

A Model for Ensuring Diversity in Engineering Recruiting and Scholarship Administration

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The College of Engineering at NC State University, located in Raleigh, NC, USA, attracts some of the most talented high school students in the country. Each year, an entering freshman class of over 1200 new engineering students includes approximately 18% women and 20% minority students. The entire College of Engineering undergraduate and graduate enrollment of 7200 students comprises 19% women and 20% minority students. While our international reputation as a top-tier engineering university, coupled with academic scholarships, continue to attract a diverse set of entering freshmen, like other public engineering universities, recent changes affecting the management and administration of race-based scholarships pose serious recruiting challenges.

The NC State University College of Engineering has a long, rich tradition of recruiting, nurturing and graduating minority engineering students. As the national trend of declining enrollments of all students in engineering continues, our College of Engineering has managed to maintain or buck the trend by showing steady increases in our enrollment numbers and graduation rates.

In 1997, in anticipation of pending changes to race-based scholarship administration procedures, our College of Engineering administration made a bold yet strong restructuring to help insure a diverse student engineering population. After presenting an overview and enrollment profile discussion of our college, this paper will describe this administrative restructuring and its continuing impact on engineering diversity at NC State University. The paper continues with discussions of how these changes have altered other administrative units on campus, and a summary of our national engineering profile. The paper concludes with a discussion of challenges to continued success in student recruiting, retentions and graduation.