

MIXIN' IT *spring 2025* MAGAZINE

issue 7

HUMAN
ECOLOGY

ON THE
MOVE

SHINING A LIGHT
ON OUR FACULTY

HIGHLIGHTING
EXCELLENCE
IN HUMAN ECOLOGY



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
EASTERN SHORE

IN THIS ISSUE



Shining a Light on
Human Ecology
Faculty

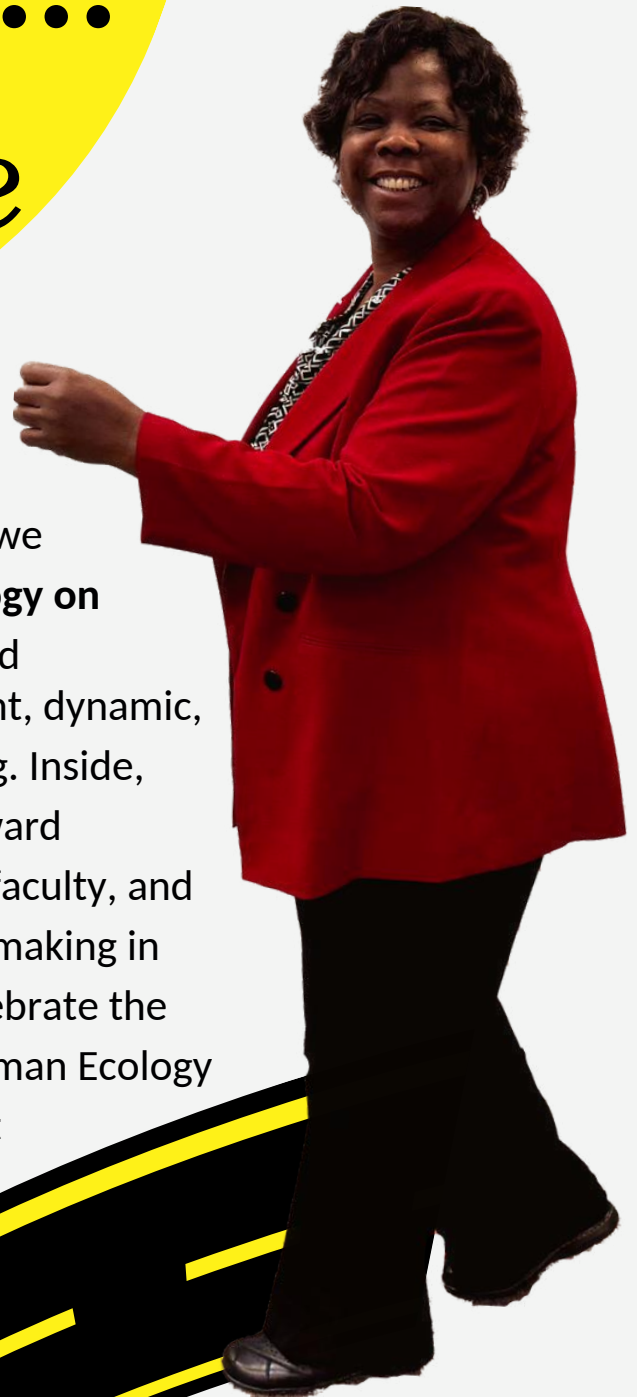
Human Ecology
Students & the Hustle
of College Life

Highlighting
Excellence in
Human Ecology

HUMAN ECOLOGY IS...

on the move

Welcome to the latest issue of the Human Ecology Magazine! In this issue we are embracing the theme, **Human Ecology on the move**. At the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, our department is vibrant, dynamic, and constantly progressing and adapting. Inside, you'll find stories that illustrate the forward trajectory of our programs, our shining faculty, and the impressive strides our students are making in their respective fields. Join us as we celebrate the energy and momentum that defines Human Ecology at UMES. Let's explore the journeys that define our movement!



DR. GRACE NAMWAMBA, CHAIR
OF THE HUMAN ECOLOGY
DEPARTMENT



We're shining a spotlight on
some of our faculty who
inspire students and keep the
Human Ecology Department
moving forward.

Human Ecology Faculty

Beyond the
classroom, their
brilliance shines.
Discover our
Faculty!



DR. BRIDGETT CLINTON-SCOTT,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND GRADUATE
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Mrs. Robin Gould

By: Aaliyah Chambers

Ms. Gould serves as both a Lecturer and the Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics in the Human Ecology Department. Ms. Gould strongly believes that students must take responsibility for their own learning by studying diligently and seeking real-world experiences through internships and networking. According to her, speaking with professionals in the field and gaining first hand exposure to the industry can significantly enhance a student's career prospects.

What do you find most rewarding about being a professor and working with students?

Ms. Gould: My favorite part of working with students is watching their interest level grow when they are learning. Even if the subject matter is complicated, I love seeing when they have that moment that they really understand certain concepts and are able to apply their new knowledge to various class discussions and projects. Supporting students as they navigate the rigorous dietetics program is another key aspect of my role. I recognize the importance of continuously adapting the nutrition curriculum to adequately prepare students for emerging trends in healthcare and the challenges they will face in their future careers.

What are some of the most exciting developments or trends in the field of dietetics right now?

Ms. Gould: Some of the exciting developments I'm seeing in dietetics involve a move towards personalized nutrition, that leverages tools like genetic testing and artificial intelligence to create diet plans specifically tailored to an individual's unique needs. Another notable trend is the increasing adoption of plant-based and sustainable diets, driven by health, ethical, and environmental concerns, which is really shifting the landscape of food choices. In addition, the expanding use of telehealth and various digital tools is making nutrition counseling and support much more accessible to a wider range of people, breaking down geographical barriers and offering more flexible options.

What career paths are available to graduates with a degree in dietetics and nutrition?

Ms. Gould: Graduates with a degree in dietetics and nutrition have diverse career opportunities in healthcare, public health, research, and the food industry. They can work as Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs), clinical dietitians, community nutritionists, sports dietitians, or corporate wellness consultants, helping individuals and organizations improve health through nutrition. Additionally, careers in food service management, nutritional research, public health, food product development, and eating disorder counseling allow professionals to apply their expertise in various settings to promote better dietary habits and overall well-being.





Dr. John Jacob

By: Cailyn Stacey

Dr. John Jacob is Professor of Fashion Design in the Human Ecology Department. Dr. Jacob offers a glimpse into his journey at UMES that began in 2020.



Do you enjoy being a professor at UMES?

Dr. Jacob: Yes, I do. I love being behind the mission of a Historically Black institution. This is because of my belief in diversity, equality, and inclusion. And also, I love the fact that I've been a part of starting the track of fashion design here at UMES. From the point of when I started during covid and now (my fifth year of teaching), things have changed a lot, but I have enjoyed the adaptation.

What are some of the most rewarding aspects of being a professor?

Dr. Jacob: There are two things that are the most rewarding for me. Firstly, it's when the lights go on for a student. They have that "a-ha" moment and demonstrate what they've learned in other real-world situations. Secondly, it's to see students graduate and pursue their dreams and still be in contact with them years later. I've been in contact with a student that I taught since 1999.



What advice would you give to current college students pursuing a degree in your field?

Dr. Jacob: Learn everything you can about this field and be hungry and motivated. Interact with everything you can when it comes to fashion. Get to know distinguished people on campus, come to class on time, and make sure your work is done on time. The fashion industry lives by deadlines they can cost a company their lives, so this is proper practice for the real thing. Most importantly, to take advantage of opportunities that are being provided at UMES and talk to as many people who have connections with the fashion industry, including your professors.

What are some career paths available to graduates with a degree in this field?

Dr. Jacob: It depends on whether its design or merchandising. Design has more flexibility. You get both aspects from retail and apparel manufacturing opportunities. In retail there's private labeling and having design knowledge helps with this aspect. Marketing has merchandising aspects that are important to manufacturing as well. If you take design, you gain an understanding of product development and if you focus on marketing you learn more about apparel manufacturing and selling. The great thing about our Fashion Merchandising and Design Program is we cover all areas, so students gain a well-rounded perspective and are prepared for entry-level positions in merchandising and design.

Dr. Sukyung Seo

By: Tamya Meade

Dr. Sukyung Seo is an Assistant Professor in the Human Ecology Program at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, where she teaches a diverse range of courses in the area of fashion merchandising. Her passion for fashion started in her childhood and she was motivated to pursue a career in the fashion industry.



What sparked your interest in your field of study?

Dr. Seo: My passion was sparked at age four, as I was heavily influenced by her mother's 25-year tenure running a boutique. I often joined my mother at the boutique each day before heading to school, where I would lose myself in reading and watching customers choose their clothing.

What are some of the most rewarding aspects of being a professor?

Dr. Seo: One of the most fulfilling experiences for me happened when I attended a research conference in Long Beach, California. Shortly after arriving, I ran into a former student of mine. He's now in his second year of a master's program and has his sights set on a PhD. He told me that my influence played a big part in inspiring him to become a professor. I really reflected on that encounter, as it was something I hadn't expected at all.

Can you describe your current research interests and any recent publications?

Dr. Seo: My recent research interest is self-gift giving. I've been studying this phenomenon, specifically exploring the circumstances that might prevent people from treating themselves. I'm interested in the various ways individuals engage in self-gifting – for example, do they tend to indulge in retail therapy, opt for a relaxing spa day, or choose other forms of self-care? I find this area intriguing, as understanding these behaviors can offer valuable insights for companies looking to understand their target market.

How do you involve undergraduate students in your research projects?

Dr. Seo: I involve students in my research projects in a few key ways. I share my research ideas with students, and if any of those pique their interest, they're welcome to collaborate with me on the project. I believe it's crucial for students' development to experience the broader research community, so I actively look for opportunities for students to engage in research.



Dr. Michelle Spencer

By: Coisrai Dorsey

Dr. Michelle Spencer is an Assistant Professor in the Human Ecology Department with extensive experience in childhood development. She originally wanted to teach kindergarten but fell in love with child development while working at a childcare center. Dr. Spencer enjoys mentoring students, especially those in UMES's new online Child Development Program.

What sparked your interest in your field of study?

Dr. Spencer: Oh my goodness, I've been working in early childhood since the mid-90s. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher and thought I would teach kindergarten. But I had to leave school for financial reasons and started working at a childcare center, and I fell in love. I realized I wanted to work with kindergarteners! Younger kids are honest but not mean. They're just little and it's amazing to teach them things for the first time.

What are some of the most rewarding aspects of being a professor?

Dr. Spencer: I love connecting with students. For in person students, I enjoy hands on experiences and seeing them get excited. For online students, since we just started our online Child Development Program I focus on being the professor I needed when I was a student. Many of them are working full time in childcare so I understand how much they're juggling.

What are some of the biggest challenges you face as a professor?

Dr. Spencer: At UMES Child Development is part of Human Ecology which is in the School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences. That's different from most schools where early childhood is under Education. This makes things tricky because our program doesn't quite fit either category. I love that our program isn't a licensure program because I can focus on infant and toddler development, but many students don't want to be teachers or work in childcare, so we have to make sure the coursework prepares them for different careers.

What advice would you give to college students pursuing a degree in your field?

Dr. Spencer: Just get the degree! Some students worry if they're in the right program especially if they want to become teachers, therapists, or psychologists. I tell them that a bachelor's degree in Child Development gives them a solid foundation those careers. If they need certification or a license they can get a master's degree later but this degree sets them up for success no matter what.



How can Child Development students best prepare for a successful career after graduation?

Dr. Spencer: Keep learning! Just because you have your degree, it doesn't mean you're done. With new research coming out we have to be open to change. It's not just about doing things the way they've always been done. We need to break cycles and keep growing as professionals.



Highlighting EXCELLENCE

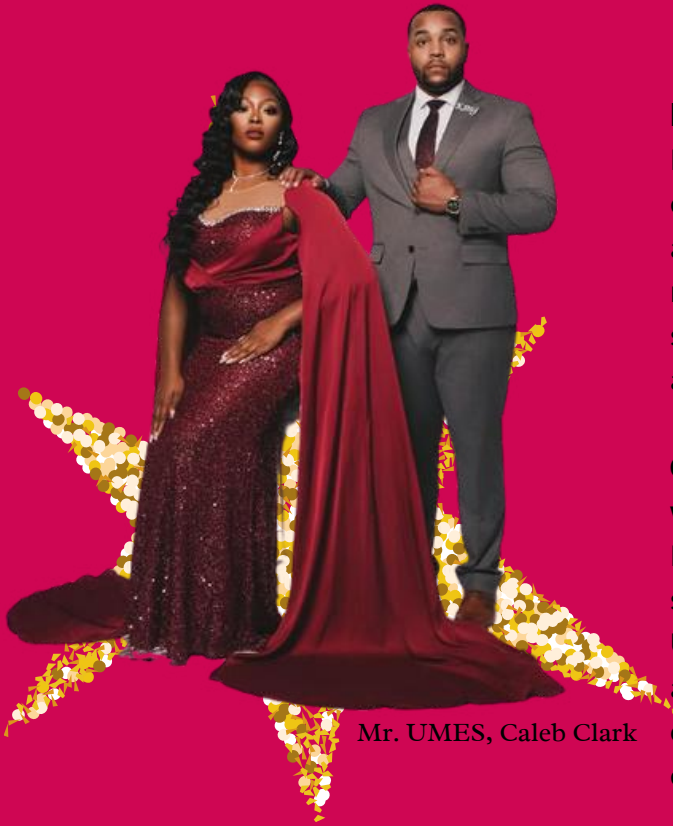
Meet three exceptional students in the Human Ecology Department. Their dedication and achievements shine brightly, and we're thrilled to share their stories in this issue.



The 56th Miss UMES

By: Mia Parsons

Oluwanifemi 'Mercy' Faniyi is a graduating senior and a student leader. She is majoring in Human Ecology with a concentration in Child Development. Mercy is an active member of Swing Phi Swing and currently serves as Miss UMES for the 2024-25 academic year. As she prepares to graduate, it's clear that Mercy has made a lasting impact on the university.



Mr. UMES, Caleb Clark

What motivated you to get involved in SGA or become a leader on campus?

Mercy: I wanted to make a real impact on campus and ensure that students' voices are heard. My passion for advocacy, leadership, and community engagement motivated me to take on a leadership role. I believe that student government is a platform to create positive change and enhance the student experience at UMES.

Can you describe your current role and responsibilities within student government at UMES?

Mercy: As Miss University of Maryland Eastern Shore, I serve as an ambassador for the university, representing UMES at official events, leading campus initiatives, and advocating for student concerns. I also collaborate with other student leaders, including SGA and CAB, to plan events, address student needs, and promote school spirit.

How does student government make a difference on our campus?

Mercy: Student government plays a crucial role in advocating for student needs, improving campus life, and ensuring that students have a voice in administrative decisions. From organizing events to addressing concerns like housing, dining, and student engagement, Student Government Association (SGA) works to enhance the UMES experience for students.

What are some of the most rewarding experiences you've had as a member of student government?

Mercy: One of the most rewarding experiences has been seeing initiatives I've spearheaded come to life, such as the Homecoming Parade and campus-wide events that bring students together. Another highlight is engaging with students and hearing how our efforts positively impact their experience at UMES.

Human Ecology's Most Outstanding Student

By: Dr. Clinton-Scott

Tracy Ewli-Kwakutse is a graduating senior at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, majoring in Fashion Merchandising. Since her freshman year, Tracy Ewli-Kwakutse has demonstrated unwavering determination, resilience, and passion.

Tracy's ambition led her beyond UMES, she became Max Mara's first-ever summer intern in the e-commerce department through Raise Fashion in 2023. The following spring, she secured another internship, this time as an e-commerce operations intern at Hugo Boss. In her junior year, she attended the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), where she pursued an associate's degree in Advertising and Marketing Communications and graduated the One-Year Program in May 2024. During her time at FIT.

Her dedication and innovative thinking were further recognized when she won the prestigious Virgil Abloh™ "Post-Modern" Scholarship from the Fashion Scholarship Fund. Her award-winning case study proposed an AI-driven subscription service for Dove, tailored to Gen Z consumers,

offering personalized product curation and consistent pricing for an effortless nighttime routine. Now in her final semester, Tracy shows no signs of slowing down. With a clear focus on her career, she has actively started networking in pursuit of securing a job offer before she graduates this May.



Elexus Hamilton-Holland

By: Serenity Primus



Elexus Hamilton-Holland, is sophomore at UMES majoring in Human Ecology with a concentration in Child Development. She's excited to continue to be a voice for others and a trailblazer in the UMES community. Through her leadership in the Human Ecology and Powerlift clubs.

Can you describe your current role and responsibilities within your student organization?

Elexus: I am The Vice President of the Human Ecology Club. I help the president with organization, event planning, and delegation of events. I am also The Secretary of the Powerlift club. I am the bridge between the board and the people in the club. I ensure that the voices of members are heard and their input is considered.

What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in your role?

Elexus: Definitely getting everyone in one place at one time with varying schedules has been challenging. Also, getting everyone to show up to one meeting for the Human Ecology Club can be difficult.

As for Powerlifting, it was difficult getting members to understand that power lifting is more than just a sport it's about resilience and perseverance. It's a mental challenge.

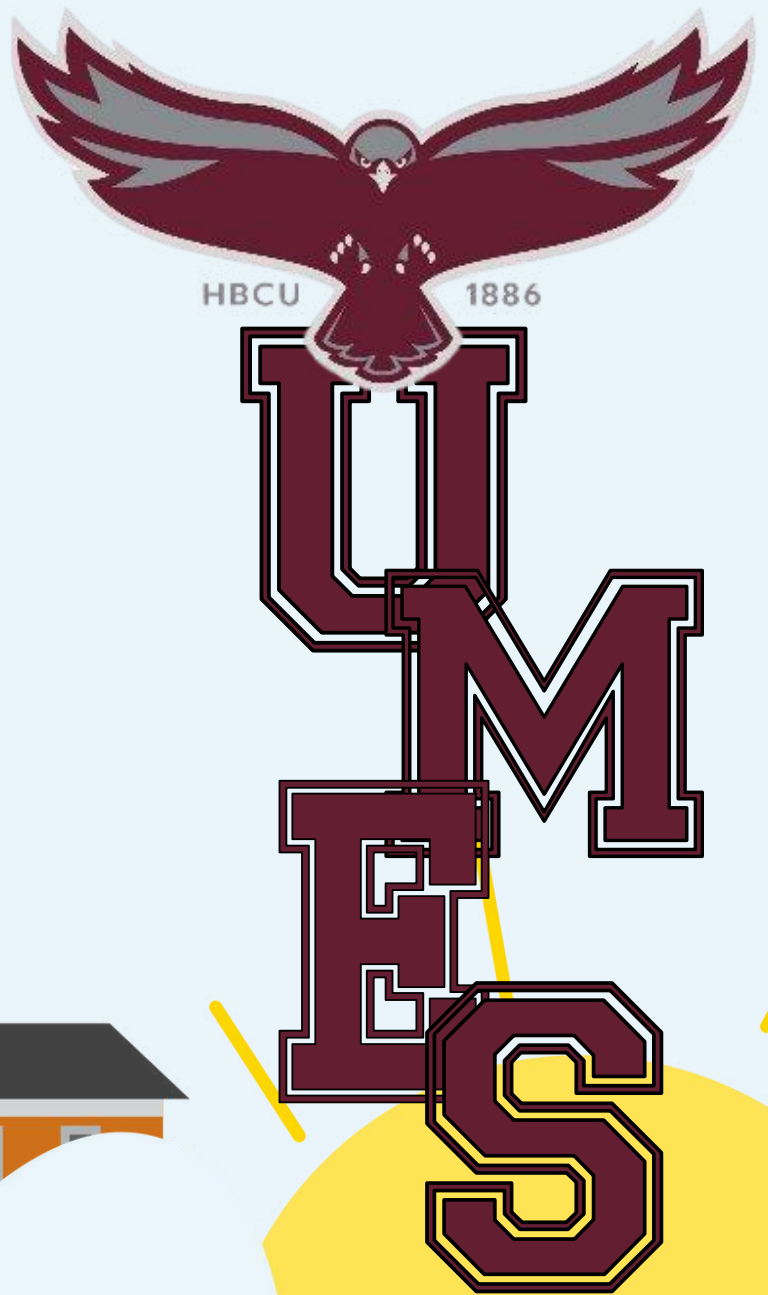


What are some of the most rewarding experiences you've had as a college student at UMES?

Elexus: Being a part of the first emerging leaders cohort run by Dr. Simmons was very rewarding. Also, being a part of the UMES powerlifting meet last semester made me very proud of our progress. The Human Ecology Club also hosted a movie night that I helped plan and we received great feedback about this event.

Can you share a memorable experience or lesson from your time at UMES that has influenced your college journey?

Elexus: Getting the privilege to attend the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference in California last fall. Participating in this conference gave me a chance to represent the school. This experience gave me a sense of belonging and a better understanding of children and their development.



The HUSTLE of College Life

I often opt for sweats and a hoodie when choosing an outfit for a busy day on campus. I wear comfy clothes because I feel like they help lighten the load. After getting ready, I jump in my car and head to my classes, which run back-to-back from 9 am to 2 pm. During breaks, I love catching up with friends over lunch and enjoying great conversation. Once classes wrap up, I dive into crocheting for my business, aiming to create 2 to 3 hats weekly to ship them out by week's end. My weekends are a mix of working on class projects and squeezing in some relaxation for all the effort I put in during the week.

TAM
YA



TAMYA MEADE
SOPHOMORE, FASHION
MERCHANDISING & DESIGN MAJOR

My days are a mixture of movement, creativity, and style, always on the go between photoshoots and my schoolwork. Sometimes my friend, Huey and I walk through Princess Anne looking for the perfect photo location or go into Salisbury for an urban backdrop. Every location becomes part of my fashion story. When I'm not being creative, I'm deep into my schoolwork, completing assignments. From the streets to the classroom my style never stops moving just like me.



COISRAI

COISRAI DORSEY
SOPHOMORE, FASHION
MERCHANDISING & DESIGN MAJOR



AALIYAH

AALIYAH CHAMBERS
SENIOR, FASHION MERCHANDISING &
DESIGN MAJOR

From the early morning hustle to my 9 AM Fashion Merchandising class to late-night study sessions at the library, my campus days are nonstop. I grab a caramel macchiato from the student center before heading to a Fashion Club meeting, weaving through crowds of students rushing to their own destinations. My afternoons are filled with creative work in the design lab, before squeezing in a quick workout at the campus gym. My weekends are packed with cheering for our basketball team, volunteering for community service and working on a fashion project. I end most weekends at a campus event with friends. College life is a constant rhythm of movement, growth, and new experiences.

I am always lost in my “hustle-and-bustle” schedule at UMES. During the day, I’m moving from the Henson Center to Murphy Hall and when the sun sets, I do a 180 from the scholar life to the influential figure life.

I’m attending events for the Human Ecology Club and the Street Team.

I’m putting on the outfits, I’m making the creative content, and I’m connecting with

likeminded innovators on campus. In my life I’m focused on building a community both online and offline and balancing both.



CAILYN STACEY
SOPHOMORE, FASHION
MERCHANDISING & DESIGN MAJOR

From the moment my alarm blares at 9 AM, I'm on the move.

I stretch, make myself breakfast, then start my day with a 30-minute run around campus, letting the fresh air wake me up before heading back to my dorm to get dressed for the day. With my laptop in hand I stop by Starbucks before heading to my 11 AM Advertising & Promotion class in the Richard Henson Center, hoping I'm not late—again.

Back-to-back Math and Nutrition classes keep me busy until the afternoon.

By 3pm my friends and I finally get a break to vent about assignments over tropical smoothie in the SSC. After that, I drive over to the library and find the quietest corner to settle down in to get ahead on some work—but let's be real, procrastination always wins and there's always a Tik Tok to distract me.

By evening, I'm socializing in the Cafe, at a campus event, laughing with friends, and desperately finishing an essay due at midnight. Sleep? Maybe tomorrow.



SERENITY PRIMUS
SOPHOMORE, DIGITAL MEDIA
STUDIES MAJOR



ON THE MOVE

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