

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESS

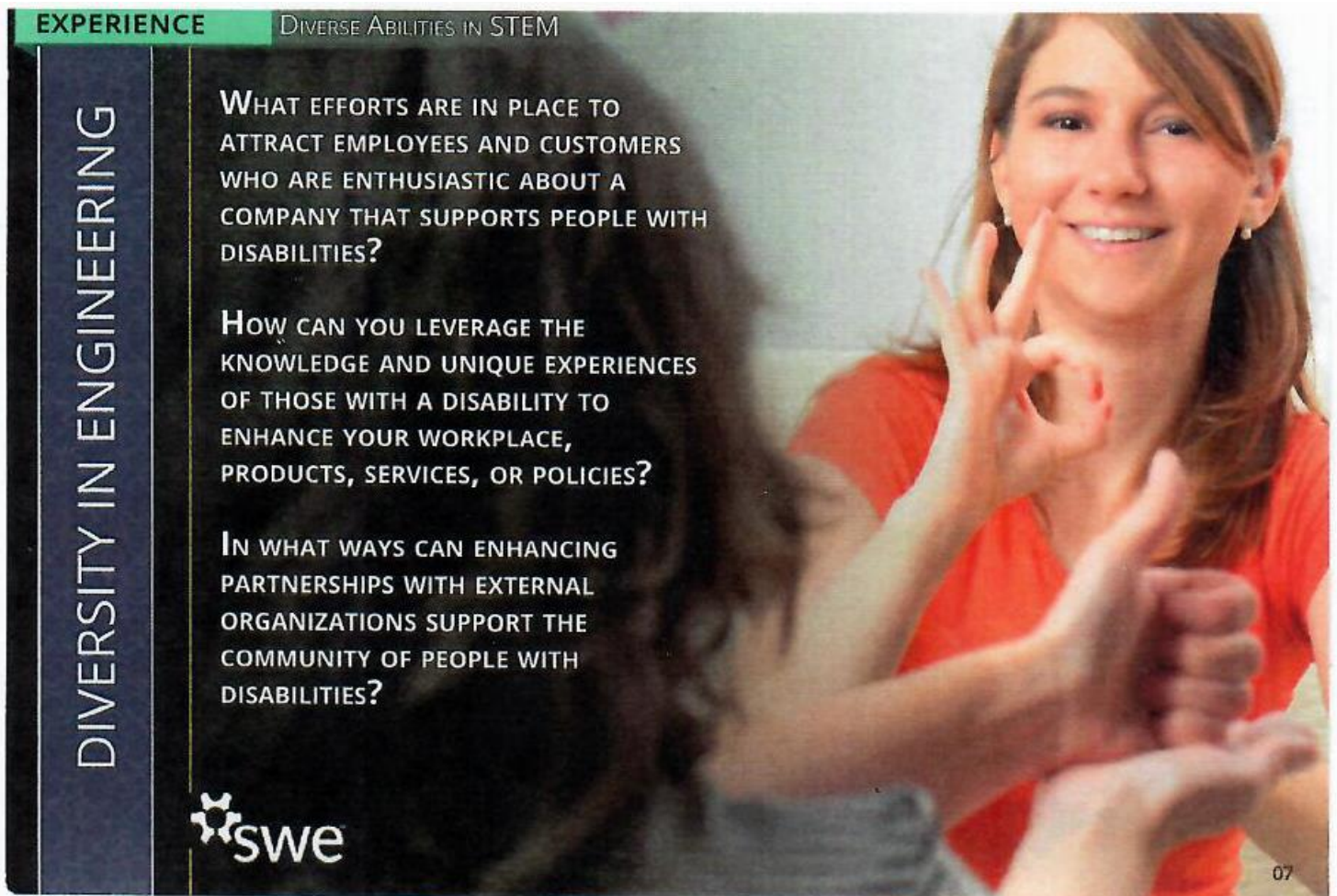
mines.edu/diversity

Diversity Moment: Underrepresented Groups

Diverse Abilities

How to use this Inclusion Solution card in a group setting:

- Review the questions on the front of the card to help anchor the topic
- Extend a few minutes of personal reflection
- Ask individuals to relate the topic to the current work environment and/or campus climate and what a future state might look like
- Create a dialogue on how the topic might create innovative thoughts, new direction for programs/classroom instruction/services, or ways to address challenges in the work environment and the campus climate




EXPERIENCE DIVERSE ABILITIES IN STEM

DIVERSITY IN ENGINEERING

WHAT EFFORTS ARE IN PLACE TO ATTRACT EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS WHO ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT A COMPANY THAT SUPPORTS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

HOW CAN YOU LEVERAGE THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNIQUE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WITH A DISABILITY TO ENHANCE YOUR WORKPLACE, PRODUCTS, SERVICES, OR POLICIES?

IN WHAT WAYS CAN ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?



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The card features a background image of two women, one in a red shirt and one in a grey shirt, both smiling and making hand gestures. The text is overlaid on the left side of the card.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

EXPERIENCE

Diverse Abilities in STEM

"Alexander Graham Bell was exploring ways to help the deaf when he invented the telephone." Cynthia Brinkley, Senior Vice President, Talent Development & Chief Diversity Officer, AT&T.

Better representation of women and minorities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) is often a key topic when it comes to diversity and inclusion. What often doesn't make the spotlight is the lack of representation of people with disabilities. Although this issue is not limited to just STEM, disabled students seeking degrees often face great challenges entering the field unaware of accommodations or resources available to help them pursue their careers. Those that do make it to the workplace don't always feel comfortable sharing their disability—which is oftentimes invisible—with their peers, making it difficult for organizations to support their needs.

Many of our scientists, engineers, and mathematicians may not readily appear disabled, but could have learning disabilities, mental illnesses, or other non-evident disabilities. It is difficult for an organization to offer accommodations that might help STEM employees work more effectively or get accurate statistics on representation when disabilities are not evident or shared. Although fostering inclusion for persons with disabilities is difficult in any field, STEM has a tremendous opportunity to benefit from the great minds dedicated to innovation, technology, and thought leadership. Here is one example of how a diverse ability can be leveraged for innovation.

Google Engineer

T.V. Raman, is a highly respected computer scientist and engineer at Google. Raman led the work on Android accessibility for Google, as a person who is blind. In an article for the *New York Times* on technology for the blind, Raman's approach was praised for the impact his Android Accessibility designs had on the broader public. "Instead of asking how something should work if a person cannot see," he says he prefers to ask, "How should something work when the user is not looking at the screen?" His approach reflects a recognition that many innovations designed primarily for people with disabilities have benefited the masses.

HIDDEN FACTS

People with disabilities constitute the nation's largest minority group, and the **ONLY** group any of us can become a member of at any time.

Of the 69.6 million families in the United States, **more than 20 million** have at least one family member with a disability.



Source: *Disability and American Families: 2000*. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/censr-23.pdf>. Note that no disability data was collected in Census 2010.

SOURCE: U.S. Chamber of Commerce: "Business Leadership Network on Disability at Work, Leading Practices on Disability Inclusion" (https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/reports/Disability_final_v2.pdf), 2012 Disability Status Report United States (http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2012-PDF/2012-StatusReport_US.pdf#cgi.SCRIPT_NAME), S.E. Smith, "Where Are All the Disabled Scientists?", *Xojane*, 2012. Miguel Helft, *For the Blind, Technology Does What a Guide Dog Can't*, *New York Times*, Jan. 3, 2009.

Associated services/resources at Mines

- [Disability Support Services \(DSS\)](#)

Reference:

"Inclusion Solutions: Discussing a Diverse Culture is in the Cards," *Lessons Learned Consulting, Inc.*, 2016.