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NEWS

Decision day: Future University of Cincinnati Bearcats get surprised at school and at home



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Cincinnati Enquirer

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University of Cincinnati surprises student with a full scholarship

Marcus Elliott jumps with excitement as he is awarded admission to the University of Cincinnati and a Marian Spencer Scholarship. *Madeline Mitchell, Cincinnati Enquirer*

Michelle Dixon hid around the corner with her sister and niece Monday morning as they awaited her daughter, Lachelle, to walk down the Butler Tech high

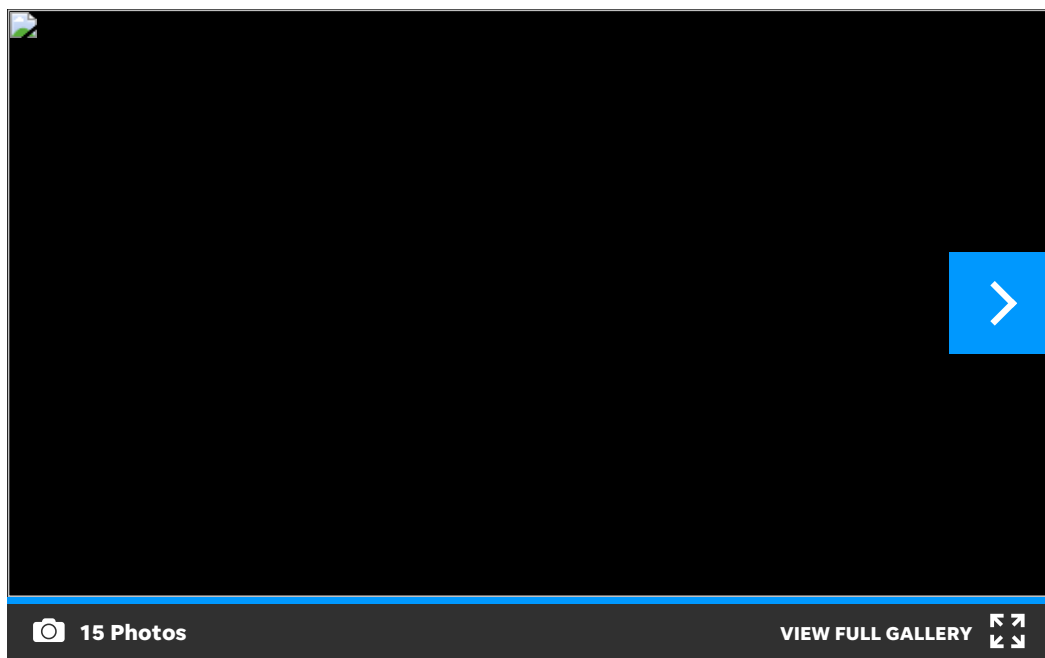
school hallway and receive the news: Lachelle has been accepted to the University of Cincinnati.

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Up a few steps on a landing at the school's entrance, UC Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Jack Miner stood with a black and red bowtie next to the Bearcat mascot.

"She is going to lose it," Michelle Dixon said.



Future Bearcats get surprised at school and at home

Students surprised with University of Cincinnati admission announcements

Most students given admittance would find out in an email later Monday afternoon, but four future Bearcats were surprised at home or at school Monday by UC administrators, their high school counselors and principals and their families.

Dixon said her daughter applied to a few different colleges, but UC Blue Ash is her No. 1 choice. Lachelle is excited about the university's [co-op program](#) – plus, it's close to her family. Lachelle grew up bouncing around to different schools since her father works for the military, and Cincinnati is the first place that's felt like home.

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“She got used to always saying goodbye to people,” Michelle Dixon said.

Now, she won’t have to. Lachelle said some of her friends are now considering UC, too, or at least planning to stay in the area.

Looking up at the Bearcat mascot, Lachelle said: “I’ll be at every game.”

Marian Spencer scholar: 'I'm gonna make the most of it.'

About two hours after Lachelle's surprise, the UC crew doubled in size as band members joined in for another stop at Oyler School valedictorian Marcus Elliott's home in East Price Hill.

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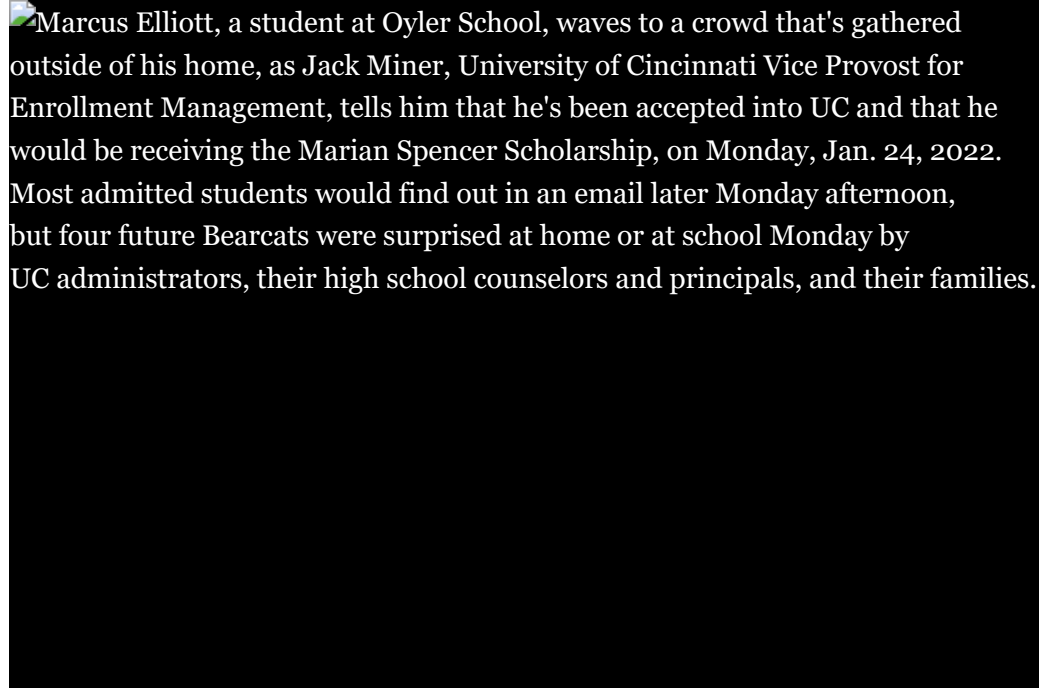
The band lined up on the driveway as Miner knocked on Marcus' door. Marcus came out in an Oyler sweatshirt and Kansas City Chiefs hat.

"What's happening?" Marcus said as the band began to play.

Marcus sprinted into a hug from his sister, Angie, when Miner told him he was accepted to UC. He then bounced into his mother's arms before Miner dropped even bigger news: Marcus is the first student to be offered a [Marian Spencer](#)

Scholarship – an award that covers full tuition, room and board and an all-expenses-paid study abroad experience to Tanzania.

"Oh my God," Marcus said, before embracing Miner.



Marcus Elliott, a student at Oyler School, waves to a crowd that's gathered outside of his home, as Jack Miner, University of Cincinnati Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, tells him that he's been accepted into UC and that he would be receiving the Marian Spencer Scholarship, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. Most admitted students would find out in an email later Monday afternoon, but four future Bearcats were surprised at home or at school Monday by UC administrators, their high school counselors and principals, and their families.

Marcus Elliott, a student at Oyler School, waves to a crowd that's gathered outside of his home, as Jack Miner, University of Cincinnati Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, tells him that he's been accepted into UC and that he would be receiving the Marian Spencer Scholarship, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. Most admitted students would find out in an email later Monday afternoon, but four future Bearcats were surprised at home or at school Monday by UC administrators, their high school counselors and principals, and their families. *Amanda Rossmann, The Enquirer/Amanda Rossmann*

Marcus said he knows so many students who don't get the opportunities that his scholarship program will provide.

"I'm gonna make the most of it," he said.

Nine other Cincinnati Public Schools seniors will be awarded a Marian Spencer scholarship this year. The program is intended to renew for the next three years, inviting a total of 40 students.

More: 40 CPS students will get full rides from UC, thanks to new Marian Spencer scholarship

Emily Moroney, college manager at Cincinnati Public Schools, said UC is "really moving the needle" on engaging with the Cincinnati community and public K-12

schools with this scholarship program by putting work, effort and fiscal investment into local students.

Annually, around 70% of CPS graduating seniors identify going to college as their post-secondary aspiration, Moroney said, but often are deterred by the affordability of college.

"The Marian Spencer Scholars program not only removes the affordability roadblock that many students and their families encounter, but creates an experience by which CPS students feel supported and engaged academically, socially and emotionally throughout their entire University of Cincinnati career," Moroney said.

Marcus' mom, Amanda Taylor, said it's been a tough road for Marcus. Both she and Marcus' father dropped out before graduating high school. Marcus himself was flunking out and constantly getting suspended throughout elementary and middle school, she said. But he came to live with her before he started high school and "flourished" amid all of the changes in his life, which included stricter rules and more family time. He got straight As and rarely got into trouble anymore.

"I never would have dreamt that he would have been valedictorian or even getting accepted into a college, or him even being excited about going to college," Taylor said, reflecting on Marcus' middle school days.

Angie Elliott, Marcus' sister, was also valedictorian at Oyster and is now studying social work at UC. Taylor said she often acts like a "dad" to Marcus, sometimes reprimanding him but always inspiring him to be his best.

"I want to be just like my big sister," Marcus said.

'Cheesin' all day long

Lachelle said she had fully expected to wait until 4 p.m. to find out if she got into UC, like everyone else. Following her surprise at school, Lachelle couldn't stop smiling and said she'd spend the rest of the day "cheesin'."

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"It feels great," she said about the whole school coming out to cheer her on.

"That smile is not going to leave for the rest of the day," her mom said before they left discussing the best spot in town for ribs, Lachelle's celebratory lunch request.

Michelle Dixon was smiling, too. Lachelle is her "baby," the youngest of her kids and last to graduate high school. She said the two are very close, always having homework sessions together (Michelle Dixon is getting her master's from UC) and making ice cream together.

Lachelle Dixon, a Butler Tech Bioscience Center student, was surprised by the Bearcat mascot and other University of Cincinnati staff with news of her admissions to UC, on Monday, Jan. 24, 2022. Most admitted students would find out in an email later Monday afternoon, but four future Bearcats were surprised at home or at school Monday by UC administrators, their high school counselors and principals and their families. *Amanda Rossmann, The Enquirer/Amanda Rossmann*

"She's such a beautiful person," Michelle Dixon said about her daughter. "For her, when she's going off to college, the only thing I would wish is that she continues to be the young woman that she has become."

Miner said 40 total students from Butler Tech in West Chester will be getting acceptance letters later in the day, and 10 Oylster students will be admitted. In total, nearly 22,000 students will get acceptance letters Monday for fall 2022 at UC.

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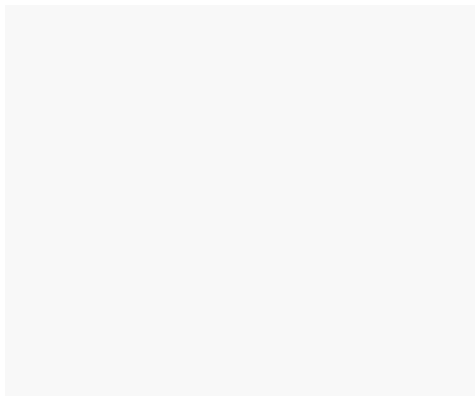


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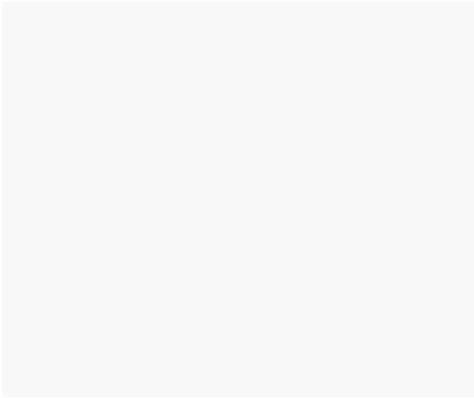


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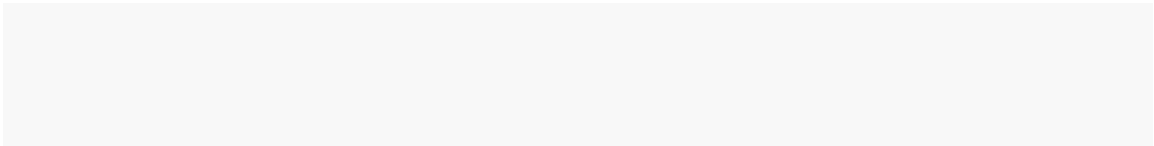
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