



USF Earns Top Honor at National Society of Black Engineers Convention

College of Engineering chapter recognized as best in Region 3.

By Brad Stager

TAMPA, Fla. (April 6, 2017) – The University of South Florida Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (USF-NSBE) earned recognition as Region 3 Medium Chapter of the Year, at the National Society's 43rd Annual Convention, held March 29 - April 2 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Chapters were ranked on a variety of criteria such as number of members, scholarly achievement, growth and chapter programs and activities.

The USF chapter increased its membership to 57, up from 33 a year ago, with about nine percent of its members improving their GPA. Activities include workshops such as developing effective resume and interview skills, networking with engineering professionals and engaging in community outreach such as participating in Habitat for Humanity projects and establishing a NSBE Jr. chapter at a local high school.

According to the NSBE website, “Region III consists of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Caribbean, and South America.”

Chapter President Jonielle McDonnough says the recognition reflects the chapter’s ability to combine the talents of its members and of people willing to help.

“We used our own resources but we also reached out to people who helped us in the past, such as mentors and advisors who could help us professionally with interview skills and how to deal with different kinds of situations.”

College of Engineering Diversity and Inclusion Programs Director Bernard Batson says the chapter’s influence is substantial within the USF community, and beyond the campus.

"The chapter engages in signature programming throughout the academic year that promote greater diversity in the engineering professions. These activities range from serving as weekend tutors for local K-12 students within [USF's Urban Scholars Program](#), establishing a NSBE Jr. chapter at Middleton High School, providing an organizational exhibit during USF Engineering Expo, and collaborating with other campus organizations through workshops and other events. NSBE students are great ambassadors for the College of Engineering and USF!"

Members of the USF Chapter of NSBE have themselves become mentors to a succeeding generation of engineering professionals by sponsoring an NSBE Jr. chapter at Middleton High School in Tampa. Middleton High School is a magnet school with Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs in engineering, computer systems engineering, computer game design and biomedical-biotechnology.

McDonnough says USF-NSBE reaped great benefit and satisfaction from the project.

"It was our first time doing something like this and we learned a lot. It was awesome for us."

The relationship USF-NSBE members formed with the Middleton students reflects what they try to do for their members, as well as their peers who may be considering a future in engineering.

"We're an organization who wants to impact our community and help people reach their potential," says McDonnough.

Batson says he has witnessed the benefits students accrue by participating in USF-NSBE activities that help them achieve high expectations reflective of the organization's values.

"First, we expect the students to become outstanding engineering professionals whatever careers they decide to pursue. It is inspiring for our NSBE members to meet and bond with USF graduates and former officers of their chapter during the Annual National Conference who are now working at Intel, Boeing, J&J, Procter & Gamble and other companies we have placed engineering alumni.

"Second, we hope that they will continue throughout their professional careers to stay engaged in supporting NSBE's mission which is to "increase the number of culturally responsible African American engineers, who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community."

The USF chapter began in 1976 as the Society for the Advancement of Minorities in Engineering and Sciences (SAMES), an affiliate chapter of NSBE, to promote recruitment, retention, and the successful graduation of prospective engineers. In 1998, the chapter renamed the organization to reflect its affiliation with the National Society of Black Engineers.

You can learn more about USF-NSBE by visiting <http://www.usfnsbe.com/> or sending an email to president.usf.nsbe@gmail.com.