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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**Society of Women Engineers, National Society of Black Engineers and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers collaborate on Women of Color in Engineering Collaborative**

***Grant from National Scient Foundation Provides Support for Diversity Effort***

Chicago (June 14, 2021)--The Society of Women Engineers, in collaboration with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) received a grant from the [National Science Foundation](https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=2040634&HistoricalAwards=false) to support the creation of the Women of Color in Engineering Collaborative (WCEC).

This NSF INCLUDES planning grant is funded by NSF Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science (NSF INCLUDES), a comprehensive national initiative to enhance U.S. leadership in discoveries and innovations by focusing on diversity, inclusion and broadening participation in STEM at scale.

With this grant, SWE, NSBE and SHPE will begin to build the WCEC by focusing on professional associations whose memberships include women engineers of color. Over time, the WCEC will expand to include the higher education community’s alumni networks, industry partners, government entities, and other organizations that share our commitment to increasing the representation and equity of women engineers of color in the workforce.

To date, many NSF INCLUDES projects have focused on the recruitment and retention of students into STEM education programs, but the WCEC will focus on the often cited, yet understudied, challenge of retaining women in the engineering workforce. Through the WCEC, partner organizations will better leverage their resources to promote systemic change while working collectively to decrease the barriers that lead to the attrition of women engineers of color.

The goals of this planning grant are to: 1) establish the Women of Color in Engineering Collaborative (WCEC), a partnership network of professional engineering associations and STEM-based companies dedicated to addressing systemic barriers that prohibit equitable work environments for women engineers of color; 2) create a shared vision focused on dismantling systemic barriers that impede the retention and advancement of women engineers of color; and 3) develop a strategic plan to guide WCEC activities.

“NSBE is proud to join SWE, SHPE and the National Science Foundation in this important, promising initiative,” said Charles Thompson III, interim chief executive officer of NSBE. “Gender inequity is deeply entrenched in the nation’s STEM workforce, and the Women of Color in Engineering Collaborative is exactly the type of broad, sustained, holistic effort needed to uproot the problem. We expect to see great gains from this partnership over the long term: gains in diversity, gains in U.S. economic competitiveness and significant forward progress in NSBE’s mission ‘to increase the number of culturally responsible Black engineers.”

“What perfect timing to come together with our committed partners to support early career women of color in engineering. Together we can make such a significant impact, learning from each other to build a stronger repository of tools, strategies and resources that will help pave the way for an equitable, safe, and positive culture and climate in the work environment,” said Dr. Dora Renaud, events director at SHPE.

“Reaching parity in engineering cannot be accomplished by approaches that solely focus on the recruitment or “fixing” of underrepresented groups; rather, efforts that connect and energize people, cross divides, and drive systemic change toward equity are needed,” said Roberta Rincon, associate director, Research at SWE.

One of the first projects to support this grant is the Women of Color in Engineering Collaborative (WCEC) Convening, which concluded last week.

**About NSBE:**

With more than 700 chapters and more than 21,000 active members in the U.S. and abroad, the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) is one of the largest student-governed organizations based in the United States. NSBE, founded in 1975, supports and promotes the aspirations of collegiate and pre-collegiate students and technical professionals in engineering and technology. NSBE’s mission is “to increase the number of culturally responsible Black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community.” For more information, visit [www.nsbe.org](http://www.nsbe.org).

**About SWE**

The Society of Women Engineers (SWE), founded in 1950, is the world’s largest advocate and catalyst for change for women in engineering and technology. The not-for-profit educational and service organization is the driving force that establishes engineering as a highly desirable career aspiration for women. To ensure SWE members reach their full potential as engineers and leaders, the Society offers unique opportunities to network, provides professional development, shapes public policy and provides recognition for the life-changing contributions and achievements of women engineers. As a champion of diversity, SWE empowers women to succeed and advance in their personal and professional lives. For more information about the Society, please visit [www.swe.org](http://www.swe.org/) or call 312.596.5223.

**About SHPE: Leading Hispanics in STEM**

SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers) is a nonprofit organization serving and advancing Hispanics in STEM. With more than 13,000 student and professional members, SHPE’s mission is to change lives by empowering the Hispanic community to realize its fullest potential and to impact the world through STEM awareness, access, support, and development. To accomplish this, SHPE provides a variety of programming, services, resources, and events, including hosting the largest Hispanic STEM convention in the nation.  For more information, visit <http://shpe.org>.