

Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives at Rensselaer

Engineering Pre-College STEM Diversity Outreach Initiatives

[PREFACE](#): This two-week residential summer experience is for rising high school juniors and seniors from across the U.S. who have a long-time interest in STEM, have demonstrated talent in math and science, and are underrepresented and underserved in STEM fields. Students are immersed in the engineering approach to solving challenging problems, develop leadership and team-building skills, explore potential engineering career paths, and experience college student living and learning.



Exploring Engineering Day: This one-day event comprised of two half-day sessions is organized by the Director for Diversity and Women in Engineering Programs, two female co-Chairs from the Society of Women Engineers, and a number of student volunteers from engineering and computer science clubs and organizations eager to inspire the next generation of engineers and computer scientists. Fifty percent of the 360 children in grades 3 to 6 who attend the program are female and about 25% are from underrepresented groups. Rensselaer students who lead Meet and Greet and classroom hands-on activities develop the ability to teach complex technologies to a broader audience and improve their public speaking and presentation skills. Children understand how engineers solve complex problems by working through similar challenges and by occasionally making mistakes. They also learn that by paying close attention to avoid repeating the same mistakes, people can improve their performance which results in a smarter brain.

Diverse Engineering Student Organizations & Programs

RPI-NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers), RPI-SHPE (Society of Black Engineers), and RPI-SWE (Society of Women Engineers) create a sense of belonging by inviting students traditionally underrepresented in engineering to be part of their professional student organizations and embrace inclusivity by inviting all Rensselaer students to be a part of their general body meetings, community events and activities.

[NSBE / SHPE Fall Career Fair](#): The National Society of Black Engineers and the Hispanic Society of Professional Engineers annually host a career fair open to all Rensselaer students. Approximately 200 companies and 4,000 Rensselaer students participate.



Leaders of Tomorrow Professional Development Workshops: Student leaders from NSBE, SHPE, SWE, SASE, and the Women at Rensselaer Mentor Program collaborate with the Center for Career and Professional Development, the Archer Center for Student Leadership and practicing professionals from local companies to help students develop skills critical for the workplace and their ongoing professional development.

Corporate Scholarships/Fellowships help underrepresented students defray the cost of college tuition.



Women at Rensselaer Mentor Program: This peer mentor program invites first year females to be matched with a female peer mentor in the same or similar major with similar personal interests. The trained mentors provided ongoing tips and support for the first year students to make a seamless transition to campus and monthly social events bring like-minded female scholars together where they can find community and meet with female practicing professionals. Monthly professional development workshops are offered through the Leaders of Tomorrow program.

Engineering Curriculum: The Archer Center for Student Leadership collaborates with the Engineering faculty to educate tomorrow's global technological leaders. As part of the curriculum, Center staff teach professional development content that includes how to develop multicultural sophistication.

Institute-wide Pre-College Diversity Outreach & Recruitment Programs

[STAR Program:](#) High School Seniors who are underrepresented and have demonstrated academic talent and interest in Rensselaer's degree programs are invited to apply to a two-day residential campus visit to experience college life at Rensselaer. Guests engage with undergraduates over meals and social activities, learn about co-curricular activities and clubs, sit in on classes, tour the campus, visit laboratories, and meet faculty.

Garnet D, Baltimore Event for Accepted First Year Underrepresented Undergraduates: Students and their families spend a week-end visiting campus, meeting alumni, faculty, students, and staff and are hosted by RPI students in their residence halls. The event coincides with the annual Accepted Students Day activities to congratulate and welcome students to Rensselaer.

[Black Family Technology Awareness Day:](#) This one-day event organized by Black and LatinX students is designed for families in our local community to explore educational and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), as well as the arts. Students participate in hands-on workshops and are inspired by guest speakers during a lunch time plenary session. Parents receive tips from Rensselaer Admissions officers and students about navigating the college admissions process.

Exploring Rensselaer from a Female Perspective: Live panels and webinars showcase the unique college experiences of diverse female undergraduates who are thriving at a male-dominated, technological campus. Rensselaer students have a work hard/play hard philosophy of life and enjoy project-oriented, team-based courses that develop skills to excel in an ever-changing technological workplace. Student success and wellness programs teach students how to cultivate resilience, manage their time, identify ways to relax and manage stress while world-class faculty expert academic guidance and one-on-one mentoring, practicing professionals offer career and professional guidance, peer mentor programs offer tips for navigating college and community. Advising hubs and career development offices help students make curriculum decisions and identify career pathways. Challenging and enriching co-curricular activities such as undergraduate research, internships, and Study Abroad at top technological universities instill confidence and develop professional competence and multicultural sophistication.

Institute-wide Student Success Programs

I-PERSIST Mentors: Undergraduates who pass Physics, Calculus, or Chemistry quizzes are invited to interview with a team of faculty and SUCCESS team professional staff to fill approximately 135 paid peer mentoring positions. Selected mentors receive specialized training and meet weekly with two groups of 8 to 10 first year students enrolled in their foundational Calculus, Chemistry, and Physics courses. All first year students enrolled in these foundational courses are required to attend weekly mentoring sessions for informal sessions on solving problems and building time management and the study skills necessary to be academically successful at Rensselaer. This is an opportunity for students who were successful in high school to understand how to best manage their time in college, devote an appropriate amount of time to their studies, and build in time to exercise, relax, de-stress, socialize, and become involved in co-curricular activities that support their future career aspirations.

Bridge Scholars: six-week residential and four-week online course by invitation only for first-time freshmen who could benefit from early exposure to college-level Calculus or Physics. Participants develop early academic and social success skills through academic mentoring, career development, access to academic support resources, and enrichment seminars that focus on excelling in the uniquely demanding Rensselaer environment.

Institute-wide Activities That Promote Community, Inclusivity, and Develop Multicultural Sophistication

Brave Space: Brave Space is an open forum for students, staff, and faculty to clear their minds and share their thoughts with the community regarding current events & experiences. Honesty is encouraged. Vulnerability is supported. Transformation is envisioned.

Latinx Heritage Month: recognizes the countless contributions and ongoing importance of Latinx people to the United States, increases awareness about contemporary issues facing Latino/Latina people in the United States and abroad, and celebrates its many nations, cultures, histories and identities.

Black History Month: recognizes and celebrates the contributions of people of African descent to the United States, and increases awareness about contemporary issues facing its constituents, whether local, national, or abroad.

The Round Table: The Round Table is an organization consisting of 30+ representatives from identity-based and underrepresented student organizations. It endeavors to use that voice to ensure an inclusive and multiculturally sophisticated RPI via functional dialogue and intentional collaborative programming.

Bias Assessment and Response Team: Recognizing the complex geo-political landscape the Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART) is a nimble far reaching team comprising professional staff from across the campus empowered to examine incidents of bias and formulate long-term and short term strategies to care for individuals and communities that are marginalized and educate the institute about diversity and inclusivity.

NRB- Towards a Culture of Curiosity: During the annual Navigating and Rensselaer and Beyond (NRB) orientation week programming, the entire incoming first year class engages in a conversation about social identities, implicit bias and the role of curiosity in building cross-cultural relationships.

Building a Cultural Nexus: An annual program designed to bring together our students of color with faculty, staff, and allies. The program is designed to foster mentoring relationships between students and key campus partners.

Campus-wide Implicit Bias Training: Increased training for students and staff on the role of implicit bias in institutional practices through online and in-person training. In person trainings are offered to all student leaders including, Resident Assistants, Resident Directors, I-Persist Mentors, Learning Assistants, By-stander intervention Peer Educators and others. Online trainings are available for all faculty, staff, and students.