

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology's Carlotta Berry Changing the Face of STEM Education

Professor Carlotta Berry recently earned TechPoint Foundation for Youth's Bridge Builder Award for inspiring underserved student populations in STEM careers.

TERRE HAUTE, IN, UNITED STATES, April 26, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Black engineering faculty matter.

That's the assertion [Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology](#) electrical and computer engineering professor Carlotta Berry and others within the Black in Engineering community have undertaken to inspire positive change, share experiences and stand in solidarity with activism efforts for Black people in America.



Carlotta Berry, PHD, professor of electrical and computer engineering, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

"We want to see some changes in the academy. It is time for us to have our say," says Berry.

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I wanted to change the face of engineering by showing that the profession could be cool, interesting, exciting, engaging, and, most importantly, diverse.”

Carlotta Berry, PhD, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

After all, she points out that Black faculty represent only 2.4% of faculty in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Berry is among a network of about 400 Black engineering and computer science faculty. After George Floyd's death in late May 2020 brought forth Black Lives Matters protests nationwide, Black academics and scholars began discussing their shared experiences with discrimination, marginalization and alienation within higher education, through the hashtag #BlackInTheIvory.

"I was intrigued to read about the accounts of other professors but was severely disappointed to see that there was almost nothing about engineering or computer science faculty," says Berry, whose efforts have come during a sabbatical leave from Rose-Hulman

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for the 2020-21 school year. "I came back to the network and worked with Monica Cox (of Ohio State University) and Tahira Redid (of Purdue University) to set up a call-to-action meeting where we could discuss social justice and what we could do to improve the climate for STEM faculty and help institutions promote inclusion and be anti-racist."

The result has been a Black Engineering Faculty Speak video series, co-produced by Berry, that approached such topics as "What it means to be Black in Robotics?," "When did you fall in love with engineering?" and "We Rise."

Other Black engineering colleagues playing key roles in the project have been Leroy Long, III of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Brooke Coley of Arizona State University.

Berry remarks, "Our goal was to not only create a media blitz by having several videos but also a website and platform with a call to action and concrete action items similar to [BlackInComputing.org](https://blackincomputing.org) ... We have received lots of positive responses, but most of all we want to see some changes in the academy.

"I became an engineering professor 20 years ago while sitting in class and realizing that I had never had a professor who looked like me, acted like me, or even seemed interested in me. I wanted to change the face of engineering by showing that the profession could be cool, interesting, exciting, engaging, and, most importantly, diverse," she said.

Berry's efforts have been recognized by many of late. She received the TechPoint Foundation for Youth's 2021 Bridge Builder Award, recognizing visionary leaders who are helping underserved student populations in Indiana gain access to experiential learning opportunities that inspire the pursuit of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). She recently was named Rose-Hulman's esteemed [Lawrence J. Giacoletto Endowed Faculty Chair](#) for her commitment to excellence in STEM education, and she was named among Women in Robotics' 30 Women in Robotics You Need to Know About – 2020.

George Giltner, president and CEO of TechPoint Foundation for Youth, says, "Carlotta has been an advocate and provider of STEM education for students for over a decade, helping bring competitive robotics to the forefront of education and helping support students who are typically not represented in STEM fields. She has been a valuable partner of the Foundation and we are honored to recognize her efforts in the STEM community at the 2021 Mira Awards gala (a

virtual event April 22 in Indianapolis)."

Berry co-founded Rose-Hulman's Building Undergraduate Diversity (RoseBUD) program, encouraging students from underrepresented groups toward STEM careers; helped student scholars organize an annual SPARK! campus event that has high school and college students working on hands-on projects; and has been a volunteer and judge for FIRST Robotics competitions throughout Indiana. She received FIRST Indiana Robotics' 2020 Gamechanger Award and been recognized as one of INSIGHT Into Diversity's Inspiring Women in STEM and a Leading Light Award winner from Indianapolis' Women & Hi Tech organization. A profile about her featured in Reinvented magazine was named the publication's top story of 2020.

"We're proud to see Dr. Berry getting much-deserved recognition for being a longtime leader in STEM education, especially in getting youths interested in engineering through robotics, says Rose-Hulman President Robert A. Coons. "Her passion for teaching and enthusiasm for helping others are contagious as an educator, mentor, academic adviser, and faculty colleague."

A member of the Rose-Hulman's faculty since 2006, Berry has taught courses from mobile robotics to human robot interaction to electrical engineering design. She also is an adviser for the National Society of Black Engineers and a past president of the technical editorial board for the American Society of Engineering Education's Computers in Education professional journal.

Learn more about Berry in [her Rose-Hulman profile](#).

About Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Founded in 1874, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology is dedicated to preparing its students with the world's best undergraduate science, engineering and mathematics education in an environment infused with innovation, intellectual rigor and individualized attention. The institute is consistently recognized nationally as an elite STEM school for distinctions that include faculty excellence, return on investment, value-added, and career services. Career placement is near 100 percent year after year. Located in Terre Haute, Indiana, Rose-Hulman has an enrollment of approximately 2,000 undergraduate students and nearly 100 graduate students. Learn more at rose-hulman.edu.

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