

### TILTING THE BOWL: CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE TOWARDS DIVERSITY

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As an exercise in teamwork during an engineering leadership and management seminar, teams were given a large hemispherical mixing bowl, a golf ball, a wire coathanger, and a small lump of modeling clay. The inside surface of the mixing bowl was painted with concentric rings around a bull's-eye at the bottom labeled "zero," with each ring increasing in value up the side of the bowl. The teams were to compete by using only the coathanger and clay to reposition the goofball up the side of the bowl; the highest stable score would win.

While most of the teams developed clever ways of shaping the wire to prop the ball against the side of the bowl, the winning team used the wire and clay to "tilt the bowl," finding a solution that dramatically dominated the others. More important, the ball itself was unconstrained, and now naturally rested in the position of highest possible score, and would require significant external forces to move from that position.

This analogy can be extended improving diversity within an academic institution. Certainly there are many excellent programs that have been implemented to "prop up" various aspects of diversity--student and faculty recruiting and retention, expanding the pipeline, improving classroom climate, etc.). But usually, these programs are effective only as long as resources are continued to maintain them. And if the individuals who are key to the success of these programs leave, the programs die or must be reinforced.

However, by first influencing the attitudes of individuals within an institution--by tilting the bowl--cultural diversity achieves a sort of homeostasis, in which programmatic approaches to change can flourish and be naturally self sustaining.

This panel will discuss, from distinctly different perspectives, the efforts ongoing within the Schools of Engineering at Purdue to tilt the bowl with respect to fostering true cultural and gender diversity within our program. Speakers will include a student, a faculty member, a diversity professional, an administrator, and an alum.

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