

## **EOP@NJIT: Diversity Personified**

**Laurence (Tony) Howell**  
**Executive Director, Educational Opportunity Programs**  
**New Jersey Institute of Technology**  
**Newark, NJ 07102**

This presentation will show that in the 39 year history of the **Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)** of NJIT, the program has been the embodiment of the Conference theme - *“Embracing Diversity in Learning: The Challenge for Engineering Education”*

EOP began as the “engineering opportunity program” in 1968 as a NJIT effort to assure that all New Jersey high school graduates, regardless of their race, creed or culture, and who had the proclivity for science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics, would have the chance to receive a top-notch education. Though the students may have come from challenged economic, educational and geographic homes, schools or communities, they would have a staff of people (with the support of the university and the state) who recruited, advised, advocated for and assisted them in, over-coming their deficiencies and graduating with a degree in a STEM major.

The presentation will highlight the diversity of the EOP student body and the challenges program staff encounter in academics, cultural concerns, economic pressures and family needs that each students/culture brings to the Program and university. We will touch on the perceptions parents have of the benefits of higher education and the challenges they have with its cost. The effects of family-culture on students’ psychological condition and the pressures different cultures place on students. Finally, we will talk about the Program’s intercessory role between faculty, university officials/offices and students’ circumstances that impinge on progression to graduation.