Building Bridges: Underrepresented Engineers, Employers, and Club Participation
Identifying Our Issue

There is a huge representation gap in the STEM field.

- Underrepresented engineers earned only 4.3% master degree and 4.9% doctorate degree in the engineering field\(^1\)
- Structural biases: minority students face additional barriers in engineering that distract from academic and professional success.
- To close the existing gap, we need to increase opportunities to develop allyship within the field.
  - Mentorship, student sense of support, and acknowledgement of issues of underrepresentation all improve minority student retention professionally and academically.

Motivation

>> “Your team did such great work in Concrete Canoe, how did you hear about it?”

>> “A friend of mine invited me to the meetings!”

>> “I’m an Civil Engineering undergraduate, my advisor recommended I compete.”

- Participation in large UW competitions is powerful: can be leveraged to secure job interviews and to improve engineering skills.

- The network of participation is localized: yet, students of disparate and underrepresented backgrounds are interested in these opportunities as well!
Proposal: Team-Forming Mixer + Showcase

Who:
- **Industry Sponsors**: company seeking to hire engineers of varied backgrounds
- **Competitive organizations** seeking to build teams for their competition cycle
- **Members of minority interest orgs.** for engineers (SWE, NSBE, SHPE, STARS)

What:
- Team-Forming Mixer event with Sponsor engineers present. *(Fall)*
- Showcase Evening to highlight project successes in front of sponsors. *(Spring)*
Project Timeline

**Fall**
Team Formation Mixer

1. One-evening jigsaw-style team challenge.
2. Student org debriefs.
3. Interested student sign-up symposium.

**Winter-Spring**
Competition Season

With diverse teams recruited from Fall mixer, students compete in their respective competitions.

**Early Spring**
Team Showcase

1. Industry sponsors invited to attend showcase.
2. Students present the successes from competition, opportunity to share progress with recruiting engineers.
Ideal Outcomes - Does Everyone Benefit?

Student-Group Benefits:
- Introduction to clubs/groups who could provide relevant skills or experiences
- Jump-off point for getting a foot in the door with companies

Club/Team Benefits:
- Opportunity to meet with potential sponsors
- Chance for to meet/recruit new members from relevant majors
- Platform to showcase the club’s work in front of students and sponsors

Industry Sponsor Benefits:
- Exposure to projects that may align with company’s focus
- Connections to students from diverse backgrounds
- Foundation to establish pipeline/presence to future engineers