

Abstract # L-12-1085

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Gear: FirstGear      Type: Discussion      Length: OneHour

Abstract: Discerning the extent to which female students are exposed to opportunities in engineering

Much has been made in recent history about more female and minority representation in science and engineering. There is documentation of the better students in elementary science and math courses being the female students. However, this excellence in earlier grade levels does not translate well to numbers of female students in engineering schools. Today we are still seeing small numbers, at best 10 to 20% females, in engineering classes. Science courses by comparison have a much higher distribution of female students. If engineering is the application of science and mathematics, why are there proportionally more female science students than female engineering students? A discussion group on this subject would consider the experiences of various female science and engineering students before choosing their major. From these experiences we can begin to formulate ways in which we might institutionalize changes in the exposure levels of younger students that might gain better female representation in future engineering classes.\*\*\* A survey of female engineering and science students at three campuses is intended to provide a revealing look at the causes for differences between female numbers in the engineering and science disciplines. The campuses polled include a Hispanic Serving Institution or HSI (The University of Texas at San Antonio), a Historically Black College or University (the HBCU Florida A&M University), and a land-grant institution (Florida State University). Differences and similarities between the experiences of the female science and engineering students at these various campuses and settings provide some insight into their choice of majors as it relates to the exposure to and awareness of the opportunities available in the various disciplines." Submit 12/19/2003      4:14:07 PM