



Helping our students  
hold fast to their dreams...



## Meyerhoff Parents Association 2020 Frequently Asked Questions

UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program, started in 1988, has become a national model for diversifying America's scientific and engineering workforce. The program began with the idea of increasing not only the number of underrepresented minority students completing graduate degrees and working in the sciences and engineering, but also the number who are leaders in their fields. The approach used in the Meyerhoff Scholars Program – setting high expectations, building community among students, and involving students deeply in faculty research – has proven so successful that these practices are now applied in classrooms and disciplines across UMBC and the Nation.

### Program Description

#### What is the mission of the program?

Our mission is to significantly increase the number of U.S. research scientists and engineers who go on to earn science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) Ph.D.'s. The program is for students majoring in an approved STEM major who plan to earn a Ph.D. or combined MD/Ph.D. and become research scientists; therefore, undergraduate research is strongly encouraged and will prepare them for graduate studies in STEM.

#### What are the significant accomplishments of previous Meyerhoff students?

Students have published in major scientific journals, presented their research at conferences nationwide and internationally, have had impressive research-based internships at laboratories throughout the U.S. and abroad (NASA, NIH, NSA, Cornell, UCSF, UMichigan, CalTech, IBM, Stanford, University of Toronto ...), and are pursuing degrees at premier graduate schools across the country (Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Duke, NYU, MIT, UC Berkeley ...). Our students also receive local and national recognition and our graduates enjoy research careers in academia, federal agencies, national laboratories, and private industry. As of February 2020, 360 scholars have been awarded Ph.D.'s (includes MD/Ph.D., DDS/Ph.D., DVM/Ph.D., and ScD.)

#### Is pursuit of a Ph.D. mandatory?

Students should intend to pursue a Ph.D. or combined MD/Ph.D. in a STEM field. This is an undergraduate program that prepares students to enter Ph.D. or combined MD/Ph.D. programs. The program is not for students whose sole interest is to attend medical school and earn an MD degree or other professional degree (Pharm D, DDS, etc....).

#### What is the staff support for the students?

There are six Meyerhoff staff members who provide full-time support for the students in everything from academics, mentor matching, internships and graduate school preparation/ placement to personal growth and development. Students are monitored, advised, and discuss academics with Program advisors throughout each semester. They receive assistance from other students, tutorial centers, professors, and teacher's assistants (TAs).

### Selection Process

#### Is Meyerhoff a program for underrepresented individuals?

Meyerhoff is open to all students regardless of race or ethnicity.

#### How many apply? How many are invited? How many are selected?

On average, 500-600 applications are received for a class of 50-60 students. Around 200 are invited for Selection Weekends.

#### If a student is not selected to the program upon first application, can he or she apply again?

Students interested in the program can apply to become a "Friend of the Program." Though these students do not receive a financial award or attend Summer Bridge, they receive advising and other forms of program support.

### Program Requirements

#### Are there specific classes that Meyerhoffs must take?

There are specific Summer Bridge courses and a first semester freshman course. During the academic year, Scholars take the classes required for their major and general UMBC requirements.

#### What is the significance of Summer Bridge? Why is it mandatory?

Summer Bridge allows students to become acclimated to UMBC and the rigors of university level courses and testing before the semester begins. Summer Bridge includes math, science, and humanities coursework, training in analytical problem-solving, group study, site visits, and social and cultural events.

#### How are AP/IB courses addressed?

Establishing a foundation for UMBC math/science courses is critical. Students may opt out of non-science courses and use their AP/IB credits for non-STEM courses. Meyerhoff students are required to take all math, science, and engineering courses for their major, even if they received AP/IB credit for the course.

#### Is community service mandatory?

Yes. All students participate in required community service activities.

### **Can I get my student's grades?**

Students receive their grades electronically through <https://my.umbc.edu>. By law, the Program Staff cannot share grades with parents. Students must consent to the release of educational records (grades, GPA, class schedule, etc...), in writing or by 'Profile Sharing' via their myUMBC account.

### **Will I be notified if my student is in academic or other difficulty?**

By law, the Program Staff cannot discuss grades with parents unless the student has given their consent (written or verbal). Parents are strongly encouraged to develop and maintain strong lines of communication with their students regarding their academic progress and success.

### **What happens if my student loses the scholarship? Is he or she still considered a Meyerhoff?**

Once a Meyerhoff, always a Meyerhoff. If a student loses their funding, full academic support is still provided by Meyerhoff staff. Students may also petition to be financially reinstated after their cumulative and/or semester GPA is 3.0 or higher for more than one semester.

### **Can students change their major once in the program?**

Yes, as long as they remain in an approved math, science, engineering, or computer science (STEM) major.

### **How are summer and winter breaks addressed?**

During the summer, students are required to do an internship or take classes. During winter break, students can do as they please.

### **Is taking classes elsewhere (another college) for a semester permitted?**

Students are allowed to take classes elsewhere during the summer or winter sessions. We have had students study at Brown University, Brandeis University, and abroad for a semester or year. Students have traveled to England, Japan, Hungary, France, and Brazil, among other locations. Advance approval must be obtained from the UMBC Education Abroad Office and from the Meyerhoff Director.

### **Can a Meyerhoff student be involved in other interests such as music and the humanities?**

Yes, scholars may explore other interests (arts, humanities, and sports) as they pursue STEM degree and career goals.

### **Are Meyerhoff students housed together? Are there specific restrictions or curfews for Meyerhoff students?**

All students are required to live in campus housing (Residential Life or Walker Avenue Apartments) during matriculation at UMBC. Freshman year, all Meyerhoff students live in Susquehanna Hall. After that, they are free to live anywhere on campus they choose. Only during Summer Bridge are there restrictions or curfews for Meyerhoffs.

### **Why are students discouraged from going home every weekend?**

The students' academic support system is on-campus and studying needs to occur seven days a week. More often than not, when students are at home, they either do not study or are not as focused as when they are on campus. Also, peer study groups are highly encouraged and these cannot occur when a student is at home.

## **Business Matters**

### **Is the Meyerhoff award a contract or a pure scholarship?**

The Meyerhoff Scholars Program is not solely a financial arrangement. Meyerhoff Scholars are a part of a program that provides academic advising, assistance with internship and graduate school applications, and any other assistance needed to ensure success at UMBC and preparedness for graduate studies.

Scholars sign a contractual agreement and are required to attend mandatory program meetings, maintain a 3.0 GPA, remain in an approved major, apply for graduate programs, internships, and meet other program requirements.

### **What is the family's financial obligation?**

Students/parents are responsible for payment of application, enrollment, orientation, and matriculation fees, housing deposits, books, supplies, transportation, other educational expenses, and billed charges or fees beyond their scholarship/financial aid awards.

### **Is a fifth year, if needed, supported?**

Students can request a fifth year of funding, however, it is not guaranteed.

### **What is MPA? How can we become involved?**

MPA is the 'Meyerhoff Parents Association. 'Its mission is to support and perpetuate the Meyerhoff Scholars Program by fostering unification among scholarship recipients (past and present), as well as among their families. The elected Board develops plans to provide support to Meyerhoff program activities and students. We also work in conjunction with Meyerhoff staff, the Meyerhoff Student Council, and Alumni Advisory Board.

The requested annual donation of \$100.00 per member family helps to fund student activities sponsored by the MPA and scholar/program needs. Parents of Meyerhoff scholars are automatically members of the MPA. In addition to providing financial support, parents are encouraged to serve as board members/cohort representatives and participate in activities. Your participation is highly encouraged.

Regular communication takes place via email via the MPA and the UMBC Family Connection.

Parent support of and trust in the Meyerhoff Staff are important.

You may contact the Meyerhoff Parent's Association Officers at [umbcempa@gmail.com](mailto:umbcempa@gmail.com) or obtain additional information at <http://meyerhoff.umbc.edu/parents/meyerhoff-parents-association/>. For general scholarship questions, visit [meyerhoff.umbc.edu](http://meyerhoff.umbc.edu) or contact the Meyerhoff Scholars Program office at [meyerhoff@umbc.edu](mailto:meyerhoff@umbc.edu) or 410-455-3139.