

TRUSTEES' SCHOLARS NEWSLETTER

University of Missouri–Kansas City | Spring 2020



ALUMNA TALKS ABOUT
LIFE AFTER GRADUATION

SCHOLARS'
SUMMER PLANS

LOOKING BACK
ON FRESHMAN YEAR

Media Committee

Ciera Ayala | Karah Chappel | Niki Joshi | Jennifer Nguyen | Timothy Nguyen

Scholars Alumna Talks About Life After Graduation

By Karah Chappel, 2nd year scholar
Sponsor: UMKC Trustees

Azani Fitten graduated from the Trustees' Scholars Program in 2017. Azani credits the program with giving her the skills needed to achieve her professional goals in her role as a recruiter at Hallmark and as the small business owner of Career Uncaged.

Looking back on her time in the Trustees' Scholars Program, Azani mentioned an enrichment session on the StrengthsFinder test as one of the most practical trainings she received. She discussed learning not only about her own strengths, but those of the other scholars and how to work best with them. Azani says this knowledge helps her overcome one of the most common workforce barriers of "present[ing] technical skills among people who all engage differently." Azani learned skills through the Trustees' Scholars Program that other professionals do not receive until well into their careers. She also affectionately described the alumni community of the program as being a family. Alumni may be distanced for a while, but every time there is a reunion, she said, "It's the same comradery and love like we never left each other."



Azani opened her business, Career Uncaged, one year ago, and it has been growing since then.

"The Trustees' Scholars Program was the connection that helped me get the skills I needed to start my business."

As an HR professional, she described her experience of seeing candidates with talent who were not successfully translating that experience into resumes and interviews.

She explained that this knowledge, combined with her desire to help people, led to opening her own business. Career Uncaged provides services in cover letter and resume writing, interview prep and more.

"The Trustees' Scholars Program was the connection that helped me get the skills I needed to start my business," Azani said. She met a Hallmark executive through the Trustees' Scholars Program and was then hired at Hallmark. Her recruiter position offered her additional training and tools that make her a successful business owner.

"I 1,000% would not be where I am professionally if not for the program equipping me for professional life after graduation," Azani said.

Awards and Accolades

By Niki Joshi, 1st year scholar

Sponsor: Barbara Hall Marshall Trustee's Scholarship



Invested in improving the American education system, **Jacob Furry** is conducting research that focuses on the retention rate of music teachers in educational institutions across Missouri and Kansas. Alongside his faculty advisor, Dr. Lani Hamilton, assistant professor of music education, Jacob worked to create and distribute over two thousand surveys through a partnership with the National Association for Music Education. His project, currently in the phase of data collection and analysis, has been accepted for presentation at the 2021 Missouri Music Educators Conference in

January. He looks forward to proceeding to the last stages of his project this summer as he and his team finish exploration, analysis and final revisions.

In November, **Ruby Rios** was invited to host the Kansas City PLTW (Project Lead the Way) Summit, a conference that highlights the work of STEM educators and emphasizes the importance of mental health in education. Although initially feeling a bit intimidated by the endeavor, she soon found herself drawing from her experience as a host of local robotics tournaments.

Looking back, she deeply enjoyed the event and viewed it as an incredible success. She appreciated the opportunity to not only speak about one of her passions, STEM education, but to also thank the STEM educators in the Kansas City community for the meaningful work they do every day.



In February, **Lanisha Stevens** was invited to represent UMKC's Black Student Government at this year's Big XII Conference at the University of Oklahoma. The conference aimed to give student leaders the opportunity to network with one another while also honing their interpersonal skills through breakout sessions and workshops. Lanisha found the experience incredibly enriching and is grateful for the opportunity to expand her knowledge, network with like-minded individuals and meet renowned activists such as King Amiyah Scott and Angela Davis.

Summer Plans

By Ciera Ayala, 3rd year scholar
Sponsor: Tom and Mary Bloch

This summer has the potential to be significantly different than what we are used to. However, we have a couple of scholars who still have some exciting summer plans.



Gavin Ott, a first-year scholar, still hopes to go on a Catholic mission trip to Guatemala in June. The main goal for the trip is to provide the local community with more livable conditions, which includes helping build different structures for them. Gavin will also bring different items the community needs and spend time with a local orphanage.

"I've honestly been looking forward to it since the day I left last year, so I really hope we still get to go," Gavin said.

Orlando Quintana, a third-year scholar, will be a mechanical engineering intern with JE Dunn Construction. His role will be as a campus intern in the mechanical, electrical and plumbing division. Orlando is very excited for this opportunity.

"Working with JE Dunn will give me valuable professional experience," Orlando said. "I will utilize skills I've gained in various different thermodynamic, fluid mechanic and structural engineering courses I've taken at UMKC as a mechanical engineering major."

This will be a great opportunity for him to put what he's learned into practice.



Looking Back on (Three-Fourths of) Freshman Year

by Tim Nguyen, 2nd year scholar

Sponsor: UMKC Trustees



Izzy Daab is a biology major with a pre-medical emphasis, minoring in both chemistry and Spanish. In addition to her heavy but manageable course load, she enjoys working out and playing basketball regularly at Swinney Center. She volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House biweekly, runs a lot, watches hockey avidly and enjoys reading, drinking coffee and spending time with family and friends. On campus, Izzy is a part of the Pre-Medical Society and intends to apply to be a Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader this fall. Eventually, during her college experience, she hopes to study abroad in Spain.

Her favorite part of being at UMKC is the energetic, vibrant atmosphere unique to Kansas City, which she finds refreshing. She considers Kansas City to be her second home away from St. Louis.



Tia Kahwaji is a biology major with a pre-dentistry emphasis, minoring in both chemistry and business. As the vice president of the Pre-Dental Society, she gets to hear from various speakers, learns about the other executive board members, plans multiple volunteer events and enjoys connecting with her peers. In fall 2020, she plans to be an honors ambassador for the Honors College. She regularly works out at Swinney Center, and her favorite part of UMKC is the "tight-knit feeling and welcoming, uplifting environment." She enjoys reading books, baking and playing the piano.

Her favorite aspects of the program are the enrichments, such as the obstacle course and the Trustee luncheons to connect with business and civic leaders in Kansas City. She intends to apply for the UMKC Reserved Admission Program at the end of her sophomore year, attend the UMKC School of Dentistry and open an orthodontic practice in Kansas City.



Gavin Ott is a business administration major with a dual emphasis in finance and real estate and a minor in economics. In his spare time, he trains in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and kickboxing at the crack of dawn and at night when all of the other Scholars are sleeping or studying. Since January 2019, Gavin has worked as a data analyst at NorthPoint Development. He works 40-50 hours a week as an intern on top of juggling his course load, volunteering at Harvesters and serving as the assistant wrestling coach at his former high school, St. Pius X. On campus, he is involved in Delta Sigma Pi, a coed fraternity, and participated in the Summer Scholar Program offered in his freshman year.

In his eyes, the best parts of UMKC are the friends and connections he's made with Scholars in his year and wise upperclassmen. He hopes to return to Guatemala this summer on a mission trip and further develop his career at NorthPoint.

Graduating Seniors

By: Jennifer Nguyen, 4th year scholar

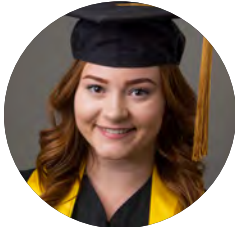
Sponsor: UMKC Trustees



Morgan Hartwig

Sponsor: Donald J. and Adele C. Hall

Morgan graduated in May with degrees in geology, geography and environmental science and a certification in geographic information systems. While at UMKC, she participated in the Chi Omega Fraternity, Geology Club and Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists. Following graduation, Morgan will begin a full-time position at Burns and McDonnell as an assistant geologist with plans to pursue a master's degree.



Katelyn McAlister

Sponsor: Kansas City Southern

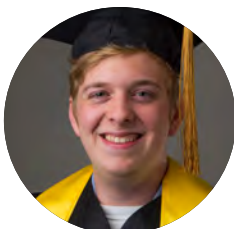
Katelyn graduated in May with a degree in business administration and an emphasis in marketing and enterprise management. During her time at UMKC, she was involved in the Honors College, residential life and Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society. Following graduation, Katelyn plans to continue working full-time at Bangert, Inc. and engaging in the philanthropic and nonprofit industry.



Jennifer Nguyen

Sponsor: UMKC Trustees

Jennifer graduated in May with a bachelor of science degree in biology with an emphasis in biomedical sciences, as well as minors in chemistry and sociology. In her undergraduate career, she was involved in the Honors College, Pre-Physician Assistant Society and St. Paul's Outreach. After graduation, Jennifer will enter the Master of Medical Science Physician Assistant Program at UMKC.



Landon Volkmann

Sponsor: Bill French

Landon graduated in May with a bachelor of science degree in computer science. In his time at UMKC, he took part in the Honors College, Supplemental Instruction, TEDxRockhill and *Lucerna*. In May, Landon began work as an academy engineer at Cerner's Innovation Campus. He plans to practice software development, engage in patent work and eventually enter law school.

Spring 2020 Events



The scholars gathered in January to thank Amy Loughman, who staffed the Trustees' Scholars Program for the last six years, and welcome Joe Constantino, the new staff liaison for the program. The get-together was just a few days before the Chiefs won Super Bowl LIV!



Several scholars had lunch with Mrs. Sue Agrawal to talk about the Trustees' Scholars Program and their experiences as students at UMKC.

ABOUT UMKC TRUSTEES' SCHOLARS

Scholars receive a full-ride (tuition, housing, book allowance) scholarship provided by the UMKC Board of Trustees and its community partners. Since the program's inception in 2002, 107 scholars have completed their undergraduate degrees at UMKC, and more than half of the program's alumni have made their home in the Kansas City area.

For information about the Trustees' Scholars program, contact Joe Constantino at constantinoj@umkc.edu

UMKC External Relations and
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