

OPENING BREAKFAST – FREEMAN HRABOWSKI

Freeman Hrabowski, the tremendously energetic President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), opened the Maryland Economic Development Association's (MEDA) 2006 Annual Conference by challenging attendees to think about doing things differently. In a very well-received speech, he said MEDA members should think creatively about the approach we take to various issues. He suggested we listen to each speaker, pull information or ideas from what they say, and then talk to our colleagues. He asked the audience to challenge what the speakers say, and think proactively.

Dr. Hrabowski suggested people need to connect across disciplines, citing the fact that he “gets goose bumps” doing math, something most Americans do not share. People need to develop their critical thinking skills, drawing the problem, and seeing the relationship between words and problems. He urged the audience to read the book, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers will Rule the Future*, by Daniel Pink. The world needs people who think both with their left brain and their right brain. Dr. Hrabowski thinks about the whole mind. He cited the case where a family enlarged a house in order to sell it, but the focus of those interested in the house should have been on the family that lived there and their family life, a different approach. Another book, *How to Think like Leonardo DaVinci: Seven Steps to Genius Every Day*, by Michael J. Gelb, bridges the gap between the arts and sciences. People need to think more broadly, and combine their analytical and artistic sides.

Dr. Hrabowski said we in Maryland have so much. He noted a May 25 editorial in the *New York Times*, entitled “Why American College Students Hate Science.” The editorial focused on UMBC, which was an “upstart campus, rocking the house in educating students in the sciences” when it opened 40 years ago. It complimented UMBC for its innovative approach to increasing American scientists, and focused on the university's methods for increasing minority students through the Meyerhoff Scholars program. He said he is sending copies of the editorial “to everyone.”

Maryland has many great universities, including UMBC, the University of Maryland College Park and Johns Hopkins University. We need to get across boundaries and do what is in the best interest of the state. The public and private sectors need to get better connected. Dr. Hrabowski asked Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin what they need, and the university is doing its best to provide it. We should find ways to create momentum, as “success breeds success.” Maryland must continue to be competitive, but in a different way. Each of us has to be able to work with others – as part of a team – and discuss ideas. He asked whether people ever get beyond their area of specialization, even within economic development. We must “get beyond our boundaries.” He cited a recent panel of five leaders from Maryland, Japan and Germany. One of the participants suggested international cooperation instead of international competition, or being competitive through cooperation. By doing so, we can all be “part of a larger pie.” We need to re-think the American model – thinking across national boundaries, and the boundary between the public and private sectors. Dr. Hrabowski suggested that the audience think about their attitudes. He said thoughts become words, words become actions,

actions become habits and habits become destiny.