Mentoring to Ensure Inclusiveness: What Works

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Mentoring is

- Access to information
- Encouragement for achievement
- Advocacy toward advancement
UMBC takes a comprehensive approach to promoting inclusiveness: recruiting, building community, fostering academic success, effective mentoring, preparation for careers.

- Must be faculty-based
- Must provide a supportive graduate experience where all students will benefit
- Paper on CGS website identifying 10 lessons learned
- Measure our success by the experiences of our students
Based on What Makes the Undergrad Meyerhoff Program Successful

- Fully integrated into the academic affairs infrastructure:
  - Reports to the Provost’s office.
  - Advisory board of STEM department chairs.
  - The most productive research faculty serve as mentors and advocates.
  - Faculty are proud of the program and are eager to have brilliant undergraduate students work in their labs beside graduate students and post docs.
Translating the Meyerhoff Success to Graduate Students

- Funding:
  - Meyerhoff Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences funded by NIH IMSD training grant
  - PROMISE: Maryland’s AGEP
  - GAANN and IGERT training grants
  - Ph.D. Completion Project

- Institutional transformation:
  - Discussions at graduate program director (GPD) meetings
  - Discussions at President’s Council
  - Discussions with individual department chairs and GPDs

- Institutionalization
Basic Premise

- Diversity programs can only be successful if the climate for all graduate students is one that promotes:
  - Inclusiveness
  - Academic success
  - Self-confidence
  - Life balance
  - Professional development

With the university as a whole serving as a mentor to shepherd each student
Academic Support

Dissertation House

Professors in Training

Graduate Student Success Seminars

Thesis and Dissertation Coach
Community Building

Retreat at Rocky Gap

Fall Harvest Dinner
The Comfort of Groups – Even When You Stand out
Four Elements of Psychological Sense of Community

- **Membership:** belonging to a community
- **Influence:** positive influence on student from others and ability to be positive influence and role model to others
- **Integration and fulfillment of needs:** members feel rewarded in some way for their participation in the community
- **Shared emotional connection:** opportunity to bond through shared experiences at retreats, conferences, monthly meetings, celebration of milestones

Why Do So Many Programs Fail?

- Self-contained programs not integrated into the mainstream of academic affairs.
- Defeatist attitude: “The problem is too large for us to make a dent.”
- Deflecting the problem: “We don’t have funding from NSF or NIH so we can’t do all those things.”
- “Committed to being committed” but never quite turn ideas into action with proper support.
What Can You Do?

- Implement policies, practices and programs listed on the CGS Ph.D. Completion Project “Factor Assessment Template”


- Admissions
- Advising, Mentoring, and Research
- Financial Support and Funding Structures
- Program Environment
- Administrative Processes and Procedures
More Information:

- CGS Occasional Paper Series on Inclusiveness

“University as Mentor: Lessons Learned from UMBC Inclusiveness Initiatives”

“Successful Ph.D. Pathways to Advanced STEM Careers for Black Women”

In *Beyond Stock Stories and Folktales: African Americans’ Paths to STEM Fields*

H.T. Frierson and W.F. Tate, Editors

Discussion