



FIRST For All - Workshop #3

Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Students

Workshop Insights - 11/21/2024

1. Changing Team Culture

- **Panelists:**
 - Promote inclusion by ensuring everyone on the team participates in outreach and business aspects, preventing stereotyping of roles.
 - Provide low-risk technical opportunities for underrepresented members to build confidence (e.g., smaller technical tasks with room for error).
 - Encourage cultural shifts that make all roles, technical and non-technical, equally valued.
 - **Students:**
 - Diverse leadership makes minority groups feel more represented and comfortable.
 - Hosting fun, inclusive events (e.g., playing games during lunch, creating meme buttons) helps foster a welcoming environment.
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2. Recruiting Underrepresented Groups

- **Panelists:**
 - Partner with organizations like NSBE, SHPE, and Black Girls Code to reach a broader audience and gain mentorship opportunities.
 - Showcase successful alumni or team members from underrepresented groups to inspire new recruits.
 - Engage directly with schools or communities with underrepresented populations by hosting events or demonstrations.
 - **Students:**
 - Freshman orientations to showcase the team and lower intimidation for potential recruits.
 - Collaborate with other school clubs to share team culture.
 - Use targeted yet inclusive messaging when advertising to underrepresented groups.
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3. Retaining and Engaging Underrepresented Members

- **Panelists:**



- Break stereotypes by having the entire team contribute to outreach and business roles.
 - Foster peer-to-peer mentorship relationships, pairing new members with experienced team members.
 - Create spaces where diverse voices can share input safely, even when leadership tends to dominate discussions.
 - **Students:**
 - Create subcommittees focusing on inclusion (e.g., "Rainbow Narwhals" for LGBTQ+ outreach).
 - Host social hangouts to reduce hierarchical barriers and build friendships.
 - Encourage leadership to spend downtime interacting with new or underrepresented members.
 - Ensure team leaders are approachable, emphasizing inclusivity in the leadership pipeline.
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4. Overcoming Gender Bias in Technical Roles

- **Panelists:**
 - Address the trend of girls gravitating to business roles by emphasizing that technical roles are accessible and valuable.
 - Provide non-intimidating pathways into technical work to build confidence without fear of failure.
 - **Students:**
 - Advocate for underrepresented members in group discussions and ensure their ideas are acknowledged.
 - Assign roles intentionally to challenge stereotypes while respecting individual interests.
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5. Measuring Diversity

- **Panelists:**
 - Use school or local demographic statistics as benchmarks to evaluate team diversity.
 - Focus on representation within the context of the team's surrounding community.
- **Students:**
 - Recognize and celebrate diverse achievements, creating a team culture that values all contributions.



6. Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

- **Panelists:**
 - Encourage team-building activities that include everyone, from technical members to business-focused individuals.
 - Regularly check in with team members to ensure their needs are being met.
 - **Students:**
 - Treat teammates like family and maintain a zero-tolerance policy for disrespect.
 - Celebrate diverse cultural backgrounds and neurodivergence by integrating team practices like “play lava monster during lunch.”
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7. General Strategies for Equity and Inclusion

- **Panelists:**
 - Highlight how engineering and technical work impacts the real world to inspire interest and engagement.
 - Provide guidance for balancing inclusivity with accountability for members who do not actively participate.
- **Students:**
 - Form spaces such as all-girls FLL teams to teach advocacy skills that can carry into higher education or professional careers.
 - Conduct weekly meetings for team bonding and sharing updates to keep members engaged and informed.