

# GREEN GRADUATES

*The Official Newsletter of the UMB MCST Medical Cannabis Student Association*



## The Latest in Cannabis News

In February, the Drug Enforcement Administration decided to place two novel cannabinoids into the controlled substances category. The DEA stated that because Delta-8-THC-O and Delta-9-THC-O are not naturally occurring compounds and can only be obtained by synthetic means, they do not fall under the classification of hemp and are therefore federally illegal. Over the last year, THC-O, otherwise known as tetrahydrocannabinol acetate ester, has increased in popularity, with evidence pointing to its potent qualities. While some applauded the DEA for setting restrictions on these cannabinoids that lack safety profiles, others in the cannabis industry expressed continued frustration over the US government's ambiguity in cannabis policy and lack of regulatory oversight, especially related to hemp derived compounds. To read the full article, please [click here](#).

## MCSA Meetings

Our **General Meetings** are now on the **second Thursday** of each month at **5pm PST/ 8pm EST!** All are welcome!

To join these meetings via Zoom, [CLICK HERE.](#)

## SAVE THE DATE!

In the coming weeks, we will be sharing more information about the **American's for Safe Access Unity Conference** that was cancelled in 2022. It has been rescheduled to **Monday, May 15th & Tuesday, May 16th!** Location TBD. If you are interested in helping at this event, please contact **Makenna Campbell:**  
makenna.campbell@umaryland.edu

## MCSA Executive Board

**President:** Alexandra Harris

**Vice President:** Brittney Naaman

**First Year Vice President:** Cody Funderburk

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**Director of MCSA Business Owners:** Shawn Williams

**Director of Alumni Relations:** Karen Jaynes & Shanetha Marable

**Cohort 2022 Liasion:** Codi Peterson  
& Shanetha Marable

### **MEMBERSHIP**

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### **PROGRAMMING**

**Vice President:** James Schwartz

# Upcoming Events

## **Career Pathways and Networking Opportunities!**

**Thursday, March. 23rd @ 5pm PST/8pm EST**

Join us for a virtual event to see the many avenues of career development available to students in the Graduate School at UMB. Presenter Nina Roa, the newly hired Associate Director of Career Development for the SOP Office of Graduate Programs, will guide us through many new and exciting programs she has been working on. Job Board Creator, Cento Sharp, will be onboard to share and discuss his Job Board created specifically for those looking in the medical cannabis job market.

**To join: <http://bit.ly/3J7vGAF>**



## Cannabis Research

A new study out of Washington State University looked at how CBD may be useful in overcoming nicotine addiction. The study demonstrated that CBD inhibits the enzyme CYP2A6, one of the main enzymes responsible for nicotine metabolism. By inhibiting this enzyme and slowing the metabolism of nicotine, users were able to wait longer before administering additional doses of nicotine, thus reducing nicotine use overall. While additional studies are needed to confirm the efficacy of CBD in reducing nicotine intake, this is a promising first step! To read the full article, [\*\*click here.\*\*](#)



## Check Us Out on Instagram!

If you are active on Instagram and have not yet done so, please follow us! We will be posting about upcoming events and the different ways the MCSA is getting involved. To connect with us, follow [\*\*@umb.mcsa\*\*](#)

## Check out our Jobs Board Database!

Don't forget to stay up to date on the latest jobs in the cannabis industry by accessing our database created by Cento Sharp, Director of MCSA Future Professions. [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)

# Alumni Spotlight: Raven Ariola

By Karen Jaynes, Director of Alumni Relations

*Raven Ariola, class of '22, is our featured Spotlight for March 2023. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences from Alderson Broaddus University. Raven is a compassion-driven entrepreneur and has worked from the labs to the classroom in the cannabis space. Currently, he is the Principal Consultant/ Scientific Advisor for his own company, Entheo Wellness, and teaches Cannabis Agricultural Science & Horticulture as an Adjunct Professor at Pennsylvania Western University and Extraction Science at The Harrington Institute. He also hosts his own successful Podcast, "Plants Saved My Life." The MCSA is proud to have Raven back in our presence, as he was our previous Co-Director of Education of the MCSA during his time in the program.*

## **What was your inspiration to join the MCST Master's Program?**

As a first-generation college graduate born and raised in West Virginia, I discovered my passion for plant medicine and cannabis thanks to the traditions my mother brought from the Philippines. Growing up, cannabis was never taboo in my household, and I was taught to treat it with respect and reverence.

As I watched my small Appalachian community succumb to the opioid epidemic, I knew I had to take action. So, I pursued a degree in Biology, always knowing that natural sciences were my truth. Afterwards, I was hired by a licensed cannabis analytical testing lab, gaining expedited experience in the industry and helping many grower/processors in Pennsylvania.

Through that work, I quickly realized the importance of bringing together education, compassion, and my own passions to make a difference in the cannabis industry. I was inspired by the potential of cannabis to heal and transform communities and was determined to use my skills and knowledge to make a positive impact.

And so, fueled by my love for plant medicine, my passion for science, and my commitment to my community, I embarked on a journey that has taken me to new heights. I applied to the MCST program the second I heard of it, and I hope to make a lasting karmic impact on the world of cannabis, using my experiences to help others and make a real difference in the lives of those around me.

## **While in the program, was there a pivotal moment or realization of your potential impact having this degree?**

Throughout my journey in the Medical Cannabis Science & Therapeutics program, I saw firsthand the misunderstandings and stigma surrounding natural medicines that interfered with compassionate patient care. But I refused to be discouraged or jaded. Instead, I was inspired to take action. I recognized the critical importance of standardized education throughout the industry and for medical cannabis patients. I was appointed the position of MCSA's co-director of education, which was a responsibility that I was both lucky and grateful to accept.



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In this role, I realized that we all have a responsibility to propagate accurate, thorough education about cannabis and to break down the barriers that prevent patient care. And so, armed with a sense of purpose and a commitment to the cannabis plant, I graciously accept that this responsibility is bigger than myself.

## Since graduating, how has the MCST Graduate Studies shifted your personal and or professional focus?

As a lifelong advocate for responsible cannabis use through proper education, I have dedicated my career to teaching cannabis science at every level. Currently, I teach Cannabis Agricultural Science at Penn West University and Cannabis Extraction Science at The Harrington Institute. Through my work, I saw a need for more education and awareness among entrepreneurs, executives, and healthcare professionals. That's why I founded Entheo Wellness, an educational consulting agency that empowers people to make informed decisions about cannabis cultivation, processing, testing, and dispensing. In order to work hands-on with patients, I also work at a local medical dispensary.

Additionally, I host a weekly podcast called "Plants Saved My Life," ([plantssavedmylife.com](http://plantssavedmylife.com)) which features real stories of patients who have benefited from natural remedies. We also hear from medical practitioners, therapists, shamans, and other specialists to gain insights into the world of entheogens, naturopathy, holistic therapies, psychedelics, cannabis, and functional nutrition.

I am committed to spreading knowledge and promoting healing through education and destigmatizing natural medicines. With Entheo Wellness and "Plants Saved My Life," I am proud to be part of a growing movement dedicated to this cause.

## Any final supportive words for your fellow Alumni and the current MCST students?

There will be days when the fight seems exhausting and never-ending. But don't give up. Remember why you pursued this path head first into the unknown. Keep that passion burning and let it fuel your perseverance. With determination and a clear sense of purpose, you can overcome any obstacle and make your mark on this world.

**Are you an alumnus who would like to be featured in an upcoming Spotlight?**

**We would love to hear your story.**

**Are you connected to an MCST alumnus who would be perfect for Spotlight?**



**Reach out to Karen Jaynes at [karenjaynes@umaryland.edu](mailto:karenjaynes@umaryland.edu)**