

CHANGING MINDS

**The Meyerhoff Scholars Program
University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

2009 Conference for Chairs
American Political Science Association
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Baltimore, Maryland

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OUTLINE

About UMBC

Program Origins

Barriers to Success

Structural Components

Indicators of Success

Conclusion

ABOUT UMBC

- Midsize public university - Founded in 1966 11,650 students (9,406 U and 2,244 G)
- 35% minority enrollment (Black 14%, Asian 17%, Hispanic & Native American 4%)
- 1391 Freshmen SAT (top quartile)
- 41% of students in STEM fields

BEFORE MEYERHOFF

1. UMBC graduated fewer than 18 African-American S&E majors per year
2. Typically, fewer than five of these students graduated with a grade point average above 3.0 (on a 1 to 4 scale)
3. Consistent with achievement levels observed at other institutions.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

1. Fear of disapproval/rejection by Peers
2. Perceived hostile/unsupportive environment
3. Inadequate preparation to attitudinal/behavioral demands of the Academy
4. Specific gaps in knowledge/skill development
5. Limited exposure to models of academic excellence and scholarly practice
6. Overall low expectations
7. Isolation
8. Financial aid

COMPONENTS

- Recruitment
- Financial Aid
- Summer Bridge Program
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Summer Research Internships
- Faculty Involvement and Commitment
- Peer Study Groups
- Program Values
- Sense of Community
- Personal Advisement & Counseling

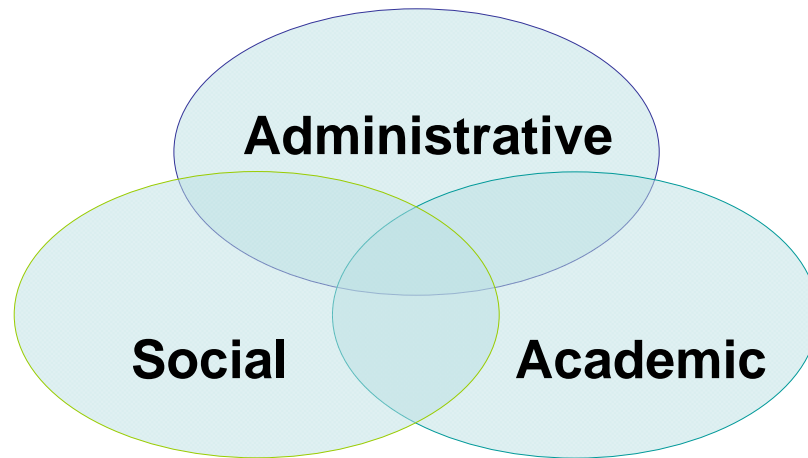
PROGRAM MISSION

1. Provide the necessary academic advising, social and moral support, encouragement, and enrichment experiences that enable a diverse group of undergraduate students to succeed in STEM fields
2. Prepare students for terminal degrees in these areas
3. Prepare them to address and combat the underrepresentation in the STEM fields.

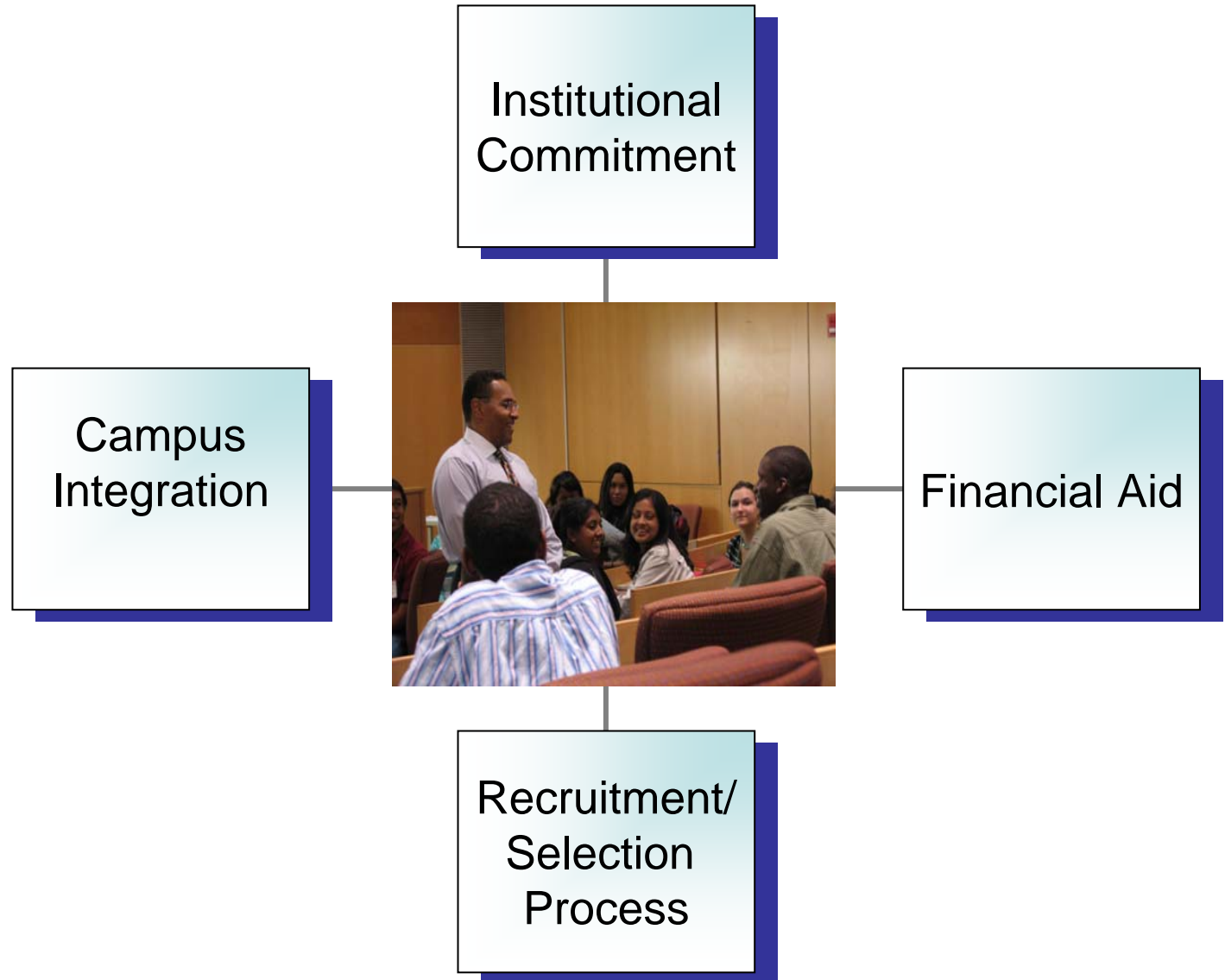
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Awards range from \$5,000-\$22,000 per year for 4/5 years
2. Student selected on:
 - academic performance
 - standardized test scores
 - recommendation letters
 - community service
 - interests in STEM fields
 - plans to pursue graduate degrees in a STEM area
3. Nomination information is sent to high schools or may be requested from the Meyerhoff office (2,000 a year)
4. The Meyerhoff application deadline is Dec. 1
5. Finalists (250) are invited to Selection Weekends
6. Offer 90-100 scholarships for 60-70 slots

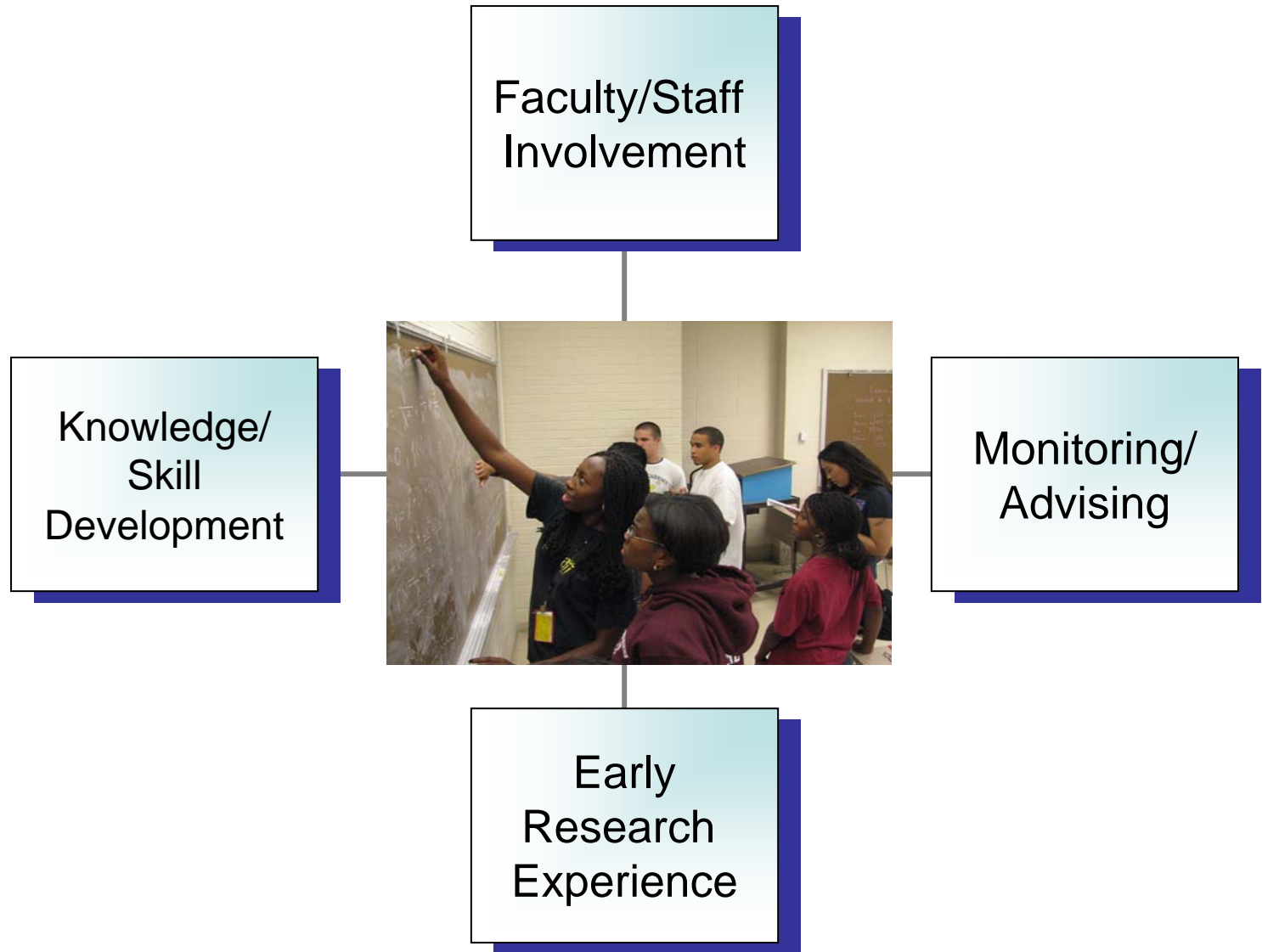
“IT TAKES AN ENTIRE UNIVERSITY
TO EDUCATE A STUDENT”



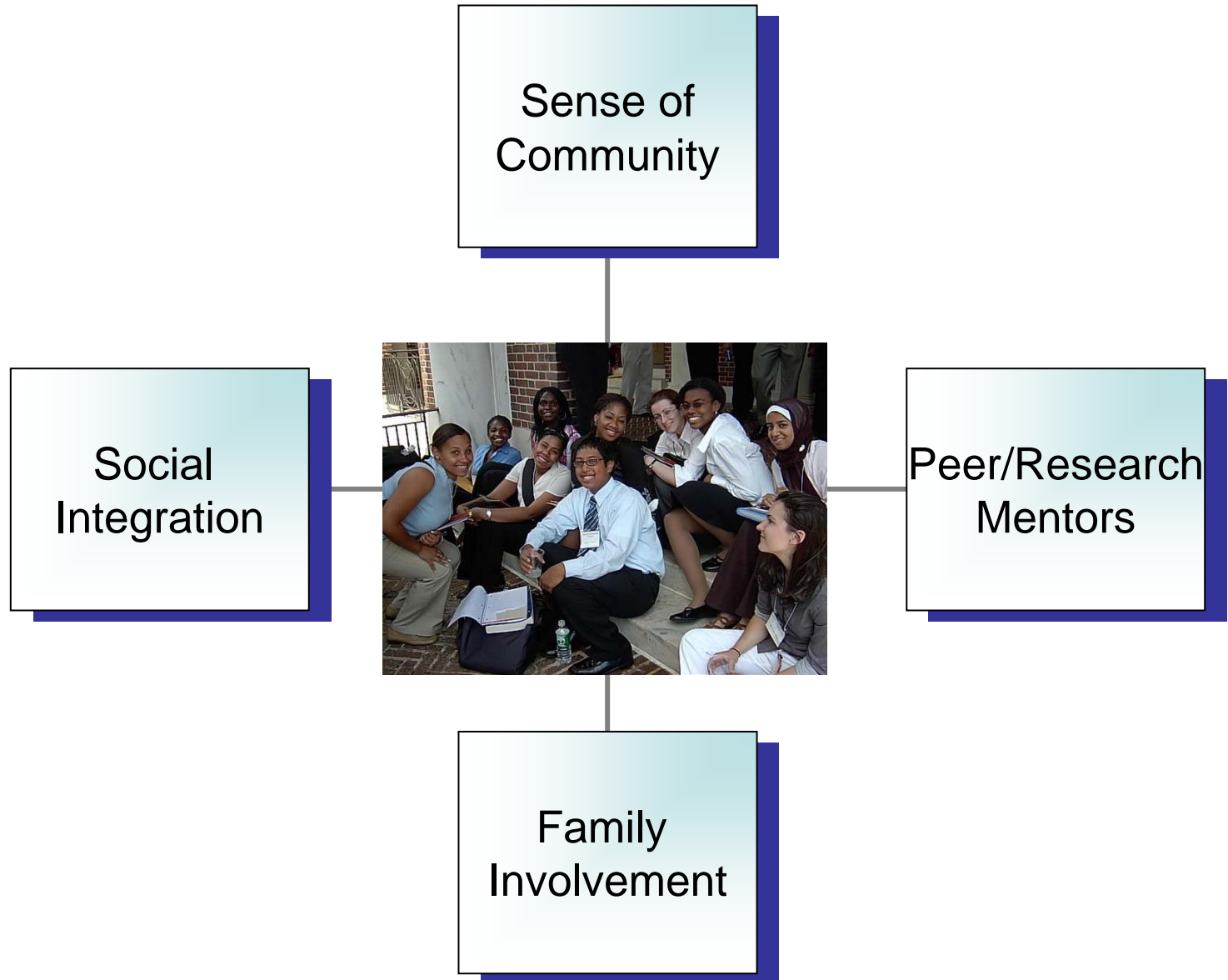
Administrative Components



Academic Components



Social Components



PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

1. Entire university should be involved in the Selection Process (ownership)
2. Comprehensive Bridge program
3. Program advisor the first 2 years
4. Retake STEM courses with “C” grades
5. Learn to study individually/groups
6. Activities with mentors and parents
7. Regular meetings to discuss class success and concerns

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. Students affiliated with learning communities are more likely to be successful
2. A Bridge program also should help “demystify” the Academy and the Professoriate
3. Program should be an integral part of the fabric of the university
4. All components of the program should lend itself to the broader mission and purpose of the university – academic success and personal growth
5. Parental involvement should not stop at K-12. Teach parents how to be supportive at this academic level

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

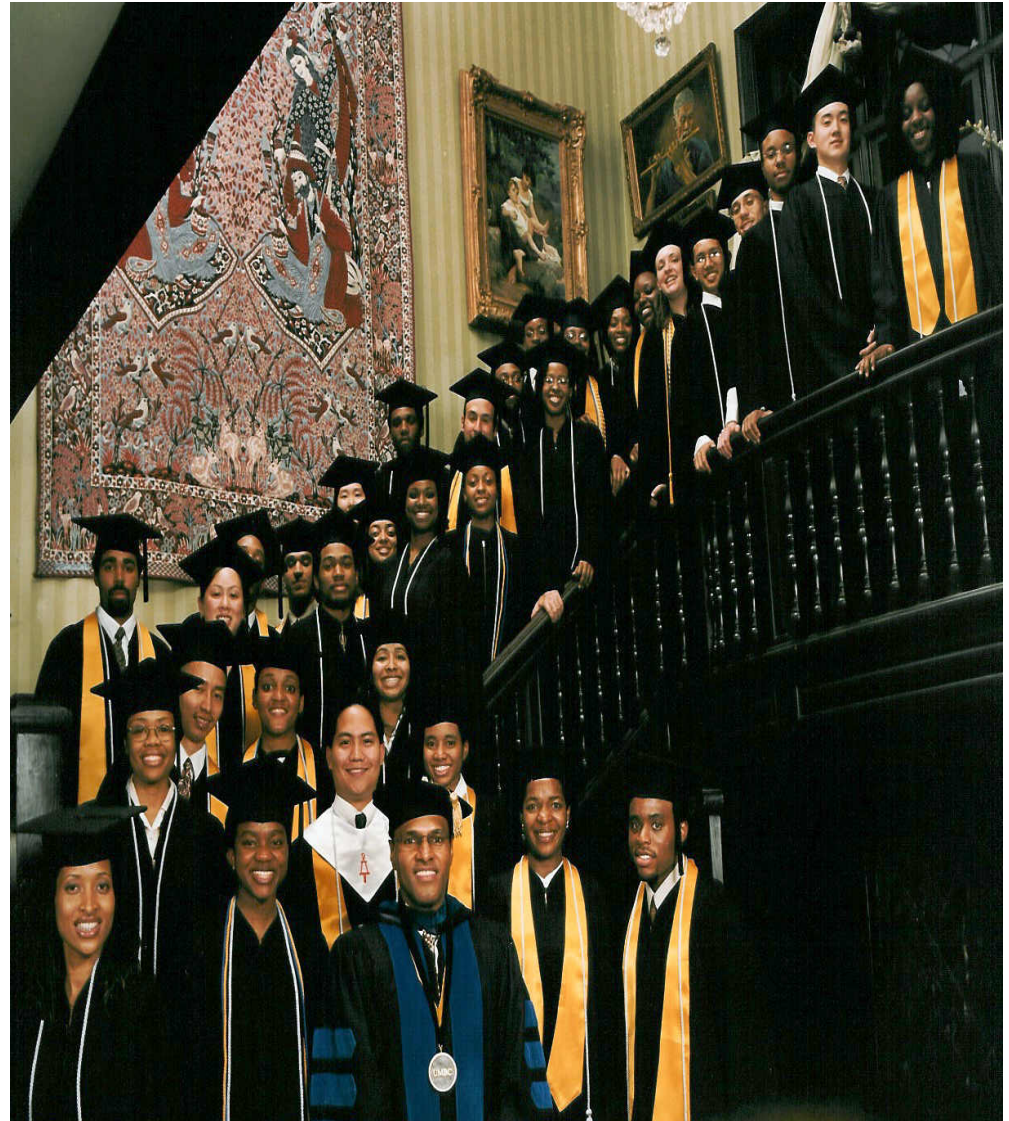
Retention

Academic
Performance

Graduate
Placement

Graduate
Program
Completion

Impact on UMBC



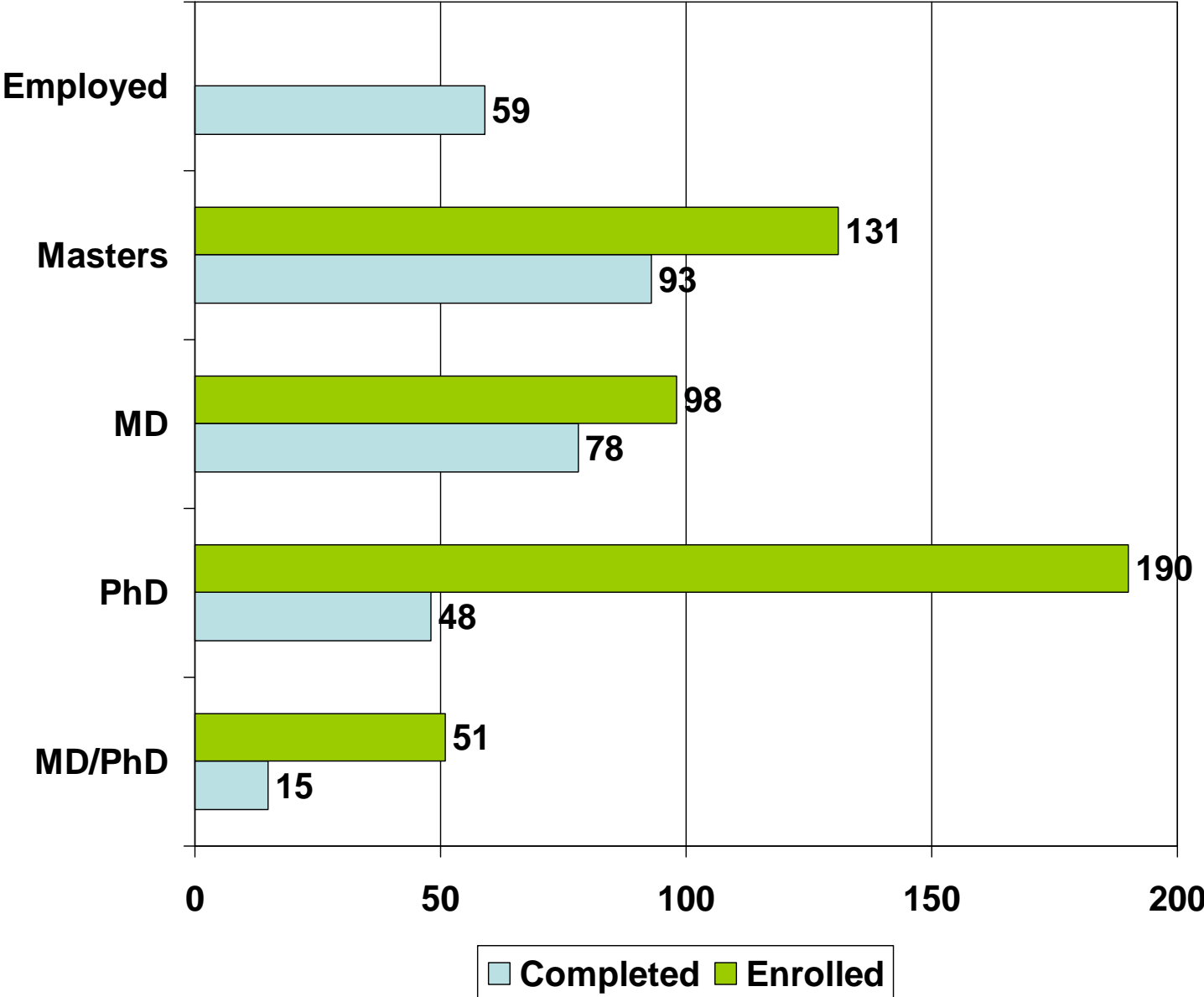
RETENTION

1. To date, the program has supported 768 students, 260 of whom are currently undergraduates
2. 86% (435 of 508 students) of Meyerhoff graduates earned science or engineering bachelor's degrees
3. 87% (379 of 508) of program graduates went on to graduate or professional school

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. Similar grades and graduation rates. But Meyerhoff students were twice as likely to earn a STEM BS/BA degree
2. 5.3 times more likely to enroll in post-college graduate study
3. Meyerhoff students twice as likely to earn STEM BS degrees as Asian, Caucasian, and non-Meyerhoff African-American students with similar preparation and interests
4. GPAs in science, math and engineering are higher than students with similar profiles

Graduate Placements (M1 – M15)



IMPACT ON UMBC

1. The average GPA of all African American STEM graduates has increased from 2.70 in 1989 to 3.21 in 2005 (due primarily to the high achievement of the Meyerhoff Scholars (average graduating GPA = 3.42 ± 0.12))
2. The average GPA of Caucasian STEM graduates has remained relatively unchanged (3.17 ± 0.05)
3. Simultaneous increase in STEM participation among UMBC minority students who are not in the Meyerhoff Program

IMPACT ON UMBC

4. The number of African-American undergraduates majoring in STEM areas has increased more than sevenfold since 1985 whereas overall African-American enrollment increased 1.4-fold
5. Overall and S&E enrollments among Latino students have also grown (three and five fold, respectively) since 1985
6. The number of Caucasian S&E majors also increased during this time period (from 710 to 1287 students, 1.8-fold) at a rate greater than that of total undergraduate enrollment (from 7914 to 9406 students, 1.2-fold).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. See who is/isn't succeeding?
2. Consider number of courses/credits first-year students take
3. Analyze grades & encourage students to repeat courses
4. Review grades to see what happens to freshmen when they come in with AP credits
5. Analyze data to see if problems in selective courses go beyond students of color
6. Do we understand why? Who?

Success Does Not Just Happen

- Faculty who risk more than others think is safe
- Staff who care more than others think is wise
- Administrators who dare more than others think is practical
- Students who dream more than others think is possible

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, President

Dr. Diane Lee, Vice Provost/Dean

Robert and Jane Meyerhoff

UMBC Community

Meyerhoff Program Staff

Meyerhoff Scholars

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