

Mega-Issue Dialogue

The Questions:

***How can SWE help corporations retain their women engineers?
What role can the COR play in this issue?***

As “the recognized authority on, and advocate for, women in engineering and technology”, SWE is in a unique position to provide insight and assistance to corporations wishing to retain more of their women engineers. SWE and the COR also have an obligation to their members, prospective members and customers to take an active role in this important issue.

The proposed goals and outcomes of this dialogue include: 1 – Provide feedback on the content and relevance of the white paper, 2 – Provide additional input to the two questions below (What can SWE do? and What can the COR do?), 3 – Provide additional input to the four Mega Issue questions listed below and 4 – Formalize this dialogue with a motion to request action of the Board, HQ and/or the COR as appropriate.

What can SWE do?

- Conduct diversity workshops for corporate managers and HR personnel
- Provide a comprehensive list of best practices compiled from the vast resources available on the internet
- Provide a formal paper or report to companies, similar to the white paper written for this discussion
- Conduct a workshop at the annual Conference for the corporate attendees of the Career Fair and Exhibits
- Create a web page on swe.org dedicated to this issue
- Use the resources, knowledge and expertise of the members of the Corporate Partnership Council to insure that any and all external communications are relevant and useful to companies
- **Others?**

What can the COR do?

- Request and encourage the Board and HQ to take action on this issue
- Provide valuable member input to the Board and HQ
- Provide members to assist the Board and HQ in the preparation of materials
- Serve as a sounding board for any actions taken
- Distribute any resulting materials to our employers
- **Others?**

To conduct this dialogue, we need to identify what we know in relation to the issue at hand. To do this, we must answer the following four questions relative to the Mega Issue question:

1. What do we know about the needs, wants and preferences of our members, prospective members and customers relevant to this discussion?

- Members want to work in rewarding, fulfilling jobs
- Members want their employers to have more respect for them and their work
- Members need more flexibility to balance their work and family responsibilities
- Members want corporations to actively address diversity issues
- Members want more from their jobs than just a paycheck
- Members want to contribute to the success of the companies they work for
- Corporations want to retain more of their women engineers
- SWE has already been approached by some of our corporate sponsors asking for our input
- Corporations are concerned about losing their competitive advantage
- Members want SWE to provide input to corporations on this issue
- COR members can provide specific insights to their companies and their policies
- **Others?**

2. What do we know about the current and evolving dynamics of our profession relevant to this discussion?

- The technical workforce is shrinking or at best remaining steady, it is not growing
- Women recognize that they can do more with their technical background than work in a traditional engineering job
- Women are willing to take personal and professional risks to reach their goals in life
- Women provide valuable technical and managerial contributions to their organizations
- Women are starting their own businesses at a greater rate than men
- Engineering is still a largely a male dominated field
- **Others?**

3. What do we know about the strategic position and internal capacity of our organization relevant to this discussion?

- SWE has limited funds for professionally generated documents, printing and postage
- SWE can use the talents of its membership to provide the content of any or all of the communications
- SWE has access to resources available through Bostrom
- SWE is one of the best resources available to provide information on this issue to corporations
- SWE can draw on the vast volumes of information already available on the issue from the internet
- The SWE website is becoming a valuable resource for companies looking to get more information about women in engineering
- The COR can deliberate and dialogue on this issue and provide valuable input
- **Others?**

4. What are the ethical implications of our choices relevant to this discussion?

- SWE can only offer suggestions and recommendations on the issue, we can not make demands
- Women employed in corporations may have access to corporate funding for travel to Conference and other SWE meetings, increasing the attendance at those events
- By assisting companies with this important issue, more companies may become willing to become corporate members

- By assisting companies with this important issue, more women may see value in SWE and become members, renew their membership and/or participate more in SWE
- Current and future engineering students will benefit because they will be employed by companies that will do more to help them achieve their goals in life
- **Others?**