

# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE STUDENTS AT MASTER'S FOCUSED INSTITUTIONS



**Presenter**

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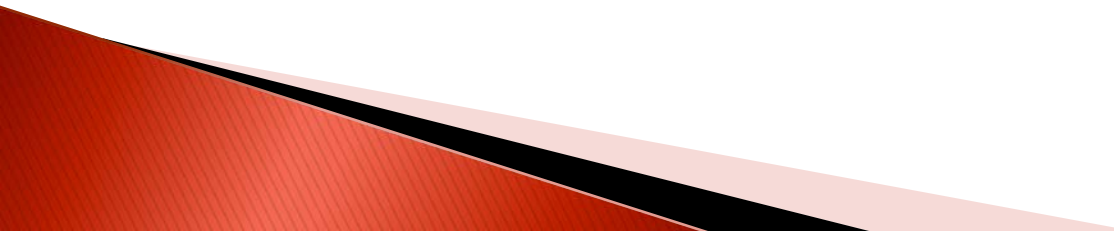


**This presentation focuses on two approaches to retention of diverse students at master's focused institutions:**

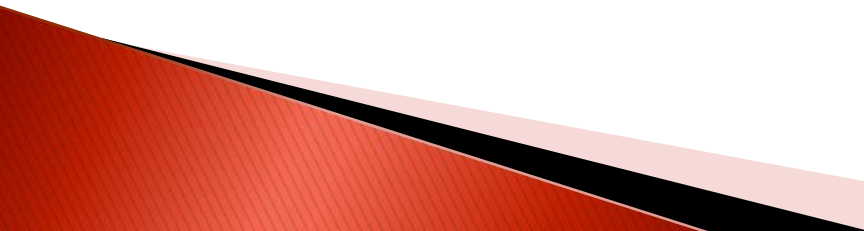
- **The Psychological Approach**
- **The Systemic Approach**

# The Psychological Approach

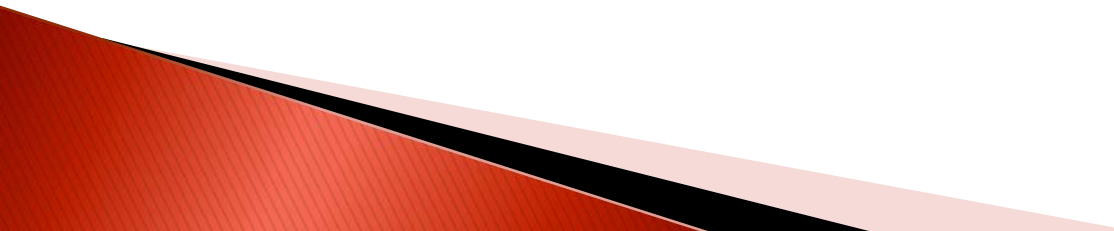
“The key to successful diversity programs in universities lies in addressing the psychological impact of “being different” on the individual and acknowledging histories of different groups without attempting to homogenize the groups and to substitute one mythology for another.” (Report of the Committee on the College Student Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, (GAP) 1999, page 61)



# Some Findings of the GAP Report “Helping Students Adapt to Graduate School:”

- ▶ Some graduate students struggle with the meaning and significance of their particular differences and have major conflicts about being different from other students.
  - ▶ The complex interaction between an individual’s sense of differentness, the visibility of the difference, and the social response to that difference influence psychological processes that ultimately determine an individual’s comfort or discomfort within an environment, and a sense of belonging.
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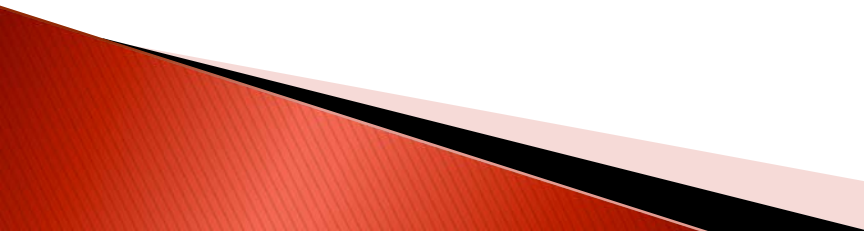
## Some Findings of the GAP Report “Helping Students Adapt to Graduate School (Continued):”

- ▶ Some graduate students experience distress, alienation, isolation, displacement, anxiety, depression, and disorganized thinking when they are categorized as a “minority.”
  - ▶ Being different may become a political issue that is injected into any discourse.
  - ▶ Complex issues of diversity may become more intense in small graduate departments.
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## Some Findings of the GAP Report “Helping Students Adapt to Graduate School (Continued):”

- ▶ Racial identity and individual identity **operate independently** most of the time and may be linked only under certain conditions (Cross, 1985)
- ▶ While some students might be accustomed to being in the minority, others in graduate school find themselves in that status for the first time in their lives. This new classification determines how the students will respond.
- ▶ A student who enjoys a minority status within a department might feel threatened when another minority student is admitted. When she realizes she feels this way, she may be overwhelmed with tremendous shame and guilt, becoming dysfunctional and in need of professional help.

## Some Findings of the GAP Report “Helping Students Adapt to Graduate School (Continued):”

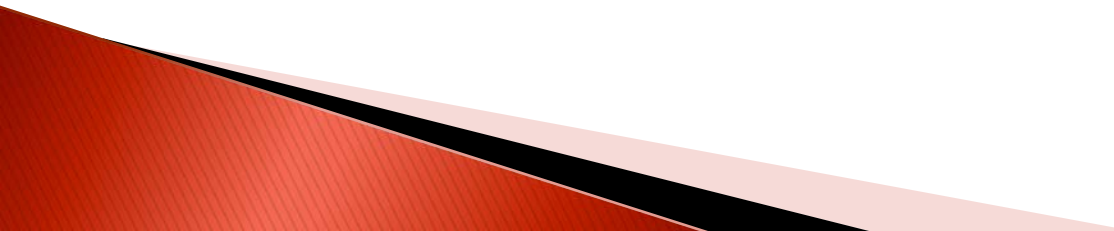
- Minority students from the most stigmatized groups may feel heavy pressure to prove that they belong and the resultant anxieties may have a negative effect on the students’ proficiency.
  - The degree to which the students feel that they belong has a significant impact on their relationships with faculty and students.
  - Universities are not immune to the influences of bias and prejudices that exist in the larger society.
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## Some Findings of the GAP Report “Helping Students Adapt to Graduate School (Continued):”

- ▶ Universities must work toward promoting an atmosphere of respect for the characteristics that differentiate people and encourage the exploration of shared characteristics.
- ▶ Full appreciation of diversity means that human beings are complex and not reducible to a single categorization (Pinderhughes, 1989).

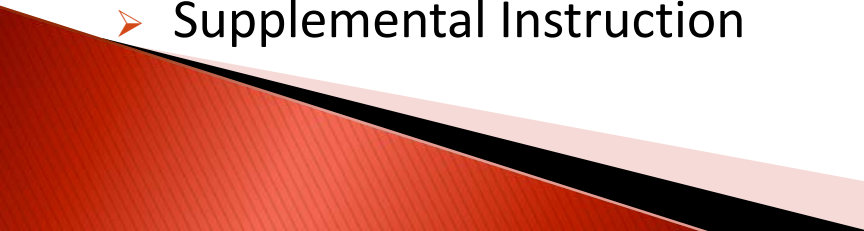
# The Systemic Approach

- ▶ Retention is a nuanced activity and also has to embrace the institutional and social approaches.
  - ▶ From the institutional perspective, retention is linked to the institution's efforts to begin "courting" students from the high school and preparing them to enter and transition from undergraduate to graduate school.
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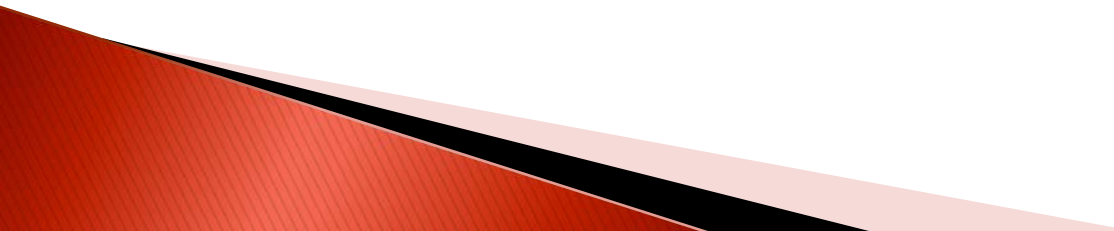
## The Case of Maryland: Institutional Approaches to Retaining a Specific Minority Group

The April 2009 Joint Chairmen's Report charged the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the State's public historically black institutions (HBIs) with identifying promising strategies for promoting achievement among academically underprepared students attending HBIs. The report fulfills the Joint Chairmen's mandate by highlighting national best practices for improving retention and graduation rates.

## The Case of Maryland: Institutional Approaches to Retaining a Specific Minority Group (Continued)

- Each year, each of the state's four HBIs receive \$1,500,000 to provide a measure of extra support for those students judged to be most at-risk, and to yield higher retention and graduation rates than would otherwise be expected for this group of students.
  - Summer Bridge Programs
  - Advising Policies and Practices
  - First-Year Experience Seminars
  - Course Redesign
  - Learning Communities
  - Honors Programs
  - Supplemental Instruction
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# Social Approaches

- ▶ Professional Development Activities
  - ▶ Social Activities
  - ▶ Counseling Services
  - ▶ Support Services
  - ▶ Transition from College to the Workforce
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# Thank you

