



UNIVERSITY OF
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PRESS RELEASE
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Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars Program honors top students and their mentors

Nov. 15, 2019 – The University of Maryland’s top graduating seniors have piloted programs to feed hungry students, created animations about quantum physics, helped emergency room patients, and analyzed hypersonic wind tunnels.

But before they could do any of that, they needed great professors and teachers to guide and inspire them, whether it was help getting through calculus or encouragement in grade school to read at a higher level.

That’s why the Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars Program honors not just 19 of the University of Maryland’s most successful graduating seniors, but also the faculty and K-12 teachers who helped mentor them.

The event, hosted today by President Wallace D. Loh, provided an opportunity for the top graduates to talk about the impact that great teaching had on their success, inside and outside their classrooms.

“This program honors an unbroken chain of teacher excellence—from K-12 through college—that leads to student success,” said University of Maryland President Wallace D. Loh. “Then it builds on that success through scholarships to rising students in those schools. We are grateful for the Merrill family’s vision and support.”

The late Philip Merrill, friend of the University and long-time Washington area publisher, created the Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars Program in 2004 to build a community of scholars, faculty members, and K-12 teachers who recognize and celebrate the importance of teaching and mentoring the next generation. The program provides \$1,000 scholarships, which are awarded in the K-12 teacher’s name to another student from that school district who will attend UMD in the fall of 2020.

“Academic success is a team effort,” said William A. Cohen, Associate Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies. “The scholarships are a great way to recognize both the students’ achievement and the superior teaching that made that achievement possible.”

The event also allows K-12 teachers to collaborate with university faculty. A workshop about “design thinking” for the K-12 teacher mentors was provided by the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies. The experiential, discovery-based learning allows participants to seek out, interview, and observe real people in the field to gain insights and learn the nuances of real-



world problems. Assistant Deans Lisa Kiely and Ann Smith led the workshop and shared how the approach, which emphasizes empathy and innovation, is used in University of Maryland classrooms.

The Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars for 2019-20 are:

Sasha Kahn, Architecture, Government & Politics

Teacher Mentor: Stephen Miller, Walter Johnson High School, Bethesda, MD

Faculty Mentor: Michael Spivey, Government & Politics

Julian Avenilla, American Studies

Teacher Mentor: Alexia Friedberg, S. Christa McAuliffe Elementary School, Germantown, MD

Faculty Mentor: Robert Chester, American Studies

Paula Molina Acosta, Women's Studies

Teacher Mentor: Wendy Eagan, Walt Whitman High School, Bethesda, MD

Faculty Mentor: Elsa Barkley Brown, Women's Studies

Garrett Yocklin, Persian Studies, Linguistics

Teacher Mentor: Nayibe Neuland, Tuscarora High School, Frederick, MD

Faculty Mentor: Stefania Amodeo, French, Italian

Luisa Beltran Rey, Government & Politics

Teacher Mentor: Daniel Pearl, George C. Marshall High School, Falls Church, VA

Faculty Mentor: Stacy Kosko, International Development and Conflict Management

Carli Daniella Fine, Psychology

Teacher Mentor: Christine Feiler, Colonial Middle School, Plymouth Meeting, PA

Faculty Mentor: Tracy Riggins, Psychology

Melody Hashemi, Economics, Government & Politics

Teacher Mentor: Michael Chellman, Bullis School, Potomac, MD

Faculty Mentor: Martina Copelman, Department of Economics

Ariana Riske, Operations Management

Teacher Mentor: Janean Ruschioni, Stoughton High School, Stoughton, MA

Faculty Mentor: Gerald Suarez, Management & Organization

David Rosenstein, Marketing, Management

Teacher Mentor: Ellen Wallace, New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, NY

Faculty Mentor: Jeffrey Kudisch, Management & Organization

Doron Tadmor, Operations Management & Business Analytics, International Business

Teacher Mentor: Shelley Jackson, Sherwood High School, Sandy Spring, MD

Faculty Mentor: Joseph Bailey, Decision, Operations and Information Technologies



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Manuella Djomaleu, Physiology and Neurobiology

Teacher Mentor: Terri Ravick, Walter Johnson High School, Bethesda, MD

Faculty Mentor: Anne Simon, Cell Biology & Molecular Genetics

Jillian Kunze, Physics, Astronomy

Teacher Mentor: Donald Walz, Governor Thomas Johnson High School, Frederick, MD

Faculty Mentor: Christopher Lobb, Physics

Nicholas Poniatowski, Physics

Teacher Mentor: Robert Nelson, Chantilly High School, Chantilly, VA

Faculty Mentor: Richard Greene, Physics

Connor Hall, Bioengineering

Teacher Mentor: Lucero Cabotaje, Glenelg High School, Glenelg, MD

Faculty Mentor: Ian White, Bioengineering

Dirk Holzman, Electrical Engineering

Teacher Mentor: Emily Roberts, Marriotts Ridge High School, Marriottsville, MD

Faculty Mentor: Gran Wilson, Voice/Opera

Evan Kramer, Aerospace Engineering

Teacher Mentor: Robert Irelan, Lake Braddock Secondary School, Burke, VA

Faculty Mentor: Christopher Cadou, Aerospace Engineering

Dena Gershkovich, Journalism, Dietetics

Teacher Mentor: Karen Wolf, Morristown High School, Morristown, NJ

Faculty Mentor: Thomas Linthicum, Journalism

Shifali Mathews, Public Health Science

Teacher Mentor: Ashley Schreckengost, Wheaton High School, Silver Spring, MD

Faculty Mentor: Joanna Goger, Environmental Science and Policy

Sari Lerner, Family Science

Teacher Mentor: Scott Culclasure, American Hebrew Academy, Greensboro, NC

Faculty Mentor: Jade Olson, Department of Communication

More information about the scholars and the program is available at:

<https://www.ugst.umd.edu/merrill/index.html>

About the University of Maryland

The University of Maryland is the state's flagship university and one of the nation's preeminent public research universities. A global leader in research, entrepreneurship and innovation, the university is home to more than 37,000 students, 9,000 faculty and staff, and 250 academic programs. Its faculty includes three Nobel laureates, three Pulitzer Prize winners, 47 members of the national academies and scores of Fulbright scholars. The institution has a \$1.8 billion operating budget, secures \$500 million annually in external research funding and recently completed a \$1 billion fundraising campaign. For more information about the University of Maryland, visit www.umd.edu.