

# MICUA *Matters*

*The newsletter of the Maryland Independent College and University Association*

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## *Dear MICUA Community,*

Congratulations on the successful completion of an entire academic year during a global pandemic! Despite the unusual and extremely challenging circumstances under which we find ourselves, our students, faculty, staff, and schools have risen to, and exceeded, all expectations. Over the past several months, we have been able to share this truth with elected and appointed officials and their staff. In response, the State Legislature has very generously funded the Sellinger Program fully at \$88.8 million, and our capital projects at \$12 million. These and other legislative accomplishments including the celebration of Independent Higher Education Day (IHED) are discussed further in this issue of MICUA Matters.

This newsletter also includes examples of how our independent institutions serve a public purpose within our communities. The articles discuss initiatives to address food insecurities and shortages, cutting-edge science and technology partnerships, student volunteer service at vaccination sites, and on-campus vaccination clinics.

The new MICUA Vice President of Academic Affairs, Angela Sherman, starts on May 24, 2021. We hope that you will join us in welcoming Angela. Angela brings extensive team leadership experience and impressive subject matter expertise to the position. Having served as faculty in the Chemistry Department at Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) for the past 25 years, Angela also brings to the position an intimate familiarity with the MICUA member institutions' mission and purpose. While at NDMU, Angela served as Chemistry Department Chair, as President of the Faculty Senate, and as a member of most of the major committees at the University. Among other things, she is passionate about ensuring gender diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM fields of higher education.



*Source: Angela Sherman*

Prior to joining NDMU, Angela was an Adjunct Faculty member at both Loyola University Maryland and Towson University. Angela graduated from The Johns Hopkins University in 1979 and she earned a PhD in Organic Chemistry from Purdue University in 1984.

We hope that you find the information in this newsletter interesting and useful! As always, we are available to you if you have any questions or concerns.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Fidler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Fidler  
President  
sfidler@micua.org

# *An Unparalleled Legislative Session of Virtual Higher Education Advocacy*

During the 2021 Legislative Session, held entirely virtual, MICUA followed the progress of approximately 250 bills and held meetings with Presidents, campus representatives, elected and appointed officials, and their staff. MICUA interfaced regularly with the other segments of higher education, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, and the MICUA government relations contacts. MICUA also submitted testimony, drafted amendments, testified, and monitored subcommittee, voting, and floor sessions of the House and Senate.

In addition to achieving full funding of the Sellinger Program at \$88.8 million and our full capital projects request of \$12 million, some of the most significant bills that passed include:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities – Funding [HB 1](#) | [SB 1](#) (enacted) – require a study of the program approval process;
- Procurement – Prevailing Wage – Applicability [HB 37](#) | [SB 35](#) (enacted) – alter the applicability of the prevailing wage rate to a capital project for which 25%, rather than 50%, or more of the project cost is state money;
- Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act [HB 156](#) | [SB 283](#) (enacted) – require institutions to provide a link to the State online voter registration website beside the institution’s online portal for course registration;
- Solid Waste Management – Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion – Food Residuals [HB 264](#) | [SB 483](#) (enacted) – require certain generators of large quantities of food residuals to separate them from other solid waste under certain circumstances;
- Higher Education – Student Identification Cards – Required Information [HB 466](#) | [SB 405](#) (enacted) – require (newly issued) student identification cards to include specified crisis helpline information;
- Labor and Employment – Employment Standards During an Emergency (Maryland Essential Workers’ Protection Act) [HB 581](#) (enacted) | [SB 486](#) – require certain employers who employ essential employees to take certain actions relating to occupational safety and health during a public health emergency;
- Housing and Community Development – Neighborhood Revitalization – Passive House Pilot Program [HB 1073](#) | [SB 636](#) (enacted) – establish a pilot program for nonprofit organizations to partner with neighboring high schools and institutions of higher education to provide students with career and technical educational experiences through the renovation of residential properties;
- Corporate Diversity – Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission [HB 1210](#) (enacted) – requires certain entities to include underrepresented minorities on their boards and/or in their mission statements as a condition of qualifying for a specified State benefit;
- Prior Authorizations of State Debt – Alterations [HB 1374](#) (enacted) – repeals matching fund certification requirements for legislative bond initiative grants in the 2019 and 2020 capital budget bills;
- Institutions of Higher Education – Use of Criminal History in Admission – Modifications [SB 127](#) (enacted) – prohibits an institution of higher education from disqualifying certain applicants on the basis of a criminal history;
- Education – Student Financial Aid – Outreach Plan and Advisory Committee [SB 664](#) (enacted) – encourages the completion and submission of the FAFSA;
- Inmate Training and Job Act of 2021 [SB 800](#) (enacted) – establishes the Inmate Training and Job Pilot Program at the HBCUs in the State or at any other institution of postsecondary education with which MHEC executes an MOU;
- Capital Projects – Minority Business Enterprise – Goals [SB 909](#) (enacted) – requires minority business enterprise (MBE) goals to be set on capital projects that receive at least \$3 million in State funding; and
- Institutions of Higher Education – Prohibition Against Incentive Payments – Foreign Student Exemption [SB 927](#) (passed) – removes the prohibition against the payment of a commission based on enrollment when recruiting international students.

To view the full 2021 MICUA bill list, click [here](#).

In addition to legislation, the budget committees publish annually the [Joint Chairmen’s Report](#) (JCR), which requires additional reporting or other action of State agencies. In the 2021 JCR, the Maryland Higher Education Commission is required to convene a workgroup to develop uniform standards to award college credit for competency-based education (CBE) and prior learning. The workgroup, which will include MICUA, will submit findings and recommendations by September 1, 2021.

# MICUA Hosts Successful Virtual Independent Higher Education Day

On February 24, 2021, MICUA brought together almost 100 college students and administrators from MICUA member institutions to celebrate the strength and continued success of the students in independent higher education in Maryland, as well as the funding of the Sellinger Program.

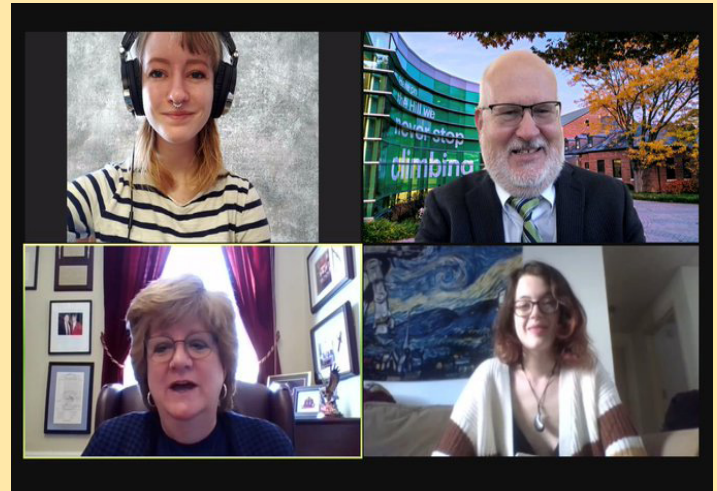
Governor Larry Hogan proclaimed the day as Maryland Independent Higher Education Day (IHED) and encouraged the people of Maryland to support independent institutions.

MICUA hosted IHED 2021 virtually via Zoom Webinar. Andrea Chapdelaine, PhD, Chair of the MICUA Board of Trustees and President of Hood College, provided welcoming remarks; then Senate President Bill Ferguson delivered a keynote address. President Ferguson is a native to Maryland, born and raised in Silver Spring, and he currently represents District 46 in Baltimore City. President Ferguson described the path by which he went from classroom teacher to law student to politician to one of the youngest presiding officers in the State Senate. He spoke of both inspiring and humbling experiences along the way, and he challenged everyone to demand nothing but the best of themselves, their colleagues, and their leaders. He had time for a few questions, and the students responded passionately and appreciatively to his remarks.

Following President Ferguson's remarks, Sara Fidler, President of MICUA, gave a presentation that included key facts about MICUA and MICUA's operating and capital budget requests, as well as tips and tricks to help the students successfully lobby members of the Maryland General Assembly. MICUA encouraged students to tweet about IHED and to tag pictures of themselves with legislators.

Students arranged almost 100 meetings with members of Maryland's General Assembly. The students expressed gratitude for past support of the Sellinger Program and the MICUA capital projects, shared demographic information regarding their institutions, and described how they have risen above the challenges of COVID to pursue independent higher education during a pandemic. When students were not in virtual meetings, they were invited to participate in the MICUA "hangout room" on Zoom to connect with each other and to share their experiences.

"Independent Higher Education Day is such an important opportunity for MICUA institutions to share with our elected officials all the great activities happening on our campuses. We knew we needed to find a way to still make it happen this year," stated President Chapdelaine. "This is a day to celebrate our students and their accomplishments, as well as express our deep gratitude for the long-standing public-private partnership between MICUA and the State. While IHED will be virtual this year, I look forward to the day when all of our institutions can be back in Annapolis, in person."



President Roger Casey and McDaniel College students meet with Delegate Susan Krebs.

Source: McDaniel College



Senate President Bill Ferguson (top left), Andrea Chapdelaine, President of Hood College (top right), and Sara Fidler, President of MICUA (bottom).

Source: Maryland Independent College and University Association



President Brad Sims, Melinda Bunnell-Rhyne, and Captiol Technology University students prepare for virtual meetings with Legislators.

Source: Capitol Technology University

## Capitol Technology University Named 2021 Educator Ally of the Year

Capitol Technology University was named Inteligencia's Educator Ally of the Year (AYA) for 2021, a prestigious title that recognizes the university's efforts to educate the technology community on gender equality issues and support women in technology.

"We are honored to be named the Educator Ally of the Year," said Dr. Brad Sims, President of Capitol Technology University. "As an institution focused on STEM education since 1927, we pride ourselves on providing our diverse student body with a quality education in sought-after fields to increase the diversity of the STEM workforce."

As part of the university's allyship, Capitol Tech has developed programs to support female students and has graduated 1,000 female students who have gone on to careers in STEM over the last 25 years.

The university has engaged over 200 members of the Washington D.C. chapter of Black Girls Code (BGC) and annually reaches over 600 local high school students through partnerships like the ones that exist with Charles H. Flowers and Oxon Hill High Schools where university faculty introduce cybersecurity and critical infrastructure to students.

On a larger stage, Capitol Tech assisted in founding the first-ever national organization for women currently in or hoping to

enter critical infrastructure professions and university faculty attends global conferences to advocate for diversity in STEM.

"Capitol Tech would like to see more woman enter STEM fields which are stable, in-demand, and offer nearly exponential opportunities," said Dr. Sims. "Having more women in STEM will not only benefit these fields as a whole by bringing in new perspectives, it will also allow young women to see positive female role models in technology, creating pathways for future generations of women in STEM."



Capitol Tech, named Inteligencia's 2021 Educator Ally of the Year, provides women in STEM visibility, a voice, and connections with fellow female STEM professionals.

Source: Capitol Technology University

## Goucher College Becomes the New Home for Student Support Network

Goucher College is now home to the Student Support Network, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting Baltimore County children's food insecurity. The partnership deepens Goucher's involvement in the Baltimore community and strengthens its commitment to service and social justice.

"The Student Support Network is doing the hard work of supporting underserved students here in Baltimore County," said Goucher College President Kent Devereaux. "This partnership builds on the thriving experiential learning opportunities that our students participate in with community partners throughout Baltimore. Offering a home to this tremendous organization is another way that Goucher can contribute to building a stronger Baltimore and foster additional community engagement amongst our students, faculty, and staff."

Goucher has a long-standing relationship with the Student Support Network and other area nonprofit organizations. Through Goucher's Community-Based Learning program, the college combines hands-on work in the community and volunteer experiences to offer students transformational learning opportunities. Goucher has previously partnered with the network to provide volunteers and host food and clothing collection drives.

Several Goucher faculty members have collaborated with the network in the past, including Associate Professor Phong Le. Le developed a unique data analytics course where his students surveyed and analyzed food accessibility in Baltimore County and provided the network with that data analysis to further their advocacy efforts.

"We are absolutely thrilled with the space so generously provided by Goucher College to the Student Support Network," said Student Support Network President Laurie Taylor-Mitchell. "We hope that our presence on the Goucher campus will create additional opportunities for students to volunteer and to learn about issues related to poverty and hunger in Baltimore County."



In 2019, Associate Professor Phong Le joined Goucher students at the Student Support Network's "Loch Raven Haven" at Loch Raven High School in Baltimore County. Source: Goucher College

## *Hood College to Partner with Kite Pharma, Establish New Laboratory*

Hood College is partnering with Kite Pharma, a Gilead Company, to help the biopharmaceutical company train employees for a new facility in Urbana in southern Frederick County. The facility in Urbana will become part of Kite's commercial manufacturing network that includes sites in California and the Netherlands.

Kite, based in Santa Monica, California, is focused on cell therapy—the use of genetically modified immune cells programmed to target tumors.

Kite will install state-of-the-art lab equipment and train new Kite employees and Hood students in cell therapy manufacturing in a new 400-square-foot lab area located within Hood's Hodson Science and Technology Center.

Building on Hood's strong programs in the biomedical field,

this partnership will offer students the unique opportunity to obtain cell therapy manufacturing skills. Kite scientists and Hood faculty will work together to develop Hood academic programs and engage in training students to an innovative, leading-edge and industry-relevant education.

"It is our honor and pleasure to partner with Kite and host them in our facilities during their transition," said Andrea E. Chapdelaine, Ph.D., president of Hood. "This is a great opportunity for collaboration between Kite employees and our faculty and students, and we can't wait to get started."

"Our biomedical science master's program includes students employed by NIH, the Department of Defense, and biotech and pharma companies in the Frederick region, and now we welcome another member to the biomedical community, Kite," said Ann Boyd, Ph.D., biomedical science director.

## *Johns Hopkins University Recruits to Support Local Vaccination Clinic*

Johns Hopkins University is recruiting and organizing volunteers, including students, to support the vaccination clinic at M&T Bank Stadium.

Volunteers are recruited through the Hopkins Engage social platform to serve in nonclinical roles at the mass vaccination site in downtown Baltimore. Positions include serving as greeters, guides, runners, or observers.

"Our student volunteers have the opportunity to have a direct impact on the COVID-19 crisis through this volunteer role. As more people in our community become eligible to be vaccinated, our students are playing a key role in nonclinical operations and assisting with the efficiency of this mass vaccination site," says Misti McKeehen, executive director of civic engagement at the Johns Hopkins Center for Social Concern.

All Johns Hopkins students are invited to volunteer for morning or afternoon shifts. Transportation options are available for students who require it.

First-year student Eyad Ali sees volunteering as a moral imperative. The public health studies and psychological and brain sciences major says the sense of enthusiasm for vaccination in the stadium is evident among those being vaccinated and the clinical and nonclinical volunteers alike.

"I'm originally from Sudan, where vaccines may not be widely available for at least another year, so I believe it is my moral obligation to make sure each community is tended to so that we can protect each other," Ali said. "That period of normalcy that we all long for begins one community at a time."



*Johns Hopkins University student volunteering at a vaccination site.  
Source: Johns Hopkins University*

## *Student-Run Program at Loyola Fights Food Insecurity in Baltimore*

Loyola's Food Eaten or Donated (F.E.D.) student club has one simple mission: to fight food insecurity in Baltimore and to reduce food waste on Loyola's campus.

Two times a week volunteers with F.E.D. greet the staff at Starbucks on Loyola's Evergreen campus to retrieve excess food items from the previous day. F.E.D. volunteers organize packaged food items into large coolers then drive to Food Rescue Baltimore in Baltimore's Hampden neighborhood. Food Rescue Baltimore distributes the recovered food at one of their free community markets.

Since F.E.D. started in 2019, the student-run program has gathered and donated more than 1,000 pounds of food. The program started as an idea from Jess Ludwig, '19, who proposed a partnership between Loyola's Dining Services and student volunteers to combat food waste and to support the community.

"I love the way that one person can make a difference," said Lindsay Winn, general manager for Loyola's Dining Services. "This is the perfect instance of one person seeing something, deciding to do something, and rallying people behind a mission."

F.E.D.'s food recovery efforts were put on hold when Loyola moved to virtual learning and Campus Dining closed at the beginning of the pandemic. Now that students are back on campus, F.E.D.'s food recoveries are up and running again.

"We don't necessarily think about it, but there are people living right down the street from our campus who are constantly thinking about it," said Dani Leblanc, '21. "We live in a world where there is so much food waste, for no reason, that it only makes sense to try and do something to effect change."



*Amelia Salvatore poses with meals that F.E.D. picked up for donation from the Starbucks in the Andrew White Student Center.*

*Source: Loyola University Maryland*

## *MICA Helps Combat Hesitancy and Eliminate Roadblocks to Vaccines*

The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) Center for Social Design, along with Morgan State University and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's International Vaccine Access Center, are partnering with the Baltimore City Health Department to help combat vaccine hesitancy, as well as roadblocks to vaccine access.

This collaboration has been working to facilitate listening sessions throughout Baltimore, and develop educational materials and training to address key demographics in the city. This partnership is working with older adults, young men, homeless, pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities, as well as Baltimore's Immigrant, Latinx and Orthodox Jewish communities. This program empowers trusted community leaders throughout Baltimore with the necessary information and tools to help both combat myths and information, as well as connect people to resources.

"The Center for Social Design at Maryland Institute College of Art is excited to bring a human-centered design approach to this collaboration to ensure that the community members who are most impacted by COVID have the ability to design their own vaccine outreach strategy," said Becky Slogeris, Associate Director, Center for Social Design.

In a statement, Health Commissioner Dr. Letitia Dzirasa said "the International Vaccine Access Center's wealth of knowledge in addressing vaccine hesitancy, Morgan State University's ties to the community and influence across Baltimore City, and the Maryland Institute College of Art Center for Social Design incredible creative talents" will combine to make the partnership effective in easing residents' concerns about the coronavirus vaccine.

Read more about the partnership [here](#).

## *First-Year Teachers Find Themselves Prepared Thanks to McDaniel Education*

Adaptability, flexibility, and problem-solving skills are all traits McDaniel College has instilled into recent alumni who have begun their first year of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

“My time at McDaniel helped me to become more flexible, adaptable, and a creative problem solver, which are skills I have definitely used as a virtual teacher,” said Montgomery County Public Schools teacher Madeline Wodaski. “Specifically, through McDaniel’s Education Department, I learned how to advocate for myself, meet students where they are, and differentiate instruction for a variety of learners, which has been incredibly important for me as a teacher at Montgomery Village Middle School.”

Wodaski is one of more than 30 alumni from the Class of 2020 who secured teaching positions this fall. Nearly all of those who graduated with either a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education or a Secondary Education minor or who earned a master’s degree in Teaching found employment in their chosen career.

According to Robin Townsend, coordinator of McDaniel’s Teacher Professional Development, “It really was an incredible year despite the pandemic. I wasn’t sure how hiring would go, but we had almost 50% of our Education students hired by school systems even before they graduated in May. It is a true testament to the quality and value of a McDaniel Education degree.”



*Madeline Wodaski '20*  
*Source: McDaniel College*

Other Class of 2020 graduates are teaching throughout the State of Maryland in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery counties, as well as New York, Vermont, Virginia, and even Thailand.

## *Mount St. Mary’s University Experiences Double the March Madness*

In a year with stops and starts in the schedule and other challenges due to COVID-19, the Mount St. Mary’s University men’s and women’s basketball teams both punched their tickets to the NCAA Division I Tournament by winning the Northeast Conference (NEC) Championship.

This is the first time that both teams went to the Big Dance since 1995. The Mount is the only team in the NEC to ever achieve this feat. The campus community and Frederick County community recognized the special nature of this achievement, especially during a pandemic. Local businesses displayed posters declaring their support for the teams, and restaurants featured the games on their television screens. Physically distanced and masked, students filled Knott Arena to 10 percent capacity to watch the men’s and women’s games. The pep bands and cheerleaders contributed to the spirited atmosphere.

Both Mount teams exited the tournament after their first game. The men, competing in the tournament for the sixth time in program history and the first time since 2017, lost a close and exciting First Four game to Texas Southern University on March 18. The men’s team is now 2-6 all-time in NCAA Tournament games and 2-2 in First Four games.

The women Mountaineers, competing in the tournament for the third time in program history, this time as a No. 15 seed, faced off on March 22 against the University of Maryland, a No. 2 seed. The Mount women hung tough with the Terrapins in the first quarter, but Maryland pulled away in the second quarter. The Mount finished the season with a 17-7 record.

The men’s and women’s teams are coached by Dan Engelstad and Maria Marchesano, respectively.



*Mount St. Mary's University's women's team winning the NEC Championship.*  
*Source: Mount St. Mary's University*

## *Notre Dame of Maryland University Partners with Vaccination Clinic*

Notre Dame of Maryland University successfully partnered with Safeway Pharmacies to bring a COVID-19 vaccination clinic to campus. Starting April 13, 2021, NDMU's School of Pharmacy faculty, students, and Safeway Pharmacy representatives held a four-day clinic distributing the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

Although held on Notre Dame's campus, the clinic was open to the public and helped vaccinate both members of NDMU's campus and the Baltimore community at large. With the eligibility for vaccine distribution expanded across Maryland, NDMU served a wide range of individuals including students from Notre Dame and surrounding colleges and high schools, their family members, and other local community members.

Administering the first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, the eight-day clinic spread over two separate weeks, fully vaccinating approximately 3,500 Marylanders. Notre Dame's School of Pharmacy Dean, Dr. Anne Lin helped coordinate the clinic, with vaccines administered by both Safeway Pharmacy staff and NDMU School of Pharmacy faculty and students.

The clinic proved to be a quality firsthand experience for many NDMU School of Pharmacy students administering vaccines, many of whom had already completed their course work for the semester and were only a few weeks from graduation. Student pharmacists were commended throughout the eight days for their special care of each patient, especially for those who were anxious about receiving any type of vaccination.

In the true spirit of Notre Dame's mission, the clinic was a community success with daily support from faculty, staff, and student volunteers, public safety, facilities, and grounds personnel. Notre Dame of Maryland University remains committed to maintaining the health and safety of its students, faculty, staff and community.



*Notre Dame of Maryland University School of Pharmacy student administers COVID-19 vaccine during clinic held on campus.*  
Source: Notre Dame of Maryland University

## *St. John's College Internship Teaches Adaptability and Persistence*

For Francisco Contreras (A20), a summer 2020 Hodson Internship with the Polycentric Learning Group (PLG) was "a haven from the storm [of] chaos and uncertainty in my personal life."

The Hodson Trust Internship Program provides funding for St. John's students at the Annapolis campus to design their own summer projects or work professionally with mentors in an internship capacity. For Contreras, that originally meant spending the summer working on location at PLG's office in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

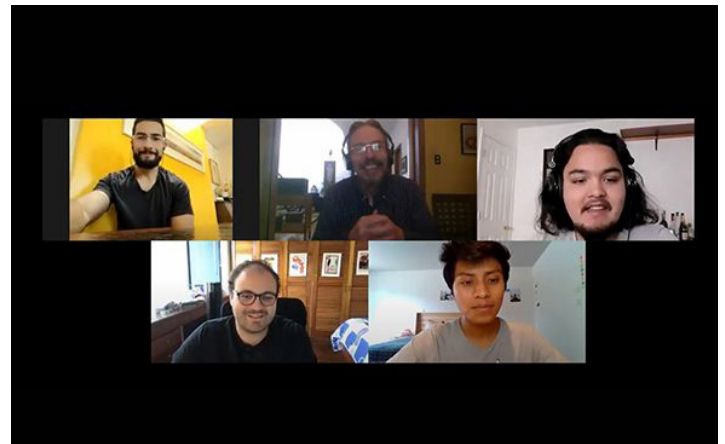
"The purchase of plane tickets and hotel reservations corroborated that," he says. "But the world had other plans."

But because of safety concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic, his engagement with the organization switched from in-person to long-distance. There was an upside to this upheaval, however, and he describes his experience working remotely as "a lesson in adaptability and persistence."

PLG was founded in 2016 to assist businesses, schools, and organizations in establishing their own learning cultures. As part of his contribution to that mission, Contreras collaborated directly with PLG founder Albert Loan, as well as with fellow intern Luis Fernando, a Santa Fe Johnnie.

"The three of us formed a great team," Contreras says. "At least three times a week we held Zoom meetings that would often last the whole day and continue well into the evening. At these meetings, we would analyze the past, present, and future of the Polycentric Learning Group. We brainstormed what direction to take and how, we read relevant texts that were the foundation of the organization, and assigned tasks that would turn these ideas into reality."

[Learn more here.](#)



*Francisco Contreras (A20), top right, conducted his 2020 Hodson Internship remotely.*  
Source: Francisco Contreras



## *A Voice, An Advocate, A Calling: Marie-Clare Ofoegbu, Stevenson Class of 2022*

Whether it's through on-campus organizations, in her local community, or on a state-wide level, Marie-Clare Ofoegbu '22 never stops advocating for those around her.

"Since Stevenson is a smaller school, I have been able to meet new people and talk to university administrators who have recommended me for various opportunities," Marie-Clare says, one of which led to her position on the Maryland Youth Advisory Council under Governor Larry Hogan, where she serves as Stevenson's Representative for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

During her first two years at Stevenson, she served as a class representative for the Student Government Association, working with a council made up of her peers. "I have always wanted to learn more about the stories people have to tell and advocate for those who do not have a seat at the table," Marie-Clare says. Now, she represents much of Stevenson's campus community as a member of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion's Student Advisory Board, a Resident Assistant, and Student Ambassador for Admissions. Along with two other students, Marie-Clare helped develop and present a student-led Inclusivity Plan.

Off campus, Marie-Clare is a fellow for the Baltimore Collegetown Fellowship, which sets out to foster civic-minded leaders who invest their talents and skills in the Baltimore Community. Additionally, as MHEC's Stevenson Student Representative, she offers suggestions to the Commission on how to best address the concerns of Maryland's college students. This year, Marie-Clare offered insight on how the pandemic has affected Stevenson students: "I provided suggestions on how to eliminate the digital divide present in a world where technology is a necessity," she says. When she's not lending her voice to Stevenson's community or Maryland at large, she's working as a Political Affairs Intern for the

Borgen Project, which advocates, mobilizes, and educates people to help secure support for global poverty-reduction on the legislative level. "Stevenson has offered me a multitude of opportunities to tap into the things I love."

Marie-Clare enjoys the flexibility of Stevenson's Communication Studies program in giving her multiple avenues to explore what she's interested in. "Communication is the foundation of all human interaction whether that be verbal or nonverbal. We must understand communication's importance in order to better understand the people and world around us."

Through her academic and co-curricular experiences, Marie-Clare has found her voice and is giving a voice to others. "No person or voice is too small to move mountains," she says.



*Marie-Clare Ofoegbu, Class of 2022*  
Source: Stevenson University

## *Washington Adventist University Student Volunteers During Pandemic*

Ava Abtahi, a wonderful Washington Adventist University student, has been volunteering since the beginning of the pandemic. She started off helping with testing and now, as vaccines have been approved, she has transferred her skills to the vaccination process. Ava has been volunteering at COVID-19 testing sites throughout Montgomery County for up to 12+ hour shifts, testing individuals, and receiving around 15,000 to 20,000 calls per day for scheduling appointments. It has been very stressful and rewarding for her. She plans to continue her drive for service in pursuing a cardiovascular or cardiothoracic surgeon's profession. Ava has learned many values from Washington Adventist University and its Honors College, but the main value being— 'serving people through the service'.



*Ava Abtahi preparing to volunteer at COVID-19 testing sites.*  
Source: Ava Abtahi



Source: Goucher College

### Maryland Independent College and University Association

MICUA Matters is published by the Maryland Independent College and University Association.

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To be added to our newsletter mailing list, or for questions or comments, please contact MICUA's Director of Communications Stephanie Thomas at 410-269-0306 or sthomas@micua.org.

## GIS Internship Points Washington College Sophomore to Career Path

When Jazmin Gascot '23 applied for an internship with the Washington College GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Program, she thought she was just getting a job. She ended up with an introduction to a world of opportunity that set her on a chosen career path.

WC's GIS program employs dozens of students to work on specific projects—funded through grants and contracts—that entail environmental analysis, criminal data analysis, traffic analysis, historical and cultural analysis, and more. In addition to longstanding partnerships with the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) and the Maryland Theft Prevention Council, other partners include Chesapeake Conservancy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, and Earth Data, Inc.

Gascot has been working under the Highway Safety Grant, which maps data from crashes and citations that the MHSO can then use to identify trends and better allocate resources. "This work changes lives," Gascot says. "I like knowing that if I can help find major hot spots and send these analyses, then I am helping to improve safety within the community."



Jazmin Gascot, from Denton, Maryland, works in Washington College's GIS lab.

Source: Washington College

Part of Washington College's Center for Environment & Society, the GIS program operates as a tradecraft guild, training students through experiential learning opportunities. As students gain expertise in software and equipment, they become responsible for mentoring younger trainees and apprentices. Gascot has worked her way up to the level of Senior Apprentice. She is now pursuing a minor in Information Systems, bolstering her analytical and problem-solving skills.

### Meet the MICUA Staff: What is your favorite season and why?

#### Sara Fidler

"My favorite season is fall. I love the way the trees look during the autumn months and the way the air starts to crisp, but the sun still feels warm."

#### Ashley Swift

"My favorite season is Autumn. I love to cook, I always think of Autumn as chili season, and the best time to cook with pumpkin, butternut squash, chili peppers, and pomegranates!"

#### Katie Flynn

"Fall! I can't get enough of apple-picking, pumpkin patches, colorful leaves, pumpkin spice lattes, and spooky podcasts."

#### Angela Sherman

"Late Summer and early Fall. Late summer marks a time of new beginnings for the academic year. I also enjoy trips to the beach in early Fall when the air and water temperatures are still warm and inviting."

#### Irnande Altema

"Summer is my favorite season! I love to attend Caribbean carnivals and festivals! It is so much fun to see the vibrant colors, themes, and cultural designs. My favorite part is the food – curry chicken, rice and beans, plantains, and patties."

#### Stephanie Thomas

"I love Spring! It's so fun to get out on the boat with my family for the first time in the season."