



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

A. J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
GEMSTONE PROGRAM

Suite 0100 Elicott Hall (256)  
College Park, Maryland 20742  
301.405.8047 TEL 301.314.8469 FAX  
[www.gemstone.umd.edu](http://www.gemstone.umd.edu)

May 30, 2009

Dear New Gemstone Student,

On behalf of the Gemstone Program let me welcome you as a new member of the Gemstone Class of 2013! We are delighted that you have decided to attend the University of Maryland, and we look forward to seeing you at the Honors Orientation this summer. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some important summer reminders concerning Orientation, registering for classes, our “GEMS Camp” and the “Gemstone Summer Buddies” program.

If you registered for an Honors Orientation (June 11, July 6, or July 16), the schedule you received states that on the first day of each orientation there is a 45 minute block set aside for a ***Gemstone Program Review from 4:15–5:00 pm in room 0130 Tydings Hall.*** Please make sure you attend this review so you can get more information about the program and have a chance to meet some of your new classmates, Gemstone staff and current students. **If you are *not* attending an Honors Orientation please contact Angela Dawson, Gemstone Academic Advisor, (301-314-7451 or [dawsona@umd.edu](mailto:dawsona@umd.edu)) so she can advise you about the Gemstone courses you need to register for and so she can arrange to get in touch with you when you are on campus.**

During Orientation you will be registering for your fall classes. **\*Please note that you only need to register for ONE Gemstone class in the *fall semester* of next year: GEMS 100 (1 credit.)** *Some advisors may not be familiar with our fall class requirements, so make sure that you sign up for GEMS 100 in the fall semester only!*

**In the *spring semester* of next year you will be required to take GEMS 104** as part of our Gemstone course requirements. This is a 3-credit course that will provide a foundational experience for your Gemstone team research. **It also satisfies a general university CORE requirement in the category called Interdisciplinary and Emerging Issues (IE). This category gives you great flexibility, because you are permitted to choose the CORE subject area to which you want GEMS 104 to be credited: (1) Humanities and Arts, (2) Social Science and History or (3) Science and Mathematics (go to <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/core/elements/DistrSt.html> for more details).** In addition to GEMS 104, you are also required to take GEMS 102 (a 1 credit seminar in which research topics are chosen and teams are formed) next spring semester. In the fall of your sophomore year you will take GEMS 202 as a member of your research team. This 2-credit course will help you understand the basis of good teamwork and will help you develop your research skills. That same semester, you will begin meeting regularly with your team and its mentor. For this research activity you will receive 1 credit in the first sophomore semester and 2 credits in each

semester thereafter under the course designations: GEMS 296, 297 (sophomore year), GEMS 396, 397 (junior year) and GEMS 496, 497 (senior year). Thus, the Gemstone Program has an 18-credit requirement, 11 credits of which are fulfilled by the Gemstone team research activity.

We are offering, for the eighth year in a row, the optional but highly recommended **Gems Camp** just before the fall semester begins. This is an overnight outing for Gemstone freshmen where you will have a chance to get to know many of your new classmates, upper-class students and some Gemstone staff in a fun, relaxing environment. Last year, more than three quarters of the incoming class chose to participate – you don't want to miss it! The camp will be held on August 26-27, and students participating will be able to move into their dorms on Tuesday, August 25 (see the enclosure for more details).

Enclosed you will find the name of your **Gemstone Summer Buddy**. This current Gemstone student has volunteered to be a 'buddy' to make your transition to the University of Maryland a little easier. Feel free to contact this person at any time over the summer. Your buddy is a wonderful resource. For example, if you have questions about the Gemstone Program, the Honors Program, housing, the campus, or even what to pack, you can contact your buddy and he or she will be happy to help.

Should you have any questions regarding the Gemstone Program or any other University related issues, please feel free to contact me or any of the Gemstone staff directly. The most up-to-date information regarding the Gemstone calendar, news items, and curriculum will be available on our website: [www.gemstone.umd.edu](http://www.gemstone.umd.edu). Have a tremendous summer. We look forward to meeting you at Orientation!

Yours sincerely,



James M. Wallace  
Director, Gemstone Program  
wallace@eng.umd.edu