

REVIEW OF FORMALLY ORGANIZED UNITS
Concerning the Recruitment and Retention of
Graduate and Professional Students from Underrepresented Groups

The Graduate College is charged with oversight of the campus-level programs and initiatives developed to recruit and retain graduate students from underrepresented groups. These initiatives will be reviewed. It is important to note that most aspects of graduate education are controlled by departments. As a consequence a great deal of the day to day work related to the recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate students is performed informally in the departments.

There are two formally organized units on the UIC campus devoted to the recruitment and retention of underrepresented professional students. The oldest is the Urban Health Program, which is arguably the most successful of such programs nationally. More recently the Hispanic Center of Excellence has been initiated in the College of Medicine. Both of these programs will be reviewed.

Graduate College

The Graduate College provides substantial assistance in the recruitment of underrepresented students. Via participation in the *CIC Name Exchange Program*, the Graduate College in concert with the other CIC institutions identifies potential graduate applicants within the consortium, shares these names with member institutions, and seeks to influence the target students' postgraduate academic and career choices. The Graduate College invites minority juniors with grade point averages admissible for graduate study to participate in this program. Students are required to sign and complete a release form granting permission for the release of their names to the 15 participating campuses of the CIC institutions. The names of these students are entered on a computer data base used to generate a list and set of mailing labels for each CIC institution. To enhance the recruitment efforts, the list of names is forwarded to the academic departments and programs. Students meeting the admission requirements are provided application materials and information on financial support, as well as literature on the academic program.

The various fellowship programs administered by the Graduate College help departments attract students of color. Among these scholarship/fellowship programs are:

- The *Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program* (IMGIP), funded by the Illinois Legislature, is designed to increase minority student enrollment and subsequent minority faculty members specifically in the fields of physical sciences, life sciences, and engineering at Illinois colleges and universities. Awards are granted to applicants following a statewide competition. Each award recipient receives a fellowship stipend and book/supplies/travel allowance to support doctoral study in the sciences. An annual Fellows' conference is designed to provide networking opportunities, expand employment opportunities, and increase general knowledge about issues related to teaching and research. This is a very successful program. Attrition is very low. The availability of multi-year support and an allowance to cover books, supplies, and travel makes these students very attractive applicants. Previous Fellows have successfully completed the PhD with many having pursued employment in higher education. One Fellow, having completed a two-year postdoctoral position, has indicated his plans to return to the Chicago area in a faculty post.
- The *Abraham Lincoln Graduate Fellowship* is designed to expand the overall breadth of background of the UIC graduate student body by providing support to individuals from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups in graduate education. The stipend was increased to \$12,000 this year, and thus, the number of awards was reduced from ten to seven awards. Selected students receive this support and a waiver of tuition and service fees.
- The *Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program* (ICEOP), funded by the Illinois Legislature, is designed to increase the number of graduate students at Illinois colleges and universities and the number of faculty and staff at Illinois institutions of higher education, governing boards, or agencies who are members of traditionally underrepresented racial minority groups. Awards are granted to applicants following a statewide competition. Each award recipient receives a stipend and a tuition and service fee waiver. This funding has increased the number of minority students accepting admission to UIC graduate programs. Previous recipients of this award have successfully completed

- their degree programs and entered academic professions.
- The *Minority Academic Partnership Plan* (MAPP) was initiated by the President of the University of Illinois to increase the participation and success of minority students leading to academic careers. Its goal is to ease the financial burden of Black, Hispanic and Native American graduate students who received their bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and are now in pursuit of advanced degrees that lead to faculty careers. Each recipient is guaranteed fellowship and/or assistant support that includes a tuition and service fee waiver, and a living stipend, contingent upon his/her admission to a full time graduate degree program. The guarantee of funding further encourages minority students to consider a graduate degree and a career in academe.
- The *Graduate College Diversity Fellowship* is designed to increase racial diversity in the graduate student body. First-year students from traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic minority groups who have not begun graduate work at UIC are eligible. This funding has increased the number of minority students in our graduate programs. Since it is a relatively new award it is too early to see if in fact, these students complete their degrees and select academic careers.

Scholarship and fellowship support is essential in recruiting and retaining underrepresented minority students to graduate programs. Possibly more important are initiatives to entice underrepresented students to consider graduate study. One well-developed program which attempts to do this is the CIC *Summer Research Opportunities Program* (SROP). The goal of the SROP initiative is to introduce talented American minority sophomores and juniors to research and to the rewards of graduate study early in their undergraduate experience, and to encourage these students to complete graduate or professional degrees in preparation for academic careers. The program is designed to provide minority undergraduates the opportunity to develop and explore a topic of their choice. Chosen competitively, these promising students are paired with faculty members working in the student's area of interest to conduct an eight-week research project. Students participate in an orientation program, a weekend conference held at one of the CIC campuses, and mandatory, weekly meetings. Participants are also required to submit a final paper on their research project and present an oral presentation at the Research Symposium at the end of the program. Each student is paid a stipend and faculty receive a research allowance. Seventy-five percent of the participants who have graduated from the baccalaureate program have gone on to graduate or professional school and more than 90 percent continue to be enrolled in their chosen program.

A relatively new program, *Helping "Other" People Excel* (HOPE), was established to provide academic and non-academic support for the underrepresented graduate students while enrolled in the university. HOPE's major purpose is to make graduate education a positive and meaningful experience for these graduate students. HOPE tries to promote the intellectual and social growth of minority graduate students as well as promote fellowship among these graduate students and University faculty and staff. To this end, HOPE sponsors regular meetings, speakers, and socials. Speakers have addressed such topics as Graduate College thesis requirements, and social activities have included the annual picnic. Due to some recent restructuring, we anticipate an increased emphasis on this program in the 1998-99 academic year. HOPE has been a good referral source for students who are newly admitted as well as for those individuals experiencing academic difficulty or wanting a social support system. Officers in the organization have been very successful in obtaining funding, completing their academic programs of study, and securing attractive postgraduate employment.

To complete the cycle, the Graduate College also contributes to the CIC *Directory of Minority PhD Candidates and Recipients*. Published annually, the Directory is an effort to increase the professional opportunities of minority graduates and to aid colleges, universities, and other potential employers in their recruitment of highly educated underrepresented minorities. Participation in the Directory is optional for the students. Eligible students who complete release forms, and return them to the Graduate College prior to the deadline, are included in this publication.

In 1989, when UIC began to examine the relationship between minority enrollments and program initiatives, the graduate student enrollments for African-American and Hispanic students were 6.0% and 2.5% respectively. The figures in Table 1 (All tables are contained in the Appendix B.) illustrate the progress that UIC has made since that time. In Fall 1997, African-American graduate student enrollment was 9.0%, and the figure for Hispanic students reached 5.7%. It is obvious that steady progress has been made within each group

throughout the eight-year period. In FY 1997, 7.6% (132) of the graduate degrees conferred were granted to African-American students and 6.2% (107) were granted to Hispanic students. Some of this change is due to the recruitment and retention efforts detailed above.

Urban Health Program

In 1978, UIC created the Urban Health Program (UHP) to recruit, retain, and graduate students from minority groups underrepresented in the health professions. The program also aims to provide assistance in improving health services delivery to ambulatory care facilities in underserved urban areas.

Six health sciences colleges at UIC participate in the Urban Health Program. These colleges are the Colleges of Associated Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and the School of Public Health. Each of these has developed specific programs that work toward recruitment and retention of minority students and toward helping students achieve their health career goals through enriched academic experiences and personal counseling. These college-level Urban Health offices and activities are augmented by the UHP Support Office and the Academic Center for Excellence.

UHP seeks to identify promising minority and disadvantaged students in high schools, junior colleges, and universities/colleges who exhibit potential for completing a health education curriculum. By reaching these students at an early stage in their education, UHP can help develop the basic academic knowledge and skills critical to preparing for a career in the health professions.

Administration and Oversight

The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs assumes responsibility for the program, which is run on a day-to-day basis by the director for urban health. A UHP management team composed of UHP coordinators from all UIC health sciences colleges, the School of Public Health, and representatives of other UHP-supported components convenes regularly to discuss program plans and progress consistent with overall UHP goals and objectives. Many of the UHP team members devote time to recruitment activities on the University of Illinois campuses and at other colleges and universities, both public and private, throughout the state of Illinois, as well as out-of-state institutions from which a significant number of Illinois residents graduate.

Community Advisory Council

Since its beginning, the Urban Health Program has enjoyed strong cooperation from other educational institutions and community groups. The Community Advisory Council was created as a forum for interested leaders, educators, and health professionals to assist the University of Illinois at Chicago in its effort to influence education and practice in the health professions. The membership of the Advisory Council is drawn from a list of key community leaders, educators, health professions, and representatives of interested organizations and institutions throughout the local area.

Assessment of UHP

Two important measures of the success of UHP are enrollments and degrees granted.

Enrollments provide a good indicator of the degree to which the recruitment and retention goals of the UHP have been met. Total enrollments of UHP students as a percentage of total enrollments in the various health professions for the last five years (1993-1997) are presented by college in Table 2 in the Appendix. First year enrollments in the six component programs for the same period are presented in Table 3 in the Appendix. There have been marked increases in total UHP enrollments in Associated Health, Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health.

Although these figures document the past recruitment success of UHP, more is expected of the program in the future. These expectations are reflected in the goals for enrollment recently set for the various colleges. The goals are to

- Increase enrollment of minority medical students in each entering class to achieve a minimum of 25 percent.
- Increase minority enrollment in health professions programs other than medicine to at least 20 percent of the aggregate class total each year.

UHP graduation rates tend to lag behind those for non-UHP students. While there are many factors explaining this in general, and there are particular combinations affecting each individual student, the core cause is that UIC admits many UHP students whose educational background has been disadvantaged. They simply have farther to go than most non-UHP students. Not all complete or complete as quickly as we would like.

Despite the fact that graduation rates for UHP students are not as high as for non-UHP students, the largest program (Medicine), through its support of more than nine hundred enrolled medical students, has contributed to the graduation of more minority physicians than any other U.S. medical school, except Howard and Meharry. Currently UIC ranks second in the number of Hispanics awarded medical degrees in the continental U.S. Similarly, UIC graduates more Mexican-American physicians than any other U.S. institution except the University of Texas at Galveston.

One indicator of the extent to which the Urban Health Program is achieving its goal of training minority health care professions is the proportion of each graduating class that are participants in UHP. Review of figures on UHP graduates as a percentage of total graduates by degree program from AY 1990-1991 through 1996-1997 reveal that UHP students make up a substantial proportion of each graduating class (Table 4). These percentages vary year to year and are especially unstable where the numbers are small. These data can best be interpreted in relation to the data on the percent of entering students that are UHP students. For example, Table 3 shows that from 1993-1997, 24.74% of the first year students in Medicine entered through the Urban Health program. Compare this percent with the percent in Table 4 which reveals the proportion of UHP graduates in 1996-1997 class -- 20.97.

Focus on Success

Recruitment activities are a core activity of the Urban Health Program in the participating colleges. Two outstanding examples of current practices are highlighted below.

- The College of Dentistry has invited minority applicants in Dentistry to participate in laboratory and clinical internships. Students have the opportunity to observe clinical dentistry and to interact with faculty as well as students while learning about the various disciplines of Dentistry.
- College of Medicine faculty mentors provide hands-on research experiences and other enrichment activities for high school students

Similarly, practices employed by UHP college programs to support current students have had considerable success and serve as excellent models for other programs. Three examples of such UHP activities are listed below:

- The School of Public Health has achieved graduation rates for UHP students equal to those of non-UHP students with a set of academic enrichment activities. These include a three-week pre-matriculation program which emphasizes writing and verbal skills as well as provides extensive exposure to the public health curriculum, mathematics and computers.
- The College of Nursing, for the past two years, has used faculty as liaisons for Urban Health students to promote retention. These liaison faculty are available to students for purposes including listening, problem solving, advocating, etc. As part of retention activities, social activities have been sponsored for the purpose of allowing students and faculty to mix in an informal basis.
- The College of Associated Health Professions' (CAHP) retention efforts include twice a term meetings of UHP students with the CAHP UHP director to discuss issues such as finances, family, and/or academic progress.

Support from other Units

The Graduate College has joined with the Urban Health Program to plan an expansion of Graduate College existing programs to support the work of the Urban Health Program. Basic science majors will be the prime

but not exclusive target of these expanded initiatives. Recruitment and retention are the areas in which support of UHP is planned.

In the area of recruitment, the Graduate College intends to work in concert with academic departments to organize and conduct visits to select feeder institutions. The Graduate College proposes to expand the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) (described elsewhere in this report) for prospective graduate students to academic programs on the west campus. The Graduate College will identify prospective graduate students, nurture ties to faculty, and recruit participants for the SROP. The Graduate College will also sponsor a recruitment program for UHP departments from undergraduate programs located on the east side of UIC. The purpose of these activities will be to introduce minority undergraduates to opportunities in graduate programs on the west side of UIC.

The College of Education also supports the Urban Health Program through Early Outreach, a long-term talent development program which targets minority and underrepresented students in grades six through twelve for involvement in an assortment of academic enrichment programs. Although our core staff is small, to achieve this goal, we hire a cadre of teachers, who are experts in their fields. Early Outreach's academic enrichment and career awareness programs provide early socialization to a college environment, academic enrichment in mathematics, language arts, and science, and exposure to diverse career options in health and other fields through forums and preceptorships. Another component of Early Outreach encourages parental involvement as volunteers. Parents also participate in educational workshops and group discussions which vary in subject matter, but include academic and career planning for children, dealing with an adolescent child, social issues impacting today's teens, etc. Parent education is crucial depending on the cultural and ethnic background of the families and their prior involvement in higher education.

The Academic Center for Excellence-Counseling Center devotes the major portion of its budget to retention activities. The Center, for example, served 44 students with direct counseling, and made 94 individual contacts. The Academic Center for Excellence served approximately 400 students with summer enrichment workshops. These workshops enhance new students' chances for success and, in some cases, prepare students for state examinations such as the M-1 medical exam. The center strives to make its services known to students through orientation booths (Mobile Labs) which are sponsored for several hours by some of the UHP colleges and through direct mailings to all UHP students. Finally, the Center has established liaisons with all of the colleges in order to maintain relationships with the college directors as well as with faculty/staff/administrators. These communication links are important for sharing information about students, developing strategies to meet their needs, and directly advocating on their behalf. The Center maintains communications with community agencies and personnel in order to stay abreast of current employment practices and opportunities.

Evaluation Plan

Beginning in FY98, the UHP college programs are required to undergo an annual assessment to determine the current status of UHP students in the various colleges in relation to support services and other initiatives. The major focus of this assessment is on the relationship between the use of resources and student recruitment, retention, and graduation in each of the participating colleges. These reviews are currently in progress.

Budgetary Support

Prior to fiscal year 1997, most Urban Health Program unit budgets were included in other College cost centers, usually in the Dean's Office or in the College's Student Affairs Office. Beginning fiscal year 1997, separate cost centers were established for the Urban Health Program in each of the colleges and the other campus units. The fiscal year 1998 budgeted number and the fiscal year 1997 expenditure amounts are reported directly from these cost centers. Table 5 presents budgeted funds for FY98 by UHP function (recruitment, retention, administration) and by college. Table 6 presents expenditures for FY97 by UHP function and by college. These tables indicate that the budget funds are concentrated on recruitment and retention efforts. Retention efforts receive over 50% of the funds.

Overall Evaluation

As noted previously, the recruitment figures, graduation figures, and comparisons with other institutions indicate that the Urban Health program is extremely successful. Despite these positive indicators, continued vigilance is necessary to insure continued success. Specifically the new structure of the program and the new assessment plans are designed to raise our level of success.

Hispanic Center of Excellence

The Latino population in the United States is presently growing at a rate approximately five times faster than that of the general population. Within a decade, Latinos will represent the largest ethnic minority, and will compose the majority of the population in some major U.S. cities. According to the 1990 Census, Latinos represent 9 percent of the United States population.

Although Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the population, the number of Latino physicians in this country is disproportionately low. The 1990 Census reported that there were 586,715 physicians in the United States. Of these only 28,781 or 4.9% were Latinos. This situation prompted the United States Congress to enact into law the Hispanic Centers of Excellence (MHIA, 1991). Currently, there are seven Hispanic Centers of Excellence based in medical schools in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

In 1991, the College of Medicine was awarded funding through the Division of Disadvantaged Assistance, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish an Hispanic Center of Excellence (HCOE). In many respects the HCOE supplemented and built on initiatives begun through the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and other sources. But the HCOE also set out to address other issues which had not received formal attention in the past. For instance, among the purposes of the HCOE are: the increase of Hispanics in the faculty ranks of the COM; curricular offerings that educate medical students about health care of Hispanics; and the coordination of faculty/student research. As a federally funded project, it has a broader mandate than recruitment and retention of Latino/Hispanic students to UIC. HCOE supports a major outreach program that informs Illinois Latino/Hispanic high school and college students of the possibilities of a career in the health professions and assists them in developing the skills necessary to succeed in college and to navigate the medical school application, testing, and interviewing process.

The UIC specific mission of the Hispanic Center of Excellence (HCOE) is to assist with matriculation and graduation of Latino/Hispanic physicians from the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine. HCOE promotes and encourages these physicians to provide quality health care to the Latino community in the state once they have completed their medical education. This center combines many recruitment and retention initiatives that were offered previously under one administrative unit in 1991. Since it is a recent addition to the support system in the College of Medicine, it is still in its formative period.

The Center seeks to accomplish its mission by:

- Increasing the quality and quantity of Latinos/Hispanics in the medical school applicant pool. Of particular interest are those Illinois applicants who would apply to the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine. The Center currently works with Latino high school and college students to provide a variety of services and programs to shape their education toward a future in medicine.
- Providing various services to Latino medical students that will ensure their retention and subsequent graduation from the College of Medicine. The Center also provides opportunities for these medical students to work with Latino faculty on important health issues that are relevant to the Latino Community.
- Collaborating with other UIC units to prepare admitted Latino medical students. The Latin American Recruitment and Education Services Program (LARES), in partnership with the Hispanic Center of Excellence, has developed a variant of their successful Summer Bridge program designed to prepare admitted students for future medical careers.

The following four examples illustrate how the Center works to implement these goals.

1. *¡ESCUCHA! Student Network* is a vital force in student recruitment and retention. The Network helps HCOE to reach out to current and future medical professionals in the Chicago area. In addition to its

invaluable data base, the Network has sponsored a weekend conference every summer for the past five years. The purpose of this conference is to develop leadership skills among participants. The agenda includes sessions addressing health care problems in the Latino community; the role of professionals in community advancement; organization skills to maintain high participation rates in ¡ESCUCHA!, etc. Two hundred and fourteen students, who have participated in summer programs since 1992, have been tracked by HCOE. Of these, 50 are in residency training; 13 are studying another health profession; 59 are in medical school; 74 are in pre-med undergraduate programs; 8 are graduate students; 16 are undecided undergraduate majors; and 10 are no longer interested in medicine.

2. *Leadership Development Seminar* is an annual seminar held during the summer that consists of workshops and group activities designed to develop and strengthen the organizational and leadership skills of Latino students.
3. *Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) Review Program* is for students who have completed their junior or senior year of college and are planning to take the April or August MCAT. This review covers the four subject components of the MCAT: Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Writing Skills.
4. *Spanish Language Course* introduces second-year medical students to basic concepts and Spanish medical terminology that helps facilitate the doctor patient encounter. Its objectives are to provide instruction in three competency areas: colloquial Spanish language skills, medical interviewing and relevant cross-cultural knowledge and awareness. Seven Hispanic and 13 non-Hispanic students participated in this course in the last year.
5. *Seminar Series on Health Care Issues in the Latino Community* educates medical students about issues and trends relevant to the health status of Latinos in Illinois and the rest of the U.S.
6. *United States Medical Licensing Exam – Step I & II Review Program* is offered to Latino medical students at UIC to prepare them by reviewing major subject areas and reinforcing test taking skills. The Center will support students to participate in either a four, eight, or 16 week program.
7. *Hispanic Medical Student Research Fellowship Program* is a ten-week summer program designed to introduce first year Latino medical students at UIC to the field of research. The Center will support selected students to participate in this research experience.
8. *Faculty/Student Research Initiative* sponsored by HCOE has involved thirty-four Latino medical students and 15 faculty since 1994. Both participating faculty and students have evaluated the program positively.

In the past year, HCOE's recruitment activity included providing approximately 24,000 students with information on health careers and counseling on the medical school admissions process. Developing this pool of potential medical school applicants is the largest and most time and resource consuming segment of the program. Federal funding of this program has been steady at \$500,000 over the last two years. The number of students served at UIC has climbed from 56 (44 Hispanic) in FY97 to 71 in FY98 (58 Hispanic). This increase reflects the success of the program as perceived by students.

Overall Evaluation

To ascertain the degree to which HCOE meets its stated goals, several indicators need to be considered. The absolute number of Hispanic students informed about health careers provides a general image of the scope of the outreach attempts. In the past year, HCOE has had contact with 24,000 students. This is an impressive record. A further indicator of program success is the level of program participation. From 1992 through 1997, 214 students have participated in summer programs sponsored by HCOE. The success of these students (50 are medical residents, 59 are in medical school, 74 are in premed, 13 are studying other health professions, and 8 are graduate students) reflects positively on the program. On the basis of these data, it appears that HCOE is a good initiative that has been invaluable to a substantial number of targeted students.