The Georgia Tech Recruitment and Retention Continuum

Dr. Stephen M. Ruffin
Associate Professor, School of Aerospace Engineering
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA 30332-0150

Successful recruitment and retention of under-represented populations in engineering programs is found to benefit from an integrated K-12, undergraduate, graduate programs. Over 40 of such programs exist at Georgia Tech and in this study, an overview of several program and they key components is provided. The programs highlighted include CEISMIC, STEP, Office of Minority Education and Development (OMED), the Dual-Degree Program, the FOCUS Program and the FACES program. The FOCUS program alone is an undergraduate, graduate, and faculty recruitment program that has become a model for similar programs at other academic institutions. The FACES program is an NSF funded collaborative effort of Morehouse College, Spelman College, Emory University and Georgia Tech. This effort provides research funding to undergraduate students, graduate research fellowships, and a support program designed increase the number of under-represented persons in the professoriate. OMED provides highly effective academic support to undergraduate and graduate students and is financed by over 20 corporate sponsors and by state funds.

The role of leveraging funds from state and federal government, industry and private foundations in these efforts is discussed. First semester and cumulative grade point average data, retention rate data and graduation data are presented to assess the effectiveness of several of the academic support and retention programs covered. The role of engineering faculty involvement and collaboration with other universities is addressed.

The network of programs at Georgia Tech spans elementary school efforts through post-doctorate and portable faculty start-up grants designed to increase faculty diversity. The elements of these programs are found help make Georgia Tech the #1 producer of engineering degrees awarded to students from under-represented populations.