

Interactive Panel Discussion Summary: Advancing Organizational Culture for Improved Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to Support Talent Recruitment/Retention

*IDEAL Summit at SAE AeroTech Digital Summit
Tuesday, March 9, 2021 1:45pm ET*

Organizer/Moderator:

Gina Covarrubias, Deliberate Doing LLC

Panelists:

*Jennifer Bunch, Sevilla West School
Sabrina Chapman, Northrop Grumman Corp.
Elizabeth Crisler, Textron Aviation
Mia DeLaRosa, Sevilla West School
Amy Grace, Pratt & Whitney
Robert Ireland, Airlines for America
Hattie Rice, University of Colorado, Boulder
Laura Wontrop Klauser, General Motors*



Panel moderator **Gina Covarrubias**, Engineering Life Coach, Deliberate Doing, welcomed guests and provided an overview of the SAE Foundation, whose mission is to deliver equitable PreK – 16 hands-on STEM education to inspire diverse, STEM-fluent innovators.

Gina spoke about the Foundation's three-pronged approach to STEM education, which includes training for teachers and volunteers, engaging volunteers and giving teachers hands-on tools to deliver hands-on STEM programming.

The SAE Foundation has served more than 6 million students and engaged more than 30,000 industry volunteers while increasing student achievement in STEM in a meaningful way. See the SAE STEM programs in action:

<https://youtu.be/mJ42B1RE330>

Gina encouraged attendees to explore ways to support the foundation through individual donations, engaging their companies in supporting the SAE Foundation or by volunteering with SAE's STEM programs.

SAE Scholarship Student Recognitions

Gina introduced four SAE scholarship recipients and each of them provided a short introduction. **Sarah Kinney**, recipient of the *Donald and Barbara Mozley Scholarship* spoke about her research related to air acoustics.

James McWhorter, recipient of the *SAE International Undergraduate Scholarship*, explained how his love of aerospace started when he was building model airplanes as a kid and he's excited about a career designing aircraft.

Carl Bertolino, recipient of the *Tau Beta Pi/SAE Engineering Scholarship* is a private pilot and is pursuing a career in aircraft design and structural/aerodynamic modeling.



Get involved today!

- **Donate** and help keep STEM learning alive saefoundation.org/give
- **Volunteer** and make an impact <https://www.sae.org/participate/volunteer>
- Explore **Corporate Partner** opportunities foundation@sae.org



Watch the video to see SAE STEM programs in action

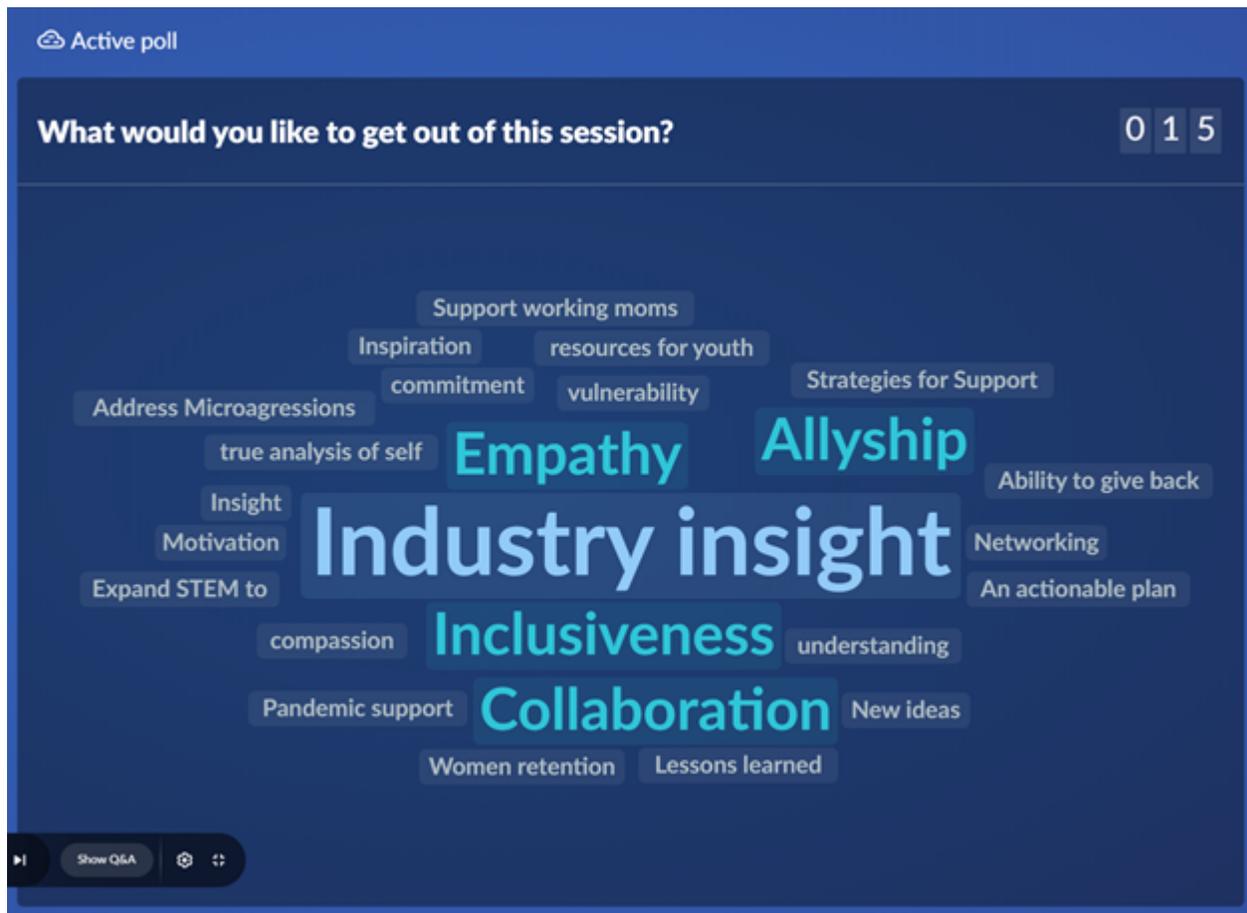
Hattie Rice, recipient of the SAE International Undergraduate Scholarship is now working as an instrument engineering research assistant. Her work involves modeling satellites on earth to predict their performance in space.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Panel Discussion

Gina introduced the session panelists and began the discussion with two poll questions for attendees: What is your current role?

- 27% Executive/Manager
- 23% Students
- 19% Sales/Development
- 15% HR/Community Relations/STEM Outreach
- 15% Engineering/Technical

What would you like to get out of this session?



Gina asked the panelists what they or their organizations are doing related to the areas of “promoting women, micro-aggression, compassion and having an actionable plan for DEI”.

Bob Ireland shared that there is shortage of women in airline maintenance. Over the next 20 years, it's predicted by Boeing that there will be hundreds of thousands jobs open worldwide that we won't be able to fill without diverse candidates, including women. Bob reiterated that the industry simply can't survive without including all people of all genders, races and ethnicities. Bob also shared an example of the work JetBlue is doing to encourage young women to enter the aerospace industry.



Sabrina Chapman shared that Northrup Grumman surveys employees regularly on a variety of topics, including DEI and they share the results with employees. She finds this to be an effective strategy to identify what the company is lacking and how to address those deficiencies/areas for improvement. She has also seen the company enacting their action plan and feels that it has been helpful for employee retention. Sabrina added that resources for youth are sometimes limited by where you live.

Amy Grace has a DEI group at Pratt Whitney. There is a lot more dialogue across the org, especially over the past year. One effective strategy has been fireside chats with executives. Has been impressed with open/transparent conversations. She sees it driving change. Listening to understand has been a big theme at the company over the past year.

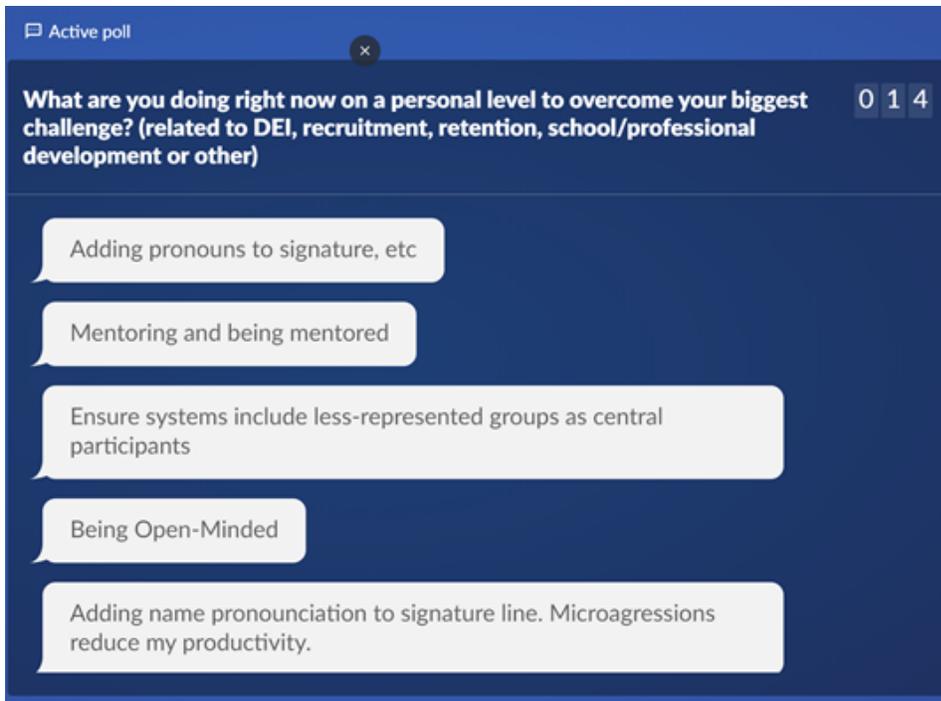
Liz Crisler said DEI initiatives are fairly new at Textron Aviation but this work has grown over the past year. She stressed that organic/grass roots efforts within companies can be a great place to start incorporating DEI into a corporate culture. She feels it's important to take the time to see what areas are important to employees and where they want the company to grow. She also pointed out that they use Yammer to engage these conversations.

Hattie Rice shared that she's been fortunate to have always had support to pursue STEM. She's had mentors who have had to fight for their place in the industry and they are helping others coming up behind them. She's also part of Out In STEM, an LGBTQ+ group at her organization and is active in helping to expand equity in this area. She feels that as long as companies are trying to include underrepresented groups, it makes a difference to employees and to the culture. Even if it's not perfect, and the company doesn't have an actionable plan, making effort towards DEI helps people feel welcome.

Mia DeLaRosa stressed that people need to be 'comfortable with the uncomfortable' because these issues are so complex and that we are working with a 250-year-old system that is structurally built to promote inequity. Mia shared the importance of executives addressing the structure of inequity. Allies in powerful positions can help change the system. Less than 13% of engineering jobs belong to Hispanic females. Once these women have these roles, how are they treated? In order for the 'others' to feel comfortable in these spaces, Mia stressed that we need trust and we need allies; we need much more than an occasional workplace in-service.

Laura Klauser said that GM has been a leader in DEI and inclusion is a corporate pillar. They have different minority groups that are active within the company and this gives people an opportunity to share experiences with like individuals. On the racing side, it's a small group but she feels that she has the support of GM behind her. Laura shares Mia's viewpoint that it takes a combination of grass roots and executive support to build DEI as a top corporate priority.

Gina launched the next poll question: What are you doing now on a personal level to overcome your biggest challenge related to DEI, recruitment, retention, school/professional development or other?



Top results from the poll included responses such as: having uncomfortable conversations, learning, listening, mentoring, being open-minded, adding pronouns to signature, adding name pronunciation to signature to combat microaggression, and building diverse network of experts.

With the second poll question in mind, Gina asked panelists to expand on other things they are doing.

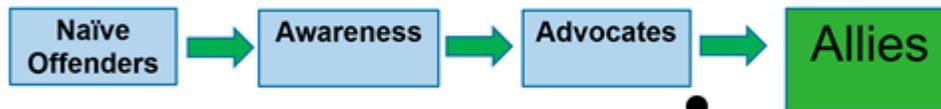
Amy Grace said she is working with communications team to cultivate excitement around data science to let people know of the opportunities that exist in that field. In her previous role at Collins, mentoring led to increased interest from young women in their group. This was a great way to get started, as it enabled them to begin recruiting more young women.

Gina Covarrubias said that telling our story could have a profound impact on others. **Sabrina Chapman** added that telling our story ties into mentorship. She was the third person in her family to go to college. She can share that story with others as well as sharing with them mistakes that she made that they may be able to avoid.

Hattie Rice is a first-generation college student. At the university, she felt that they had women interact with the dean to “boast their diversity stats” but the actual DEI resources within the university are more hidden. She works mostly with straight white men and feels that there is a strong need for education on the ground level, versus the executive level. She wishes she could make all of her peers see things through someone else’s lens. Even things like adding pronouns on Zoom, etc. are helpful to shed a light on things that some people may not be aware of. She also stressed the need for people to have conversations and commit to ongoing learning.

Mia DeLaRosa reviewed a flow chart showing the path to inclusive and engaging relationships.

Path to inclusive and engaging relationships



Personal and Professional

How can you help others to be their best and thrive?



Created by Adrien Colpnet
from Noun Project

Mia explained how allies stick up for the underdog when it's uncomfortable; when it's tough. Mia feels the most important take-away is that underrepresented groups cannot ever be their own allies. People in power have to will it. With inclusion, companies thrive.

Gina gave the panelists an opportunity to share final remarks.

Amy Grace said any time you see an opportunity, even in the smallest way, you should try to be an ally and that doing that can lead to positive change.

Liz Crisler echoed Amy's remarks and agrees that little things can make a big difference – things like using pronouns in your signature or profile, etc. She also added that most people tend to refer to 'diversity and inclusion' but she believes it should be 'inclusion and diversity' because without inclusion, you can't have diversity.

Laura Klauser expressed appreciation for all that she learned in the session.

Sabrina Chapman stressed that everyone needs to do their part both with their coworkers and throughout their companies to make DEI a priority.

Bob Ireland shared that he feels the last year has laid bare a lot of blind spots and that at his company. In daily meetings, they now include learning about DC's rich black history and that has been a learning experience for him.

Hattie Rice added that we live in the age of information and it's easy to research things and become knowledgeable. She suggested that all of us should take advantage of the resources available to learn as much as we can. She reiterated the importance of asking difficult questions in a respectful way.