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Contact: John Gordon, Jr. Communications Director
202.274.5998 (o) or 202.701.8805 (c) or john.gordon@udc.edu

Dwight Sanchez, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
202.274.6158 or dwight.sanchez@udc.edu

UDC STEPS "UP" ITS GAME TO ATTRACT TOP-RANKED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Washington, D.C – Jalia Johnson, Emmanuel Charles and other top-ranked graduates from DC’s public high schools are scrapping plans to attend out-of-state private colleges and universities. Instead, they are choosing the University of the District of Columbia, impressed by its high quality academic offerings and eager to take advantage of a newly created, multi-facet \$1.24 million incentive program called DC “UP” or District of Columbia University Partnership.

“UDC is a great school. I did a semester [there] in a dual enrollment program. I had a great experience; I learned a lot,” asserts Johnson, the salutatorian at the National Collegiate Prep Public Charter School. She recently changed her plans to attend Hampton University, deciding to enroll at UDC after receiving a DC-UP scholarship.

Already the most affordable university in the nation’s capital, UDC aims to seize that advantage while underscoring its mission of building “a diverse generation of competitive, civically engaged scholars and leaders.” Under UP, each valedictorian or and salutatorian from a District public or public charter high school who enrolls in UDC receives a full four-year scholarship. Each also gets a \$6,000 annual housing allowance. Students with grade points between 3.0 and 3.5 receive a hefty tuition discount. The full program provides other unique opportunities for students in the Metropolitan region and those from out-of state. Equally important, while other universities are tossing out students because of outstanding bills, UDC will offer an amnesty program that allows former students to complete their education.

“It has a wide-reaching effect on the University and the DC community,” says Dwight Sanchez, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director of Undergraduate Admissions, who worked along with Chief Operating Officer Troy Lemaile-Stovall and President Ronald Mason, Jr., to design the project.

“We’re fortunate in DC to have one system of public education that allows us to have closer ties between K-12 components and higher education,” says Mason. “DC-UP presents the University a tremendous opportunity to invest in District youth and to be innovative in our learning approaches.”

“UDC is contributing to the Mayor’s efforts to cement a pathway to the middle class for our students,” added Stovall.

Charles agrees. A “stellar scholar” at Richard Wright Public Charter School, he graduated with a 3.76 grade point. Initially he was to attend Morgan University, but switched to UDC. “It’s a great honor to be selected for the scholarship. It proves against the stereotype of African-American males that says we won’t choose to advance ourselves when given the opportunity. This allows me to be more motivated to finish my education; I won’t have financial worries.”

The days of ignoring the grand, historic institution on Connecticut Ave. NW have ended. UDC is attracting top-notch researchers and faculty while improving its physical plant, including construction of a \$63 million state-of-the-art-student center. UP adds to this upward trajectory.

“We are just getting started. Over time, we intend to expand UDC-Up to every graduate at every high school in the District,” promises President Mason.

With 13 student scholars already enrolled, the University has met its goal for this year. However, it’s not too late for former students to take advantage of the amnesty program to enroll for the fall semester.

“[UP] is an opportunity to get a quality education that is debt-free or economically friendly,” says Sanchez.

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