



The closing of True Blue Inclusion's final Great Idea Hunt Roundtable this month signaled an end to conceiving possible solutions to the women in engineering and computer science problem. **On September 14-15** at Texas A&M we will gather in a pathway forward solutions forum, *Writing the W into Engineering*, to develop a Blueprint for Action derived from insights gathered at the roundtable meetings. We want you to consider participating and contributing by joining others who are committed to creating innovative solutions.

The time for discussion is over. Join us. Whether you partner with True Blue Inclusion, Chevron and Intel to help in the creation of this gathering, or register as an individual, adding your voice will push us that much closer to bringing things to an even playing field. We can't do it without you. Sign up **SOON**, we have **65 slots left available** out of 150. You do not want to miss out on this opportunity.

Let me tell you what we learned from the roundtable discussions and what we are going to do about it in September!

These discussions provided many insights along with an overarching reality: something is broken, and it's not the women. So let's stop focusing our money and time on "fixing" girls and women. Engineering provides opportunities to engage in innovative work and acquire an impressive income; however, women are missing out. We have noted in our discussions diverse paradigms drive innovation. When we exclude women we are stunting creativity and innovation. Innovative paths build powerful agendas. We have the tools to change the reality before us.

Highlights from roundtable discussions include:

- The endless focus on "fixing" women to fit the culture of engineering and computer science is a red herring. Women are not broken. **Focus on the system that produces and employs an engineer.**
- In contrast to women's growing success in other STEM fields, engineering lags substantially in attracting, rewarding, advancing and keeping women at parity in a company's workforce.
- The culture engineers foster is overly male. It leaves little to no room for women. It is a problem and a barrier.
- Recognize women are an asset and an opportunity. **Half of the population is opting out of a field critical to our success as companies and as a nation.**
- Science, technology and math win early attention in grade and high school; engineering does not.
- Mentoring and sponsoring within companies is successful - almost essential. **Men, not just women, need to step into the gap.**

- Cross-gender management is perceived as more complicated by workplace managers. Ensuring that male engineers, both teachers and managers, are adept and comfortable with leading and providing actionable feedback to both men and women equally is a real need.
- There are successful “model” programs, but without widespread endemic benefit.
- Vibrant partnering between business and academia to **ensure gender balanced engineering and computer science classes is a fundamental need.**

The *Writing the W into Engineering Solutions Forum* agenda grew from more than six months of extensive and fact-based collecting of insight. In listening sessions throughout the US, nearly 100 participants contributed their thoughts and ideas. They came from various backgrounds; multinational companies, universities and nonprofits. These representatives were Diversity and Inclusion Leaders, HR Leaders, Engineers, Academicians and Students who each had a passion for the issue on the table.

During the ***Writing the W into Engineering*** forum we will engage in critical dialogue and create the BluePrint for Action. We are proud to announce **Shayla Rivera** will be facilitating our second day events. **Shayla** is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Engineering, a former Aerospace Engineer with NASA and well-known Keynote Speaker, Facilitator, Panel Moderator, TV Host and popular Comedian. Forum participants will be treated to critical dialogue and a blend of humor that only the unique talents of Rivera can offer.

Our hosts for the first day forum are two well-known and respected leaders in the Diversity & Inclusion world: S. Shariq Yosufzai, VP, Office of Global Diversity, Ombuds and University Partnerships & Association Relations at Chevron and Rosalind Hudnell, Vice President, Human Resources, Director, Corporate Affairs at Intel and President of the Intel Foundation. Our onsite hosts will be Texas A&M University's Chancellor John Sharp and Dean Katherine Banks from the School of Engineering.

Your voice, your concerns and your ideas for a better way for a new day will be brought to life by researchers, academics, trade associations and corporate leaders.

Our forum topics for the two-day discussion are listed below, with each explained in detail:

1. **Man Up: Why Men?**
2. **Women: Why so few? It's an “And” world. Attract and retain the best.**
3. **Difference Makes Me Strong: The resiliency of individuality.**

Three topics were derived from our six roundtables at:

- Estee Lauder in New York City on March 14th
- Rackspace in San Antonio, TX on April 8th
- Net App in San Jose, CA on April 22nd
- SAIC in Orlando on May 4th
- Mattel in Los Angeles on July 13th

I. Man Up: Why Men?

Let's be blunt. Engineering culture weighs against women. It's male-dominated and controlled, an environment mostly unfriendly to women. That's what we hear both quietly and in the open. Men have a critical role to play in accelerating change to a more inclusive culture – where women and men have equal opportunities to make contributions and advance to leadership roles. The actions that successfully breach this professional resistance have one thing in common: individual men in engineering taking on a personal responsibility to move women ahead.

- Individual change, not organizational change, is the difference-maker.
- Embedded personal values of engineering culture need to quickly evolve.
- One-to-one, he-for-she partnering needs to become an anchor point for change.
- Individuals need to alter the culture, not vice-versa.
- “I have to change” must replace “That’s the way it is.”

Session outcome: The Forum will examine how personal accountability is the key for growing gender equity in the engineering disciplines. It will be a complex and highly charged examination of why those who sustain the culture must step up to change it, person by person. The Forum will highlight examples of how men can accelerate change and make a difference. The candid and open dialogue will highlight how individuals can make personal immediate commitment to change their behaviors and the behaviors of other key influencers in their organization.

II. Women: Why so few? It's an “And” world. Attract and retain the best.

It's discouraging, but true. “Attracting and retaining” women in engineering is problem. Getting women or girls to decisively opt-in is as relevant as preventing career fall out. Bringing attention to the exciting opportunities that engineering represents for girls and women is just as important as understanding the reasons why women opt-out. Each year millions (billions) are invested in program. What's missing has been a collaborative and laser focused effort that is based on deep understanding of the issues for each target audience – young girls, teachers, professors and women in the workplace. Acquisition and retention strategies are different, but must share common values.

- Acquisition and retention strategies are different, but must share common values.
- Construct pathways for individuals, not groups, with personal reward and fulfillment.
- Personal and individual rewards falling far short of investment of time and energy.
- Academia and business need to share goals, recognize different tactics.
- Mirroring the spirit of Title IX can proactively advance engineering for women on campus and in business.

Session outcome: The Forum will examine unique solutions to attract women into engineering field, change the way we invest our resources and unearth the insights that will help us stop trailing all other disciplines with STEM.

III. Difference Makes Me Strong: The resiliency of individuality

Being a woman doesn't bring immunity to the affliction of unconscious discrimination. What the workplace needs is people who understand that every person has a different story, a different set of attributes and frailties . . . and how every individual is an essential part of the big picture.

- Gain a popular understanding of intersectionality.
- Examine the infusion of conscious and subconscious bias that perpetuate exclusion.
- Understand the implications of gender washing.
- Know that "You're like me" isn't always a compliment.
- Communicate personal stories for nuanced understanding.
- Acknowledging and acting on individual attributes builds strength.

Session outcome: The forum will lead the discussion on topics related to the intersections of gender, the implications of gender washing and the interconnectedness of collective struggle, with a specific focus on race and ethnicity. Engineering is a field where race and ethnicity is rarely discussed. The goal of the discussion is to develop a popular understanding of intersectionality and the negative implications of gender washing. We want to create an atmosphere for critical dialogue in which we examine the ways exclusion is perpetuated. At the center is a recognition that gender is only the broadest of unifiers; individual differences define the parameters of success. Understanding those differences, and building on them, is the way to ensure sustained success for women who choose engineering as a career. The Forum will offer participants ways to share personal views and develop collective counsel.

The agenda, focus areas, partnership brochure and registration guidelines are attached separately for your review. Should you have any questions, reach out to me by calling 202-345-6474 or sending a message via Catherine@trueblueinclusion.com. Time is of the essence, both for this Forum and the BluePrint for Action with solutions that we're creating while we're there. Please RSVP at your earliest convenience

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Catherine Smith", with a stylized, flowing script.

Catherine Smith, CEO, True Blue Inclusion