

***MS PHD'S PDP: Vision, Design, Implementation, and Outcomes of a
Minority-Focused Earth System Sciences Program***

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Abstract –

As minorities are predicted to comprise at least 33% of the US population by the year 2010, their representation in the STEM fields, including the ocean sciences, is still poorly established. In order to advance the goal of better decision making, the Ocean Sciences community must achieve greater levels of diversity in membership. To achieve this objective of greater diversity in the sciences, the *Minorities Striving and Pursuing Higher Degrees of Success in Earth System Science*[®] Professional Development Program (*MS PHD'S PDP*), which was launched in 2003, is supported via grants from NASA's Office of Earth Science, and NSF's Directorate for Geosciences. The *MS PHD'S PDP* is designed to provide professional and mentoring experiences that facilitate the advancement of minorities committed to achieving outstanding Earth System Science careers. The *MS PHD'S PDP* is structured in three phases, connected by engagement in a virtual community, continuous peer and mentor to mentee interactions, and the professional support necessary for ensuring the educational success of the student participants. Since the pilot program in 2003, the *MSPHD'S PDP*, housed at the University of South Florida's College of Marine Science, has produced 4 cohorts of students. Seventy-five have completed the program; of those 6 have earned their doctoral degrees. Of the 45 current participants 10 are graduate students in Marine Science and 15 are still undergraduates, the remaining 10 participants are graduate students in other STEM fields. Since the implementation of the *MSPHD'S PDP* a total of 87 students and 33 scientist mentors have become part of the *MSPHD'S* virtual community, helping to improve the learning environment for current and future participants as well as build a community of minority students that encourages each other to pursue their academic degrees.