Personal Experiences with Diversity in Engineering
• What percentage of engineering majors at UW are African American?

• What percentage of engineering majors at UW are Women?
Statistics

UW Bachelor’s Degrees by gender and race/ethnicity in 2007

UW CoE Undergraduate Student Numbers:

Total enrollment: 3,806 degrees awarded in 2007: 702

(Source: PEERs seminar week 2 lecture)
Engineering Stereotypes

- White male
- Good at math
- Introverted
- Nerdy
“I have learned to overcome many obstacles in my life, but I have no complaints.

I’m proud of myself for overcoming these great obstacles. I have learned that the more I put into my own accomplishments, the more I receive back and the more I’m able to give to others.

It’s a great life.”
Stereotype Threat

“Stereotype threat refers to being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype” (Steele & Aronson, 1995)

reactance
decreased performance

internal attributions for failure  task discounting

altered professional identities and aspirations  self-handicapping

disengagement and disidentification  distancing self from the stereotyped group
Privilege

• “unearned advantage”

• Privilege can affect many different groups

• Awareness is important for identifying privilege

• Obstacles for minorities and women in engineering may not be experienced by every student
Groups affected by stereotype threat and privilege in the engineering community:

• Minorities
• Women
• People with disabilities

Diversity in engineering can reduce the affects of stereotype threat and increase awareness of privilege.
Promoting Diversity

Diversity benefits the entire engineering community!

Ways for students to promote diversity:

• Encourage awareness of diversity issues

• be respectful of different cultures and beliefs

• Create diverse study groups and project groups in classes