Sophomore Derecka Purnell is a Pre-Law student currently pursuing degrees in political science and black studies. Remarkably, this does not mean she spends her time in an academic vacuum.

Late last February, Purnell had an opinion piece published in The Kansas City Star. In it, she recalled the civil rights activists who participated in lunch counter sit-ins in the 1960s and challenged readers to consider the activists of our age. Purnell cited institutional inequality in schools, disproportionate prison rates, and the increase of AIDS among black women. She defended young men who receive constant criticism for their lifestyle choices, men who are often failed by public schools.

Although Purnell offered powerful words and thought-provoking prescriptions, her efforts are not limited to what she can write. Purnell volunteers her time at a mentoring program she created at Cristo Rey High School, working to provide a scholarship to those students. It is evident that Purnell’s article in The Star was not an empty opinion but rather a call for change from someone truly concerned about her community.

Dedicated to a career of service

Stephanie Stephens, Trustees’ Scholar Class of 2008, cannot thank the scholarship program enough for the opportunity to go to school at UMKC. Ms. Stephens was able to move from Iowa and attend one of the best nursing schools in the Kansas City area. She states, “Although I did not realize it at the time, I was fortunate enough to graduate from the best nursing school in the area. I was more prepared to be a nurse than other baccalaureate-prepared nurses, and I excel because of my education.”

Stephens is currently a registered nurse in the ICU at St. Mary’s Medical Center in Blue Springs, MO. Every day she has the opportunity to impact many patients’ lives. Stephanie is able to calm, reassure, and treat suffering patients alongside other outstanding healthcare professionals. Her UMKC education taught her to provide excellent care to all types of patients.

Although nursing can be a very challenging and heartrending occupation, there are numerous joys that make nursing the best career for Stephens. Stephens excitedly tells the story of how one day her patient took her hand, looked in her eyes and said, “Thank you for saving my life! I am glad you were there today.” This is why Stephens is a nurse and loves what she has the opportunity to do each day.

Ms. Stephens would like to thank her anonymous Trustee for providing her the generous gift of an education at UMKC. She will continually be grateful for this priceless donation that has so profoundly impacted her life.

Scholar lends commentary to public forum

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A Ph.D. in her sights

Jenny Guthrie, former Trustees’ Scholar who graduated from UMKC in the winter of 2006, is currently a graduate student at the University of Kansas, where she is researching and serving as a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Communication Studies. Currently, she is finishing her thesis on deception within romantic relationships. She is also serving on two research teams whose focus lies in social justice issues.

Since starting her graduate career in the fall of 2008, she has served as a graduate student mentor, has presented her research at two conferences, and was the recipient of the E.C. Buehler Outstanding First-Year Basic Course Instructor award for the 2008-2009 academic year. Guthrie, still thirsty for more of the academic experience, plans to continue her education as a Ph.D. student this fall at the University of Kansas.

What drives Guthrie? In addition to the rewarding experience of empowering students with better communication skills, she says of her research, "In essence, I want to help people. My goal is to conduct research that helps those who are struggling—whether they are facing discrimination and injustice or problems in their relationships. To me, nothing is as rewarding as this."

Lunching is for learning

The UMKC Trustees’ Scholar Business Connections Committee determined it would be beneficial for the scholars if Trustees hosted a series of luncheons based on general career goals. The areas of health sciences, law, arts, education, and business were chosen. Trustees enjoyed sharing professional expertise and career advice while scholars appreciated the opportunity to interact with leaders in their respective career paths. Tom Bloch, John Bluford, Ellen Darling, Linda Hammer, Ann Mesle, Jim Sangster, Suzanne Shank, Kent Sunderland, Art Stoup, and David Westbrook graciously participated in the luncheons. Given the success of this new initiative, future luncheons will be planned each semester to foster interaction between Trustees and scholars.

Student and professor team up for advanced research

Allison Meyer, a junior Trustee scholar, has been involved in undergraduate chemistry research since fall 2009 with Dr. Kathleen Kilway. Together Meyer and Kilway research various procedures that they believe will shape the future of dental composite materials. “I experiment with various chemical compounds and use a SpeedMixer to create an ideal substance that is not toxic to the gumline or teeth,” said Meyer when asked about her specific research duties.

The research team is also looking into a compound that could stabilize small bone, not just teeth. This means that the experiments Meyer and Kilway conduct could not only lead to dental advancements, but change the way doctors treat people with broken fingers and toes. “I am now involved in the experimental process where I help decide what portions of each chemical
For most performers, being cast in a professional opera production would be the achievement of a lifetime. For Brandon Russell, it’s only the beginning of what is shaping up to be quite the college experience. As a freshman UMKC Trustee scholar, Russell auditioned for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City in February and was cast only months later as a member of the chorus in the company’s production of Rigoletto. Now a sophomore at UMKC, Russell said joining the Lyric was “a dream come true.”

But attaining a position at the Lyric was more than a dream come true; participating in Rigoletto was an indication of things to come for this budding performer. “I am very passionate about a career in opera… and [having this opportunity] is a very good foot in the door.”

And while Rigoletto’s run at the Lyric may have ended, Russell understands this experience represented more than a one-time gig. “It proves to me that people out there are interested in hiring me and gives me hope for my future.” Not surprisingly, the Lyric did not have just one talented UMKC Trustee Scholar in their midst, they had two! Chai Jindasurat, a 2008 graduate was involved in the chorus of Rigoletto.

Many of the scholars, upon hearing of fellow Trustees’ scholar involvement, wanted to witness the performance for themselves. With special help from the Lyric, the scholars were able to attend performances of Rigoletto as a group.

For many, it was their first experience at the opera. Freshman Kate Tankel said of her first encounter with the opera, “It was an adjustment from the typical play or musical event, but I adapted to reading subtitles, and I ended up really enjoying the plot.” Many were surprised to discover at dinner before the event that none of the performers’ voices were amplified. It was evident that most left that evening with a new appreciation for the skill and art involved in the production and performance of opera. “While opera-going may not become a weekly hobby,” said Tankel, “I would definitely go again.”

In all, eleven scholars attended the opera on one of two days and they would like to thank UMKC Trustees Anne Elsberry and Michael Fields as well as the Lyric Opera for making the evening possible.

compound we should add to create an ideal nontoxic material similar to a moldable putty that hardens over time.”

Although Meyer says the research process is tedious, she has learned invaluable information over this past school year.
One of the great benefits of the Trustees’ Scholarship Program is the opportunity to intern with well-known professional businesses and organizations in the Kansas City area. A purpose of the scholarship program is to pair scholars with prominent organizations that will hopefully hire the students after graduation.

Salvatore Scavuzzo, a senior business major with a finance emphasis, has had the chance to work in a real business environment prior to graduation. Scavuzzo has been able to intern at Midland Properties with his sponsor, Alan Atterbury. Scavuzzo says, “In addition to learning more about a variety of areas of business and finance, the most valuable thing has been the opportunity to experience working in a professional environment.”

Salvatore has been working at Midland Properties since January of 2008 and has also had the opportunity to interact with Trustees’ Scholar Alumnus, Kevin Barb. Many times, Scavuzzo has stated that he looks up to Barb and his sponsor as good mentors and friends. This internship has certainly enhanced Salvatore’s education at UMKC. Through this internship, he will be exceptionally prepared for a job in the professional world of business.

Other students who have current or have recently completed internships include Tara Kloeppe1 as an editorial intern at Andrews McMeel Publishing, Allison Meyer as a pre-dental Intern at Miles of Smiles, and Levi Rash as a public relations and marketing intern with Family Career and Community Leaders of America, Inc.

UMKC Trustees’ Scholars and Institute for Urban Education scholars surprised Hugh Zimmer on Friday, April 22 with a reception to honor him for his dedication and service to the university. Zimmer, chief executive officer of Zimmer Real Estate Services, was instrumental in the formation of both scholarship programs and was the 2010 recipient of the Chancellor’s Medal, the highest non-academic award presented to a member of the community for his or her support of UMKC.
Among the many things that the Trustees’ Scholar program aims to provide for its students are opportunities to advance their career development and sense of professionalism.

As part of the Scholars Program Professional Enrichment Curriculum, freshman and sophomore scholars heard presentations in January from representatives from the Honors Program, SEARCH, Study Abroad, Greek Life, and Student Life departments. The session, entitled “Making the Most of Your College Experience,” was designed to inform the undergraduates of the wonderful opportunities available to them as UMKC students.

Dee Evans, UMKC Assistant Director of Community and Public Affairs, hosted the scholars on a bus tour of Kansas City in February. Due to Ms. Evan’s commitment to community engagement and urban initiatives, the Scholars gained a better understanding of the diversity and history of the Kansas City area.

In March, Dean Betty Drees and members of her staff hosted the scholars at the School of Medicine on March 12 for a discussion around health care issues of disparity and access in Kansas City. Dean Drees discussed the myriad of ways that UMKC helps provide care for those who would otherwise be unable to afford quality treatment.

The group paid a visit to the Civic Council of Greater Kansas City in April where they learned about services and resources provided by the Civic Council. Jewel Scott and Jason Dalen hosted the group for a discussion and open questions about the role of the Civic Council and how it helps shape our community.

Each session was very enriching and the scholars were exposed to opportunities that most students do not get to experience.
Lindsey Scarcello was a dean-appointed member of the Publications Board, a member of the UMKC Honors Program, and served on the Honors Student Advisory Council. She was an employee at Gilmore and Bell, one of the largest municipal finance law firms in the nation. She will attend the UMKC School of Law beginning this fall. She looks forward to continuing her education at the university that offered her a very rewarding undergraduate experience.

Salvatore Scavuzzo was a member of the Mercury Association, the UMKC Honors Program, and Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity. He has been an intern with his Trustee sponsor, Alan Atterbury, at Midland Properties since 2008. He plans on attending graduate school for business after completing a few years of in-field experience.

Sadia Aslam was a volunteer income tax assistant, supplemental instruction leader and mentor, and a member of the UMKC Honors Program, Arts and Sciences Student Council, the Muslim Students Association, and the History Club. She was involved in Upward Bound, Kauffman Scholars, and summer programs for the Barstow School. She has begun law school at UMKC through the 90+ Program and plans to graduate in May 2012.
Tara Kloeppel served as an editorial assistant on two national academic publications, *Eighteenth Century Theory and Interpretation* and *Young Scholars in Writing* in addition to co-creating and editing UMKC’s premier visual and written creative publication, *Dossier Magazine*. She was an intern at Andrews McMeel Publishing and the office of U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill in Washington D.C. She served as the executive vice president for the Student Government Association as well as treasurer for the Undergraduate English Council. She will be published in the 2011 summer issue of *Kairos* with her rhetorical study, *Anna Wintour: The Truth Behind the Bob*. She plans to attend graduate school in the fall of 2011.

Amy Kucharo was a supplemental instruction leader, an undergraduate teaching assistant, private tutor, and building supervisor for Swinney Recreation Center at UMKC. She was a member of the STARR Women Leader’s Program, served on the Vice Chancellor’s Student Advisory Committee, and was a Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Policy Fellow. She will present at the International Supplemental Instruction Conference in New Orleans this summer and will travel with the UMKC Honors Program to Uppsala, Sweden for international study. After returning to perform academic research at UMKC, she plans to continue her education with graduate studies in Anatomy and Physiology.

Sarah Foster is a Golden Key International Honor Society Member and a commissioner for the Kansas City Youth Advocacy Office. She was a member of the UMKC Honors Program and served on the Vice Chancellor Advisory Committee Board. She was a manager at Swinney Recreation Center where she managed over 80 student staff members. She has hosted Application Essay Workshops for Kansas City youth and completed her student teaching at Paseo Academy of Fine and Performing Arts. She will start next year as a senior English teacher at Center High School in the Center School District.
Ever since Jen Kaminsky can remember, she has wanted to be an attorney. Her passion for law led her to UMKC, where she became involved in mock trial. Mock trial allows students to practice law in a real courtroom setting prior to entering law school. This unique experience has given Jen the opportunity to stand in front of a jury and deliver the closing argument, during which she has been able to persuade judges that a defendant is guilty and should serve a prison sentence. Jen states that this valuable courtroom practice has given her the opportunity to “learn and understand complicated rules of evidence that most first year law students do not even comprehend.”

Kaminsky has been the captain of the UMKC mock trial team for two years and has led the accomplished team to the opening round of the first level of the national championships, where the team took first place. Jen's strong leadership skills and motivation to succeed has made the mock trial team the only team in the country to be undefeated at the opening round championship tournament.

Jen enjoys the activity so much that ten hours a week of practice with her team is fun. She says that “I love what I do and mock trial has made me confident that the career path I have chose really is the right choice for me.” Her diligent work ethic has definitely reaped success, as Kaminsky has won best attorney awards at numerous invitational, regional, and national championship tournaments.

Jen would like to thank the UMKC Trustees for their motivation and foresight to create the Trustees’ Scholarship Program. The scholarship has allowed this talented student to accomplish her dream of going to law school and spend many hours a week practicing with the mock trial team. The Trustees’ Scholarship will give Jen the opportunity to afford attending law school and one day become a successful attorney.