Scholar grateful for mini things

Amanda Clark, Trustees’ Scholar graduate of 2009, would not have the career she has today if it had not been for her relationship with her Trustees’ Scholars sponsor. In fact, before meeting her sponsor, Clark never dreamed it would be possible to work full-time in a national museum only steps away from her alma mater.

It was through her sponsor, Barbara Marshall, co-founder of the Toy and Miniature Museum, that Amanda was able to obtain an internship. “Prior to my internship, I had never even considered museum work,” Clark said “but interning there just made a lot of sense based on my interest in history as well as education. I just fell in love with the Toy and Miniature Museum and museum work in general, and I ended up interning there for a year and a half.”

After graduating in 2009 with an undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature with a minor in History, Clark earned her master’s in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University. “I am an assistant educator,” Clark said. “I advocate for our visitors, create tours and programming, research the collection, and work directly with the visitors, which is my favorite part. Because the museum is so small, there is a lot of variety to my job—I love that.”

Clark is looking forward to the upcoming programming this summer, including overseeing three interns who will experience what she did a few years ago. “I am so grateful to the Trustees’ Scholarship and my wonderful sponsor, Barbara Marshall, for giving me the means and the guidance to find my way to a career path that is fulfilling and rewarding,” Clark said.

-Sydney Llewellyn
Scholar awarded prestigious law scholarship

Derecka Purnell was recently awarded the Nelson Mandela Scholarship by the National Black Law Students Association in Washington, D.C.. The scholarship, offered exclusively to Pre-Law Division members to offset law school expenses, is given to a member that exemplifies Mandela’s dedication to justice and equality. As Purnell has accepted an offer as a 2012 Teach for America Corps Member, she will be allowed to use the award when she matriculates to law school in the fall of 2014.

In 2009, Derecka Purnell became a charter member of the UMKC Black Law Students Association: Collegiate Student Division, a local chapter of the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA). Locally, Purnell served as President and Community Service Coordinator, planning a campus conference, doubling membership size, and tripling active members in leadership roles on campus and nationally. She created a college preparatory mentorship program between pre-law and high school students, and their chapter was awarded a $500 grant to provide scholarship to a high school student. In 2010, Purnell became an inaugural NBLSA Programming Fellow, which allowed her to serve on the national board. There, she helped create a national grant program for law school and undergraduate chapters, and maintained arrangements for a national convention.

Purnell thanks Lathrop & Gage, her Trustee Sponsor, for the continual support throughout her undergraduate career. With the support of the Trustee Scholarship, she has been able to devote her energy to securing support as she prepares for law school.

-Derecka Purnell

Student selected as Fulbright recipient

Thanks partly to his music education training at UMKC’s Conservatory of Music and Dance, Ryan Occeña has been selected to receive a grant from the U.S Fulbright Student Program for a year of study in Kecskemét, Hungary. He will be studying at the Zoltán Kodály Pedagogical Institute of Music. The institute is known for a music teaching method that has spread throughout the world because of its effectiveness in teaching music literacy. Occeña’s immersion in Hungary’s culture and exposure to world experts will allow him to bring these methods to his classroom in Kansas City in a new way.

The path he is undertaking will not only give him a firm grasp of new teaching methods, but will also hone all of the practical musical skills that the best music teaching requires. Some of the most valuable lessons, however, will come as Occeña adapts to the many cultural challenges faced during a year abroad. “For the next year, I will be carrying a bit of UMKC far away from Kansas City,” Occeña said.

“I hope to make a return on the incredible opportunity the UMKC Trustees have given me by creating valuable opportunities for my students in Kansas City,” Occeña said. “In bringing me to UMKC, the Trustees’ Scholarship led me to my launch pad. Receiving the Fulbright Grant was a natural continuation of the stellar training I have received while at UMKC.”

-RyanOcceña
Johnson represents students to Board of Curators

After being appointed by Governor Nixon and confirmed by the Missouri Senate, sophomore Trustees’ Scholar Amy Johnson became the Student Representative to the Board of Curators. In her new role, she will channel the voice of the 70,000+ students in the UM System to ensure the Board takes the student’s best interests into consideration.

Johnson has many goals for her two-year term as Student Representative, including better informing the students of their role in the decision making processes of their university. She is presently working on opening lines of communication between the four campuses and the Board. “I am only one person,” she said. “If I can restructure a few of the methods by which the Student Representative has previously worked to dialogue with students, I hope to have a much larger and dynamic view of the progressive student opinion.”

Although this may be an uphill battle, Johnson hopes many students and student organizations will realize the benefits of consistent dialogue and in turn become more empowered to represent their views to make positive changes wherever they go. As a Trustees’ Scholar, Johnson says she feels increasingly equipped to be an agent of change and eagerly supports others in doing so as well.

-Amy Johnson
Scholar gains rare experience in lab

Freshman Trustees’ Scholar, Alaina Shine had the unique privilege to work in the research lab of Dr. Alex Idnurm this spring. It is extremely rare for a freshman to be offered the opportunity to assist with lab research. Currently, she is finishing a project on the fungi *Phycomyces* to study the effects of light on spore production. Shine will soon begin research on a species of pink yeast.

“I have really enjoyed learning and being mentored by Dr. Idnurm,” Shine said. “I came into the lab with limited experience, so it is amazing to me how much I have learned these past few months.”

She has also been trained in many basic laboratory techniques such as DNA extraction, and has gained a better understanding of how a research lab operates.

“It is exciting to see things I have learned about in my lecture classes actually happen in real life,” Shine said. “The experience and knowledge I am gaining in the lab is invaluable and will ultimately one day help me achieve my goal of becoming a genetic counselor.”

- Alaina Shine

Stepping onto national stage

Senior Trustees’ Scholar Brandon Russell wowed the audience this past March as leading tenor in UMKC’s production of *La Tragédie de Carmen*. Russell is a senior Vocal Performance and Music Education double major through the Conservatory of Music and Dance at UMKC. He has been actively involved in the Opera Department since his freshmen year. He has also been involved as a chorus member with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City for the past three years. All of this valuable experience and training has culminated in Russell’s hard earned accomplishments.

Last winter, Russell went through the audition circuit in Chicago and New York City for summer opera programs. He auditioned for seven companies. Of these companies, he was offered four summer positions, one waitlist position, and two encouragement letters. “These results are incredible for any opera singer, let alone an undergraduate singer,” said Raymond Feener, Associate Professor of Music. Russell is delighted to announce that he is going to Saratoga Springs, N.Y. to be a studio artist with Opera Saratoga this summer.

The Trustees’ support has provided Russell with the resources and education he needs to succeed in the opera world both on campus and on the national level.

- Brandon Russell
In the three years that Appie Peterson, a junior Trustees’ Scholar double majoring in Dance Performance and Chemistry has lived in Kansas City, she has grown to love and appreciate many things including its thriving arts community. One of many benefits of the Conservatory of Music and Dance is a close relationship with the Kansas City Ballet, which affords many opportunities for the dancers to work with an esteemed professional company.

Peterson was recently selected to perform with the Kansas City Ballet in George Balanchine’s Serenade in their spring performances entitled “Masters of American Dance”. Peterson considered it an amazing opportunity and great honor to perform a Balanchine work and to dance with a professional company in the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

“The Trustees’ Scholarship has not only given me the chance to go to college, but an amazing college experience that is above and beyond anything I could have imagined,” Peterson said. “Kansas City has an incredibly rich arts community, and I couldn’t have asked for a better city or university in which to grow as a dancer or a person.”

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Scholar performs at the Kauffman

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Scholar involvement builds greek leaders

UMKC’s Greek life has given several Scholars a channel to grow academically, socially and spiritually. The university is home to more than 15 fraternities and sororities and continues to increase its Greek presence on campus.

Because the average Greek grade point average on campus is approximately .2 points higher than the average non-Greek GPA, involvement helps contribute to academic success. Also, the Scholars’ involvement within their chapters has afforded the Scholars the opportunity to develop leadership skills that will help them in their future endeavors in the workforce.

In addition, Greek members build lasting bonds with their brothers and sisters. Scholar Fabian Gomez says of Beta Theta Pi, “My membership in my chapter is really important to me. My brothers are a family outside of my family” Scholar Sarah Tucker describes her personal growth through her sorority by saying, “It has shaped me into what I consider to be a better person, a leader, and a businesswoman. It has also taught me the value of volunteering and giving back to my community.”

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Greek banners adorn the UMKC Student Union.

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Trustee Scholars 2012 Graduates

Derecka Purnell  
**Sponsor: Joel Voran and Lathrop & Gage**  
Purnell has served as President and Community Service Coordinator of the Black Law Students Association: Collegiate Student Division, co-chaired the Engage KC Board, and was an investigations intern in the Civil Rights Division of the City of Kansas City. She has had many roles with the Kansas City Freedom School Initiative and is an advocate for equal education. Purnell is a former fellow of the National Black Law Students Association, a Coca-Cola Scholar and University of California Berkeley Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) Law Fellow. This fall, Derecka will be teaching in Kansas City as a 2012 Teach for America Corps Member.

Abby Sharp  
**Sponsor: Don & Adele Hall**  
Sharp was a member of Psi Chi Psychology National Honor society and a member of the Delta Phi chapter of Alpha Delta Pi. She served as Guard, Scholarship Chair, and Chaplain during her membership in Alpha Delta Pi. Sharp was a volunteer leader for Lee’s Summit Young Life, and was a member of the Swinney Recreation Center Student Staff Council. This summer, she will begin graduate studies at Rockhurst University to obtain her Doctor of Physical Therapy.

Mary Cisetti  
**Sponsor: The Hugh J. Zimmer Family**  
Cisetti held an internship at Global Prairie Integrated Marketing Communications, working with major healthcare and consumer goods customers. She is a member of Alpha Delta Pi sorority and Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity, where she has held numerous leadership roles throughout her time at UMKC. She is a member of Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity, Order of Omega Honor Society, Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Golden Key Honor Society, Mortar Board Honor Society, and the Honors Program. After graduation, Cisetti will stay in Kansas City and pursue a career in integrated marketing communications.

Lauren Meyer  
**Sponsor: Barbara Hall Marshall**  
Meyer is a Nursing major with minors in Spanish and Business. She has worked at St. Joseph Medical Center for nearly two years and plans to be employed there after graduation. She hopes to specialize in cardiac or critical care nursing and ultimately become a Nurse Practitioner. In her role as President of Mortar Board National Honor society, she helped the chapter more than quadruple in size over the past two years. She was a member of Mortar Board National Honor Society, the Honors Program, and Golden Key International Honor Society. Meyer also served on the Trustees’ Scholars Newsletter and Community Service Committees.

Congrats!
**Ryan Occeña**  
*Sponsor: Phil Bixby and The J. B. Reynolds Foundation*

Occeña student-taught in general music at Manor Hill Elementary School and choral music at North Kansas City High School and next year will attend the Zoltán Kodály Pedagogical Institute of Music in Kecskemét Hungary as a Fulbright Scholar. He has performed in numerous Conservatory choirs and the UMKC operas *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* and *Don Giovanni*. Ryan participated in professional organizations in his field, including the American Choral Directors Association and the National Association for Music Educators-Collegiate. He led Bible studies and mentored peers as a student leader in the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

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**Allen Hamilton**  
*Sponsor: The UMKC Trustees*

Hamilton was a member of the Biological Sciences Student Government and also directed an environmental and international awareness organization. He worked with teachers to collect data for their projects, and during his senior year, volunteered with the Wyandotte County Lake Park Library as a bird bander. In this position he collected data on wing measurement, age, sex and species, and assisted with collecting native and migratory species and displaying them to the general public. Hamilton is currently looking for internships and plans to attend graduate school in the fall of 2013.

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**Scholar accepts coaching position**

Landon Berry, freshman Trustees’ Scholar and Secondary Education and History double major, has accepted a job by his former high school basketball coach as the 7th/8th grade basketball coach for Summit Christian Academy in Lee’s Summit. Landon was excited about this incredible experience, calling it his first chance at taking a step toward his dream career of coaching college basketball. He coached two teams that competed against other Kansas City private schools such as Pembroke Hill and Barstow. The teams combined to finish the season with a record of 15-7.

“I enjoyed coaching this team not only because they were a talented group of players, but also because of how willing they were to learn,” Berry said. “They really looked up to me as a mentor, and I loved the opportunity to teach them about life lessons as well as coach them in basketball. I know as a player I learned a lot from my coaches and always looked up to them as men of character. It was a privilege to be a positive role model for these young men as I coached them.”

Landon plans to pursue summer employment working at a basketball camp to enhance his experience and broaden his professional network.  

-Landon Berry
Professional enrichment curriculum

During the spring, 2012 semester, Scholars learned how Kansas City operates and built on the leadership training they received during the fall semester. Sessions exposed the students to the business world, provided them with valuable tools necessary for success in the workforce, reminded them of the importance of community service, and helped acquaint them with the larger Board of Trustees.

The Trustee Scholars had the pleasure of welcoming Trustee Doranne Hudson to the January Scholar Enrichments session. The session, which she presents to her graduate students, was full of valuable, practical wisdom on leadership, flexibility, attire, communication and attitude. The scholars were inspired to be mindful of the image they present as they emerge as leaders on campus and within the community.

Trustee-hosted lunches become increasingly popular every year. Fourteen Trustees and 23 Scholars attended the three lunches held in April. Both groups enjoyed the opportunity to share a meal and great conversation. The scholars each shared ways in which the Trustees could assist them in their academic and professional endeavors and greatly appreciated the Trustees for taking time out of their busy schedules to provide personal insight and business acumen.

In order to gain a deeper appreciation for Kansas City’s diverse cultural heritage, the Trustees’ Scholars toured the city with Dee Evans, assistant director of Community and Public Affairs at UMKC. Evans enriched the Scholars’ knowledge of Kansas City’s rich history, showing them first-hand how the region continues to be transformed through the efforts of civic, philanthropic and business leaders. The Scholars thoroughly enjoyed learning more about Kansas City while spending time together as a group.

In April, the Scholars met with members of the Civic Council board and staff to learn about the purpose and impact of the organization. Joel Voran and Betsey Solberg joined Jewell Scott and Jason Dalen to lead the session. The group had a lively conversation which lead one scholar to reflect, “I’m pleasantly surprised to see the breadth of civic energy focused on making our city better. It makes me want to give back even more by watching their example.”