center for Academic Innovation – to make the Maryland Open Source Textbooks (MOST) initiative a reality. The project was successfully piloted in the spring and fall of 2014, saving students about \$130,000. The initiative will be rolled out on a larger scale this year. During his tenure at UMBC Jesse has served as the GSA Vice President, the GSA Vice President for External Affairs and the Southeast Regional Vice Chair for the National Association for Graduate and Professional Students. Jesse has plans to defend his PhD in 2015.

Future IMSD Activities

IMSD graduates will participate in the winter Dissertation House in January 2015, a 4-day boot camp focusing on PhD completion. Dr. Wendy Carter-Veale, CEO of PhDCompletion.com directs this program.

IMSD Meyerhoff Graduate Fellows have been invited to visit the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in the Spring 2015.

The IMSD Program will host our 3rd Internal Grant Writing Workshop in the Spring 2015.