We have much to celebrate! In spite of a fiscally challenging year, our students, faculty and staff continue to perform at a level of excellence. I am very proud of their engagement and the manner in which each contribute to the success of our school. Highlights of selected accomplishments are again presented in this edition of Wingspan. Other selected School of The Arts and Professions (SAP) milestones are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

First, the SAP celebrated one of its largest December graduating classes. There were 118 degrees conferred at commencement: 98 baccalaureates; 9 Masters; and 11 Ph.D.s. A pre-commencement celebration was held to recognize their achievement. Dr. Carl Bryant, a UMES alumnus, delivered the keynote address titled, “The Odyssey and the Obligation.” This SAP graduate celebration was a festive evening attended by over 100 students, faculty and administrators. Respectively, Brooke Stacey, Megan Powell, and Natalie Curry were recognized as the top three SAP graduates. Ms. Stacey, a criminal justice major, completed her program with a perfect 4.0 overall GPA. The faculty and department chairpersons are to be commended for contributing to our students’ achievement.

Second, to further support our students and faculty, the SAP administration, executive board and ad-hoc committees have remained active. More recently, and in response to Senate Bill 740 which impacts all University of Maryland System institutions, departments are developing benchmarks at each level for their academic majors. The intent is to delineate measures of competency for every academic major through each level of progression (i.e., freshman through senior year). Such systemic measures will enhance the academic progression of our students while providing a measurable guidepost along the way.

Lastly, the executive board and ad-hoc committees have been engaged in achieving our strategic initiatives. On October 18, the board convened its fall meeting that culminated with enthusiasm and excitement for advancing the School of The Arts and Professions. Board President Sherman Lambert presented his vision for how the board could strategically partner with the school to support programmatic and student needs. Also, the three strategic ad-hoc committees are on target to complete their respective committee charges: Research Committee; Faculty Mentoring Committee; and Task Force on Theatre/Performing Arts Degree Program. A final report from each committee will be submitted in April 2014. A summation of their reports will be published in the next edition of Wingspan.

The Department of English and Modern Languages marked two important milestones recently. Students enrolled in communication courses—which have been a staple of the department’s curriculum for many years—will now be able to earn a telecommunications minor; and construction has begun on a new 166,000 square-foot building which will house state-of-the-art broadcast facilities.

While the structure is officially labeled the Engineering, Aviation, Computer and Mathematical Sciences Building, a third floor wing of the $91.5 million project will house instructional radio and television studios, multiple audio and video editing stations, a computer graphics laboratory and telecommunication faculty offices. In addition, Hawk Radio, the university’s student-managed radio station will broadcast from a glass-walled studio which will serve as a centerpiece of the building’s first-floor atrium.

“We will offer our students the opportunity to practice their skills on the same equipment they’ll find in radio and TV stations around the country,” said Marilyn Buerkle, a faculty member who represented the department in the multi-year planning process. “That will be an extremely valuable recruitment tool.”

The facility should be ready for occupancy by September of 2015.
Those are some of the issues addressed in a research project being conducted jointly by Dr. Lily Tsai from the UMES Department of Criminal Justice and Dr. Claire Nolasco from the Criminology Program at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

“Target Hardening—Situational Crime Prevention and Campus Crime” is a two-phase collaborative project between the two institutions that focuses on how well students, campus police and the campus itself are prepared to handle a crime.

Some 900 students from both campuses participated in a campus crime survey conducted last fall. More than 300 students expressed interest in taking a self-defense course. Students also were involved in the creation of a crime prevention poster which will be displayed on both campuses.

This project is being funded by a President’s Circle Faculty Research Grant provided by the president of Texas A&M-San Antonio. Tsai and Nolasco discussed the research at the annual convention of the American Society of Criminology and plan to present their findings at the 2014 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Conference. The women were colleagues while earning their doctoral degrees in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University in Texas.

For most people, the words “African-American composers” and “saxophone” evoke the sounds of master jazz composers and performers, such as Duke Ellington, John Coltrane and Charlie Parker. However, there are a significant number of composers creating classical works for the concert saxophone world that are often overlooked.

“When I brought my students to concerts, conferences and festivals, I noticed that this demographic of composers appeared to be almost non-existent,” music faculty member Brian Perez said. He hopes to correct that omission.

Concern over the issue led Perez to discover that, despite their lack of accessibility, many African American composers have contributed works to the repertoire of the concert saxophone. “There are many hidden musical treasures,” he said.

As part of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland, Perez plans to add to the body of research available about African-American composers, and, through a series of recitals, to promote the music of three particularly prolific musicians. Dr. David Baker, Dr. Yusef Lateef and Andrew White have all composed more than five separate works featuring the concert saxophone.

Perez presented Lateef’s music at the first of three recitals in College Park, Md., in October. He performed the work of White in December, and he has scheduled Baker’s compositions for a final concert in February. “It is my goal to be an advocate for their music and bring it to the widest audience possible,” he said.

One common trait the three composers share is that they all began their careers as jazz performers. Perez believes the incorporation of the jazz language and improvisation within the formalist concerto and sonata settings of the classical tradition make these works a perfect bridge between the two worlds.

“Modern music educators must possess a command of many different styles in order to develop a holistic music program in their K through 12 and higher education programs,” Perez said. “My research will demonstrate how these works may serve as valuable resources to bridge the gap between the classical and jazz idiom and the constantly evolving scope of concert saxophone repertoire.”
A TEACHER’S TOOLBOX

Local public school teachers, school administrators, higher education faculty, state officials and community business leaders gathered on the UMES campus for the 12th annual Professional Development School Summer Institute just before the start of the current academic year.

Some 70 participants spent two days gearing up for the year ahead. They were briefed on the implementation of new education standards and other important initiatives by representatives from the Maryland Department of Education. Rhonda Holmes-Blankenship, Maryland’s 2013 Teacher of the Year, inspired them with her remarks as a guest speaker. They also had the opportunity to select from a variety of issue-oriented discussion sessions, including one on school safety.

The theme for this year’s workshop was “Making the Adjustment.” Patricia Goslee, a staff member in the university’s education department, serves as coordinator of the professional development schools and other school-based programs. “Participants were given hard hats and key chains that had a set of tools on them,” Goslee said. “The thought behind this theme was for us to not become overwhelmed by the changes, but to just make the adjustments with the skills we already had been taught.”

Participants described the conference as informative and enlightening. In addition to their enthusiasm for this annual event, they suggested that UMES hold periodic “tune-up” sessions to discuss the information gained from the conference.

Support for this initiative is made possible through the university’s Title III funds and the University System of Maryland’s Redesign of Teacher Education grant.

BEYOND WORDS

Learning a second language is about more than vocabulary and grammar. UMES offers an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the history, art, literature and even the culinary staples of another culture.

The Foreign Language Instructional Center (FLIC) has sponsored unique events including the demonstration of ancient Chinese calligraphy, the translation of traditional American names into Arabic characters and a look at the creative storytelling of an author and artist whose work is inspired by her Middle Eastern roots.

Recent classroom sessions featured the preparation and consumption of some of the foods associated with foreign cultures. French language students helped to prepare crepes with Dr. Jacalyn Book, and Spanish language students in Dr. Carole Champagne’s classes ended their semester with a Christmas feast which included some of the traditional foods they might encounter in Spain or Latin America.

“We often talk about the career opportunities available to students who study a foreign language and those are very real, said Tammy Gharbi, FLIC Program Coordinator. “But I believe that enriching one’s life with an understanding of how others live beyond our own borders is what makes education truly valuable.”
A SENSE of ADVENTURE
Some faculty members use winter and summer breaks to take a much needed rest. History professor Dr. Tim Baughman has a completely different strategy for recharging his batteries.

He spends the time as a lecturer on eco-tourism cruises conducted by Zegrahm Expeditions. He has visited six of the world’s seven continents in the last two years.

An expert in European history and the author of four books on Antarctica, Baughman joins a team of academic experts who educate and entertain an onboard audience of about 100 tour guests with detailed knowledge of the flora, fauna, folklore and facts associated with their destination.

This past summer, Baughman spent a little over a month lecturing on an expedition to Alaska and the Russian Far East. Over the most recent winter break, he worked a three week cruise to Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

While he describes Antarctica as “the most dazzling place on earth,” Baughman says the most unusual place he’s ever visited is Tristan da Cunha, a volcanic island in the South Atlantic Ocean. It’s the world’s most remote, inhabited archipelago; it is located more than 1,700 miles from the nearest land and houses only seven families.

An expedition lecturer since 1995, Baughman has, at times, been surrounded by herds of walruses, waddles of penguins, and, most recently, nearly 2,000 reindeer.

He brings a wealth of fascinating experiences back to campus. “There’s rarely a day that I don’t bring something from the cruises into the classroom,” he said.

Baughman believes a college education should be a life-changing experience. He is a serious advocate of international experiences. During his nearly three decades as an educator, he has led 25 study abroad programs.
Local Talent on Display

Four years after UMES became the only state university in Maryland—and the only HBCU nationwide—to offer the sequential arts concentration for applied design majors, the Mosely gallery hosted POW!, an exhibition highlighting the medium and showcasing local talent.

POW! displayed work by eight artists including Brad Hudson, the fine arts faculty member who created and directs the sequential arts concentration; UMES alumni Michael Carmean, Doug Draper, and brothers Josh and Mat Shockley; and local artists James Duffendach, Ryan Thompson and Jason Mckeef.

The term sequential art is most often associated with comic books but technically refers to a series of images done in sequence to tell a story, a definition which could also be applied to film, animation and storyboards. The artists featured in POW! shared their insights about this important artistic medium generally and the comic book industry specifically during a panel discussion when the show opened in October.

“Since coming to UMES, I found that many of the art students shared an interest in comics,” Hudson said. “They wanted to study and learn the processes of sequential arts, so I initiated classes and continued the program’s growth until it was approved in 2009.” Since then, Hudson said, the concentration has expanded considerably. “This event is well overdue. The campus and local community need to recognize and appreciate the effect that this major and UMES in general have on the artistic community of the Eastern Shore.”

Plans are being made for a follow-up exhibition of the local artists in the future, and Hudson says the gallery hopes to stage a show in 2014 featuring an internationally recognized creator.

Collaborative Learning

Professors Amy Hagenrater-Gooding and Brad Hudson found a unique opportunity for a creative, interdepartmental, collaborative learning project during the fall semester: a graphic novel.

Students in the English department’s Special Topics course, taught by Hagenrater-Gooding, penned their own narrative, writing about a watershed or pivotal moment in their lives. They produced a synopsis of the entire work and created a short script to be illustrated by art students in Hudson’s Sequential Art I and II courses. Reaching beyond the campus, a few of the student writers were teamed with Worcester County Technical High School’s Interactive Media Productions Department.

It was a challenge for the authors to move from an idea, to words on a page, to surrendering the project to an artist for graphic representation. Devin Freeland, a senior English major, was teamed with Jaron McDougal.

“It was cool. I gave him all the flexibility in the world. I’m going to write the story, but he’s the artist,” Freeland said. “It was exactly like I thought it would be.” Students wrote about a broad variety of topics ranging from heartbreak and culture shock to hard hitting issues like PTSD, gang violence and racism. “It is always rewarding to see students push themselves in producing a quality product for the course but also working through words to resolve emotional issues,” Hagenrater-Gooding said. “I loved not only listening to them construct their narratives, but seeing the final project and that moment when they realize their story, their voice counts.”

Although Hudson’s students will be adding lettering and color to the pages over the course of next semester, Hagenrater-Gooding’s students got to see rough sketches of their story. Both professors hope the students will continue to work together in completing the project with the hopes of publishing some of the collaborative pieces.
I love this organization because it perfectly complements my major and my plans for the future. I aspire to pursue a career in film and television, specifically as a writer for sitcoms and dramas. My entire life will revolve around writing, and this organization helps me to experiment with various writing styles beyond the classroom.

One of my goals in college is to become a well-rounded person; this organization helps me to achieve this goal. I am happy that Jot-It-Down has allowed me to make new friends and develop closer connections to my old ones. My friends in this organization urge me to let my voice be heard.

By working together, sharing our ideas, and peer editing each other’s work, we each help one another foster our creativity. If I ever need creative advice, help with a writing assignment, or simple encouragement, I can count on my Jot-It-Down colleagues.

I love being surrounded with so many brilliant minds with whom I can learn and collaborate. Jot-It-Down is much more than something to put on my résumé. It’s been a chance to polish my skills and grow my self-confidence. I am grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful organization.
Fine arts professor Michel Demanche’s fifth solo exhibition at Causey Contemporary, a New York City gallery, opened in November. She presented two collections, a series of photographs titled “Americana Still” and a group of mixed media work titled “Tom and Betty Connect the Dots.”

What follows is what she describes as “the anatomy of an art exhibition,” the dynamics of the launch of a show from the artist’s perspective.

Two Days before Departure:
Dear Diary,

It has been a very long and productive two years. I have wandered in and out of abandoned houses despite the authorities’ efforts to dissuade me. I have produced 69 exhibition-ready, silver gelatin prints of the evidence found inside the houses. Now I have placed them onto the digital delivery devices ready to reveal my evidence of image. I can only hope that memories will be evoked and all the risk is worth it.

One Day before Departure:
Dear Diary,

All of the paper codes are now loaded, along with the memory evidence of the abandoned houses. Delivery devices are prepared. Seven full works with nine enlargements of the evidence, all in frames, along with the “house.” The Volvo is prepared.

Arrival Day:
Dear Diary,

Five hours on the road, no events. I have met my contacts, all work unloaded and the preparation for the presentation will take place after my debriefing. I am lucky; the facility and owners are very receptive. They have three subjects who have expressed interest in the code works.

Presentation Day:
Dear Diary,

I have spoken with many subjects all very interested in the code works. The facility owners have allowed the works to be placed as background to a film crew. I am allowed interaction with the crew and learn the works will be part of a “Film.” The presentation has been a great success and all are excited by the memories they now share with the abandoned homes of the Eastern Shore.

Departure Day:
Dear Diary,

I am so pleased with all the work. The images are now part of the large world of communication. I am taken by the facility owners to places for food and drink. I can leave now and keep this with me as my memories. I will leave at daylight and return after another successful mission.
Gladys Goslee knows how important international travel is to someone who is trying to learn a foreign language. She taught French for more than 40 years in nearby Wicomico County and says she polished her language skills by traveling to French-speaking countries.

“I believe total immersion is the way to learn the language and culture of a country,” she said.

The Department of English and Modern Languages is grateful that’s her philosophy, because she and her husband, Charles, have pledged $10,000 to create an endowment for the department which, among other things, will support study abroad.

Both Goslees were local public school educators. That’s why Charles Goslee, a graduate of UMES when the institution was still known as Maryland State College, said they wanted to give back to their community. “We saw so many students who needed assistance,” he said. “We wanted to help.”

Gladys Goslee didn’t graduate from our university, but she serves now as a member of the UMES Board of Visitors which offers advice and assistance to the institution’s administration. “We’re just 12 miles from the university; we should be involved,” she said.

In addition to the creation of the Charles G. and Gladys B. Goslee Fund for English and Modern Languages, which will be administered by Department Chair Dr. Jacqueline Brice-Finch, the couple has also created a fund to support local youth through the Eastern Shore Community Foundation.

The federal government is footing the bill for an extraordinary group of doctoral students enrolled in the university’s Education Leadership Program. Over $1 million in Race to the Top grant money is helping 25 young local educators advance their careers.

There’s a payback for the taxpayers’ investment. The students are required to plan and implement solutions to specific local public school problems.

Their efforts are described as collaborative action research projects and address issues in Eastern Shore school districts, such as a decrease in math achievement levels when students in Talbot County move from elementary to middle school and Somerset County’s higher than average dropout rate.

The group was handpicked by school superintendents in Dorchester, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties. The students are in the final stretch of their coursework and will begin their dissertations this fall.

Each of the students was selected back in 2012 because he or she was a promising local teacher. Dr. Derry Stufft, the director of the doctoral program, has been impressed. “This is an exceptionally bright group,” Stufft said. “They’re amazing.”

Stufft wrote the grant request with Dr. Doug DeWitt from the Education Administration Master’s Program at Salisbury University. A handful of the students are working on SU master’s degrees.

Most of the group hold school leadership positions, and a number of the students earned their undergraduate degrees at UMES.
Generous

Social science majors enrolled in the freshman orientation class known as First Year Experience shared an experience last fall that helped them to see their decision to attend college as life changing. The course instructor, Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines, gave her students a non-fiction, non-textbook, reading assignment.

“I want to give my students the gift of reading a book, and the greater gift of enjoying a book,” Barrett-Gaines said. “Many of our students do not associate school reading with enjoyable reading.”

“The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates,” is the story of two black men who grew up in Baltimore and, by coincidence, shared the same name. They didn’t know each other, and while their lives began similarly, they are now dramatically different. The author is a Rhodes Scholar, a White House Fellow and a decorated combat veteran; the other Wes Moore is in prison, convicted of murder.

The book forces its readers to evaluate the impact of their families, their neighborhoods, their friends and their education on their lives.

“Reading changes minds, and my students’ experience with this book proves that,” Barrett-Gaines said.
The School of The Arts and Professions owes a debt of gratitude to Bob Harleston and his wife, Dr. Sheila McDonald Harleston. Before their retirement, each spent years establishing the reputation of two uniquely successful programs at the university.

He created the Department of Criminal Justice and served as its first chair; she was a tenured faculty member in the Department of Fine Arts and director of the highly acclaimed UMES Concert Choir.

While their commitment to the university was evidenced by the decades they spent nurturing their programs and their students, it was crystal clear when there were unanticipated vacancies late last summer. SAP Dean Ray Davis asked the Harlestons for help—and they said yes.

Bob Harleston returned to chair the criminal justice department. “It’s like one of your kids. You’ve … expended a lot of energy. You’ve seen it grow,” he said. “It’s hard to say no.”

Sheila Harleston is back in the classroom teaching music and on the stage directing the concert choir. “I didn’t want the choir to be down,” she said. “I could just help to get it back on its feet and maintain a high standard.”

The return to campus requires long hours, but retirement didn’t mean sitting still. The Harlestons traveled to exotic destinations including Switzerland and Hawaii. They plan equally spectacular travel itineraries—and time to enjoy their grandchildren—once national searches for their replacements are completed and they retire again.

Here are some of the reactions from the UMES freshmen assigned to read the book:

“Reading this book, I am starting to notice that a lot of people wish they could be in my situation. I am the first male in my family to go to college. Making the decision to come to school makes me think about what I would be doing instead of being here . . . To me, school looks like the only way out of Philadelphia, and the only way to make it in life.”

“The story shows real young people’s lives changing over time. The more we read, the more we recognize ourselves in the story. We learn that we can change our fate from bad to good.”

“Being a freshman in college is a brand new experience. Some of us are overwhelmed, and thinking about quitting and going home. This book challenges those thoughts. It follows the paths of kids who go to school versus those who drop out. It motivates us to believe that struggling is okay.”

“Reading this book has shown me how the decisions that I make shape who I am and who I will become. It’s easy to make plans or predict how I want things to go for myself, but sometimes I have to take a different avenue to create a better future for myself.”

“Reading about the struggles of Wes Moore makes me want to do better for myself. I have made bad decisions in the past, and I know I will make a thousand more; but I also know that life is about making mistakes and learning from them. Where I am from, young children and adults get in trouble, do the wrong things, and just give up . . . If I hadn’t been accepted to college, I would not have known what to do with myself.”

“Dr. Barrett-Gaines wants to show us the different paths we can take in life, which the two Wes Moores represent. Their stories teach us about overcoming obstacles, facing consequences, and taking responsibility. She wants us to understand that everyone struggles. She wants us to learn how to read to enjoy, and since there are so many interesting things going on in this book, it is a great place to start.”
The UMES Social Science Club made a difference in the lives of 30 children over the Christmas holidays this year.

With help from Somerset County Social Services, the students created an Angel Tree which contained the children’s names and their wish lists. They asked the campus community to select one child and provide at least one gift. The generous response from UMES faculty, staff and students was remarkable.

The interim chair of the Department of Social Sciences, Dr. Joyce Bell, wasn’t sure what to expect. “This is the first year we had requests for bikes,” Bell said. “I really didn’t think anyone would purchase such a big ticket item for the children. However, we received five bikes!”

Elizabeth Ranger was one of the students who donated gifts. “My mother went without things that she wanted or needed to make sure that we got a good Christmas every year,” she said. “It breaks my heart that there are children who never experience one.” Ranger chose a particular little boy because of his clothing size. Shane is just 4 years old, but wears a size 8 husky. “When I grew up, my brother was overweight, and he didn’t have many friends because of his size.”

The Social Science Club learned a valuable lesson. “I think the Angel Tree project and people’s willingness to give is just another sign of the good that still exists in our society today,” Bell said. “There were so many that were willing to give to complete strangers in an effort to make a child’s Christmas a little brighter.”
Three students in the Doctoral Program in Organizational Leadership (ORLD) traveled to Montreal, Canada, to present their research at the 15th Annual International Leadership Association’s Global Conference held October 30 – November 2, 2013.

Tondalaya Carroll, Cynthia Sims, and Lonnie Morris, discussed their separate dissertation studies on a joint panel entitled “Understanding the Intersection of Leadership and Entrepreneurship.” Collectively they explored a concept they call the “entrepreneur life cycle.”

The students were accompanied by Dr. Prince Attoh, a long-serving faculty member in the ORLD program and a member of each student’s research committee.

Lonnie Morris also participated in an “Ethics in Business” panel where he joined representatives from Duquesne University and Gonzaga University to discuss leadership and ethics in a business context.

The four-day conference featured participants and presenters from more than 30 countries. Through workshops, symposiums, panels and roundtable discussions, students, faculty, business leaders, and scholars engaged in practical and scholarly discourse about the conference theme, “Leadership for Local and Global Resilience: The Challenges of a Shifting Planet.”

Despite the cold temperatures in Montreal, the students valued the opportunity to interact with others who share their passion for leadership.

UMES participation in the annual conference will become a staple of the ORLD academic experience, but students will be a little warmer at the 2014 event. It’s scheduled for San Diego, Calif., in late October.

Ajanae Lewis, a standout during her undergraduate career on our campus, is making an equally favorable impression in graduate school in New York City.

Lewis earned a bachelor’s degree from the UMES Department of Fine Arts in 2011. Faculty members describe her as “an ideal student” and a “pillar within the student body.” She maintained a 3.2 cumulative GPA, participated in the department’s Envision Art club, helped with projects unrelated to her coursework and eagerly pursued exhibitions at off-campus venues.

A New York native, Lewis began her graduate work at the prestigious School of Visual Arts in New York City last semester. She is pursuing a Master of Professional Studies in art therapy. The program is a two-year, 60 credit curriculum that integrates art therapy into an academic structure of theory and application.

While the UMES fine arts faculty predicted Lewis would be successful in her graduate studies, it didn’t take long for confirmation of their expectations.

The chair of the program at the School of Visual Arts, Deborah Farber, took the time to send an email to compliment the department on the quality of its graduates.

“Ajanae has been a wonderful addition to our program . . . Responsible, affable and hardworking, she is a pleasure to teach,” Farber said. “The groundwork of her academic, creative and personal accomplishment was surely shaped by the education and guidance she received at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.”

The Department of Fine Arts is brimming with Hawk pride at the news of its graduate’s success.

HAWK PRIDE

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The UMES Honors Program has a new director, Dr. Michael Lane. What follows is a summary of his plans for the university’s best and brightest.

Thanks to the gracious good will and generous guidance of the institution’s superlative staff, first-rate faculty and stellar students, the Honors Program at UMES is burgeoning in many ways. Its branches reach broadly, campus-wide and beyond, creating an academic, co-curricular and social canopy that will better align the program with national standards and recognized best practices in honors education.

Recent activities aim to increase the visibility and viability of the program. We aspire to elevate the UMES Honors Program to its full and promising potential, to garner the attention of the world and to prepare our students to thrive, personally and professionally, in that world.

Newly inaugurated committees, including an Honors Advisory Board, Honors Council, and Honors Student Association Executive Board, guarantee shared governance; the program excels when it represents the interests of and is invested in by all.

We have stepped up support for undergraduate research, including presentations at regional and national meetings and the development and implementation of Senior Honors Theses in all major, degree-granting divisions.

A Summer Honors Freshmen Academy will serve as a bridge program to facilitate the transition of incoming students to UMES by acquainting them with campus, local, and regional resources and outlets for service projects, internships, and profile-building professional development opportunities.

The Academy provides an apt segue into the projected Honors Residential Learning Community that will incorporate shared honors seminars, philanthropic cooperation, community-building programs, and peer-to-peer mentorship – a recipe for success in creating cohesion in the new cohort and in repairing student retention deficiencies.

Our communication and marketing plans have been expanded to connect with prospective, current and alumni honors students via our redesigned website, various social networking outlets and a quarterly newsletter.

Glimpses of other projects include an honors medaling ceremony to recognize the achievements of our graduates, an Emerging Leaders Institute planned for late March, and an Entrepreneurship series to be held during the fall 2014 semester.

Honors staff will travel to Rome and Paris in late May, where UMES officials and their French and Italian counterparts will begin drafting partnership agreements that will enable bilateral student exchanges between the institutions.

Stay tuned, honors at UMES is a whole new game … and we’re winning!

A RECIPE for SUCCESS

It’s not every day that brand-name, national news organizations come calling at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

But that was almost routine during 2013, including a visit by a Baltimore Sun reporter that produced a front-page article about two School of The Arts and Professions (SAP) programs in mid-October. Maryland’s largest daily newspaper wanted to delve into an observation made by a federal judge in a lawsuit that challenged the way the state of Maryland has supported historically black institutions financially.

While the judge questioned the wisdom of policymakers allowing the duplication of degree programs at the state’s public colleges, she applauded UMES and Salisbury University for finding ways to collaborate.

Dating back to the William Hytche administration, when the late president lobbied hard to work in concert with Salisbury, the collaboration included two SAP programs: a dual degree in sociology and social work and a joint Master of Arts in teaching degree. Senior sociology major Martin Ngwa was one of the students interviewed for the article, as was Dr. Karen Verbeke, who directs UMES’ educator training program.

Dr. Ronnie Holden, the vice president for administrative affairs who has worked at UMES for 37 years, offered historic perspective that drove the collaborative agreement.

The two universities “got together and they developed a plan … that kept us off a collision course,” Holden told The Sun.

Earlier in 2013, The Washington Post published a lengthy article about UMES professors’ work on course redesign and The New York Times produced a short report on the university’s recent investment in hand-held whiteboard tablets that can double as bullet-proof shields.
The odds were stacked heavily against UMES music instructor Mercury Morris ever setting foot on a college campus. He was far more likely to become another casualty of the crime-ridden, poverty-stricken, inner city Baltimore neighborhood where he grew up.

Looking back, the name his father selected for him might have been an omen. Morris was named for both the Miami Dolphin's star running back of the 1970s and the red hot planet closest to the Sun.

His father didn’t live to see his son’s success. He died of cancer when Morris was just fifteen. A year later, cancer claimed his mother. Morris found a family in the band at Dunbar High School.

To see the accomplished trombone player perform today, it’s hard to believe he had never considered music as a career. “I had never played an instrument in my life,” he said. “I had no clue what a trombone was. I had never even seen one.”

The director of the school’s concert and marching bands, Charles Funn, provided the structure and discipline that Morris needed. “It kept me off the streets. I was too busy to hang out.”

His talent blossomed, and his world expanded. He met Wynton Marsalis when the jazz superstar performed in Baltimore. He flew on an airplane for the first time when he traveled to Denver for a high school jazz competition.

“I loved the music. I loved the people. I saw people cared.” He began to envision his future.

Enter Morris’ next mentor: Dr. John Lamkin, the director of bands and coordinator of music education at UMES. He visited Dunbar High and encouraged Morris to consider college.

No one in the Morris family had such big dreams. “It was just me,” he said. “I had to do it on my own.” Lamkin offered the four year scholarship that made it possible.

As a member of the UMES Jazz Ensemble, Morris realized his childhood ambition to travel. He toured across the country and around the world. He visited Africa, Europe, Canada, Jamaica and the Virgin Islands.

He also met the woman who would become his wife; Margaret Rutherford was the jazz ensemble’s vocalist. They earned their music education degrees together and married in 2009.

After graduation from UMES, Morris became a fulltime music teacher and choir director at nearby Crisfield High School. Though an administrative overhaul and school restructuring plan eliminated his position after just two years, he continued to teach, this time as a private instructor at a local music studio.

In 2011, the call came from his alma mater to join the UMES faculty as a part-time instructor. He works both in the classroom and on stage, serving most recently as director of the university’s concert band.

Between his UMES teaching schedule and his private music lessons, Morris is working six days a week, but he’s on a mission. “Maybe there’s a kid out there— like me— who is waiting for me,” he said.
FOR the COMMON GOOD

Dr. Karen Verbecke, chair of the UMES Department of Education, is a key player in Maryland’s efforts to prepare its teachers to best meet their students’ needs.

She is currently serving as the co-chair of the Maryland Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC) Work Group on Teacher Education. She is also the president of the Maryland Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and a member of the Maryland PARCC Educator Leader Cadre, the Maryland Teacher Education Task Force and the Governor’s P-20 Leadership Council.

What follows is her explanation of a new mandate for classroom instruction and evaluation.

Educators across the United States have been wrestling with their latest challenge – the implementation of a new set of standards called the “common core.” Created in part by the National Governors’ Association and the Chief State School Officers and their representatives, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been adopted by 45 states.

The common core is intended to provide students across the nation with a single set of standards in both English/language arts and mathematics from kindergarten through high school. It is designed to push students to dig deeper and to ensure that our high school graduates are better prepared for college and/or employment.

Some of the most notable differences in the new English/language arts standards, which also include science, social studies and technical subjects, are more emphasis on content rich nonfiction and informational texts in addition to literature; reading and writing that is supported with evidence from the text; and more exposure and practice in complex vocabulary.

The primary shifts in the mathematics standards are to focus more intensely on two to three topics in each grade; provide more coherence between concepts from one grade to the next; and increase the overall rigor with even more emphasis on applications to real world situations, higher levels of fluency with arithmetic; and a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

As with any new reform, there are numerous challenges and opportunities. The CCSS has widespread support from a broad constituent base. There are also critics who question the legitimacy of so much federal involvement, the perceived standardization of curriculum, etc.

The fact is that the common core and its related activities are already part of the educational landscape. Guiding its development were the following familiar criteria:

• Alignment with expectations for college and career success
• Inclusion of application and higher order skills
• Real-life scenarios and application
• Research-based
• Internationally benchmarked

Additionally, common assessments are being developed to allow for comparison across students, schools, school systems, states and nations. Two consortia are developing these assessments: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC).

Maryland is working with PARCC and has been piloting the assessments. They are technology-based, and both teachers and their students are required to utilize some new technology tools. In addition to the usual keyboarding skills, students will need to know, for instance, how to drag and drop, cut and paste, highlight text features, use multiple screens to respond to questions, use spellcheck, insert citations, use a slide rule and use a calculator.

The common core is being fully implemented in Maryland public schools during the current academic year. The PARCC Assessments will be fully implemented during the 2014-2015 academic year. All UMES teacher/counselor/administrator education faculty and students are integrating the new standards and assessments in their curriculum.

The next few years will be interesting, exciting and challenging!