

# UMBC News

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## **ACTiVATE® Program Recognized Internationally**

### *Program Cited As One of Three “Good Practices” Programs*

The ACTiVATE® program has been recognized by a European organization as one of three “Good Practices” programs that train women entrepreneurs. ACTiVATE®, a year-long program at bwtech@UMBC that trains women to be entrepreneurs, is the only U.S.-based program of the three honorees; the others are the MEETS program in Cambridge, UK and the NEnA program in Halle, Germany.

The recognition was given by the organizers of FemStart, a partnership of six European universities formed in 2006 to study female entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship training programs at universities. There is an ongoing concern in Europe that women are underrepresented in university entrepreneurship programs. Given that entrepreneurship and small businesses are important generators of jobs and economic activity, there is a strong interest in encouraging women to pursue entrepreneurship. FemStart organized a series of six conferences in various European cities over the past two years to study entrepreneurship programs that have been successful in attracting female participants, particularly those in science and technology. ACTiVATE® administrators presented at five of these conferences, which in total attracted over 500 participants across Europe.

In recognizing the “Good Practices” programs, FemStart noted that ACTiVATE® and the other programs “were well-accepted and received very positive feedback from the participants.” The organization also recognized that in the U.S., as in the UK and Germany, “support of university-based and high tech start-ups has a longer tradition.”

Stephen Auvil, assistant vice president for research at UMBC who is one of ACTiVATE®’s co-principal investigators, presented at three conferences: “Attending the FemStart conferences showed us how much interest there is in successful programs that train female entrepreneurs. It was an honor to be able to share ACTiVATE®’s successful model with the European academic and business communities.”

Said David Fink, director of entrepreneurial services at bwtech@UMBC and the ACTiVATE® program director, who presented at two of the other FemStart conferences: “We are very proud of this latest recognition for ACTiVATE®. It affirms that the program is a worldwide leader in producing successful women entrepreneurs in the science and technology fields.”

ACTiVATE® is a joint program of bwtech@UMBC’s Incubator, the UMBC Office of Technology Development, and the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship. The year-long program utilizes technologies developed by Maryland’s universities and research institutions and trains mid-career women with significant technical or business experience to start companies based on those technologies. In the first four years of the program, ACTiVATE® has trained 92 women and has launched over 25 companies. ACTiVATE® was initially funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Current sponsors include the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Venable LLP, Corporate Office Properties Trust, Miles & Stockbridge PC, Whiteford, Taylor, and Preston LLP, and SB and Company LLC.

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**About bwtech@UMBC:**

bwtech@UMBC is a 71-acre research and technology community at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). It comprises the technology business Incubator and Accelerator, home to over 30 early-stage high-tech and life science companies, and the Research and Technology Park, with a capacity of 350,000 square feet of office and laboratory space. bwtech@UMBC offers collaboration with university faculty and students, and enjoys a strategic and convenient location, close to downtown Baltimore, BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, and Washington, D.C. bwtech’s annual economic impact on the state is estimated to be over \$300 million.

**About the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship:**

The Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship was established in Spring 2000 through a generous gift of \$1 million from The Alex. Brown Foundation. UMBC has worked closely with the Baltimore business community to create a leading center for university entrepreneurship. The mission of the Center is to provide innovative courses and programs to support and inspire entrepreneurial accomplishment both on campus and in the region.

**About UMBC:**

UMBC is a medium-sized public research university of 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students who collaborate with faculty to address real-world challenges. Located just south of Baltimore near I-95 and the BWI airport, UMBC’s residential campus houses state-of-the-art facilities in the sciences, engineering, arts, social sciences and humanities. UMBC combines the energy of a research university with the close community feel and attention to individual students found in liberal arts colleges.