Collaborative Network for Engineering and Computing Diversity (CoNECD) Conference

Outcomes Report

This report summarizes the first year of the CoNECD conference

Background

The vision of the CoNECD (pronounced, "connected") Conference was to provide a forum for exploring current research and practices to enhance diversity and inclusion of all underrepresented populations in the engineering and computing professions including gender identity and expression, race and ethnicity, disability, veterans, LGBTQ+, 1st generation and socio-economic status.

CoNECD is a collaborative effort between the National Association of Multicultural Program Advocates (NAMEPA), the Women in Engineering Proactive Network (WEPAN), and the Minorities (MIND) and Women in Engineering (WIED) Divisions of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE). Recognizing that "none of us is as strong as all of us," we believe that numerous activities that have been successful in broadening participation of targeted groups in the precollege, university, and professional workforce environments can be successfully applied to other underrepresented populations. There is a need to share the research that is showing promise to create equitable, inclusive and diverse environments

Planning

The organizing committee consisted of Amy Freeman, president of WEPAN, Beena Sukumaran, Rowan University, Bevlee Watford, Virginia Tech and ASEE Board President, Darryl Williams, Franklin Institute, and Virginia Booth Womack, Purdue University and President, NAMEPA

Promotion

The CoNECD conference was promoted through ASEE membership emails, social media and website as well as WEPAN and NAMEPA.

Event Details

One unique aspect of the conference was that it drew attendees from the ranks of researchers and practitioners. Researchers are accustomed to creating scholarly output (papers, journal articles, etc) based on their topic of interest. It is part of their job requirement to publish their work. Practitioners, on the other hand, are those that create and implement interventions, and seldom are they involved in creating scholarly publications. By allowing the submission of both research papers and presentations, CoNECD was able to bring together both of these groups, enabling the researchers to interact with those that *implement* their scholarly output.

Another notable aspect of the conference was the focus on various under-represented and under-served populations. Often, conferences address a single population, for example WEPAN addresses issues associated with women in engineering, NAMPA focuses on people of color. CoNECD allowed those working with not just these two populations, but also those who are supporting veterans, 1st generation students, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community and individuals with low socio-economic status. Additionally it was not just engineering, CoNECD also involved those in engineering technology, computing and information technology. There was a richness to the discussions as participants shared across these dimensions.

Papers

There were 97 presentations over the 2 ½ day conference. The topics ranged from issues facing transfer students of color, to connecting social justice and STEM integration. Attendees were particularly excited about the various invited presentations including Laureen Summers, project director for the AAAS Project on Science, Technology, and Disability and the Entry Point! A particular favorite was the Times Up! Panel featuring women discussing how they handle harassment in their workplace.

Attendance
381 attendees with 271 paid registrations.
14 one day
53 students

Feedback
The full survey results can be found in Appendix A.
142 responses of 391 = 38%
Very satisfied 81.69%
Somewhat satisfied 17.61%
1 person neutral and 0 negative responses

Highest value
Networking and connecting with likeminded people. "*Networking / community. As a statistician who works with people in a variety of fields, it is often the case that I am attending conferences where I am something of an outsider, and everyone else knows one another beforehand. This was the most welcoming group I've encountered at a conference. I got to know so many people working on the same sorts of diversity issues I am working on, and had many wonderful conversations that will end up substantially helping my work.*"

Negative Comments

The single most noted complaint was the timing of the conference. It was held in late April which is at or close to the end of the spring semester for most schools. Individuals found it difficult to be away from their institution during that time.

Relevance of content was rated excellent.

Budget and Revenue

Total revenue $194,110.00
Registration revenue $178,350.00
Sponsorship revenue $11,000.00

Future Plans

The 2nd annual CoNECD Conference is at the Marriott Crystal Gateway, April 14 - 17, 2019. Abstract submission is open July 1, 2018 to October 1, 2018.