

The Worcester Pipeline Collaborative Executive Summary

Its mission: “to encourage, educate, and challenge underrepresented, educationally and economically disadvantaged students for success in the biotechnology, biomedical research, and healthcare professions (BBHP), where they are traditionally underrepresented.”

In 1996, the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) made a conscious commitment to get directly involved with the public education system to help improve and strengthen the curricula of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. To that end, UMMS teamed with local education, community and business partners to establish the Worcester Pipeline Collaborative (WPC). Current partners include the Worcester Public Schools, Worcester State College, Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), Plumley Village (low-income housing complex), Abbott Bioresearch Center (ABC) and UMass Memorial Health Care System, Inc. (UMMHC).

Partnership activities include: mentoring, job-shadowing, tutoring, clinical and research internships, touring, laboratory opportunities, after-school science programs, visiting scientist programs, and a speaker's bureau. The WPC also provides family involvement activities and professional development opportunities for teachers. Through these efforts, students learn to set high expectations for themselves, as they participate in rigorous K-12 mathematics and science curricula, and develop language skills required to enter competitive collegiate programs. Students also become academically prepared to pursue BBHP in Massachusetts.

Through the WPC, there are over 5,000 North Quadrant students among seven elementary schools, Worcester East Middle School, North High School, Worcester Technical High School and the Comprehensive Skills Center participating in numerous opportunities in a “seamless K-12 pipeline approach” focused on health care, biomedical research and mathematics. Annually, an additional 1,500 students from other Massachusetts' high schools participate in UMMS tours.

QCC reserves ten slots for qualified WPC graduates from North High School and/or Worcester Technical High School, to enroll within their allied health programs, eliminating these graduates from being placed on the QCC's two to three year lists.

The UMMS's Office of the Vice Chancellor of Operations and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences' Dean's Office sponsor five WPC high school graduates, who have received their acceptance letters from colleges. These students have the opportunity to work forty hours weekly, during the summer.

Lastly, when former participants of WPC/Outreach programs apply to the UMMS for employment opportunities, they are processed as internal candidates. This commitment completes the cycle of the seamless “pipeline” while promoting UMMS's commitment to building a productive and diverse workforce.