

INSIGHTS

Department of English and Modern Languages
SCHOOL of EDUCATION, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS
DIVISION of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS


UMES
February 2022
Volume 39 Issue 1

CLASS ASSIGNMENT PAYS OFF

UMES Students Win Top Four Prizes in HBCU Essay Competition

Four students enrolled in the English department's Afrofuturism class swept all of the awards in an essay contest sponsored by the Essex County, New Jersey, chapter of [The Links, Incorporated](#).

The group, part of an international cultural/civic organization for women of African descent, invited students at nine regional HBCUs to watch and discuss "[Summer of Soul](#)," the recent documentary directed by [Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson](#) about the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival.

Amy Hagenrater-Gooding encouraged her Afrofuturism students to participate in what the organizers called their "Voices of Soul" competition, challenging students who watched the film to write about the documentary's themes of culture, race, politics, history, pride and music.



Clockwise from top left: Ms. Vaughn, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Reeves and Mr. Turner

Senior English major Kaila Vaughn won the \$400 first prize. "I want Black people to be able to do things without having the doubt of it failing because we are Black," Ms. Vaughn wrote in her conclusion. "'Summer of Soul' inspires me to be unapologetically Black."

Her UMES classmates claimed the other awards. Augustus Roberts took home the \$200 second prize. St. Jerome Reeves won \$100 for his third place essay, and Dante Turner received the \$50 honorable mention award.

Over 400 students watched the film and participated in group discussions. In addition to UMES, participating universities included Cheyney, Coppin State, Delaware State, Hampton, Morgan State, Norfolk State, Virginia Union and Simmons College of Kentucky.

WELCOME ABOARD!

New Faculty Member Joins English Department

The Department of English and Modern Languages is pleased to welcome a new member to its full-time faculty.

Andrea Johnson will teach basic composition courses, African American literature and creative writing this spring.

Ms. Johnson earned her bachelor of arts degree in English literature from



Ms. Johnson
Photo by Jim Glover

Swarthmore College, followed by a master of fine arts in popular fiction from Seton Hill University. She also holds a copyediting certification from the University of California San Diego.

Prior to her appointment in the English department, Ms. Johnson taught as a part-time instructor at Wor-Wic Community College in Salisbury.

EXECUTIVE IN TRAINING

Congratulations to Michael Wilson, Class of 2005. He is one of just nine people selected to join Disney's highly competitive [Executive Incubator Program](#). It's designed to create a pipeline of next generation network executives from underrepresented backgrounds.



Mr. Wilson
Photo provided by Disney General Entertainment Content

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

English Major is Commencement Speaker



Ms. Wells

Photo by Jim Glovier

Ms. Wells, who completed her English degree in three and a half years with a flawless 4.0 grade point average, was selected through a competitive audition process to deliver the student commentary at the university's [winter commencement ceremony](#) on December 17.

The former writing center tutor reminded the assembled graduates that they had

Philadelphia native Ciani Wells finished her stellar undergraduate career with some advice for her colleagues.

gained more than academic knowledge during their time at UMES.

“Along the way, we learned to take time for self care, ... to be patient, ... to be steadfast, ... to be adaptable. ... Along the way, we learned that we are capable of completing anything we put our minds to and that we are more than enough.”

Ms. Wells encouraged her audience to apply those lessons beyond our campus.

“Continue to believe in yourself. Know that you are destined for greatness. Understand that you were created to succeed and to prosper. Be assured that you have a purpose on this earth to fulfill. Never give up. Continue to show the same tenacity, determination, commitment and dedication that you did here on this campus.”

Ms. Wells plans to attend law school.

Ms. Wells encouraged her audience to apply those lessons beyond our campus.

“Continue to believe in yourself. Know that you are destined for greatness. Understand that you were created to succeed and to prosper. Be assured that you have a purpose on this earth to fulfill. Never give up. Continue to show the same tenacity, determination, commitment and dedication that you did here on this campus.”

Ms. Wells plans to attend law school.

Ms. Wells plans to attend law school.

AN INSIDER'S VIEW

Senior English major Frederick Walls will complete his minor in digital media with hands-on, real world experience.

Mr. Walls has been selected to participate in the Draper Media internship program. He will assist in the company's marketing and promotions department. Because [Draper Media](#) owns a variety of local information and entertainment platforms, Mr. Walls will learn how to market and promote television, radio, digital media, and locally produced programming.

He will be supervised by a familiar face. Rob Wilkinson, who serves as the company's senior promotions producer, is also an adjunct instructor in the UMES digital media program.

“Not only will Frederick learn and assist in a total of 14 properties, but he will also help launch a brand-new TV station,

Delmarva Sports Network,” Mr. Wilkinson said.

“Draper Media is thrilled to have a University of Maryland Eastern Shore student like Frederick with the passion to learn and gain experience in the field.”



Draper Media is owned by Draper Holdings, a local Delmarva-based company. Its properties include seven TV and seven radio stations: WBOC-TV, a CBS affiliate; FOX21, a FOX affiliate; Delmarva Sports Network, the new local 24/7 sports channel; Telemundo Delmarva, a Telemundo affiliate; WBOC Classics, an Antenna TV affiliate; WRDE-TV, an NBC affiliate; My COZI TV Delmarva, a COZI TV and My Network TV Affiliate; 102.5 WBOC FM; 93.5 The Beach; 107.1 The Duck; BIG 107.7; 106.3 Chesapeake Country; 100.9 WAAI Classic Country; and 1240AM CBS Sports Radio.



The UMES English department allows up to 12 credits in academic internships.

TO OUR DECEMBER GRADUATES,



CONGRATULATIONS !

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. UMES prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Inquiries regarding the application of federal laws and non-discrimination policies to university programs and activities may be referred to the Office of Equity & Compliance/Title IX Coordinator by telephone at (410) 651-7848 or by email at titleix@umes.edu.

WINTER ESCAPE TO PORTUGAL

Language Professor Travels to Research Medieval Poetry and Verse

By Carole Champagne

Editor's Note: Dr. Champagne is a professor of foreign languages and coordinator of the department's Spanish language minor. This article describes her winter term stay in Portugal.



Photo of Dr. Champagne by Jim Glover

Photos in Portugal provided by Dr. Champagne

The view from my window: Tejo bay glimmers like silver fish scales swimming westward to the Atlantic. Across the street is the house where Luís de Camões, Portuguese poet of the epic *Os Lusíadas*, died in 1580. From my office window, I watch the sunrise over Castelo São Jorge fortress on the highest promontory guarding the port.

The Tajo River is the longest Iberian Peninsula river, encircling Toledo, Spain, before winding through Portugal as the Tejo. It enticed *King Henry the Navigator*'s Sagres School to venture around the world.

I am researching medieval troubadour poetry and verse in Galaico: galego-português, an early Romance language that developed into separate Portuguese and Galician languages. *The Escuela de Traductores of Alfonso X the Wise* in Toledo translated multilingual verses (cantigas, juglaría, clericía) during the 1200s. Alfonso's court, influenced by Provençal troubadours, Sephardic and Arabic scholars, scientists, and philosophers, fascinates me. My History of the Spanish Language modules focus on Alfonso X, the first to codify Castellano/Spanish as an official language.



Belém Tower

The *Luso-American Development Foundation* invited me to conduct research at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. The Foundation manages Fulbright and Gilman scholarships. Since 2020, FLAD has networked with me, the UMES Fulbright and Gilman Advisor. We also discuss the expansion of *research and study abroad programs* with university and governmental officials to promote Portuguese language and culture in the United States.

I climbed eighth-century *Óbidos* fortress walls of a living medieval town. Dom Afonso Henriques conquered the fortress in 1148. Subsequent kings dedicated it to their queens, giving the queens sole authority over Óbidos. I walked along the aqueduct to its source in an ancient stone cistern.

I visited *Évora*, a medieval capital in the Alentejo region. Augustus built the Roman temple there in his honor, but the locals prefer to dedicate it to Diana, goddess of the hunt. The library, where I studied, is lined with antique Latin volumes and overlooks the temple. Former palaces and monasteries of Universidade de Évora welcomed me home.



Roman temple of Évora

I returned to the region to explore *Cromleques dos Almendres*, the oldest cromlechs, dolmen, and menhirs in Europe. More than 95 standing stones were aligned in concentric circles to mark celestial and seasonal events. The menhirs are two millennia older than Stonehenge.

Tomar's Templar Citadel was founded in 1119 by Gualdim Pais, Grand Master of the Knights Templar (Templários). King Henry the Navigator, a Grand Master since 1417, reinstated the Templários. The UNESCO World Heritage Site overlooks a working waterwheel and the oldest European Synagogue.



Dr. Champagne with the statue of author Fernando Pessoa at Café Brasileira

I followed Lord Byron and "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" to Monserrate in Sintra's UNESCO World Heritage site. I returned to scale the Mouros Fortress and descend into the Masonic Initiation Well and caves beneath Palacio Regaleira. Following Lord Byron's pilgrimage, I relive his verse as "*Sintra's Glorious Eden* intervenes." (XVIII)



Initiation Well at Quinta da Regaleira de Sintra

Every day I discover tiny treasures: marble mosaics beneath my feet, intricate azulejos on walls, papagaios, large green parrots, in my local park.

Many more hidden treasures await discovery.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. UMES prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Inquiries regarding the application of federal laws and non-discrimination policies to university programs and activities may be referred to the Office of Equity & Compliance/Title IX Coordinator by telephone at (410) 651-7848 or by email at titleix@umes.edu.

POSITIVITY FOR KIDS

English Graduate Writes Children's Books

Bria Townsend earned her UMES English degree in 2019. She didn't start to think seriously about writing until after she took the department's creative writing class.



Ms. Townsend

Four years after she completed the class, she is the published author of a [series of children's books](#) under the pen name Bria Unique.

The idea for her books started with a conversation she had with her cousin who was only a toddler at the time. Ms. Townsend was surprised to hear her tiny relative worry about how she looked and whether or not people would like her.

That was the start of an idea to create books that send a positive message to children, particularly children of color, about their self image.

She will soon have immediate feedback on her work.

Ms. Townsend will be able to read her books to her first child. Her son arrives later this year.



CONFERENCE CREW

While more than a hundred college professors were participating in day two of the Winter Faculty Institute sponsored by the UMES [Center for Teaching Excellence](#), the English department's digital media staff was behind the scenes assisting in the event's virtual presentation.

CTE Director Cynthia Cravens and Dean Marshall Stevenson were on a UMES-branded set located in the digital media television studio to host the all day discussion of social justice pedagogy.



(R) Television crew member Bill Brophy assists conference hosts.

THEATER OF THE MIND

Senior English major Christian Ferguson has produced another original play, only this time the audience will use their imagination to visualize his drama.



"Grace of God" is an audio play, recorded in the digital media podcast studio and posted on YouTube. Use the QR code above to listen.



Audio cast (L to R) Ahvanah Ali, Sharon Ogunmola, Savannah Hackley, Daniel Voelker and Christian Ferguson
Photo by Bill Brophy

WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING

Biden Administration Continues HBCU Events

For the third time this academic year, a UMES student was invited to participate in a virtual news briefing organized by the White House press staff.

The briefings have been held exclusively for students enrolled at HBCUs and have featured African American members of the Biden administration.

Kamille Little, a sophomore digital media major from Dundalk, Maryland, represented UMES on January 26 in a virtual briefing featuring the [Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge](#).



(L to R) Ms. Little and Secretary Fudge
Photos provided by Edwin Linderkamp



Secretary Fudge is one of the most senior Black women in the administration, a former U.S. congresswoman and chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and a previous national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Ms. Little asked the HUD secretary if she would strengthen inner city communities as a method to combat homelessness.

Secretary Fudge suggested that her best weapon to assist in disadvantaged communities is to promote federal programs that encourage home ownership.

Insights is published monthly during the academic year. Content is written and edited, except as noted, by faculty member Marilyn Buerkle. The copy editor for this issue was faculty member Amy Hagenrater-Gooding. Photos are by Marilyn Buerkle, except as noted. If you have information you would like to appear in this publication, call 410-651-8349 or email mlbuerkle@umes.edu.