QUEST HONORS PROGRAM
Annual Report 2017-2018
University of Maryland
WHAT IS QUEST?
Fostering innovation by teaching business, engineering and science students to use technology and unbounded creativity to solve the world’s most difficult problems.

Quality Enhancement Systems and Teams (QUEST) is an honors program for University of Maryland undergraduate students who participate in a challenging curriculum that focuses on innovation, quality management, process improvement, and systems design. QUEST develops career-ready graduates as students develop deep critical thinking skills and learn and hone professional communication, teamwork, and collaboration skills.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY
QUEST students are from the Robert H. Smith School of Business, the A. James Clark School of Engineering, and the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences. In a highly competitive process, 90 new “QUESTees” are admitted each spring as freshmen.

COLLABORATION & TEAMWORK
QUEST students work in cross-functional teams on projects and are fully comfortable navigating team dynamics, working with individuals with diverse skill sets and talents, and inspiring an environment for collaborating on ideas and tactical strategies.

COMMUNITY OF LEARNING
QUEST is a dynamic community of learning where students, faculty and staff, alumni, professional partners, and University colleagues contribute to and benefit from the interactions and lessons learned.

HANDS-ON
QUEST projects focus on real-time innovations and challenges facing organizations and society today. Students apply total quality tools, design and systems thinking principles and engage in customer-driven initiatives. Project outcomes develop real and immediately applicable innovations that improve processes, drive productivity, and reduce costs for clients.

How Do Students Describe QUEST?
- Community
- Quality
- Fun
- Passion
- Family
- Experience
- Innovation
- Challenging
- Opportunity
- Real-world
- High-achieving
- Design
- Ideation
- Perspective
- Thought-provoking

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I’m delighted to share with you QUEST’s 2017-2018 Annual Report. It has been a wonderful year for QUEST that began with a celebration of QUEST’s 25th anniversary. Since then, we have celebrated many successes, which are highlighted in this Report. I think you will find that this year has given us a renewed commitment to the principles of QUEST – multidisciplinary, team-based, experiential learning – and a strategic direction to stay on the cutting-edge of learning.

QUEST continues to be a dynamic and vibrant learning community. We have wonderful students doing amazingly cool things. The courses within the program are just the tip of the iceberg. From the IBM Design Challenge to QUEST 2 Spain to QUEST 2 Silicon Valley, students continue to follow their ambitions and stretch themselves beyond the classroom. While the details of all of our improvements are detailed in the pages that follow, I hope the photos within this Annual Report can give you an idea about the QUEST culture. I’m particularly thankful to my colleagues in the QUEST leadership team—the Quality Guild—for their efforts to innovate and improve our QUEST curriculum and community.

As we begin the second 25 years of QUEST, we see many opportunities to help shape our learning community and remain a model of innovative education. As our corporate partners ask for QUEST students with leading data analytics skills, QUEST is heeding this call. We have revamped our QUEST core and elective courses as we think more about digital innovation and data quality. Furthermore, we see a shift in the types of companies that recruit our students and partner with us for capstone learning. Overall, I think we will help improve student placements and the learning experience for QUEST students.

I’m very honored to be the Executive Director of such a fantastic program. I hope you get a sense from this Annual Report that it takes many dedicated people to make QUEST a success. I’m thankful to all of them for their contributions, and I’m delighted to let them share with you their stories that follow.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Bailey

A NOTE FROM THE DEANS

QUEST is an important part of the University of Maryland’s commitment to preparing students to be fearless leaders of tomorrow. By bringing together some of the best and brightest undergraduates in engineering, business, and science, QUEST gives students a defining learning experience that complements their advancement within their majors.

As deans of the three colleges whose students participate in the QUEST, we are grateful for all of the program’s contributions. QUEST’s 25th anniversary last year gave us an opportunity to reflect on the program’s success so far. From the very start, QUEST was built on a foundation of multidisciplinary collaboration and learning. This has helped shape the careers of over 1,200 QUEST current students and alumni. Moreover, the program has a steadfast commitment to continuous improvement. This has resulted in a dynamic program that has made a significant impact emanating from QUEST students and alumni to the rest of campus and beyond.

We reaffirm our commitment to QUEST’s future success. QUEST’s mission is more important now than it was 25 years ago. As technologies continue to shape the world around us, our students need to be prepared to work across disciplines in teams solving complex problems. QUEST is the ideal environment for our students to be prepared for the changes yet to come.

Darryll J. Pines
Dean, A. James Clark School of Engineering

Alexander Triantis
Dean, Robert H. Smith School of Business

Amitabh Varshney
Dean, College of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences
This year, QUEST received over 220 applications for its incoming cohorts. With the help of QUEST alumni and current students, we reviewed each application, conducted 145 interviews, and admitted 90 new students at the end of March. We are very excited to welcome Cohorts 31 and 32 into the QUEST community!

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*Numbers total to more than 247 because some students are pursuing multiple majors.
In 1992, IBM launched an exciting opportunity for college campuses nationwide, offering grant funding to execute a multidisciplinary program for undergraduate students. The University of Maryland designed a proposal and was granted the funds to run a program. IBM/TQ launched in 1993 and was available to students majoring in business and engineering. The grant enabled five years worth of program events and projects for IBM/ TQ students. As the fifth year drew to a close, program administration proposed to keep the program at Maryland. Due to the success of its participants, the university agreed to support the program and QUEST (Quality Enhancement Systems and Teams) was born.

25 years later, IBM reengaged with the program through a large donation in 2017. As part of this donation, IBM hosted a month-long Design Challenge leading up to QUEST’s 25th Anniversary Gala on October 7, 2017. Seven multidisciplinary teams of 4-5 QUEST students embraced the challenge, each working with a diverse group of smart, passionate, and innovative QUEST students. The level of dedication, creativity and collaboration on their projects blew me and the rest of the IBM team away.

During final presentations on October 7, 2017, judges from the University of Maryland and IBM rated each team on the feasibility of their business plan, completeness of strategic concept, potential for impact, relevance to theme, and overall presentation. After deliberation, the International Business Men were announced as the winners at the 25th Anniversary Gala that evening. Team members included Conar Casey, aerospace engineering ’19 (Cohort 27), Tim Chen, computer science and finance ’19 (Cohort 28), Cameron Harner, bioengineering ’18 (Cohort 25), Varun Mohan, computer engineering ’19 (Cohort 28), and Jeff Zhao, finance and information systems ’19 (Cohort 28).

“IBM’s prompt was to leverage one of IBM’s technologies in order to help make the world a flatter place. With such an ambiguous prompt, our team was pivoting like crazy - we went through more than seven ideas. Luckily, I had just taken a business law class and was extremely frustrated with the legal jargon that seemed commonplace in the textbook and legal system in America so we decided to use IBM’s Natural Language Processing technologies to help break down and translate those difficult texts for any small claims court party,” said Zhao. “It was an absolute blast to work on this idea, and I think that the judges really appreciated the novelty and empathy we showed during the presentation. Overall, the competition allowed me to work on a fun project with old friends and meet new friends as well.”

The QUEST community joined together to celebrate 25 years of QUEST at the 25th Anniversary Gala on October 7, 2017 at the Hotel at the University of Maryland. 420 attendees included students, alumni, employers, corporate partners, IBM partners, and current and former faculty and staff. The night kicked off with a cocktail hour, complete with photo booth, jazz band, and Testudo. Guests voted on the best 190K team name over the years, and hors d’oeuvres, including beef wellington, coconut shrimp, and crab bruschetta, were passed.

Once in the ballroom, quests were seated at 42 tables. Alumni and current students sat together, forming new bonds, and long-term corporate partners, Becton Dickinson, IBM, Orbital ATK, Leidos, and Tulkoff Food Products, sponsored tables of their own. Guests were served dinner, which included roasted chicken with red pepper coulis and balsamic reduction, garlic mashed potatoes, roasted carrots, and white chocolate raspberry cheesecake for dessert.

QUEST alumnus Ricky Wilson, electrical engineering ’02 (Cohort 6), kicked off the night with a warm welcome, followed by well-deserved thanks from Dean Alex Triantis of the Robert H. Smith School of Business, Dean Darryll Pines of the A. James Clark School of Engineering, and Interim Dean Jerry Wilkinson of the College of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences. “This is probably the most sought-after program by engineering students in the Clark School. Everyone wants to be a 25th Anniversary Gala alum and there can be a QUEST student,” said Pines.

Current QUEST leaders Joe Bailey, Pam Armstrong, and Jeffrey Hermann thanked the lifetime sponsors of QUEST with various gifts, including dRovels, Pwc, Tulkoff Food Products, and Unilever were honored as Corporate Cathedrals for giving over $25,000 to QUEST. Lockheed Martin received the Corporate Innovator award for giving over $50,000 to QUEST. IBM, Leidos, and Orbital ATK were recognized as Corporate Visionaries for giving over $100,000 to QUEST. Jerry Goodman from IBM then spoke about the IBM Design Challenge and announced the winners.

The program continued with remarks from three alumni, representing different eras within the program. Debbie Feinberg, accounting ’96 (Cohort 1), explained, “Often when I introduce myself as a member of Cohort 1, I get many different reactions. But the question I always get is, what was the program like back then? In many ways, it was the same as the program is now, but like any 25 year old, it has grown and matured.”

Vlad Tchompalov, computer science ’09 (Cohort 14), exclaimed that some programs are great at teaching the how, but QUEST is great at asking the why, and Adreana Smith, IBM, Orbital ATK, and Unilever were honored with team management ’14 (Cohort 18), shared how QUEST instilled confidence, passion, and fearlessness within her.

Wilson then called current and former QUEST faculty and staff to the stage to present six awards to outstanding alumni. Jason Gates, civil and environmental engineering ’11 (Cohort 16), won the Innovative Professional Achievement Award, celebrating the success he’s achieved through his start-up company, Compology. Linda Rassenti, bioengineering ’12 (Cohort 17), was honored with the Outstanding Young Alumni Award for her incredible impact on QUEST, her employers, and her MBA program in her five years since graduation. Steve Kutchi, mechanical engineering ’97 (Cohort 1), was presented with the Outstanding Corporate Connector award for helping to establish many valuable relationships between QUEST and corporate partners.

The final award for Outstanding Service was presented to three alumni: Danny Laurence, computer science ’14 (Cohort 19), Zach Towns, chemical engineering ’02 (Cohort 7), and Ricky Wilson, electrical engineering ’02 (Cohort 6). The evening closed by looking ahead into the future as newly admitted student Rachit Agrawal, computer science ’20 (Cohort 30), presented his thoughts on what’s next for QUEST.

Overall, students and alumni called the evening an overwhelming success. Planning committee member Noah Vernick, mechanical engineering ’19 (Cohort 28), said, “As a current student, it was great to see the huge QUEST family come together. Witnessing the success of those who came from QUEST to those currently in QUEST, like the winners of the IBM Design Challenge, was truly humbling. It is evident that there was and is true talent within QUEST, but even more importantly, true potential. Potential for using takeaways from the program to make the world a better place or developing the program itself to build on the strong foundation of QUEST. This potential is what drives me within the program.”

Bryan Towns, alumni award winner and planning committee member, was pleased with the outcome after helping to plan the event over several years. “The 25th Anniversary Gala was a culmination of several efforts, including the multi-year planning effort by the organizing committee, support from the QUEST Alumni Board, and of course, the passing of the first quarter-century since the founding of the program. The evening enabled us to reflect on the impact the program has had on the university over the past twenty five years, but better yet, it was recognition that the program is still speeding up at age twenty-five. Between its expansion to two cohorts each year, collaborations with other universities, and continued focus on building relationships with corporate partners, the program is as dynamic today as it was twenty-five years ago.”
In this first QUEST course, students hone their problem solving and teamwork skills by participating in design challenges while working in multidisciplinary teams. The early projects include designing physical and digital products, while the final project involves designing or improving on-campus services. Along the way, they learn and apply techniques from design thinking, new product development, quality management and process improvement.

Recent design challenges required students to identify a need within a given theme, such as Be Well and Urban. These themes pushed students outside of their comfort zones and required them to look beyond campus for inspiration. The resulting projects addressed important issues such as banking for the homeless, clean water for cities, loneliness, and food deserts. In another project, students were given constraints whereby their designs had to mimic nature in some way and be environmentally-friendly.

For the service design projects, each team works with a different on-campus client to improve business processes. Every semester a couple of teams work with the Administrative Modernization Program on problems that are of strategic importance to the Office of the Provost. Many of our clients end up implementing our students’ recommendations, which is very fulfilling for the students.

"190H not only introduced me to quality management, but also to some of the most talented, driven, and kind-hearted people I have ever met.”

Adam Sarsony
Finance ’20
Cohort 29

"190H taught me about the importance of understanding others’ perspectives while working on a team. I was also able to develop a number of broadly transferable skills throughout my time in this class.”

Shivani Krishnamurthy
Finance and Information Systems ’20
Cohort 30

"390H has inspired me to push my own limits and widen my perspective for 490H and post-graduation. Idealizing projects with meaning has fueled my passion for the QUEST curriculum and ability to think with depth.”

David Rosenstein
Marketing and Management ’20
Cohort 29

"390H was the first class that gave me an opportunity to pursue projects that aligned with my interests. Through examining idealized designs, it helped me develop a curiosity that went beyond simply looking for the right answer.”

Sasha Miller
Computer Science ‘20
Cohort 29

The middle QUEST required course on Systems Thinking (BMGT390H/ENES390H) was revamped in the Spring 2018 semester. Students were asked to participate in three different challenges throughout the course. Two of the challenges had previously been used in QUEST courses—a computer design challenge and an idealized design challenge—and were successful. The third challenge—a technology disruption challenge—was new to the QUEST curriculum, and it turned out to be the most rewarding of the three.

The technology disruption challenge asked all students in 390H to consider a nascent-stage technology’s impact on our future. This challenge was particularly difficult because students needed to consider how systems evolve over time through system dynamics as people, materials, and capital change over time. Each team was asked to pick a technology that is starting to affect our society (e.g. autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, genetically manufactured food) and understand how these changes will affect the future state. Students were able to estimate these changes using S-shaped diffusion models. Furthermore, students drew insights from the sensitivity analysis of their models to understand the sources of uncertainty and how that uncertainty may be managed by different stakeholders. This challenge helped students understand how systems change over time and how actors can accelerate, slow down, amplify, or attenuate systems.

Going forward, 390H will continue to introduce new challenges to improve learning and engagement of students. For example, by taking the lessons learned from the IBM Design Challenge last year, we can improve the design challenge in 390H. Furthermore, with help from colleagues, we can transform one of the challenges to be more global-minded. This may take the shape or form of a collaboration similar to a 490H experience of the past whereby students were on a team with students from universities outside of the United States. We are excited about the direction of 390H and thank the students in Q29 who helped with the improvements this past year.
490H: CONSULTING AND INNOVATION PRACTICUM

In the QUEST Consulting and Innovation Practicum, 490H, students work together on multidisciplinary teams to help clients address real-world organizational challenges by utilizing concepts and techniques of process improvement, system design, quality management, and product innovation.

Each project is sponsored by a corporate partner, and each team works directly with that client to understand the opportunity, research the industry and relevant technologies, develop and evaluate possible solutions, and make final recommendations. This experiential learning project is a highlight of the QUEST program.

"490H pushed me out of my comfort zone by teaching me how to cope with a difficult project scope, apply my engineering skills, and network directly with a technical team at Orbital ATK."

Haroula Tzamaras
Mechanical Engineering '19
Cohort 27

"No other course at UMD better prepares students for what to expect in the real world. By challenging us to consider both the ideal and the feasible, 490H shapes and solidifies the professional acumen of QUEST students, regardless of major."

Jacob Lapidus
Finance and Operations Management & Business Analytics '19
Cohort 27

QUEST CAPSTONE PROJECTS OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS

LARGEST NUMBER OF PROJECT SPONSORSHIPS:

17 ATK/ORBITAL ATK
11 LOCKHEED MARTIN
10 SAIC/LEIDOS
9 GENERAL ELECTRIC
7 BOWLES FLUIDICS

CONSULTED FOR 94 COMPANIES

COMPLETED 206 TOTAL PROJECTS

147 PROJECTS WITH COMPANIES WITH A MAJOR OFFICE OR PLANT IN MARYLAND

35 OF THOSE COMPANIES ARE MARYLAND-BASED

THIS YEAR’S CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Over the past academic year, QUEST students completed 16 projects for 15 companies. These projects, based everywhere from Baltimore, Maryland to Lake City, Missouri to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, provided students with the opportunity to tackle real-world problems and provided companies with tangible benefits in the forms of manufacturing efficiency, time savings, and reduced operational costs.

Becton Dickinson

Becton Dickinson (BD) is one of QUEST’s lifetime partners, sponsoring ten capstone projects over the past several years. According to Kevin Thai, Advanced Analytics and Big Data Analyst at BD, “Our partnership with the QUEST program over the years has been incredibly valuable. We are continually impressed by the enthusiasm students show as they consider both the ideal and the feasible, 490H shapes and solidifies the professional acumen of QUEST students, regardless of major.”

In fall 2017, Team nBD worked with BD to design an imaging device for microbiological automation. The current automation system was too expensive and too large for small- to medium-sized laboratories, but the team’s proposed device would be accessible to smaller laboratories, allowing BD to expand the market and leading to a projected $3.5 million increase in annual revenues. “The coolest part of the project was that we got to actually develop materials and 3D print the proposed system. Through interviews, we learned about the needs of the microbiologists and the engineers, and we took the feedback of these different stakeholders into consideration and integrated it all into the device,” said Nimit Patel, chemical engineering ’18 (Cohort 26).

University of Maryland Community Medical Group

When the Provider Wellness Program identified the EHR (electronic health record) software as a major driver of provider burnout, Rob Lyles, Smith MBA ’16 and Senior Director of Operations at University of Maryland Community Medical Group (UMCMG), knew that his colleagues were embarking on a significant challenge. He turned to a QUEST team for help.

In spring 2018, team I.V. League Consulting set out to reduce the risks of physician burnout in order to allow UMCMG to cut costs associated with high turnover rates and increase physicians’ quality of life by helping them achieve a better work-life balance. According to Lyles, “I was impressed with the team’s commitment to our project. The speed at which the team developed a working aptitude for clinic operations and EHR workflows was impressive. Additionally, the level of professionalism exhibited by the team was impeccable as evidenced by the praise expressed by staff and clinicians after site visits. The team’s inquisitive nature and ability to see issues through multiples lenses led to a strong current state assessment and tactically feasible solutions.”

Napiera Shareef, biochemistry ’19 (Cohort 27), was attracted to the project due to her interest in entering the medical field upon graduation. “Working with UMCMG provided us with an amazing opportunity to help the selfless individuals whose lives revolve around caring for others. As a pre-med student, I am truly grateful to have been given this opportunity, and I am sure it will have a substantial impact on my future academic and professional endeavors.”

"No other course at UMD better prepares students for what to expect in the real world. By challenging us to consider both the ideal and the feasible, 490H shapes and solidifies the professional acumen of QUEST students, regardless of major."

Napiera Shareef, biochemistry ’19 (Cohort 27)
**QUEST ELECTIVES**

Continuous improvement is a main tenet of the QUEST program, and over the past few years, QUEST’s Curriculum Review Committee has set out to improve the curriculum to better prepare students for the real world. Beginning in fall 2017, all incoming cohorts are required to take a data analysis course as one of their two QUEST electives. The committee hopes that these data manipulation skills will pay off in even more spectacular 490H projects and greater success post-graduation. According to Jim Purtilo, Associate Professor of Computer Science and member of QUEST’s Curriculum Review Committee, “This change resulted from careful analysis of learning outcomes in courses, plus an across-the-board study of 490H projects. ‘Big data’ jumped out as the top opportunity to move all of our projects from good to great.”

Students have the option to take one of seven data courses offered around the university or our QUEST-only data course, BMGT 438A/ENES 489A: Applied Quantitative Analysis. According to Professor David Ashley, this course “provides students with hands-on experience working with data for a corporate client. It focuses on both descriptive and inferential statistics designed to help students learn how to tell a story with data by turning data into information.”

In fall 2017, Unilever sponsored two projects related to data-cost mining and network exception sensing. According to Max Cooper, Associate Manager of Strategic Planning at Unilever and civil engineering ’15 (Cohort 19), “These QUEST analytics teams were able to rapidly grasp difficult concepts and bring a fresh take on how to approach data-driven solutions. Not to mention, the overall experience was accentuated by strong project management acumen ensuring sustainable outputs.”

The students enjoyed the class as well. “I learned what it was like to work on a team to provide real insight and help an actual company. Additionally, I learned more than just data analysis skills because I had to communicate with professionals at Unilever throughout the course,” said Nicolò Primarano, aerospace engineering ’20 (Cohort 30). QUEST alumni and faculty worked together to bring back another QUEST elective this spring, BMGT408C: Quality Web Development in Business. Danny Laurence, computer science ’14 (Cohort 19), did the bulk of the teaching. “This class aimed to give QUEST students – computer science and non-computer science majors alike – an overview of the components that go into web development. Students were challenged to learn technologies that were unfamiliar and to think carefully about how to build a web application.”

As a senior studying business, Paula Rabade, finance and accounting ’18, (Cohort 25) was excited to take the class to gain exposure to coding and web development prior to graduation. She said, “This course helped me learn the basics of HTML, databases, Angular, and Git. The professor, Danny Laurence, was very enthusiastic about the course and super helpful in explaining difficult content. I also had the opportunity to meet and learn from students in other cohorts who had previous experience in the field and together we were able to complement each other’s skills and create a functioning website!”

In the spirit of QUEST, there’s always room for improvement, says Laurence. “The tentative plan is to offer the course on an annual basis going forward. Looking to the future, the course will hopefully feature projects from a range of companies and include a variety of technologies that would be used to accomplish things such as data analytics, massive events processing, or multimedia. I look forward to my involvement going forward!”

**QUEST TO SPAIN**

In January, students from QUEST and the Design Fellows program visited Spain to learn how art, science, and tradition influence design and innovation in that country. The journey began in Barcelona by experiencing the works of famous architect Antoni Gaudí and seeing how he drew inspiration from nature. The influence of Spanish culture on design was also observed on visits to local heritage sites and businesses, including a cava producer and a makerspace. Our students interacted with local students in both Barcelona and Madrid on design challenges; the one at the Instituto Europeo di Design in Madrid involved using live snails as inspiration for building better disaster survival solutions. Everyone came away with fresh perspectives from this insightful journey.

**Shanaya Mullan**
Computer Science ’20
Cohort 29

**Benjamin Conway**
Aerospace Engineering ’19
Cohort 28

**“The QUEST to Spain course opened my eyes to a new culture’s perspective on design and innovation and their way of life.”**

**“Having the opportunity to visit businesses and cultural sites in a society we were unfamiliar with was an incredible way to learn about design thinking and how the principles we learn in our regular QUEST classes can be applied in the real world.”**
QUEST TO SILICON VALLEY

Over spring break, students in QUEST’s Design and Innovation in Silicon Valley elective (BMGT 438G/ENES 489Q) visited San Francisco and Silicon Valley to study the product and software development processes at firms in the area. Throughout the week, they visited eleven firms and networked with Bay Area QUEST and UMD alumni. After returning to College Park, the students presented to the QUEST community about the similarities and differences of the design processes at the different firms.

“It was interesting to see how companies are beginning to merge aspects of hardware and software in their recent product development, for they used to work solely in one space. The multidisciplinary, collaborative environment was something very similar to the environment of QUEST, and I could easily see how the members of our QUEST community could contribute to the innovative work being done there.”

Regina Wingate
Mechanical Engineering ’20
Cohort 30

“The QUEST curriculum took on a whole new meaning after seeing QUEST alumni and other impressive Silicon Valley professionals using the same tools that we use in QUEST classes in their every day work.”

Doron Tadmor
International Business & Operations Management and Business Analytics ’20
Cohort 29

FIRMS VISITED – SPRING 2018

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QUEST CORPORATE

In its third year, the QUEST Corporate student committee worked to build and grow QUEST’s corporate partner relationships and provide QUEST students with exclusive career building opportunities. In the fall, QUEST Corporate hosted several events including the Branding Event and Networking Event.

At the Branding Event, QUEST alumni provided valuable advice to students on how to present themselves in a professional manner and share their QUEST experiences at networking events, in interviews, and in other professional settings. They also reviewed resumes and provided feedback in smaller groups. “The alumni provided guidance that will truly make an impact on QUEST students. Their feedback really illustrated what they had learned throughout their time in QUEST and in professional settings since graduation,” said co-lead Michael Vetter, accounting and finance ’19 (Cohort 28).

About a week later, twelve companies attended the third annual QUEST Networking Event, including Accenture, Applied Predictive Technologies, AT&T, Becton Dickinson, Bloomberg, Cohn Reznick, Deloitte, KPMG, Leidos, Optimity Advisors, Orbital ATK, and PwC. Over 120 students attended as well. Vetter said, “The networking event allowed students to utilize the conversational and professional tools that they acquired at the Branding Event to make connections with recruiters and alumni.”

In the spring, QUEST Corporate focused on planning casual events to foster relationships between QUEST students and alumni representing a wide variety of companies. Alumnus Mark Nathanson, mechanical engineering ’15 (Cohort 20), was one of twelve alumni to attend QUEST Corporate’s Bowling With Professionals event in April. He said, “It was great to have an opportunity to engage with so many QUEST students and alumni in a convenient D.C. location. I was able to have conversations with both students and alumni while having fun bowling. I hope that there are more events like this in the future!”

According to co-lead Olivia Wolcott, bioengineering ’20 (Cohort 30), “Bowling was an extremely successful event as alumni and students alike enjoyed that they could interact in a stress-free environment. Overall, this event promoted relationship building and helped QUEST students feel more comfortable and confident when networking.”
The QUEST Social student organization hosts events throughout the year to engage the QUEST community. In October 2017, QUEST Social member Clair Devaney, finance and supply chain management ’18 (Cohort 25), worked with alumnus Brian Bender, accounting ’00 (Cohort 5), to host the annual QUEST Homecoming Tailgate. “This year’s tailgate was as enjoyable as ever! For the first time, we hosted the tailgate closer to Van Munching Hall and student dorms. This allowed for more foot traffic and a larger group in attendance. The weather was great, the food was delicious, tailgate games were played, and a good time was had by all. The event was a success, and we look forward to hosting more tailgates in the years to come,” recalled Bender.

In April, QUEST Social hosted the student and alumni dinner on campus. Noodles and Company was provided, and students rotated throughout four tables to get a chance to meet all of the alumni in attendance. “The student and alumni dinner continues to be a great platform for current and former QUEST students to discuss the program and life after undergrad. I loved coming back to campus to see familiar faces, meet new students, and chat over dinner,” said former QUEST Social member Elijah Biggs, bioengineering ’17 (Cohort 22).

In early May, QUEST Social hosted the End-of-the-Year Pizza Party, welcoming cohorts 31 and 32 to QUEST with a game of QUEST bingo and honoring our seniors with medals and awards. Two seniors, Chineme Obiefune, operations management and business analytics ’18 (Cohort 25), and Ivy Xia, marketing and operations management and business analytics ’18 (Cohort 25), received the inaugural Director’s Service Awards for their exemplary contributions to QUEST, and 15 other seniors received Outstanding Service Awards. “The QUEST Pizza Party was a great way to say goodbye to the seniors and welcome the new cohorts to our community,” said QUEST Social member Ankita Sahoo, biological sciences ’20 (Cohort 30).

A Note from the QUEST Alumni Board Executive Team

Hello QUEST family!

The executive team of the QUEST Alumni Board (QAB) is committed to improving the QUEST experience for students and alumni. We are currently working to develop and utilize tools to improve alumni communications, expand our student mentoring program, provide meaningful social interactions for students and alumni, and help position the program for continued future success. We have worked with the QUEST community to plan the 25th Anniversary Gala, expand the QUEST conference, and introduce alumni events in new cities. While these efforts help keep alumni engaged and offer students rich experiences, we are aware that the success of the program depends upon the academic rigor and professional development offered to the students.

We know that what QUEST has been will not be what QUEST is in the future. What will be the future challenges faced by employers, and are our academic institutions preparing students addressing them? What experiences do students need to be prepared for the workforce? Are there other campus, national, or international communities the program should engage to enrich student experiences? Does the QUEST Alumni Board need to pivot to assist in new or different ways? There are many questions to be answered, and the QUEST Alumni Board is committed to making QUEST impactful to students, alumni, corporate partners, and faculty and staff.

Thank you for being a member of our community and for contributing to QUEST!

Sincerely,

Ricky Wilson, Cohort 6, QAB Chairman
Josh Kohn, Cohort 18, QAB Vice Chair
Shirley Han, Cohort 19, QAB Secretary
Eleanna Makris, biochemistry ’18 (Cohort 25), will be attending Rutgers University to pursue a dual degree in business and science with a concentration in biotechnology and genomics. She decided to pursue this after joining QUEST and realizing that she is passionate about the intersection of business and science and would prefer to further explore these interests than go into research or the medical field. “The world we’re going into is all multidisciplinary, and I don’t think people are preparing enough for that,” said Makris. “I’m hoping to take these next two years to delve more into the overlap between business and science and figure out my next career step. It may be corporate strategy or venture capitalism in biotechnology, but I’m hoping this program will help me figure it out!”

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

Micah Arnson-Serotta, mechanical engineering ’18 (Cohort 25), will be working as a Quality Assurance Engineer at Applied Predictive Technologies (APT) in Arlington, Virginia. He will be testing software written by APT’s software engineers to ensure the quality of the product prior to shipping it out to clients. “I’ll be trying my hardest to break the software at my desk and figure out a way to fix it before the client ever sees the product,” he said. “This role exemplifies what I’ve learned in QUEST about creating quality products and forming the best solutions to problems.” Arnson-Serotta interned at APT last summer and enjoyed having the chance to work independently on several projects. He loves the culture of APT, describing it as “a very young company with great amenities - like cold brew on tap!”

Sherry Levine, finance and information systems ’18 (Cohort 26), is moving to New York City to work as an Investment Banking Analyst for JP Morgan. She will be in the Diversified Industries group, which serves industrials, transportation, chemicals, metals and mining, and other similar companies. She will be working on mergers and acquisitions, debt deals, and IPOs. After interning with the same group last summer, she received an offer in early fall. “Everyone at JP Morgan has diverse academic backgrounds so my QUEST teamwork experience has been, and will continue to be, very useful!” said Levine.

Brayan Varghese, aerospace engineering ’18 (Cohort 26), will be working as a Flight Test Engineer for NAVAIR (U.S. Navy Naval Air Systems Command) in Patuxent River, Maryland. Specifically, he’ll be working on the CH-53K helicopter program, which is one of the Navy’s newest heavy-lift helicopters. He’ll be looking to verify the helicopter’s flight controls and handling qualities to see if it is in accordance with the mission profiles set by the Navy by testing it in different types conditions (speed, altitude, weather, atmospheric, etc.). This will require Varghese to travel across the country to simulate these conditions and collect data on how it performs during the test. “I’m most excited to be on the actual base. It’s really large and has many different aircrafts. It will be so cool to see planes and helicopters flying by at all times!” said Varghese.
Amanda Tang, marketing & information systems ’19 (Cohort 28), is spending her summer in New York City as a Marketing Intern for the Disney Theatrical Group. Tang’s internship is specifically focused on marketing for Disney’s Broadway shows including The Lion King and Frozen. Throughout the internship, she’ll be rotating within the marketing department, getting a taste for brand management, graphic design, media planning, and social media. She’ll also utilize her QUEST teamwork skills during her final project in which all of the interns will be tasked with developing a hypothetical new Disney musical. As someone with a background in theater and acting, Tang is thrilled about the opportunity. “I’m hoping to work in the entertainment industry after graduation so I’m excited to spend the summer pursuing my passions and being surrounded by others who are passionate about entertainment as well,” she said.

Matt Masison, mechanical engineering ’19 (Cohort 27), is spending his summer in Baltimore, Maryland as a Mechanical Design Engineer Intern at Root3 Labs, an engineering firm owned by QUEST alumnus Chad Schneider of Cohort 3. Masison was attracted to the internship because Root3 Labs focuses on helping companies turn ideas into working prototypes and prototypes into finished products, which is exactly what he wants to do in his career. He looks forward to applying the design mindset he’s learned in QUEST to a real-world setting. “When I met Chad during my interview, he explained that all employees at Root3 Labs work on multiple projects to keep engagement at a high level. I am very excited to try out different projects - and to work in an office with dogs!” he said.

Adam Hostetter, finance & operations management and business analytics ’20 (Cohort 29) was competitively selected to participate in GE Healthcare’s Commercial Leadership Program this summer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Hostetter was the only University of Maryland student selected to interview at nationals out of about 100 that applied and one of only 22 students from around the country ultimately selected for the program.

While in Milwaukee, Hostetter will work on two projects: an individual project in which he will analyze trends in the data of healthcare product sales and a team project in which he will develop a sales strategy for a new territory. “GE has always been a company I’ve looked up to and learned about in my QUEST classes. I’ve heard many cool stories about how they build empathy for customers, and it will be cool to see how that plays out in the workplace,” said Hostetter.

Jacqueline Deprey, computer science & operations management and business analytics ’20 (Cohort 30) is a Software Engineering Intern at Leidos in Gaithersburg, Maryland this summer. Deprey will be tasked with updating database systems, specifically in MongoDB. She was initially attracted to this opportunity because she had been exposed to MongoDB in the fall while working with QUEST Dev, a student group within QUEST.

“DEP is most excited about the internship because it will be a cool opportunity to apply the development skills that I’ve learned in the classroom and figure out if this is the field that I want to pursue in the future,” she said. “Also, I will get to see some of my QUEST friends as three of the five students on my 190H team are interning at Leidos this summer!”

**Post-Graduation Plans**

62 Graduating Seniors

62 Graduating Seniors

90% Pursuing Full-Time Jobs

8% Pursuing Graduate Studies

2% Pursuing Programs Abroad

42% Accepted Jobs with QUEST Client Companies

100% Would “Do It All Again”
“QUEST has been one of the best decisions I made throughout college. I am not sure if I would have accomplished as much as I did if it weren’t for QUEST.”

“QUEST completely changed my college experience. From the people I’ve met, the projects I’ve worked on, the skills I’ve developed, everything has been affected by QUEST. There is nothing like surrounding yourself with intelligent, capable people that motivates you to work harder and constantly seek your best self. I am extremely proud of all of the work I have done while in QUEST and honored to have been a part of the program.”

“I am not sure if I would have accomplished as much as I did if it weren’t for QUEST.”

“QUEST was easily my most valuable academic experience I had at UMD. Because of QUEST, it opened my eyes and perspectives into career paths I could pursue after college. From participating in class projects for 190H and 390H, to getting to apply it to real-world situations in 490H (and Silicon Valley and Spain to an extent), this was something that I realized now I wouldn’t really get a chance to apply in my major studies, and I would be more than happy to do it all over again.”

“QUEST gave me opportunity in terms of learning and experience that few, if any, other programs can offer that transfer directly over to almost any workplace.”

“A WORD FROM OUR SENIORS

“QUEST was one of the most impactful programs I’ve been involved in throughout my college career.”

“It was the best choice I made in college and the only one I never regretted.”

“QUEST was one of the most defining experiences for me in college. If it wasn’t for QUEST, I wouldn’t be pursuing the graduate degree that I am today.”

“QUEST has given me a great sense of belonging and community in my four years at UMD, and I have met some of my closest friends through it.”
The QUEST Honors Program relies on individual and corporate gifts to support its curriculum and special programs and events. All funds raised provide direct support for students, academic programs, and co-curricular experiences. Make a gift today at go.umd.edu/givetoQUEST.

To discuss unique giving partnerships, please contact Jessica Roffe, program manager of the QUEST Honors Program, at jroffe@rhsmith.umd.edu.

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QUEST would like to express its sincere gratitude for the generous contributions of the following donors this year:

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