

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: MAPPING THE JOURNEY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS STUDENTS: TOWARD THE IDENTIFICATION AND DUPLICATION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

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In an effort to build a diverse, scalable Honors Program, this research considers two major issues that community college Honors Programs often face: homogeneity amongst its membership and the growing percentage of developmental students amongst the general college population. Surveys conducted in the Fall of 2012 at The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) confirm that the CCBC Honors Program suffers from demographic issues shared by many community college Honors Programs nationally, whose students are often younger, more affluent, and more likely to be White than their classmates in the college general population. Meanwhile, community colleges face an ever-increasing percentage of students with developmental educational needs. To better reflect the general community college's population, Honors Programs, whether they seek growth or simply program maintenance, must find ways to diversify their program enrollment by attracting

students who have recently completed developmental coursework and may not have the initial academic self-confidence to apply. This project takes a qualitative, success-based approach to research at the community college, seeking ways to diversify Honors Programs. Through intensity sampling of students at CCBC, focus group and interview research was conducted with 29 students who began their coursework in developmental education, many from underrepresented populations, including Black/African-American students, first-generation college students, and students of nontraditional college age. This research highlighted several similar components of the successful, and perhaps unlikely, Honors students' journey, from their starting location, through their early progress, and impediments to their advancement. From these students' journeys, the study includes recommendations for program reforms that can lead to an increase in Honors applications amongst students originating in developmental education and a methodological approach to Honors research that privileges student voice, most importantly that of Honors students from underrepresented populations.