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ASEE Launches National Diversity Recognition Program

April 10, 2019 - The American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and its Engineering Deans Council are pleased to announce the ASEE Diversity Recognition Program.

With the support of over 200 engineering schools and colleges, the initiative is a national recognition encouraging institutional transformation in engineering and engineering technology schools and colleges around the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. It is the first national effort to publicly recognize these institutions for their success in building a diverse workforce. “While other efforts have sought to award individuals or organizations for singular efforts in diversity, equity and inclusion, this recognition utilizes self-assessment, metrics and reforms to propel units in advancing systemic institutional change,” explains Gregory N. Washington, chair of ASEE Engineering Dean’s Council and dean of UC Irvine’s Samueli School of Engineering. The academic, business and social value of diversity and inclusive excellence has been well documented. Regardless of motivation, industry reports the need for a more diverse mix of engineering professionals, and these professionals need to be able to work effectively in a diverse, multicultural and global environment. Inclusive excellence is defined as doing things right (achieving a competitive advantage as well as reflecting demographic imperatives) and doing the right thing (achieving social justice goals).

ASEE will accept applications for the initial cohort in March; recognitions will be formally announced at the ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition, June 15-19, in Tampa, Florida.

Background

After the ASEE Board of Directors declared academic year 2014-2015 the Year of Action on Diversity, ASEE implemented numerous awareness and implementation activities in response to data on continued (and in some cases worsening) underrepresentation of various minority groups. In January 2017, the ASEE Engineering Deans Council issued the ASEE Deans Diversity Pledge, which has now been signed by over 220 of ASEE’s 330-member engineering colleges. The pledge commits signatories to engage in four activities:

1. Develop a diversity plan for our engineering programs with the help and input of national organizations such as the National Society of Black Engineers, the Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers, the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, the National Gem Consortium, the Society of Women Engineers, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, the Women in Engineering ProActive Network, the National Association of Multicultural Engineering Programs and Campus Pride. In turn, ASEE would: articulate the definition and the vision of diversity and inclusiveness for the institution; assess its need or justification; provide a statement of priorities and goals; commit to equity, implicit bias and inclusion training across the school; define accountability and the means of assessing the plan through various ways including surveys.
2. Commit to at least one K-12 or community college pipeline activity with explicit targeted goals and measures of accountability aimed at increasing the diversity and inclusiveness of the engineering student body in our institution.

3. Commit to developing strong partnerships between research-intensive engineering schools and non-Ph.D. granting engineering schools serving diverse populations in engineering.
4. Commit to the development and implementation of proactive strategies to increase the representation of diverse groups in our faculty.

The pledge notes that a measure of success will be a notable increase in diversity in enrollments, retention and graduation rates of engineering and engineering technology students, and increase diversity in faculty and in the engineering workforce, over the next decade.

Founded in 1893, ASEE is a global society of individual, institutional, and corporate members. ASEE seeks to be the pre-eminent authority on the education of engineering professionals by advancing innovation, excellence and access at all levels of education.

ASEE engages with engineering faculty, business leaders, college and high school students, parents and teachers to enhance the engineering workforce of the nation. We are the only professional society addressing opportunities and challenges spanning all engineering disciplines, working across the breadth of academic education, research and public service.

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