

UMBC Awarded NSF Grant To Increase University Technology Commercialization

ACTiVATE Program Trains Women Entrepreneurs

Baltimore, M.D. (August 26, 2004) – The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) has been awarded a \$600,000 grant for Achieving the Commercialization of Technology in Ventures through Applied Training for Entrepreneurs (ACTiVATE) from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The ACTiVATE program will create a systematic model for increasing the commercialization of technology innovations from universities by training women entrepreneurs to create technology-based, start-up companies.

“The ACTiVATE program will provide an awareness of entrepreneurship for a significant number of women, who traditionally have been underrepresented among entrepreneurs, while also providing a model for commercializing innovations at universities and federal labs that can be used at other institutions across the country,” says Freeman Hrabowski, president of UMBC.

Although Maryland is a leader in R&D activity due to a high concentration of research universities and national research laboratories, a relatively low number of start-up companies are formed from university technology. According to the Corporation for Enterprise Development's 2002 Development Report Card, Maryland is ranked 32 nd nationally in university spinouts.

Increasing the availability of experienced entrepreneurs is critical to raising the number of technology-based start-up companies. Governor Ehrlich's Commission on the Development of Advanced Technology Business (the Pappas Commission) supports the need for more entrepreneurial development in the State. UMBC's ACTiVATE program will address these needs by introducing 90 mid-career women to the basics of entrepreneurship and technology commercialization. One of the Program's goals is to create six to nine new companies during the first three years.

“Women entrepreneurs are a vital part of Maryland 's and America 's economy. We are highly supportive of this joint effort to support women entrepreneurs and, at the same time, commercialize promising technologies from Maryland 's research institutions,” said Christopher C. Foster, deputy secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

UMBC (www.umbc.edu) will partner with the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) to identify appropriate technologies for the ACTiVATE program. “TEDCO is excited to be a part of a program that will increase the number of university start-ups in Maryland ,” says Phillip Singerman, TEDCO's executive director.

The UMBC team includes the Office of Technology Development, techcenter@UMBC, Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship and the Center for Women and Information

Technology (CWIT). In addition to commercializing technologies from UMBC, the ACTiVATE team will work with other Maryland institutions, including:

- Johns Hopkins University
- University of Maryland College Park
- University of Maryland , Baltimore
- University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute
- Towson University
- University of Maryland , School of Law

“The ACTiVATE program will partner with the public and private sectors to train entrepreneurs, with a focus on women, through a hands-on approach using university technologies,” says Ellen Hemmerly, executive director of the UMBC Research Park Corporation. “Marylanders benefit from the Program through job creation and increases in tax revenue.”

Private partners involved in the ACTiVATE program include:

- Legg Mason Wood Walker
- Constellation Energy
- Grant Thornton
- Venable LLP
- Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP
- New Markets Growth Fund
- MGH Public Relations
- The Eager Street Group
- Darrah Tax Advisory Services
- BioPlan Associates, Inc.
- Anthem Capital Management
- American Express Tax & Business Services

About UMBC: UMBC is a distinguished research university with a deep commitment to the education of undergraduates. The University was recently named one of the nation's 12 “Hot Schools” by Kaplan/Newsweek's “How to Get into College” guide. One of only 151 U.S. institutions to be ranked as Doctoral/Research Universities-Extensive by the Carnegie Foundation, UMBC is known for its research centers in gerontology, digital imaging, photonics, structural biochemistry, urban environmental research and education, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at UMBC. The University's commitment to engaged learning, and to the social and economic development of the State of Maryland , is put into action through such programs as The Shriver Center for Work and Service-Learning, the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship, the Center for Women and Information Technology and its technology center and research park, home to more than 20 companies.

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