

# Parents' 411

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION

VOL. 11 ISSUE 11  
Fall 2013

## GREETINGS FROM THE RETENTION STAFF



*The Office of Student Success and Retention*

Another academic year has begun. Thousands of students have returned prepared for another successful year on their journey to graduation. The last thing students, or you, want to be concerned about is whether the Morgan State University campus is safe. Morgan's president, Dr. David Wilson, is adamant about his responsibility to provide an invigorating, challenging and safe environment for

Morgan students to learn and thrive. Having a safe environment is essential. If students are concerned about their safety, they cannot concentrate on their studies. President Wilson has "redoubled" efforts to boost campus safety. This issue will focus on the safety initiatives Morgan has implemented to keep students, faculty, staff, parents and guests safe as they navigate our campus. As always, our staff, Dr. Tiffany Beth

Mfume, Director, Mr. Arkuie Williams, Retention Specialist, Ms. Tawana Banks, Retention Specialist, and Ms. Diane Wise, Administrative Assistant, and the Retention Specialists in each of the schools and colleges is committed to providing you with the information that you need to support and assist your student from matriculation to graduation. We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions!

# "SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING"

In January 2012, the **B.E.A.R.** (Behavior Emergency Assessment and Response) Team was created to help make Morgan State University one of the safest campuses in the country. Dr. Kevin Banks, Morgan State University's Vice President for Student Affairs, is the creator of this team. After the Virginia Tech incident in 2007, there was a realization that many institutions of higher learning did not have communication systems in place to alert them to a **potentially dangerous situation** on campus. As a result, threat assessment methodologies have been implemented at colleges and universities across the country.

**B.E.A.R.** is Morgan's threat assessment team; it is a behavior intervention team. Morgan has developed an interdisciplinary approach to assessing and managing potentially dangerous and disruptive behaviors on campus. The team is coordinated by Dr. Banks and consists of representatives from the Counseling Center, Student Conduct, Health Center, University Chapel, Residence Life and Housing, Campus and Public Safety, and faculty. The Team's goal is to **HELP** students exhibiting behavior that is disruptive. **Dr. Banks says passionately, "Morgan's approach is designed to retain students until they graduate, not kick them out"**. But, he also noted that the Team "will take action, if necessary, drastic action, if necessary."

The **B.E.A.R. Team** anticipates that most of its efforts will be about identifying students who are experiencing difficulties and connecting them to appropriate support services and resources. The Team comes together as a collective to weigh different pieces of information and determine if any action is necessary and if so, what is that action. The Team has already seen results. For example, they were able to help a student who was being disruptive in a classroom. It was determined that the student possibly suffered from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). The student was referred to the appropriate support services on campus and is now getting much needed assistance.

Still, we are all very aware that some erratic or illegal behaviors will require extreme and immediate action. The Team works closely with the Executive Director of the Office of Campus and Public Safety, Mr. Adrian Wiggins, and his staff to assure that they are aware of any situations that might affect campus safety. Over the past year in their continuing efforts to "**pro-**

**tect and serve"** the Morgan community, Executive Director Wiggins and Police Chief Lance Hatcher have implemented new crime prevention programs and strategies and enhanced ongoing programs. (See **Protect and Serve** below)



In order for the **B.E.A.R. Team** and other safety initiatives to be truly effective, however, a campus-wide communication network is imperative. The Team depends on open communication. Faculty, administrators, staff, students and parents must recognize their responsibility to report disruptive behavior anywhere on campus. "**If you see something, say something. Safety and Security is everyone's responsibility.**" There are many ways to report disruptive behavior, including reporting incidents anonymously through the Silent Witness initiative. (See **Protect and Serve** below) Even

threats of potentially dangerous behavior communicated through social media ( Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) should be reported.

The **B.E.A.R. Team** wants parents to be vigilant. Your daughter or son may have witnessed an incident or crime on campus but is reluctant to formally report it. However, she or he may tell you. **Encourage them to tell someone in any manner that is comfortable for them or report it yourself.** Parents are an important resource.

We all want to feel safe and secure as we walk our beautiful campus. So again, everyone...

## IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!

### References

Telephone Interview with Dr. Kevin M. Banks, Vice President for Student Affairs, Morgan State University, August 30, 2013.

"Threat Assessment Teams Try To Predict Violence: NPR", February 23, 2010, Dr. Gregory Eells, Director, Counseling and Psychological Services, Member of the Cornell University Threat Assessment Team.

Dr. Gene Deisinger, Director of Threat Management Services, Deputy Chief of Police, Virginia Tech.

# PROTECT AND SERVE



Executive Director of the Office of Campus and Public Safety, Adrian Wiggins, and Police Chief, Lance Hatcher consider the safety of the Morgan State University community their highest priority. The Office consists of professional police officers and public safety aides who are dedicated to keeping our campus safe. The Office's Communications Center is staffed with certified dispatchers who immediately dispatch officers to respond to emergency calls for assistance and monitor fire alarms and possible malicious intrusions on campus. The police officers and staff are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in order to **protect and serve** all members of the University community.

It is important that parents are aware of the various public safety programs that are in place on Morgan's campus to protect students. A few of these programs are described below.

- **Campus Escort Program**

If students must travel the campus at night, the campus escort program provides a safe, reliable way to travel throughout the campus. **Escorts may be requested by calling 443-885-3103; they are usually provided during evening and night hours.** Police officers, security officers and campus safety aides escort students on foot or via motor vehicle to their desired destination on campus.

*Continued on page 4*

- **Foot Patrol**

MSU has two foot patrol assignments. The purpose of the foot patrol is to provide visible police presence to help deter criminal activity and help the campus community feel safe knowing that they are under the watchful eye of the Morgan police force. **Additionally, Morgan is in continuous contact with the Baltimore City Police Department (BCPD) Northeast District during peak evening hours.** These tandem patrols consist of officers from Morgan State and officers from the BCPD. They concentrate on areas adjacent to campus and may be seen patrolling the campus.

- **Bicycle Patrol**

The Bicycle Patrol is the newest proactive crime prevention patrol program. It was established as part of the Department's commitment to community based policing. The Bicycle Patrol Unit provides another visible public safety presence on campus. **It has become a valuable tool in patrolling the center campus and university housing because our officers have been able to respond more quickly to incidents. The patrol has definitely improved Morgan's ability to deter crime.** As a result of the implementation of this unit, there is also more personal contact between public safety officers and the community.

- **Canine Patrols**

Morgan has a "zero tolerance policy" regarding the possession, use, manufacturing, or distribution of illegal substances or drug paraphernalia of any kind, in any amount. This policy applies to every member of the Morgan community. **On an intermittent basis, Morgan police offers partner with outside police agencies who loan us canine teams.** These teams assist campus police officers with random patrols of campus buildings and target illegal substances.

- **Police on Posts**

This crime prevention technique was recently implemented to further increase police visibility on and near the campus. **Security booths have been strategically placed along Hillen Road to help report "unwelcome" visitors and deter them from coming on campus.** Police officers are "on post" in these booths and patrol areas adjacent to them, on and off campus.

- **Silent Witness**

The Morgan State University Campus and Public Safety Office understands the reluctance people may have to report crimes or other incidents of concern to us face-to-face. For this reason, we created the Silent Witness online reporting form. This form may be used by anyone who has witnessed or knows about a crime committed on or off campus. Completed Silent Witness forms are routed to MSU Police Headquarters, which follows up with an investigation and involves other authorities as necessary. **Information gathered through Silent Witness goes to the proper law enforcement agency or University authority and nowhere else.**

- **Campus Mobile Emergency Alert System**

A Short Message Service (SMS) has been established to send emergency alerts, notifications and updates to text-enabled devices and/or e-mail accounts. In the event of an emergency, the Office of Campus and Public Safety will send alerts and updates to subscribers' cell phones or other mobile devices. **Registered members of the Morgan community receive instant messages about public safety, crime, campus closings and severe/dangerous weather.** Once the University determines that an alert will be issued, the Office sends text messages and e-mails, and posts the messages on bulletin boards throughout campus.

The above programs and initiatives are just a few of the ongoing efforts at our University to assure our campus is one of the safest in the country. Always remember that the officers and staff of the Office of Campus and Public Safety are available to you 24/7.



## A SAFE HAVEN – A STUDENT LEADER SPEAKS

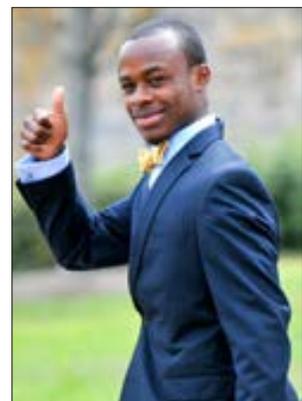
Your child has left home, a familiar environment, and is now embarking on a journey through foreign territory. He or she is in pursuit of a first class education and your first question is: Is the campus safe? This is the thought going through every parent's head as their child is away in a major city for months on end. As a senior mathematics major and student leader from Baltimore, Maryland, it is my distinct pleasure to reassure you that Morgan State University is **a safe haven for your pride and joy. Nestled in the Northeast corridor of the "Charm City" Baltimore, Maryland, Morgan has devised an innovative campus safety plan like no other.** This plan will allow you to rest assured as you leave your future leader in the hands of Morgan State University.

Morgan has made many additions and changes to enhance campus safety. Recently the University installed a plethora of safety booths around the campus. **Security guards occupy these booths in strategic locations on the campus and they patrol the campus within a certain radius of the booth. This addition adds a sense of security and safety as we walk the campus late at nights to and from our dorms, and to parking lots. In addition, there is a reliable escort system afforded to us.** At any time we feel the need for an escort, we call campus security and request an officer to accompany us to our destination either via foot or vehicle. This service is very beneficial to students who walk by themselves late at

night, or a group of students who feel the need to be escorted to their destination.

As someone who has lived on campus for three years and traversed the campus at varying times, I can safely say the presence of Morgan State University Police and Security Guards is consistently felt. Being that we have officers on foot, bike, Segway and motor vehicle, one can always see the visual presence of our competent campus

police. By and large, as a student I trust that if **"I see something, I will say something"** and likewise trust that my peers will do the same. **The campus safety campaign has been embedded into the students of Morgan State University.** This is our home and we must protect it by coming forward with any information that could possibly help foster a safer campus environment. **Now I charge you to rest assured that the University has employed the proper tools and manpower to keep our campus safe.** I trust that your pride and joy will have a prosperous year here at Morgan State.



*Glen George II, Mathematics Major, MSU Senior, Student Regent MSU Board of Regents*

## FINANCING COLLEGE – A CONUNDRUM

For the past several years, the process of financing your student's college education has changed dramatically due to Federal budget cuts, fluctuating student loan interest rates, and other issues related to the recent economic downturn. These changes continue for the 2013-2014 academic year. Morgan State University's Office of Financial Aid is committed to keeping parents and students up-to-date on the changes that affect their ability to receive financial assistance.

Current information about the Federal Direct Plus Loan is given below.

In an effort to assist parents who were initially denied a Direct Plus Loan and to provide additional assistance to parents, the **U.S. Department of Education (ED) developed an enhanced Direct Plus loan reconsideration process.** A new communication campaign that provides additional outreach to certain Direct Plus Loan applicants who have been denied a Plus Loan due to adverse credit went into effect on April 21, 2013.

**On June 28, 2013 ED started sending schools weekly Plus Loan Reconsideration Reports that identify applicants that they believe may qualify for reconsideration based on information available to ED.** It is Morgan State University's goal to accept assistance from ED with this process and to ensure that we are receiving the necessary information to assist our students and parents. If you have questions concerning the Direct Plus Loan, you may contact the Office of Financial Aid at 443 885-3170 or access <http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/loans/plus>.

It remains critical to remember that the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid or loan applications must be filed in a timely manner. Early is always best. FAFSA can be filed as early as January 1, 2014. March 1, 2014 is the deadline for students to submit FAFSA in order to be considered for Maryland Higher Education Commission financial aid.**

### HELP IS JUST A CLICK OR CALL AWAY

It would be impossible to tell you everything you need to know about financing your child's college education in this newsletter. In this electronic age, however, all you would possibly want to know about the availability of financial aid at Morgan and

scholarships and funding from other sources is accessible on the internet.

Listed below are a few sites which we think will provide you with useful information.

**[www.morgan.edu](http://www.morgan.edu)**

Our site provides detailed information about the financial aid process. Click on

Admissions on Morgan's home page, then Funding Your Education.

**[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)**

This site provides complete, detailed information about FAFSA. Students can also complete the application on this site. Students must complete the FAFSA on-line where it takes about 3-5 days to get to MSU.

**[www.mhec.state.md.us/financialAid/index.asp](http://www.mhec.state.md.us/financialAid/index.asp)**

This site provides information about Maryland state scholarship programs.

**MSU WEBSIS**

This site provides students access to check their financial award status, account credits and balances, and to register for courses.

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## OFFICE OF JUDICIAL AFFAIRS REACHES OUT

The Morgan State University Office of Judicial Affairs manages and directs activities related to student conduct. Based on recommendations made by a Student Code Committee, composed of faculty, staff and students, Judicial Affairs is making changes in the way it operates. If approved by the MSU Board of Regents, the current name will be changed to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities. The Office is changing its image. The Office of Judicial Affairs plans to "better engage students" and make the Office more relevant to student life. They no longer want to be viewed as only a disciplinary body dealing with violations of student conduct.

The Office will be proactive and educational so students are aware of expectations regarding their conduct and behavior as a Morganite. Once the changes are implemented, the Office will **reach out**

to students to be sure they know the **high standards of conduct demanded of “Morgan men” and “Morgan women” as well as the consequences for not heeding them.**

*"To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."*

*-Teddy Roosevelt*

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## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

The price of higher education in America is a huge problem. Federal and student loan debt now exceeds \$1 trillion. The average college student leaves school with nearly \$30,000 in debt. State and community systems of higher education are facing unprecedented budget cuts, leaving students with even higher bills.

Bottom-line: It is unlikely that the cost of higher education is going to decrease in the foreseeable future. Parents should encourage, insist if possible, that their daughter or son graduate in 4 years or less. Talk with them about their career goals, their majors and their grades. **Try to keep them focused on graduating in as little time as possible: more time, more money, and in most instances, more debt.**

“A debt-free College Education”, Katrina Vanden Heuvel, The Washington Post, Thursday, August 8, 2013.

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## GREAT FIRST YEAR FOR MSU ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM (AMP)

One year ago Morgan launched the **MSU Alumni Mentoring Program (AMP)**. MSU AMP provides mentors with an opportunity to learn about the current student experience while also becoming a more engaged Morgan State University ambassador. **The overall goals are to increase MSU student retention and graduation rates, to increase new student satisfaction, and to provide meaningful opportunities for alumni to give back.** During our inaugural year, more than 300 alumni volunteered to mentor the incoming freshman “Class of 2016” with fantastic results. Students who partici-

pated last year indicated that their mentors were accessible and fully committed to their college and future success. Members of the incoming freshman “Class of 2017” are excited about obtaining a mentor. **If you are a Morgan alum and are interested in volunteering, please contact Ms. Tawana Banks, MSU AMP Coordinator by emailing [MSU.AlumniMentor@gmail.com](mailto:MSU.AlumniMentor@gmail.com) or calling 443-885-3945.**

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## FALL COMMENCEMENTS ARE BACK!

The University will again hold **DECEMBER COMMENCEMENTS**. Students completing graduation requirements during the summer sessions and the Fall semester will be officially graduated in December and will be required to attend December Commencement Exercises. This year the Commencement Exercises will be on December 20, 10:00 AM. If your son or daughter is scheduled to complete all graduation requirements by the end of the 2014 summer sessions or by the end of the Fall 2014 semester, he or she can look forward to being graduated in December 2014.

## PARENTS MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The ACCESS Orientation Program for first-time freshmen enrolling for the Spring 2014 semester will be conducted January 21-22, 2014. All first-time freshmen are required to attend the Program. Specific information about the Orientation will be sent to freshmen admitted for Spring 2014 in November.

## FINANCIAL LITERACY TIP: SAVINGS MADE EASY

In the midst of strenuous economic times, it might seem impossible to save – but where there’s a will, there’s likely a way. **The 52 Week Savings Plan recently exploded on social media as a savings plan feasible for most families.** The plan suggests that saving a dollar amount each week that matches the number of that week in

the year. For example: Week One – one dollar is set aside for savings, and Week Six – six dollars is set aside, and so on and so forth, until at the end of the year savings should total \$1,378. Saving gradually and incrementally makes this plan doable for parents and students alike! See the chart below for details. It’s time to get saving!

### 52 WEEK MONEY SAVINGS PLAN

Week Date	Week #	Deposit	Balance
1/4/2013	1	\$1	\$1
1/11/2013	2	\$2	\$3
1/18/2013	3	\$3	\$6
1/25/2013	4	\$4	\$10
2/1/2013	5	\$5	\$15
2/8/2013	6	\$6	\$21
2/15/2013	7	\$7	\$28
2/22/2013	8	\$8	\$36
3/1/2013	9	\$9	\$45
3/8/2013	10	\$10	\$55
3/15/2013	11	\$11	\$66
3/22/2013	12	\$12	\$78
3/29/2013	13	\$13	\$91
4/5/2013	14	\$14	\$105
4/12/2013	15	\$15	\$120
4/19/2013	16	\$16	\$136
4/26/2013	17	\$17	\$153
5/3/2013	18	\$18	\$171
5/10/2013	19	\$19	\$190
5/17/2013	20	\$20	\$210
5/24/2013	21	\$21	\$231
5/31/2013	22	\$22	\$253
6/7/2013	23	\$23	\$276
6/14/2013	24	\$24	\$300
6/21/2013	25	\$25	\$325
6/28/2013	26	\$26	\$351
7/5/2013	27	\$27	\$378
7/12/2013	28	\$28	\$406
7/19/2013	29	\$29	\$435
7/26/2013	30	\$30	\$465
8/2/2013	31	\$31	\$496
8/9/2013	32	\$32	\$528
8/16/2013	33	\$33	\$561
8/23/2013	34	\$34	\$595
8/30/2013	35	\$35	\$630
9/6/2013	36	\$36	\$666
9/13/2013	37	\$37	\$703
9/20/2013	38	\$38	\$741
9/27/2013	39	\$39	\$780
10/4/2013	40	\$40	\$820
10/11/2013	41	\$41	\$861
10/18/2013	42	\$42	\$903
10/25/2013	43	\$43	\$946
11/1/2013	44	\$44	\$990
11/8/2013	45	\$45	\$1,035
11/15/2013	46	\$46	\$1,081
11/22/2013	47	\$47	\$1,128
11/29/2013	48	\$48	\$1,176
12/6/2013	49	\$49	\$1,225
12/13/2013	50	\$50	\$1,275
12/20/2013	51	\$51	\$1,326
12/27/2013	52	\$52	\$1,378



*The Ladies of Student Retention*



*The Gentlemen of Student Retention*



*Parents' 411 Workshop, Summer 2013*



*Access Orientation Peer Mentors*

## IMPORTANT 2014 SPRING SEMESTER DATES!!!

### January 21-22 - Spring ACCESS Orientation

January 1 - FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Application opens

January 27 - Classes Begin

March 1 - Deadline to file FAFSA for consideration for Maryland Higher Education Commission financial assistance

March 3 - Last day to submit application for financial aid

March 17-22 - Mid-Semester Exams

March 24-29 - Spring Break

March 25-Apr 12 - Registration for Summer 2014 Sessions I and II

April 1-12 - Registration for Summer 2014 Sessions I and II

April 3 - Honors Convocation – 11:A.M. (Recognizes student outstanding academic achievement)

April 4 - Open House

April 9 - Spring Job Fair

April 11 - LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES  
(with grade of "W")

April 14-May 11 - ADVISEMENT DAYS (Students must meet with academic advisors to review progress and prepare FALL 2014 schedule) Registration for Fall 2014 semester

April 15 - Last day to apply for admission for Fall 2014

April 28-May 3 - Final Exams for Prospective May 2014 Graduates

May 1 - Application Deadline for Fall 2014 Admission

May 1-11 - Advisement/Registration for Fall 2014 Resumes

May 16-23 - Final Exams for Non-Graduates

May 17 - COMMENCEMENT (10:00 A.M.)

**MAY 27 - SPRING 2014 SEMESTER ENDS**

### SUMMER SESSION I

## SUMMER 2014 SESSION DATES

April 1-12 - Early Summer Registration for Continuing Students (Sessions I and II)

May 22-23 - Session I Registration I

May 27 - CLASSES BEGIN – SUMMER SESSION I

**July 2 - SUMMER SESSION I ENDS**

### SUMMER SESSION II

June 26-27 - Registration for Summer Session II

July 3 - CLASSES BEGIN – SUMMER SESSION II

**August 11 - SUMMER SESSION II ENDS**

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# Parents' 411

**Morgan State University**  
Office of Student Success & Retention Staff – Fall 2013  
PARENTS' 411 EDITOR – Sarah D. Adams

#### Contact Us

The Office of Student Success and Retention is located in McKeldin, suite 318.  
Please call us on (443) 885-3651 or email us at [diane.wise@morgan.edu](mailto:diane.wise@morgan.edu).

**Director, Office of Student Success and Retention – McKeldin Center, Suite 318**  
Tiffany Beth Mfume x3651/x1481/fax x8347  
[tiffany.mfume@morgan.edu](mailto:tiffany.mfume@morgan.edu)

**Retention Specialist/SASS and Academic Recovery Program Coordinator – McKeldin Center, Suite 318**  
Arkuie Williams x3946/fax x8347  
[arkuie.williams@morgan.edu](mailto:arkuie.williams@morgan.edu)

**Retention Specialist/ACCESS Orientation and MSU AMP Coordinator – McKeldin Center, Suite 318**  
Tawana Banks x3945/fax x8347  
[tawana.banks@morgan.edu](mailto:tawana.banks@morgan.edu)

**Retention Advisor/ Academic Recovery Program Assistant – McKeldin Center 320**  
Mariellis Jansen x4479/fax x8347  
[mariellis.jansen@morgan.edu](mailto:mariellis.jansen@morgan.edu)

**Financial Literacy Coordinator – McKeldin Center 320**  
Robert Fronta x4474/fax x8347  
[robert.fronta@morgan.edu](mailto:robert.fronta@morgan.edu)

**Administrative Assistant – McKeldin Center 318**  
Diane Wise x3651/fax x8347  
[diane.wise@morgan.edu](mailto:diane.wise@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinators, School of Business and Management – McMechen 209**  
Stepheca Sawyer/Ardyn Barton/Emmaus Ferdinand  
x3855/x3162/x4261/fax x8253  
[stepheca.sawyer@morgan.edu](mailto:stepheca.sawyer@morgan.edu)/[ardyn.brooks@morgan.edu](mailto:ardyn.brooks@morgan.edu)/[emmaus.ferdinand@morgan.edu](mailto:emmaus.ferdinand@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinators, School of Engineering – Mitchell 224**  
Grace Mack/Myra Curtis/John Wheatland x1207/x4210/x3864/fax x8218  
[grace.mack@morgan.edu](mailto:grace.mack@morgan.edu)/[myra.curtis@morgan.edu](mailto:myra.curtis@morgan.edu)/[john.wheatland@morgan.edu](mailto:john.wheatland@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinator, Schools of Education and Urban Studies/ Social Work – Banneker 211A**  
Michael James x3356/fax x8240  
[michael.james@morgan.edu](mailto:michael.james@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinators, College of Liberal Arts – Holmes 206**  
Andre Patterson/ Terrone Hill  
x3960/x3956/fax x8222/x8358  
[andre.patterson1@morgan.edu](mailto:andre.patterson1@morgan.edu)/[terrone.hill@morgan.edu](mailto:terrone.hill@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinators, School of Computer, Mathematical, & Natural Sciences – Spencer 112**  
Cynthia Staley/Georgia Sawyer x3701/x4512/fax x8286/x8215  
[cynthia.staley@morgan.edu](mailto:cynthia.staley@morgan.edu)/[georgia.sawyer@morgan.edu](mailto:georgia.sawyer@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinator, School of Architecture and Planning – CBEIS, 107**  
Johnny Macon x2060/fax x8233  
[johnny.macon@morgan.edu](mailto:johnny.macon@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinator, School of Community Health & Policy – Jenkins 106**  
La-Keshia Williams x4612/fax x8347  
[lakeshia.williams@morgan.edu](mailto:lakeshia.williams@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinator, School of Social Work – Jenkins 336**  
Nia Johnson x4382 fax x4218 x8241  
[nia.johnson@morgan.edu](mailto:nia.johnson@morgan.edu)

**Retention Coordinator, School of Global Journalism and Communications**  
Gary Albury x1886 fax x8322  
[gary.albury@morgan.edu](mailto:gary.albury@morgan.edu)

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THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION



The Office of Student Success and Retention  
1700 East Cold Spring Lane  
McKeldin Center, suite 318  
Baltimore, MD 21251

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #191  
Baltimore, MD