

Panel Session - The Experiences of African American Women Engineering Faculty

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Abstract – The goal of this panel session is to share the firsthand experiences of African American women faculty in engineering. It will facilitate a dialogue between African American women faculty and other faculty and administrators on the challenges they face as members of the academy. The dialogue will also discuss how these challenges might be addressed as future African American women faculty are hired. The experiences of African American female faculty in engineering are rarely topics for discussion and yet research in this area implies that the community should listen to narrative of faculty of color in order to gain a better understanding of their challenges.

The session will begin with a moderator providing background information on the challenges affecting women of color in engineering and how these are different from majority women. Challenges from the current research literature are expected to include: Marginalization, The “Two Worlds” Phenomenon, Sexism vs. Racism, Mentoring, Isolation, and Cultural Taxation. Each presenter will then share personal experiences related to the challenges. The presenters will be comprised of seven diverse African American women faculty teaching at various types of institutions (e.g. predominantly white research intensive institutions, predominantly white research intensive institutions, and historically black colleges and universities). Following the presentations, there will be a discussion led by the moderator that focuses on recommendations for faculty, administrators and institutions to bring about change. Upon the conclusion of the discussion, the floor will be open for questions.

Armed with this information other faculty and administrators will gain a better understanding of the issues and challenges of African American women on a day-to-day basis and be equipped to address them in a positive, proactive manner.

Index Terms – African American engineering faculty, Diversity, Female engineering faculty, Minority faculty recruitment.

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