

# MESSENGER

MID-ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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Summer 2024

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## WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

*Rejoicing, reaffirming, and  
repositioning for the future*

Carrington Townes '24, a May graduate and biology major from Alaska, will continue her research with Dr. John Pace in MACU's biology lab as a research assistant.





Theoneste Nzogiroshya speaks for graduation at MACU-Rwanda on Jan. 6, the first graduation ceremony for the African school.



Isabel LaPoe, a rising sophomore from West Virginia, joins MACU's longstanding tradition of serving by donating blood. This year the Red Cross collected 66 units of blood from three campus drives.



# WALKING TOGETHER

What a rollercoaster ride these past six years at MACU as President have been! In 2000 and 2001, I was a resident in a Clinical Pastoral Education program at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Virginia. Training was thorough, and teaching sessions were only one component. In one of those teaching sessions our supervisor taught us that most of the time we knew what to do and how to respond to life's situations, but then said that it was in the times that we didn't know what to do or how to respond that our faith comes into play.

That phrase – “our faith comes into play” – has been in the forefront of my life these last four years. MACU has been through tremendous trials over these years – Covid, the loss of classroom and cafeteria spaces when Heritage collapsed, civil unrest in our community. The collapse forced us to take on two major building projects (Allgood Commons and Heritage Hall) while fighting our insurance company for 3 ½ years to get financial remuneration.

During that same time, my wife had major surgery in 2020, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2021, and in 2023 was diagnosed with stage 4 liver disease. On top of that, MACU alumna Diane Baker (Sherry's sister) and her husband were tragically killed in a scooter accident in Cozumel, Mexico, while on a cruise.

Trying to balance life has been extremely difficult, and at times the stress has been overwhelming. There were days that I did not know what to do other than get out of bed in the morning and go to work to tackle the alligators closest to the canoe. There was no strategy, no guidebook, no preparation to lead me or the university through the crises.

I do not write this for sympathy or pity. While it describes many of the trials we have faced, I am grateful to write that God has brought us through the fire and that our faith is strong. To be honest with you, I prefer walking by sight. Walking by faith is difficult. And leaning on God through each situation is harder than having solutions to each problem.

My guess is that you, too, are on a rollercoaster ride. You face dilemmas, obstacles, situations, and overwhelming circumstances that nearly paralyze you. When you don't know what to do is when you will depend on your faith. Let's try to keep our eyes on Jesus, walking by faith and not by sight (II Cor. 5:7). Won't you join us on our faith walk as we rejoice in our Lord, reaffirm our mission, and reposition MACU for the future?

Walking together,

John W. Maurice, President

# WHAT IN THE WORLD?

## WHAT IS GOING ON AT MACU?

In short, LOTS! Of course, one of the best ways to find out is to visit campus. Tour Heritage Hall. Eat in the Mustang Cafe. Meet some students. Visit several classes. Even take a boat ride on the Pasquotank. Another way is to call us. A third way is for us to share photos and stories, so here is a glimpse into what in the world is going on at MACU.

## We are preparing students for ministry.

Below are excerpts from several Bible and Theology majors who shared their thoughts or experiences last semester.

### Brandon Barrier '24

I have been serving as a part-time youth minister for the last three years of my college career. It has been an extremely positive experience for me. The most beneficial thing about it has been my still being in school. I have been able to take what I am learning in a classroom setting and see how it works in a ministry setting. The other part of being in ministry that has been great is being able to see the impact that the Gospel has had on some of the students in the areas I have served. Seeing them grow and decide to follow Christ has been amazing.

### Rising junior Kaylon Sampson:

When I gave my life to Jesus, he turned my whole life around. My dream after that was to travel the world and preach the gospel like Billy Graham. With the Lord making a way and providing, I got accepted to MACU [in 2022]. Within the first semester, God opened a door for me to have my first preaching opportunity at Gaston Church of Christ. Since then, I have preached at my home church and a church near Edenton. It is just amazing how God has opened doors for me. He has been faithful. . . . I will be a testimony to the people, especially the broken people, that God can use anybody to change the world no matter what you look like or what you have been through. My life has only one purpose now, and that is to glorify God. Without Jesus, I would not be here or be preaching, so I just give my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the glory. *(Kaylon seizes every opportunity to speak to others, here talking about living well with 16- to 24-year-olds at River City Youth Build.)*



### Dylan Hardison '24

My career in ministry did not start the way that I would have intended. My main goal in life is to pursue lead ministry and preaching; two years prior, youth ministry was not in my sights. However, an opportunity arose for me to serve [Poplar Chapel Church of Christ in Jamesville, NC], and while I was very hesitant initially, through much prayer, wise counsel, and consideration, I took the position. In that time, I have made many mistakes, but I have also gained the trust of an entire youth group who are a joy to talk to, teach, and laugh with; found a family in a body of believers who share a heart for service in the youth program; and have been given so much wisdom and practical advice from Poplar Chapel's lead minister and my mentor, Glenn Crocker. Two years ago, I would have never asked to be part of youth ministry; today, I would not give it up for anything.

I thank God every day for the opportunity I have to be part of the few who call themselves ministers. It can be at times stressful, exhausting, and perhaps underappreciated, but those pale in comparison to the reward of being part of a life-changing work. I am grateful for ministry, I am completely committed to ministry, and I pray that God would continue to use me in His will to further His kingdom and disciple his people in any way He would have of me.

(Continued)



*We are engaging in cross-cultural missions.*

Various campus guests presented challenges for mission work, including Stephanie Freed, this past year’s president of the International Conference on Missions (ICOM), who spoke in chapel, and an international food tasting in the cafeteria, both as a part of Mission Emphasis Week.

*We are serving others*

Opportunities for service are endless, and students, staff, and faculty answer the call to serve often. Students helped a local elementary school with the end-of-year activity day, serving snacks and playing outdoor games with children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The men’s basketball team participated in an emergency preparedness plane crash simulation at the Wilmington airport.



From June 20-30, Dr. Claudio Divino will lead a team of 14 to his home country of Brazil. The two purposes of the trip are to learn (the people, culture, and churches of Brazil) and to serve (children, the homeless, the poor). Current students, alumni, and members of Denbigh Christian Church in Newport News, VA, comprise this year’s group. (Several in this photo from last year are returning this summer to serve their Brazilian brothers and sisters in Christ.)



MACU students, staff, and faculty collaborated with “Green Saves Green” to complete a roadside cleanup of E. Broad and Ward streets. Four large pick-up trucks of trash, along with four mattresses, a sofa and a deer were removed.



Another service group cleaned cages at the SPCA of Northeastern North Carolina and made snacks and enrichment toys for cats and dogs. (Professor Kathy Smith, Student Services Assistant Nicole Delosreyes, Dr. Abbey Mirau, and Student Life Director Emily Meneely)



The MACU baseball team volunteered at the food pantry, one of several team projects during the year, packing food boxes and stocking the pantry.



On another occasion, MACU students joined students from Elizabeth City State University and College of the Albemarle for the pantry’s sort-a-rama.



Students also helped to write 1,128 Christmas cards to deployed service members in collaboration with students from ECSU, COA, and Camden High School, as well as Maritime Ministries personnel.

*Sometimes the community served us!*

Sentara gave MACU five automated external defibrillators, or AEDs. These medical devices are used to treat people experiencing sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). If left untreated for even a few minutes, SCA can quickly lead to death. Athletic Director Andy Meneely, Vice President for Student Services Dr. Bane Angles, and Student Life Director Emily Meneely received training on the proper use of the AEDs, which have been strategically placed around campus. Thank you, Sentara!

*We served each other.*

Students and alumni led on-campus devotional groups. Students, as well as alumni, also spoke in chapel and led worship. A number helped lead church youth groups. One student was instrumental in establishing a campus chapter of Fellowship of Christian Athletes and offered regular devotions to athletes and non-athletes alike. FCA also partnered with intramural activities to lead devotions at the end of events. Serving others is a way of life at MACU.



**For we live by faith,  
not by sight.**

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)



DR. ROBERT W. SMITH, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF HISTORY



Regarding Events in Gaza

The atrocities of October 7, 2023, perpetrated by Hamas on Israelis and the bombings of Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli military are understandable in light of historical animosities. One evil response begets another. Through news media we learn of increasing body counts, we hear pleas of distraught families of Israeli hostages, and we see desperate Palestinian parents fighting to get food for starving children. So what should Christians do?

The Gospels record Jesus’ actions in a socio-politically divided situation. The Jews in Roman Palestine were dominated by foreign procurators like Pilate, who put pagan images above the Temple entrances and killed pious protestors. Jews were compelled to pay taxes that they had not voted for, to oppressors who did not use the funds for their benefit. Some, like the Herodians and tax-collectors like Zacchaeus, accepted the situation and found ways to profit. Others, like the Sicarii, plunged their daggers into such passing “traitors.” People tried to pull Jesus into the maelstrom. Jesus ate with people from both sides and called followers from both sides. Jesus kept His focus on what was important. He sacrificed His life for both Jewish and Gentile sinners. He set a paradigm for Christians.

The Gospels further record Jesus’ teachings for disciples living amongst warring neighbors. He commanded disciples to love and pray for others (Mt 5:44). He encouraged us to be peacemakers (Mt 5:9). He called on us to help the hurting (Lu 14:13) and to forgive repeatedly (Mk 18:22). Finally, He called on us to make disciples (Mt 28:19). By first praying, we call on all-mighty God to act in His providence and seek insight on how we should engage as peacemakers. Our voices and actions must proclaim love as we wage peace. Sharing from our means with the hurting in the name of Jesus and fostering relationships with Jews and Muslims through which we and representatives we support can share the Gospel, must follow. It is God’s Spirit, working through His proclaimed Word, that Jews and Palestinians, who have defined themselves by their past hurts, can be reconciled to God and to each other.



It is God’s Spirit, working through His proclaimed Word, that Jews and Palestinians, who have defined themselves by their past hurts, can be reconciled to God and to each other.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be resolved by one side annihilating the other or by another “Two-State” UN peace plan. The violence can only be resolved through the combatants choosing the “One-State Solution” of the Prince of Peace. Advance His plan!

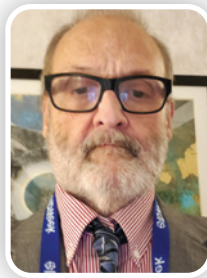
NEW FACULTY ROLES, TITLES



David S. King, Ph.D.

In April Dr. David King was promoted from associate to Professor of Counseling. Dr. King has had a formal relationship with MACU since 2012

and leads the counseling and psychology program. He is chair of the Department of Marketplace Ministry.



John L. Pace, Ph.D.

Last year Dr. John Pace accepted a one-year full-time position as Visiting Professor of Biology. This spring he agreed to a permanent full-time position as Professor of Microbiology.



Patrik Skultety, Ph.D.

In March Dr. Patrik Skultety’s role was modified from LMS Administrator & Instructional Designer to Director of Online Education. While he has already been doing

several functions of his new position, he now has formal leadership in helping MACU deliver a robust distance education program, both synchronous and asynchronous. His familiarity with MACU’s current capacities and limitations and his growing experience from working with other higher education institutions with distance education technology commend him for this critical position.

INAUGURAL COTTRELL LECTURESHIP AND LIBRARY DEDICATION



Some current and past MACU faculty and administrators who studied under Dr. Jack Cottrell. Front: Professor Ronnie Woolard, Dr. Bane Angles, Dr. Lee Fields, President John Maurice. Back: Dr. Clay Perkins, Dr. Gene Andrews, Dr. Kevin Larsen, Dr. Cottrell, Dr. Bob Smith, Professor Don McKinney, Dr. Greg Waddell.

The inaugural Jack W. Cottrell Lectureship was held in the Davenport Chapel at MACU on Friday, March 8, with nearly 100 in attendance. The lectureship is part of the MACU strategic plan to establish an annual lectureship event that will address biblical, theological, or cultural issues. The lectureship also honors a friend and theologian who left a profound imprint upon MACU and the churches of the Restoration Movement, Dr. Jack Warren Cottrell. The Jack W. Cottrell Memorial Library was also dedicated at this event. Prior to his death, Dr. Cottrell asked President Maurice if MACU would want his personal collection of books. MACU was honored to receive Cottrell’s personal library and establish a special library in his memory on campus.

Alumni, ministers, and friends heard Mid-Atlantic faculty members deliver the inaugural lectures on The Inerrancy of Scripture. Dr. Josiah Peeler, Dr. Ronnie Woolard, Dr. Bane Angles, and Dr. Gene Andrews addressed the topics of inerrancy and why inerrancy matters for teaching and preaching. The next Jack W. Cottrell Lectureship is scheduled for Feb. 27, 2025.



(For more information, read article by Dr. Johnny Pressley ‘75 in the Christian Standard: <https://christianstandard.com/2024/03/jack-cottrells-life-teaching-celebrated-at-macu-lectureship-library-dedication/>.)

DATES AND EVENTS

- Aug. 12  
New students move in
- Aug. 13-18  
Orientation/College Success
- Aug. 19  
Final registration
- Aug. 19  
Classes begin
- Sept. 15  
@MACU
- Oct. 4, 5  
Homecoming
- Oct. 14-18  
Fall break
- Nov. 7  
Foundation Board
- Nov. 7, 8  
Board of Trustees
- Nov. 9  
Open House
- Dec. 12  
Semester ends
- Jan. 7-11  
New student orientation
- Jan. 13  
Spring semester begins
- Feb. 27  
Cottrell Lectureship
- Apr. 11  
Seniors by the Sea
- May 8  
Foundation Board
- May 9  
Board of Trustees
- May 10  
Commencement





MID-ATLANTIC  
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



Trey Dail (above) and his classmates jumped for joy May 11 as their journey at MACU came to a successful completion. In addition to earning their degrees, they adapted to the Covid years and were among those to eat first in the Mustang Café and the first graduating class to study in the new Heritage Hall. In addition to the 13 handed their diplomas on commencement day, 11 others earned their degrees during the year (August, December, May). J. Glenn Crocker '07 (left), preacher for Poplar Chapel Church of Christ in Jamesville, NC, delivered the commencement address.

## WHAT A GREAT DAY, CLASS OF 2024!

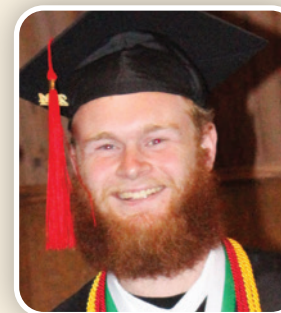


Honors during commencement included speeches delivered by valedictorian Dylan Hardison and salutatorian Brandon Barrier. Longevity awards were given: For 5 years of service – Candace Rohde, Housekeeping; Sara E. Shepherd, Vice President for Finance; and Tiffney L. White, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Finance. For 10 years of service – Dr. Claudio D. Divino, Associate Professor of Ministry, and John W. Maurice, Jr., President. For 50 years of service, Dr. Ronnie J. Woolard, Professor of Bible. Trustees recognized were M. Virginia “Ginny” Ambrose and Mark Coffey for 5 years and Dr. Larry D. Cooper for 15 years.

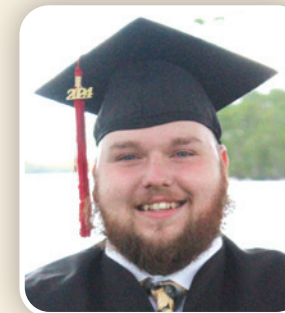
Professor of Bible Ronnie Woolard accepts his award for 50 years of service to MACU, along with a cane, since his students occasionally “confuse” him with Moses.



**Dylan Hardison**  
Valedictorian



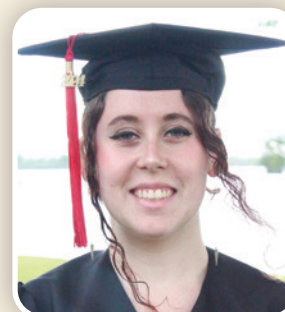
**Brandon Barrier**  
Salutatorian



**Seth McKinley Ambrose**  
BS, Youth & Family Ministry  
Biblical Studies



**Brandon James Barrier+**  
BA, Youth & Family Ministry  
Biblical Studies  
*Cum Laude*



**Kimberly Dallas Sawyer Crouse**  
BA, Ministry (Cross-Cultural)  
Biblical Studies



**Trey Tanner Dail**  
BS, Bus. Admin.-Sport Mgmt.  
Biblical Studies



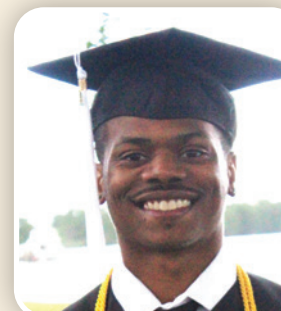
**Dylan Morgan Hardison+**  
BS, Ministry (Preaching)  
Biblical Studies  
*Summa Cum Laude*



**Sean Thomas Henry**  
BS, Bus. Admin.-Sport Mgmt.  
Biblical Studies



**Kayla Alexis Kent**  
BS, Bus. Admin.-Sport Mgmt.  
Biblical Studies



**Jajour Shammon Lambert**  
BS, Counseling & Psychology  
Biblical Studies  
*Cum Laude*



**Alexander Christopher Miller**  
BS, Counseling & Psychology  
Biblical Studies



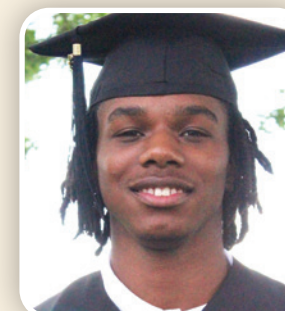
**Talik Ja'Quan Totten**  
BS, Bus. Admin.-Sport Mgmt.  
Esports & Gaming Admin.  
Biblical Studies



**Carrington Ailayah Townes**  
BS, Biology (Pre-Professional)  
Biblical Studies



**Marahya Shykeia Holley**  
AA, General Studies



**Melvin Lee Sauls III**  
AA, General Studies

+Member of Theta Alpha  
Kappa Honor Society



2024 DEGREES AWARDED IN ABSENTIA OR PREVIOUSLY

**Judea Star Edmonds** (in absentia)  
BS, Business Administration-Sport Management; Biblical Studies and Counseling

**Jessi Jean Pelszynski** (in absentia)  
BS, Counseling and Psychology; Biblical Studies

**John Kayitare** (in absentia)  
AA, Bible and East African Ministry

**Khalid Akil Harper** (conferred August 2023)  
BS, Counseling and Psychology; Biblical Studies

**Matthew Lee Eckert**  
(conferred December 2023)  
BS, Youth and Family Ministry and Biblical Studies

**Vanessa Monique Fonville**  
(conferred December 2023)  
BS, Counseling and Psychology; Biblical Studies

**Jesse Quinn Hood+**  
(conferred December 2023)  
BA, Applied Linguistics and Biblical Studies  
*Magna Cum Laude*

**Anna Emily Leidheiser+**  
(conferred December 2023)  
BA Applied Linguistics; Biblical Studies  
*Magna Cum Laude*

**Joseph Niyongira**  
(conferred December 2023)  
AA, Bible and East African Ministry

**Theoneste Nzogiroshya**  
(conferred December 2023)  
AA, Bible and East African Ministry

**Kathryn Nicole Pressey**  
(conferred December 2023)  
AA, General Studies

**Earning the Professional Christian Ministries Certificate in 2023-24:**  
Susan L. Bailey, Toni F. Gibbs, Denver W. Hixenbaugh

DEAN’S LIST 2023-2024

The Dean’s List is comprised of full-time students (12 credits or more) who earned a semester grade point average of 3.5000 or higher. \*Indicates students who earned a 4.000 GPA.

FALL 2023

Alford, Patrick Logan  
Arrington, Dalon Thomas  
Crouse, Nicholas Ridley  
Dabney, Madalyn Elizabeth\*  
Dail, Trey Tanner  
Edmonds, Judea Star  
Frazier, Joseph Martin  
Hardison, Dylan Morgan\*  
Henry, Sean Thomas  
Hixenbaugh, Denver Wayne\*  
Holt, Emily Paulette  
Inman, Dakota Scott  
Knight, Mia Chelsea  
LaPoe, Isabel Erin  
McMillion, Victoria  
Meads, Michaela Anne  
Miller, Bree Lynn  
Miller, Landen  
Munyaneza, Jean  
Nelson, Imanuel Jacob  
Nzogiroshya, Theoneste  
Osborne, Brady Allen  
Pressey, Kathryn Nicole  
Ruhara, Emmanuel  
Sampson, Kaylon Orlandus  
Skidmore, Tanner I.  
Wilkins, Elle Renee  
Wooten, Elizabeth Grace

SPRING 2024

Alford, Patrick Logan  
Boyd, Samuel Rux  
Cabrera Jr., Rafael Farias  
Crouse, Nicholas Ridley  
Edmonds, Judea Star  
Edwards, Carson Gene  
Egypt, Matthew Zacharias  
Frazier, Joseph Martin  
Goodwin, Henry Douglas  
Hardison, Dylan Morgan\*  
Henry, Sean Thomas  
Hixenbaugh, Denver Wayne  
Holt, Emily Paulette  
Inman, Dakota Scott\*  
Lambert, Jajour Shammon  
LaPoe, Isabel Erin  
McMillion, Victoria  
Meads, Michaela Anne  
Miller, Bree Lynn  
Miller, Landen  
Nelson, Imanuel Jacob  
Osborne, Brady Allen\*  
Pressey, Kathryn Nicole  
Quijada, Esteban Arturo  
Revels, Rachael  
Santoro, Michael Francis  
Sheppard, Ethan Terry  
Snell, Travis Daniel  
Tyler, Joshua Collin  
Watkins, Grace Elizabeth  
Wilkins, Elle Renee  
Wong, Connor P.  
Wooten, Elizabeth Grace\*

Several other students also earned Dean’s List honors but requested nondisclosure.

SPRING AWARDS PRESENTED IN HONORS CHAPEL

Student Body President	Travis Snell
Christian Service Award	Immanuel Nelson
Christian Character Award	Dylan Hardison
School Spirit Award	Judea Edwards
Association of Christian Librarians Research Award	Carrington Townes
Mustang Pride Award	Trey Dail
National All-Academic Award	Bobby Brown, Landen Miller
Distinguished Student Award	Brandon Barrier, Kimberly Crouse, Dyan Hardison, Jajour Lambert
Cross-cultural Ministry Award	Kimberly Crouse
Melvin Styons Outstanding Counseling Student Award	Michaela Meads
Business Administration Award	Judea Edmonds, Trey Dail
Youth & Family Ministry Award	Brandon Barrier
MACU-Zondervan Theology Award	Dylan Hardison
Stone-Campbell Journal Promising Scholar Award	Brandon Barrier
Theta Alpha Kappa Honor Chords	Brandon Barrier, Dylan Hardison
Academic Honor Chords	Theoneste Nzogiroshya, honor (Rwanda) Jajour Lambert, cum laude Brandon Barrier, cum laude and salutatorian Jesse Hood, Anna Leidheiser, magna cum laude (Dec.) Dylan Hardison, summa cum laude and valedictorian

NEW HONOR BESTOWED BY STUDENTS

The students have spoken! They selected Dr. Bane Angles and Housekeeper Candace Rohde as Faculty of the Year and Staff of the Year, respectively. The students asked that a student choice be included in Honors Chapel and then conducted a selection process among themselves so that the awards would be a surprise. Congratulations to Dr. Angles for his outstanding guidance (Psalms 32:8) and to “Queen” Candace for her exemplary service (Eph. 6:7, 8).

Senior Carrington Townes presents awards from the student body to Candace Rohde and Dr. Bane Angles during Honors Chapel on May 2.





CONGRATULATIONS TO THREE TEAMS  
COMPETING NATIONALLY

From staff reports and USCAA reports

Three of the seven MACU sports teams went to a USCAA national tournament – golf, volleyball, and baseball. This was the fourth consecutive USCAA Small College World Series appearance for the Mustang baseballers. They went in as the sixth seed, the highest in MACU baseball history.

Jalyn Lee (1B) was named Player of the Year by virtue of a team-leading .391 batting average with 40 RBI. The 6-2 senior from Smithfield, NC, finished the regular season with seven homers and a .461 OBP. He also won the pre-tournament homerun derby for the second straight year. Lee, Dakota Jacobsen, Colin Langley, Adam Schell, and Travis Snell made the 2024 NSAC All-Conference Team.

The NSAC All-Academic Team (3.0 GPA or higher) include Dalon Arrington, Titus Bleckley, Bobby Brown, Josiah Collado, Trey Dail, Sean Henry, Landen Miller, Travis Snell, and Connor Wong. Landon Miller and Bobby Brown achieved National All-Academic honors.

BOOTS & BLING FORMAL AND COURT



King Geoffrey Wellons, Queen Kathryn Pressey, Princess Emily Holt, and Prince Travis Snell were named members of the MACU Formal Court at the annual formal, this year entitled Boots & Bling.



CONGRATULATIONS,  
ANGEL REEVES!

Angel was a member of MACU’s inaugural softball team. She holds the distinction of hitting the first homerun in MACU softball history.

OFF TO VIRGINIA FOR MUSTANG DAY

Mustang Day (a spring skip day) took place April 25 at two locations in Virginia. The first destination, Sky Zone in Chesapeake, had a trampoline park and other games and activities. The second destination, Apex Entertainment in Virginia Beach, was the scene for bowling, food, and more games.



Titus Bleckley keeps the fire burning for s’mores and pumpkin carving.



Evan Jones joins the solar eclipse party April 8 – glasses required!



CAMPUS BIBLE STUDIES

Two of numerous Bible studies that take place on campus throughout the year are pictured. The ladies met in the dorm for a student-led study.

Area youth ministers meet monthly on the second floor of the library for discussion, fellowship, and prayer. Students preparing for youth ministry are also invited to the meetings, which is comprised primarily of MACU alumni, as well as their mentor, Dr. Ken Greene.



WHERE ARE THE  
MINISTERS?

Christian Churches and Churches of Christ are in the beginnings of a minister shortage. Frank Weller, president of Great Lakes Christian College, writes: “Restoration Movement churches face a looming ministerial crisis, with one in four lead ministers expected to retire by 2030. There are not nearly enough students in the pipeline to fill the number of expected empty pulpits” (*Christian Standard*, 19 May 2024, pp. 74-77). For a full reading of the article in *Christian Standard*, follow the link at <https://christianstandard.com/2024/05/may-june-2024/>.

The shortage is not just a Restoration Movement concern or a regional problem, but a national concern. Too few are being encouraged towards ministry, and some are actively being discouraged from considering ministry for various reasons. Several of our Bible colleges have closed (Crossroads, Cincinnati Christian University, St. Louis Christian College, Lincoln Christian University, Nebraska Christian College, Johnson University Florida, and Eastern Christian College), severely impacting the development of potential ministers.

Silas McCormick, president of Lincoln Christian University through its closing in 2024, wrote chilling words: “...the one thing we could not do was persuade enough students to enroll. Candidly, our constituents provided us with few prospective students. In their defense, many of them had few prospective students interested in a theological education. Others, though, simply didn’t see the need for a formal theological education to do ministry. The majority of our prospective students found us online.”

We can either curse the darkness, blame the colleges or the churches or the demise of religious and cultural values, or we can light a candle to see if we can find a way forward through this moment. I ask you to remain optimistic.

Many churches are evaluating what an education for ministry looks like. I do not think the Bible college model is ineffective or outdated, and I have genuine concerns about “dumbing down” our ministerial preparation model. Without a rigorous academic study of the scriptures, we are setting our ministers and churches up for heresy and division. The First Council of Nicaea met in May of 325 to determine orthodox doctrine about the nature of Jesus, resulting in the Nicene Creed and their condemnation of Arianism. This council played a pivotal role in the early church and directly impacted the doctrine Christian churches uphold today. Without the scholars of the church, there could have been a great heresy and schism.

A theological and biblical education is needed now more than ever in today’s complex environment. Anyone can find various positions on any given biblical topic with one Google search. Our churches deserve better theological education than one by internet. They need ministers who have wrestled with complex ideas, handled scripture in an atmosphere of faith, and learned to think critically. The primary purpose of a university education is not to indoctrinate, but to teach students to think critically. After graduation is often when they will commit their lives to preaching and teaching the scriptures, and they need to know how to reason and divide rightly the Word of truth.

(Continued)



WHERE ARE THE MINISTERS

Most denominations require a baccalaureate degree and a Master of Divinity (90 more hours) for ordination – seven years of education. The BA/BS in our colleges provides more Bible and ministry courses than most three-year M.Div. programs. While Christian colleges do not ordain, they serve the churches that do. The church is to examine candidates on their knowledge of the Word of God, Christian doctrine, their call to the ministry, and fitness for the ministry. These topics are offered to potential ministers during a Bible college education.

Cost. The news is replete with articles about rising costs of higher education. According to Forbes Advisor (May 2023), “In 1980, the price to attend a four-year college full-time was \$10,231 annually – including tuition, fees, room and board, and adjusted for inflation – according to the National Center for Education Statistics. By 2019-20, the total price increased to \$28,775. That’s a 180% increase.”

From the academic year 2019-20 to 2020-21, average tuition, fees, and room and board dropped 0.2% at private nonprofit four-year schools, according to the College Board. From 2020-21 to 2021-22, prices dropped a further 1.7% (Forbes Advisor, May 2023). While MACU has had slight tuition and fee increases during this time, we have done some things to minimize costs for students, such as moving to “block tuition,” where a student pays the same tuition fee for 12-18 hours of coursework, encouraging students to maximize their course schedule rather than taking the minimum number of courses. At MACU, 98% of students receive financial aid. We have more scholarships available for those entering the ministry than any other discipline. Several

ministry majors graduate each year with zero debt. We have a couple of heavily discounted programs for students who might want to “wade into the water” of Biblical higher education. The Professional Christian Ministries Certificate (<https://www.macuniversity.edu/academics/certificate-programs/professional-christian-ministries-certificate/>) is a 15 credit hour certificate (five classes) for a flat rate of \$2,000 (\$133 per semester hour). Classes can be taken on campus or online, and each credit applies towards an associate degree (<https://www.macuniversity.edu/academics/associates-of-arts-programs/associate-of-arts-biblical-studies/>) or baccalaureate degree (<https://www.macuniversity.edu/academics/bachelor-programs/ministry/>). More academic hours from dual enrollment are accepted as electives in the ministry programs than in other academic disciplines. Also, to help keep costs lower, a student can 1) enroll at community colleges with whom we have articulation agreements to complete many general education courses at a much reduced cost, 2) live in our dorms and dine in our cafeteria if they choose to attend College of the Albemarle, or 3) attend 100% online.

How might your church help? Consider a scholarship for a young man in your church considering ministry as a vocation. Pay the bulk of his tuition, room, and board so that he will graduate with little to no debt. A couple of churches choose a student intern and pay the student’s cost of attendance as well as a weekly stipend, encouraging the student in his pursuit of ministry and providing valuable experience.

The shortage of ministry students negatively impacts the church and the college. Mid-Atlantic would love to partner with you to increase the number considering ministry vocations and service.

INSURANCE SETTLEMENT REACHED

One week before our scheduled court date against our insurance company, a settlement was reached, ending our litigation against them. Sadly, the company took 3.5 years to get serious about payment following the collapse of Heritage Hall in September 2020. There is a strict non-disclosure and non-defamation clause upon all parties, which means we cannot disclose the amount of the settlement or speak ill of the insurer.

So, what can be said? While it was a fair settlement, we are not rolling in money. We do have two new buildings, but we also have increased indebtedness. The debt is manageable with the settlement, though no one likes to pay interest with the Lord’s resources. But the biggest deficit we feel is in enrollment. Recruitment and retention suffered with a pile of rubble rather than classroom and cafeteria space. This exacerbated the punches that Covid and a trending decline in college enrollment nationwide had already delivered.

Please help us erase the debt and build enrollment. We have the best Bible faculty in our brotherhood and produce great graduates ready to serve, but we need more students seeking ministry. We are eager to educate and train them, but we need your partnership in challenging and mentoring them toward Christian service. Thank you for your fervent prayers regarding settling this case and for your partnership in this ministry.



Heritage Hall old



Heritage Hall new

A NEW COHORT, A NEW CAMPUS, A NEW CLASSROOM

From the Rwanda Challenge Newsletter, February 2024

Cohort 4 (fourteen students) began their studies on January 2 on the new campus of MACU-Rwanda. The new campus was purchased in early August 2023. While there is more to be arranged and furnished for our duplex campus, we were excited to host the first classes for Cohort 4 in one of the new classrooms. While we recognized needs and made decisions about the layout and furnishings needed to complete the campus, it was exciting to experience in a live classroom setting, “This is going to work.”



Africa Hope Initiatives, one of the MACU-Rwanda partners, had made significant progress with minor repairs [to the main building on the new campus, pictured left], a fresh coat of paint, and locally designed and built classroom furniture. We will still need to add room darkening shades for two classrooms, more desks and chairs, furnishings for a director’s office, etc. But for now we are praising God for a new cohort, a new campus, and a new classroom!

This year saw the first graduates from MACU-Rwanda, one of whom is pictured on page 2. We rejoice that these men have worked hard to prepare for ministry in their land. Pictured is the fourth group to begin pursuing their MACU associate degree, Bible and East African Ministry. (U.S. Co-directors of Rwanda Challenge Frank Reynolds ’76, left, and Scott McClimans, right.)





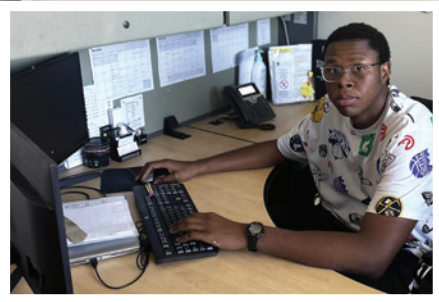
FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORKPLACE

On-the-field training gives life to classroom facts and examples. During the summer – and often during the school year – students are practicing what they have been taught. Both paid and unpaid internships afford great value to the academic experience. The business program has numerous concentrations, two of which are featured.

Associate Professor of Business Administration Dr. Tracy Wooten advises the business major interns. A weekly intern report from Geoffrey Wellons exemplifies the care with which the program is administered. Geoffrey reported that during one week he directed a T-ball game for ages 5 and 6 at an elementary school, inventoried and organized soccer equipment, prepared a field for flag football (measuring flag distances, painting lines), and verified registration records for youth athletes. His areas of learning included watching videos on coaching youth basketball (skill development and various drills), interacting with young children as a coach, and how to set up a flag football field. He also cited spiritual, emotional, and relational growth experiences. He also continued his required reading and met with his field mentor.



**Geoffrey Wellons, Jr.** (Junior, Business Administration/Sport Management) is interning with the 633 Force Support Squadron/Youth Sports in Langley AFB, Virginia.



**Jalyn Lee** (Senior, Business Administration/Sport Management) is interning with the Bakersfield Train Robbers in Bakersfield, CA. The Bakersfield Train Robbers are a professional baseball team and a member of the Pecos League, an independent league that is not affiliated with major or minor league baseball.



**Kathryn Pressey** (Senior, Business Administration) is serving her internship with Lynn Designs & Interiors in Winterville, NC.



**Ethan Sheppard** (Senior, Business Administration/Professional Sales) is interning with NAPA in Asheboro, NC.



HE’S REALLY DIGGING SHILOH

ISRAEL: ANCIENT SHILOH

In spite of persistent unrest in the Middle East, Dr. Kevin Larsen, vice president for academic affairs, and others from around the world were once again able to join the Associates for Biblical Research for another season of archaeological work at ancient Shiloh in Judea and Samaria (Israel). Dr. Larsen served as a supervisor over two 5x5 meter excavation squares and worked in several others. Each week a team of individuals from the USA and other nations do the heavy work of excavation, dry sifting, and wet sifting. One of the goals of the excavation is to better understand the time period of Joshua and Judges while the tabernacle was erected and functioning at Shiloh. Those who dig range from experienced experts to those with no training and on their first dig. There is a place for you during next year’s dig.



Pictured is an overview of part of the excavation site.



Pottery with potter’s mark (left), three pieces combined to make one button (right)

THREE EXCERPTS FROM DR. LARSEN’S DAILY REPORTING:

Today, I, personally, found a very unusual piece of pottery. Sometimes the maker of a vessel would put his mark on the vessel, almost always on a handle. Today I found the base of a jar, and the potter’s mark is on the very bottom. No one on our staff or the guy from the Israel Antiquities Authority has ever seen such a thing. The jar dates approximately 1650 BC.

I found 3 wood buttons. There is some debate about their age. The context of the find is approximately 1500 BC. But the environment of the area makes it questionable if wood would have survived this long. . . .

Let me offer an update on 3 buttons that we found a week ago. It turns out that it’s one button, and it’s made from hippopotamus ivory. Some Canaanite (pre-Israel by 200 years) possessed a valuable imported item.

SUMMER TEAM IN FIVE CAMPS

Sophomores Joey Frazier (left) and Imanuel Nelson (right) are representing MACU in six weeks of camp this summer. Please pray that their ministry will encourage both campers and staff, as well as the young men themselves, in their walk with the Lord.



- June 2-8 High School Week, Oak Hill Christian Camp, Mechanicsville, VA
- June 9-15 Deeper Life Week, Roanoke Christian Camp, Washington, NC
- June 23-29 1st Intermediate Week, Roanoke Christian Camp, Washington, NC
- June 30-July 6 High School Week, Camp Rudolph, Yale, VA
- July 7-13 High School Week, Cedar Creek Christian Camp, Strasburg, VA
- July 21-27 Middle & High School Week, Park Springs Christian Camp, Providence, NC



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028



MID-ATLANTIC  
CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

### VISION

Be a transformative community of higher education anchored in biblical truth.

### MISSION

An institution of Christian higher education whose mission is to equip people to be extraordinary Christian leaders.

## Guiding Values

- ▶ FAITH
- ▶ LEARNING
- ▶ BELONGING
- ▶ SERVICE
- ▶ LEADERSHIP



The educational philosophy of Mid-Atlantic Christian University rests upon the conviction that all truth comes from God. Only the Bible, God's word, enables us to integrate all fields of knowledge into a meaningful unity; it alone answers the deep questions of the human mind and spirit. The University seeks to accomplish this through its academic curriculum, its service-learning program and its extracurricular activities. Academic work is designed to provide intellectual growth and maturity. The service-learning program is designed to integrate instruction with practical experience in Christian service. Extracurricular activities are designed to promote spiritual, physical and social growth.

## OBJECTIVES

### Provide relevant and quality academic programs

- Establishing a graduate program
- Offering one associate degree and two baccalaureate degree programs via a "Hyper-flex" modality (live in classroom, live via technology, or watch recorded class sessions)
- Hiring three additional faculty to support existing academic programs

### Promote a healthy quality of life for an expanding university community

- Enrolling 100 non-traditional students
- Achieving and maintaining a 75% retention rate of first-time, full-time (FTFT) students
- Increasing FTFT student enrollment 15% per year
- Increasing base pay 15% across all positions
- Enhancing safety and security measures on campus
- Enhancing the sense of community for employees

### Operate with fiscal health and accountability

- Increasing the number of Mid-Atlantic society members 7% per year
- Depositing into the MACU Foundation \$125,000 per year in new money for funded scholarships
- Increasing general fund income by \$1,500,000 to finance strategic plan initiatives

### Demonstrate its commitment to biblical truth

- Establishing an annual day of community service in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Employees participating in a half-day joint service project twice a year
- Trustees, Faculty and Staff signing a yearly statement of agreement with the university's statement of faith
- Establishing an annual lectureship event that will address biblical, theological, or cultural issues

## SYMPATHY

**Michael L. Isbell '67**, Oct. 23, 2023

**Stacia Messick Baker ex'78** ECC, Nov. 1

**Ginny Bodamer Greek '85**, Nov. 26

**Janet Spencer Midgett '66**, Dec. 2

**M. Lusetta Slagle '81**, Dec. 4

**David Martin '77**, Dec. 23

**Myron P. Elliott '55**, Jan. 23, 2024

**Bob and Diane Baker '83 Johnson**, Jan. 23

**J. Homer Styons, Sr.**, Apr. 28



## FIFTY YEARS ON THE MISSION FIELD: EZEKIEL '90 AND AH-CHA FISH

May 31 marked 50 years on the mission field for Ezekiel Fish '90 and his wife, Ah-cha. He wrote, "When we first came to Thailand, 1974, there were zero number of Christians among the Lisus. By now over twenty thousand." He also noted that Good News Mission's Bible and hymn books printed for two less-than-friendly countries total over 50 thousand. The mission ministers in at least four nations in Southeast Asia and reaches hundreds of thousands for Christ. Ezekiel said, "Thank God and thank you for you all. Your support and your prayers impact many people's lives turning from animistic and idol worship religions to Jesus our Lord and

## Alumni News

### NEW MINISTRIES, SERVICE

**Franklin McAllister ex '78** serves Isle of Wight Christian Church, Isle of Wight, VA, as minister.

**Vernon Siders ex'91** has been appointed Chief of Police for Shaw University, Raleigh, NC.

**Jonathan Craft '92** is serving as a registered nurse, having earned his R.N. degree from Danville Community College in Virginia in December and having passed the licensure exam.

**Daniel Davenport '02** is ministering with Countryside Church of Christ, Edenton, NC.

**Greg '03** and **Nikki Treasure '01 Saldi** continue their mission work in France from a new location there, Fougères.

**Tim Cyphers '05** is Development Coordinator for The National Center for Healthy Veterans, a faith-based organization in Altavista, VA, committed to helping veterans navigate the challenges of trauma/PTSD.

**Glenn Crocker '07** is preaching for Poplar Chapel Church of Christ in Jamesville, NC.

**Krysia Davis '09** was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Hope First, a pro-life ministry in Jacksonville, NC.

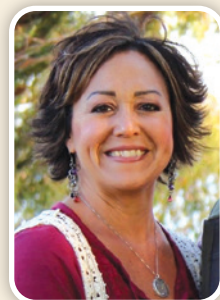
**Charlie '10** and **Melissa Wojan '11 Stephenson** are year-round staff members at High Hill Christian Camp in High Hill, MO.

**Evan Coltrain '12** is the Connections Minister with First Church of Christ, Washington, NC.

**Josh Bueno '15** is the Discipleship Minister for Towne South Church of Christ, Elizabeth City.

**Jessi Pelszynski '24** serves as a worship leader at Journey Christian Church in Elizabeth City, where she also leads an addictions group, Faith Voyagers.

Senior **Nick Crouse** is serving as youth minister with Corinth Baptist Church, Elizabeth City.



### Kristine "Sissy" Giffin '94

After years of serving congregations as a children's director, both vocationally and avocationally, in February 2022 Sissy Giffin took a position with the local Children's Developmental Services Agency in Pasquotank County, North Carolina. She said, "As an Early Intervention Service Coordinator and now a certified Infant Toddler Family Specialist, I serve families with children ages birth to three years who may have developmental delays. Alongside a great team, I evaluate and then coordinate the needed services for families that require this special support. And I love it!"

Senior **Michaela Meads** is interning with Pasquotank County Social Service.

### ORDINATIONS

**Brandon Barrier '24** was ordained May 12 by the elders of Towne South Church of Christ, Elizabeth City, where he serves as youth minister.

**Dylan Hardison '24** was ordained June 2 by the elders of Poplar Chapel Church of Christ, his home congregation and where he serves as youth minister.

### WEDDINGS

**Lyle Hinsdale '09** and **Debby Adams**, June 21

### BIRTHS

**Chris '20** and **Krysten Bisson '22 Stowe**: Thomas Robert Stowe, June 28, 2023

**Phil ex'08** and **Kourtney Thomas**: Guinevere Eowyn, Oct. 25

**Michael** and **Micaiah Gilkes Blanchard '19**: **William Paul**, Feb. 25, 2024

**Brian** and **Sarah Bateman Elder ex'03**: Adeline Grace, Feb. 26

**Nishant '11** and **Sonalie Walters**: Joshua Ryan, Apr. 29

### HONORS, MILESTONES

**Samantha Hare '22**, who teaches at Weeksville Elementary School in Elizabeth City, received the Employees Exceeding Excellence award from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Also, she was named Outstanding Mathematics Teacher for Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools. Library Assistant Evan Wooten earned a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice, Homeland Security from Liberty University in May.



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# COME HOME THIS FALL! HOMECOMING 2024 OCTOBER 4 AND 5



Enjoy the fellowship of friends from years past. See the beautiful campus upgrades. Worship with music led by talented alumni and a stirring message from Dr. Ajai Lall '83.

Friday, Oct. 4, includes a Harbor Town boat cruise, outside events, and fellowship with alumni and friends. After the evening worship with Dr. Lall, enjoy a campfire with s'mores and hot chocolate. Stay for Saturday's alumni connection opportunities and a MACU Mustangs baseball game, Orange vs. Green. Watch for more details.

For more information, contact Nicole Sershen, Institutional Advancement  
252.334.2008 | [advancement@macuniversity.edu](mailto:advancement@macuniversity.edu)