

The Scholar's Academy

College/University

University of Houston-Downtown [Houston, TX]

<http://www.uhd.edu/scholars>

Description

The Scholars Academy (SA) is an academically competitive scholarship and mentoring program housed in the University of Houston-Downtown College of Sciences & Technology supporting exceptional minority and female, first time in college (FTIC), first generation, and transfer students pursuing baccalaureate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). By providing tuition support scholarships and year-round mentoring with both peer mentors and STEM PhD faculty mentors, a scholar's community forms the foundation for success in this program. The Scholar Academy's inception was the result of an initial Army Research Office grant in 1999 authored by two UHD STEM professors.

Goals

The Scholars Academy mission ten years ago focused primarily upon increasing underrepresented students in the undergraduate STEM university experience. Now, the Academy also focuses upon increasing on-time graduation rates and greater retention rates and how many enter graduate/professional programs, after having completed the baccalaureate STEM major at UHD.

Outcomes

The Scholars Academy maintains membership of 150 students per semester. In 2009 the SA membership was comprised of 79% minority and 55% female. Currently, over 82% of SA students are first generation entrants (first-time in college-FTIC). SA currently has a FTIC retention rate of 69% and an FTIC six-year graduation rate of 49%. Over 86% continue in STEM through continued graduate studies or the workforce following graduation. Over 57% maintain a grade point average between 3.5-4.0, while over 29% maintain grade point averages between 3.81-4.0 supporting the premise that while in the SA, members improve study skills and intellectual capacity as associated with rising grade point averages.

Key Personnel

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