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Student Educational Enrichment Program (SEEP)

When Jada Henderson, a Black student currently attending MCG, was just 16 years old, she experienced firsthand the inequities people of color face in many medical situations. During an episode where she was rushed to the emergency room by ambulance, Henderson and her mother sat helplessly as doctors inadequately explained her condition, a condition she didn't understand and was brusquely told was incurable. Angry and frustrated at her insensitive treatment, Jada used that event as inspiration to enter medical school. She began telling everyone she knew she wanted to become a doctor. Jada earned the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship, which supports high-achieving racial minority students, to pay for her undergraduate education, and with the help from her high school guidance counselor, she connected with the Student Educational Enrichment Program (SEEP).

Her first day in medical school, Jada thought, "Oh, no, I'm not going to make it." But by the end, she says, "I could really say to myself: 'You could become a doctor; this is tangible.' I really credit SEEP for that."

SEEP at Augusta University is one of the nation's oldest diversity pipeline programs, offering pre-college (in Augusta and Savannah with plans to expand to Albany), and intermediate and advanced college tracks. The program prepares students for a future career in the health professions through extensive academic curriculum.

SEEP is also an integral pipeline for the MCG 3+ initiative, which strives to encourage more students to commit to service in an underserved area of the state. Who better to understand the needs of these communities than those who have firsthand experience living and growing up there?

Return on Investment

An analysis of participants over the past 10 years shows:

- Annual economic impact estimate = \$146.9 million supporting 3,315 jobs.
- Direct and indirect government revenue = \$24.3 million.
- 95% of these impacts stay in the state and contribute \$140 million annually to the state economy.
- Every dollar invested in SEEP returns \$2,232 in economic benefits.

SEEP data recorded since 1978 shows more than 70% of its graduates have completed premedical/pre-health preparation and entered into a health profession. About 50% chose medicine, matriculating at MCG and other medical schools throughout the country. While these numbers are impressive, the latter point is cause for concern. Because of more generous scholarship offers, many SEEP alumni (and other candidates of color) attend medical schools outside the state of Georgia, even when MCG would otherwise be their first choice. This results in less opportunity for our state to retain the best and the brightest underrepresented in medicine, thus affecting the diversity of programs like MCG 3+.

Philanthropic support of SEEP can help ensure MCG attracts and retains more SEEP students and, through the MCG 3+ program, help the communities that would benefit most from these students going on to work in the underserved areas where they are most needed. Scholarships, for example, are just one of the ways a generous gift can ensure MCG attracts the most qualified students from diverse backgrounds by removing financial barriers. Evidence suggests that cost is the number one disincentive for potential underrepresented medical school applicants.

Having a diverse medical school class and, subsequently, a diverse physician workforce, is important to meeting the health care needs of the entire state. History indicates students from underrepresented groups are more likely to practice in impoverished areas, medically underserved areas and health professional shortage areas.



Philanthropic Opportunities

SEEP Support

Ensure the future expansion of SEEP and support current programming. Ideas include:

- Name SEEP – example: J.W. Johnson, M.D. Student Educational Enrichment Program: \$3,000,000
- Sponsor expansion of SEEP to another MCG regional campus location: \$500,000
- Sponsor research program for SEEP participants: \$250,000
- Create a named endowment to support SEEP: \$100,000
- Sponsor a SEEP student – create an endowment to sponsor one student per summer: \$100,000

Scholarships for medical students at MCG

Create a named scholarship endowment for those underrepresented in medicine in your own name or to honor or memorialize a loved one or respected colleague, with a gift starting at \$100,000 (which can be pledged and paid over five years). Example: J.W. Johnson, M.D. Scholarship.

Endowed scholarships grow and exist in perpetuity because these funds are invested with only a portion of the earnings distributed annually in scholarships. Endowments ensure scholarship funds are available for many future generations of aspiring physicians.

For more information about how you can support SEEP, contact Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement at philanthropy@augusta.edu or 706-721-4001.