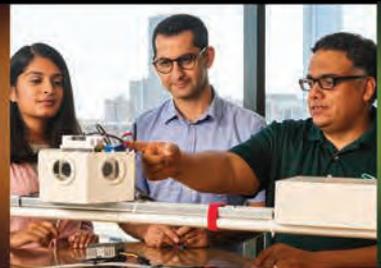


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# API'S MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS INITIATIVE

**API is proud to partner with minority serving institutions to provide free access to our library of world-class standards**

Nearly 50% of job opportunities through 2040 in the natural gas, oil and petrochemical industries are projected to be filled by individuals that identify as African American, Hispanic, Asian or non-white. Through API's Minority Serving Institutions Initiative, API is working with higher education to help prepare this workforce by supplying students with industry standards and practical knowledge that will be directly applicable to their future careers.

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Learn more about our work toward a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce at [www.API.org/MSI-Initiative](http://www.API.org/MSI-Initiative)

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American  
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# Investing in Inclusion and Diversity is Investing in the Future

*Research shows diversity delivers value to organizations.*

By **Molly Determan**, Energy Workforce & Technology Council

“The greater the representation, the higher the likelihood of outperformance.”

—Molly Determan

I recently read in a survey published by Momentive that 47% of C-suite executives believe diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are a distraction from their company’s real work, and I was astounded.

I hope this finding isn’t an accurate reflection of what executives think. I believed corporate leaders understood the business value of a diverse team. The study left me wondering whether I have been naïve or blind to reality. Do we have an even tougher job than we realize to show the business imperative of an inclusive culture?

While we know there is considerable work ahead to achieve meaningful change, the study shines a light on the need to continue educating by the numbers. Not only is this the right thing to do, but diverse companies perform better in an array of business measures.

With the growing globalization of the economy and the energy industry, continuing to improve diversity and inclusion (D&I) throughout the energy services and technology sector is an opportunity to accelerate the growth and innovation we’ll need to meet rising energy demands and reduce emissions.

The Energy Workforce & Technology Council has partnered with Accenture and recently published a study that found that the percentage of women in the sector rose from 16% in 2018 to nearly 20% in 2021 despite widespread workforce disruptions caused by the pandemic. The report also set a benchmark of 25% for racial and ethnic groups employed in the sector. Improving gender diversity against the backdrop of a global pandemic is encouraging, but the study shows we must continue making progress to create the kind of inclusive workforce the sector will need.

While C-suite executives may consider D&I a distraction, research continues to show companies benefit from establishing an inclusive leadership team and workforce. Businesses with inclusive cultures report significant increases in creativity, innovation, openness and profitability. This is because when we work with people who are different, we’re exposed to new ideas and new ways of thinking. This opens the door to questions about why we do things in certain ways and break out of the “this is how we’ve always done it” rut.

According to management consulting firm McKinsey & Co., companies with gender diversity on their executive team were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability and value creation. Companies with ethnic diversity in the C-suite were 36% more likely to have above-average profits. The greater the representation, the higher the likelihood of outperformance.

With younger people placing greater value on a culture of diversity, it is mission critical for services and technology companies seeking to recruit the next generation of talent. The Momentive survey found that two-thirds of workers under age 45 think D&I initiatives are an important factor in the company’s ability to drive success.

## Tracking, evaluating and identifying

Working through the Energy Workforce & Technology Council, energy services and technology companies are taking concrete steps to improve performance in this area. The 2018 and 2021 studies demonstrate the value of giving visibility to D&I metrics. This year’s update allowed the sector to track metrics, evaluate what is working and identify tangible ways to improve.

Companies active with the council have access to training opportunities and resources. The council serves as a repository of best practices for companies to increase diversity, including how to best use employee resource groups and providing sponsorship program models. The council is also brokering partnerships to increase diversity in talent and recruitment pipelines.

Another essential component available to companies through the council is networking opportunities to share experiences and strategies from peers. This process can help companies identify blind spots, streamline efforts and lead to meaningful change. As each company advances, the

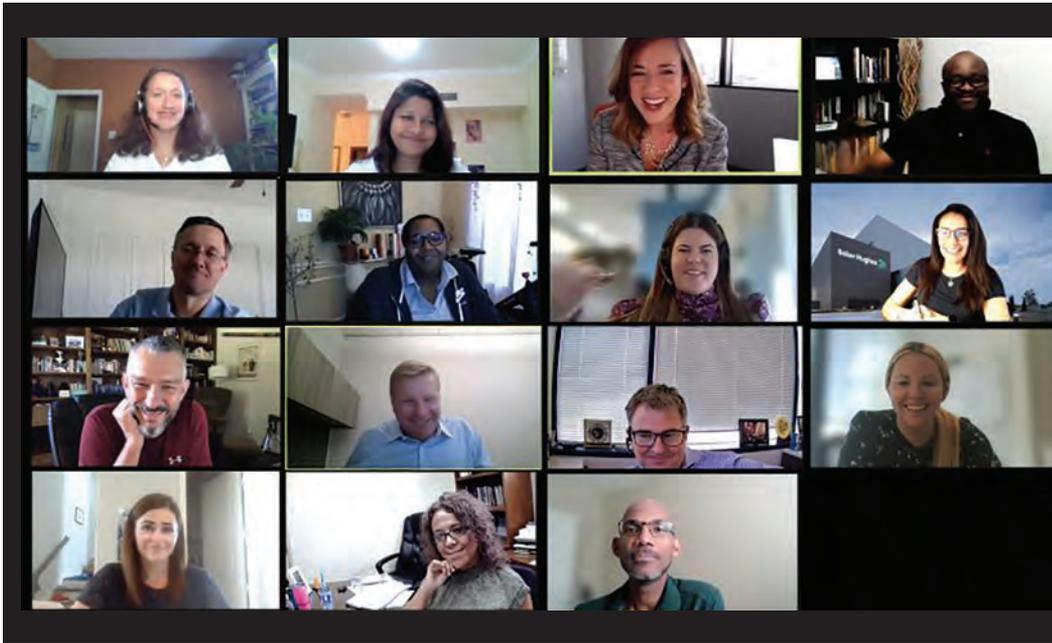


# Our Passion is Our People

The Global Edge is a woman-owned staffing firm connecting projects worldwide with the industry's most talented project professionals. We work with high-level technical and commercial personnel in a variety of industries including Energy, Power, Renewables, Technology, Mining, Automotive, Aerospace, and Infrastructure.



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The Energy Workforce & Technology Council’s Inclusion & Diversity Engagement Committee and COO Molly Determan hosted a best-practice sharing session where participants in the Inclusion & Diversity Business Champion program could engage in conversations with industry peers about challenges and solutions in establishing and maintaining D&I cultures within their companies. Representatives from Baker Hughes, Caterpillar Inc., DistributionNOW, Exterran, Halliburton, NOV Inc., Piper Sandler, Schlumberger, TechnipFMC and Vallourec participated in the virtual meeting. (Source: Energy Workforce & Technology Council)

sector improves as a whole, and the recruiting and retention process enters a cycle of progress leading to greater progress.

The Energy Workforce & Technology Council shared its study findings in mid-September 2021 at its annual meeting—an event attended by the C-suite executives of the council’s member companies. The council’s Inclusion & Diversity Committee took to the podium to issue a challenge. Oceaneering President and CEO Rod Larson shared his experiences and encouraged other CEOs to lead by example, establish tangible goals to turn ambitions into results, invest in the work of D&I and reframe the organizational culture.

**Call to action**

While I initially felt dismayed by Momentive’s survey findings, I’d like to continue the call to action. We clearly have more educating to do and we are equipped to do it. This is not a project with a clear beginning and end. It’s learning from mistakes and successes and engaging in the process of continuous improvement.

It is essential that the energy services sector engage in this effort. Working together, we can build an inclusive culture that will contribute to the bottom line and help recruit the diverse new talent we need to thrive in the future. ■

**About the author:** *Molly Determan is the COO of the Energy Workforce & Technology Council.*



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# Diamondback Energy Sparks Interest in STEM

*Summer camp aspires to provide fun and engaging activities to help children focus on tangible objectives that can lead to higher education opportunities in engineering and geoscience.*

During the summer of 2021, Diamondback Energy hosted an in-house Summer Camp with local seventh and eighth graders at its Fasken Center in Midland, Texas. Diamondback partnered with a local non-profit organization with extensive experience in summer skills learning for the company's first-of-its-kind STEM camp experience.

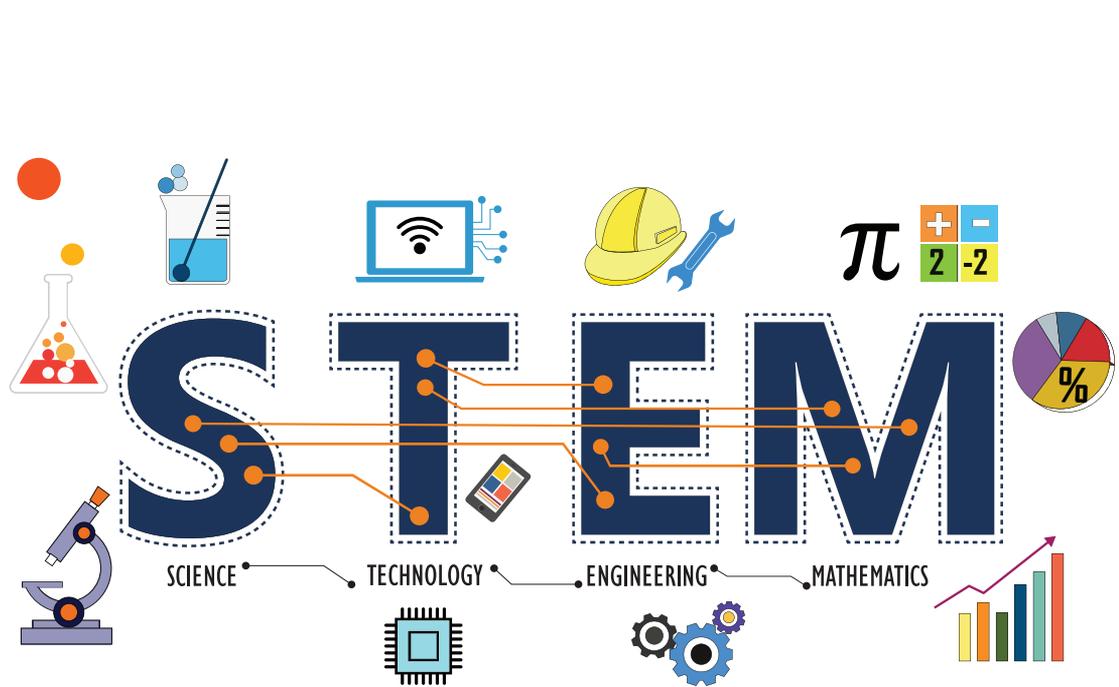
Aimed to spark interest in STEM, Diamondback's five-week camp aspired to provide fun and engaging ideas and activities to help children focus on tangible objectives that can lead toward opening up opportunities for higher education in engineering and in geosciences, thereby even

potentially preparing them to be eligible for the many roles in the oil and gas industry.

During camp, Diamondback focused on three key matters. First, there were guest speakers who shared their own personal experience of overcoming life challenges. Second, Diamondback provided direct mentorship with members of its team from various roles who talked about how they cherished their education in math, science, reading and/or writing skills to advance their careers. Lastly, there were various fun experiments and hands-on projects, with the help of mentors, in which the students engaged, such as building solar-powered ovens to make s'mores!



The summer camp offered fun experiments and hands-on projects, such as building solar-powered ovens to make s'mores. (Source: Diamondback Energy)



(Source: P-pongsiri/Shutterstock.com)

**The company focuses on nurturing an environment that is inclusive, diverse and equitable, so that all employees feel empowered to contribute their full talents and their best ideas.**

Diamondback's roots and strong bond to the community run deep in the Permian Basin, and the company supports philanthropic activities that serve the communities in which its employees live and work. In various ways, some of Diamondback's philanthropic efforts help support, engage and champion diverse children in the community, removing barriers to inclusion, particularly socio-economic obstacles. This camp focused on the importance of STEM in their education, while we aimed to build the diversity of the future workforce through inspiration and information.

At Diamondback, we're proud of how we operate, who we are and the culture that our actions demonstrate. The company focuses on nurturing an environment that is inclusive, diverse and equitable, so that all employees feel empowered to contribute their full talents and their best ideas.

Diamondback believes that access to education overcomes, advances and fosters belonging and inclusion, and even inspires. The company's focus over several years has

been to improve access to various types of education in communities. Diamondback is proud that its social commitment remains strong to the underprivileged children in the communities where it operates. ■

**Acknowledgement:** *This summer camp would not have been possible without our generous team. Thank you to the many employees who volunteered a part of their day to contribute either as mentors or volunteers. We also appreciate our industry peers who donated items that we included in back-to-school backpacks and other take-home items that we gave to the students.*



**Jennifer Soliman**  
Executive Vice President and  
Chief Human Resources Officer



## Working Toward a More Diverse and Inclusive Natural Gas and Oil Industry

*The API and its members are focusing on people of all backgrounds, including communities of color, women and veterans, to strengthen their commitment to a diverse workforce.*

By **Amanda Eversole**, API

“As an industry of problem solvers working to tackle the world’s greatest energy challenges, we value individual perspectives from all backgrounds.”

—Amanda Eversole, API



For the U.S. natural gas and oil industry, the challenge of meeting global demand for energy while building a lower-carbon future is fundamental. One key to achieving this important goal is continued investment in an increasingly diverse, resilient and well-trained workforce whose unique life experiences, hard work and ingenuity will strengthen our day-to-day operations toward a cleaner world.

This industry supports more than 11 million U.S. jobs, employing a highly skilled segment of the workforce—and paying employees steady wages that often eclipse six figures. We are proud of our contributions to America’s economic recovery and long-term growth, and we are committed to attracting and retaining the next cohort of engineers, scientists and skilled laborers who will drive American energy leadership. Most importantly, we are working to ensure that future generations of energy workers reflect the makeup of the country we all call home.

Based on analysis of U.S. employment trends, nearly 50% of job opportunities through 2040 are projected to be filled by individuals who identify as African American, Hispanic, Asian or non-white. Understanding the industry’s evolving nature of work, the API and its members are recruiting and hiring to strengthen its commitment to a diverse workforce by proactively focusing on communities of color, women and veterans.

API recognizes that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) make us stronger, and its organization-wide principles go beyond rhetoric to commit members to hiring, training and developing a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

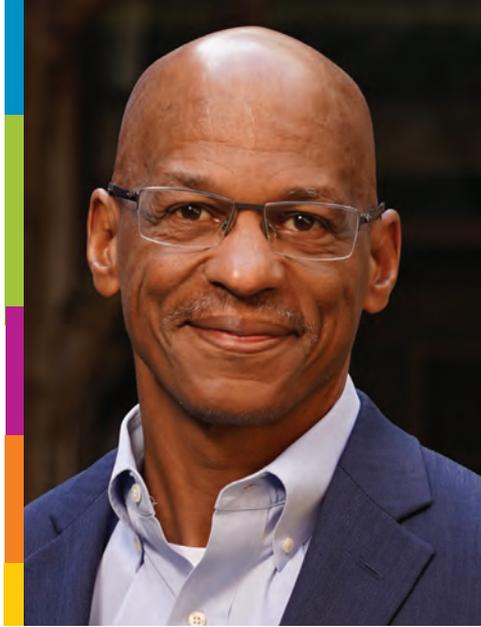
API also recognizes that connecting with people at an early age is essential to showing them career opportunities where they can change the world. Working alongside allied industry associations and Discovery Education, API launched the STEM Careers Coalition to enhance STEM curriculum in K-12 U.S. schools and extend the benefits of the U.S. energy workforce to the next generation.

Given that educational opportunities are critical to successful employment, API has established complementary programs with post-secondary institutions. Through API’s Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Initiative, students at participating historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions and other minority-serving institutions receive free access to API’s world-class standards that support safety and sustainability in industry operations. API also provides opportunities for internships for students from its MSI partners, allowing the application of academic skills in a real-world environment. As a result, API is equipping students with practical knowledge that will be immediately helpful to advancing their careers. API is working to expand this program with more institutions nationwide.

Simultaneously, API member companies are committed to fostering DEI across every step of the vast natural gas and oil supply chain, seeking out innovative business owners and investing in development strategies to engage new suppliers across a wide range of communities and talents.

Together, API members are driving broader industrywide solutions through new partnerships, best-practice sharing and bringing successful pilot programs to scale. As an industry of problem solvers working to tackle the world’s greatest energy challenges, we value individual perspectives from all backgrounds. We are committed to recruiting a resilient workforce that reflects the communities we serve and delivering a better energy future. ■

**About the author:** *Amanda Eversole is API’s executive vice president and COO.*



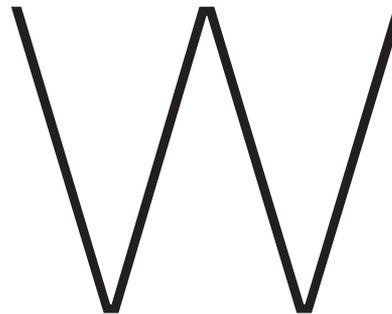
# How to Become a More Inclusive Leader

*The path to inclusive leadership involves four key ingredients.*

By **Lee Jourdan**, Consultant

“Listening with intent to learn is important on many levels.”

—Lee Jourdan



We have heard a lot about inclusive leadership over the last few years. You may wonder whether it is just the latest in a long line of corporate buzzwords—“paradigm shift” and “swim-lanes” come to mind. No, inclusive leadership is here to stay. In fact, it’s not new. It has been here all along.

When you think about it, we have always been more attracted to leaders who hear us, see us and value us. These are leaders who provide feedback in a constructive manner, challenge us to be our best and appreciate us for

who we are. But the command-and-control boss has historically attracted the most attention. You know what I mean—someone who knows it all, tells you what to do and how to do it. They tend to recruit and promote people who are replicas of themselves.

Who would you rather work for, go the extra mile for or feel safe suggesting a new and creative solution to? The inclusive leader.

The corporate world has finally caught up to what workers have known all along: inclusive leaders enable better performing teams. They have less turnover, and they are a heck of a lot more fun.

So what does it take to be an inclusive leader? In my experience there are four key characteristics of inclusive leadership. They are not the flavor of the month; nonetheless, I’m going to use the acronym FLAV—Feedback, Listening, Authenticity and Vulnerability—to describe them.

## Feedback

Feedback is a key ingredient to growth. It tells employees what they need to do to improve and what they are already doing well. Importantly, it sends a message that you care enough to take the time to give feedback. However, people from underrepresented groups are less likely to receive feedback than people in the majority.

A Harvard Business Review analysis speaks directly to that anomaly from a gender perspective. “Our research shows that women are systematically less likely to receive specific feedback tied to outcomes,” the authors stated in the analysis.

The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology tested and supported the hypothesis that minority students do not receive critical feedback from evaluators for fear of appearing racist. The study notes that these stigmatized students sometimes fail to receive the critical feedback necessary to identify areas needing improvement. And let’s face it, we all suffer from FOSSS (fear of saying something stupid), so we avoid giving feedback for fear of saying the wrong thing. Those of us who exist in underrepresented groups can help by asking for direct feedback and having grace if we hear something off-putting or not quite right. We can create a safe space for others to deliver the feedback that we need.

## Listening

I once mentored a young man who knew, or thought, he was usually the smartest guy in the room. He said to me, “Lee, if I already know the answer, why do I have to listen to what everyone else has to say?” He said this with a straight face. Fortunately, he was open to feedback, and years later he became a great example of an inclusive leader.

Listening with intent to learn is important on many levels. From an inclusive leader perspective, it lets your employees know you know they have something important to say. You can demonstrate you care without saying a word. But listening goes beyond altruism. Listen to learn. Inclusive leaders are always learning—often from their direct reports.



## Authenticity

Ritu Bhasin, author of “The Authenticity Principle,” said, “Practicing authenticity is the catalyst to realizing your full potential.” So how do we get our employees to be more authentic? By demonstrating authentic behavior ourselves. Bhasin discusses this further in the final chapter of her book, “Leaders, Be the Change.” A few tips she shares on being authentic are:

- Know that your team is watching you. By being more of yourself at work you allow them to be the same. Embrace and showcase your diversity even in the face of judgement.
- Recognize and address your privilege. Recognizing your own privilege is among the tips I provide on how to have a constructive conversation about privilege.
- Be genuine in your curiosity to learn about others.

## Vulnerability

Vulnerability is a misunderstood, underutilized but powerful leadership trait.

At its surface it can be mistaken for weakness, but it is just the opposite. It is the epitome of strength. Demonstrating your vulnerability allows others to share theirs and allows the team to shore up gaps.

About a year ago, a conversation with a manager began by him asking me how I was doing. It was a simple, throw-away question used to start any conversation. But I decided not to throw it away. Instead, I replied, “I’m exhausted. This is literally my 10th meeting today, and I am toast.” I then asked him how he was doing. He said, “You know, to be honest, I am overwhelmed. I have these three huge projects that are due at the same time, and I am really struggling to bring them all over the finish line the way both you and I expect them to be delivered.”

My vulnerability created a safe place for him to be vulnerable. Before that conversation, I had no idea he was struggling. I consider myself to be someone who had created a psychologically safe environment and encouraged feedback. But he thought that since I came across as Superman, he had to be as well. Learning that I really wasn’t Superman allowed him to admit he wasn’t either. And frankly, I didn’t need him to be. We readjusted his priorities, and he was able to deliver all three projects when I really needed them with high quality. Vulnerability exposes gaps that can then be shored up and addressed.

Feedback, listening, authenticity and vulnerability are the ingredients to inclusive leadership. Want to be an inclusive leader? Find your FLAVor. ■

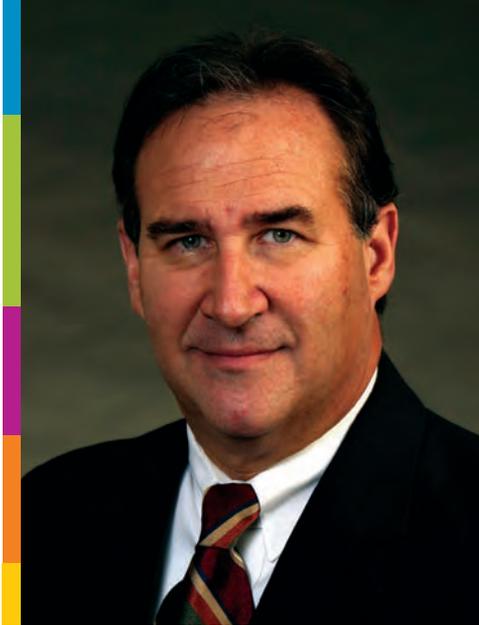
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**About the author:** Lee Jourdan retired as Chevron’s chief diversity and inclusion officer in 2021 after serving in the position for three years. He was employed with the company in varying roles for 18 years. He currently serves as a director on the boards of PROS Holdings Inc. and SEARCH Homeless Services and special advisor to FTI Consulting.

“Vulnerability is a misunderstood, underutilized but powerful leadership trait.”

—Lee Jourdan





## A Bridge Between the Energy Sector and Education

*For more than 15 years, IPAA's Energy Education Center has facilitated programs such as camps, field trips, competitions, career conferences, teacher training and an extern program.*

By **Barry Russell**, Independent Petroleum Association of America

“Our outreach to students empowers them to take control of their future by reassuring them that they belong in our industry while simultaneously introducing them to available careers and encouraging them to reach high to achieve their dreams.”

—Barry Russell, IPAA



**B**ack in 2006, the team at the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) started out small with an initial idea on how it could make a difference in education. The IPAA Educational Foundation began with one high school in east Houston, and 15 years later, it has reached more than 20,000 students in 163 schools and 87 school districts around the U.S. We're proud of the diverse students, both economically and geographically, that we're empowering with our programs. Our pre-pandemic stats are as follows: 61% Hispanic, 26% Black, 8% White and 3% Asian, with 41% of those being female. While COVID-19 has shaken the industry in many ways, it has allowed us to reach an even wider and more diverse group from the standpoint of our programs, as we were forced to virtually connect with educators and students. For me, that's really been the silver lining through all of this. The longstanding relationship we built with educators allowed us to provide them with what they needed when it mattered most.

What is the 'why' behind our outreach to students? It really comes down to ensuring the energy industry attracts the brightest minds over the next decade as the number of jobs in STEM industries, including oil and natural gas and renewables, is expected to grow 50% faster than in non-STEM industries. Our outreach to students empowers them to take control of their future by reassuring them that they belong in our industry while simultaneously introducing them to available careers and encouraging them to reach high to achieve their dreams.

With the support of the IPAA Energy Workforce Education Advisory Board and critical corporate and individual sponsorships, we are achieving an unprecedented level of success. It really is exciting to be a part of, and we're forever grateful for the support of the Energy Workforce & Technology Council (formerly PESA) and Leslie Beyer, the council's CEO as well as Halliburton, specifically Galen Cobb, who have believed in our mission and have been with us for more than a decade.

For more than 15 years, the Education Center has facilitated many programs, including camps, field trips, guest speakers, competitions, career conferences, teacher training and an extern program (to name a few). But like everyone else, in 2020 we were forced to quickly adapt, and for now our key programs are all virtual.

At the high school level, the Education Center grew our annual Exploring Energy conference into a dynamic, ongoing virtual program that launched in January 2021. The Virtual Exploring Energy Program empowers educators and students by encouraging them to delve into the energy industry and its many career fields through a variety of video showcases, virtual tours and virtual visits to the classroom by respected professionals. Students can enter essay and video contests and apply for a completion certificate they can use on college applications and résumés. There are also incentives for educator participation.

Launched in November 2021, a student-led national energy academy is a part of the Virtual Exploring Energy Program. The academy meets once per month and is free to those interested in STEM career fields. Each month students explore different topics related to the energy industry and listen to industry professionals with expertise in that topic. This is another great addition to students' college applications and résumés.

Today there are more than 100 videos available in the repository with more than 6,500 students participating, representing 47 school districts and territories across the country, including as far as Guam (home of Kali, the program's first student prize winner).

At the middle school level, we expanded our digital Permian STEM career exploration program,



**Pictured Left:**

IPAA's Exploring Energy Program, currently offered virtually, empowers educators and students by encouraging them to delve into the energy industry and its many career fields. The 2019 in-person conference welcomed more than 1,300 high school students from Houston. (Source: IPAA)

**Pictured Below:**

Students from the Young Women's College Preparatory Academy attended the 2019 Women's Global Leadership Conference in Energy in Houston. This annual women's event in the energy industry focuses on discussing the industry's key environmental, economic, professional development and human capital issues in one setting. The 2020 event attracted more than 10,000 attendees. (Source: IPAA)

called Power Your Future, to 57 counties in Texas and New Mexico. Many of these counties have only one middle school and they often don't have access to this type of innovative educational initiative. In the program, learners engage with interactive content to show them STEM in their world. Virtual career cards are integrated within the digital learning experience that expose students to STEM roles relevant to their interests.

Our Education Center staff's skills and background in working with both industry and educators made this virtual transition happen with ease. Our women-led team of Anne Ford, Sarah Hewitt and Nikki Thomas are seasoned pros. Often when the industry goes straight to education, with the best of intentions, it is like two worlds colliding as they each approach things from very different perspectives. Our team is the bridge that speaks both languages. They have learned what works and know how to be successful.

Nobody wants to relive the hardships of 2020, but we are forging on because what we're doing is important now and for generations to come.

We encourage companies to consider making this program part of their ESG initiatives. Learn more about our programs and how to get involved at [IPAA.org/education](https://www.ipaa.org/education). ■



**About the author:** Barry Russell is president and CEO of the IPAA and co-chairman of the IPAA Energy Workforce Education Advisory Board.

**Pictured Left:**

Westside High School hosted a summer camp for incoming petroleum academy freshmen in August 2018. Approximately 40 freshmen and 12 upperclassmen spent their day taking part in team building activities led by InnerWorks Co. Students were tasked to work together to solve fun and fast-paced physical and mental challenges. Throughout the camp, older students worked side by side with the incoming freshmen. The goal of this summer camp was to introduce new students to each other and to older Westside Petroleum Academy alumni so each student would have connections on the first day of school. Students also practiced working in a team and persevering through challenges—skills that are essential for success in high school and beyond. (Source: IPAA)

# A Case for

# Diversity

Studies suggest more inclusion leads to better performance.



By **Velda Addison**,  
Senior Editor



By **Brian Walzel**,  
Senior Editor

**T**he Great Crew Change is complete. Much discussed, fretted over and analyzed, the shift in the makeup of the oil and gas industry's workforce that was long portended has come. And for all intents and purposes, it has come and gone.

Look around conference rooms, exhibit halls, cocktail receptions and Zoom meetings, and you'll see the change firsthand. The industry is younger, more diverse, less formal, speaks in buzzwords, understands (mostly) cryptomining, sees printouts as passe, conducts business and does their jobs from their cell-phones, and now frequents the office far less.

Much like the sources of energy it procures, the industry workforce has transitioned and continues to do so. It is the "S" in ESG—social responsibility. But while the industry has prioritized the "E"—environmental—with net-zero and other carbon and methane reduction targets, there is still work to be done to complete the ESG picture.

Part of the effort in achieving those end goals is the continued evolution of the industry's workforce, essentially to make it more diverse. A diverse workforce doesn't just make social sense and is the "right thing to do," but it makes for good business, explained Molly Determan, COO with the Energy Workforce & Technology Council.



**Pictured Left:**

Burns & McDonnell is involved in several business and community organizations, including many that help promote gender diversity in the industry. Among those the company is involved in are Women’s Business Enterprise National Council and Women Construction Owners and Executives. (Source: Burns & McDonnell)

**Pictured Below:**

Burns & McDonnell takes a community-based approach to recruitment, including efforts to connect with potential employees at historically Black colleges and universities. (Source: Burns & McDonnell)

“The business case is that more diverse companies perform better and have better returns,” she said. “But also, as our work changes, as we become more focused on digitalization and AI [artificial intelligence], the people that we need to employ are changing, and we need to be able to attract those people. So the traditional kind of oil and gas industry that wasn’t as flexible and wasn’t as focused on making sure that there were benefits like parental leave and things like that, that isn’t going to attract the type of people that we need in order to be a leader through energy transitions.”

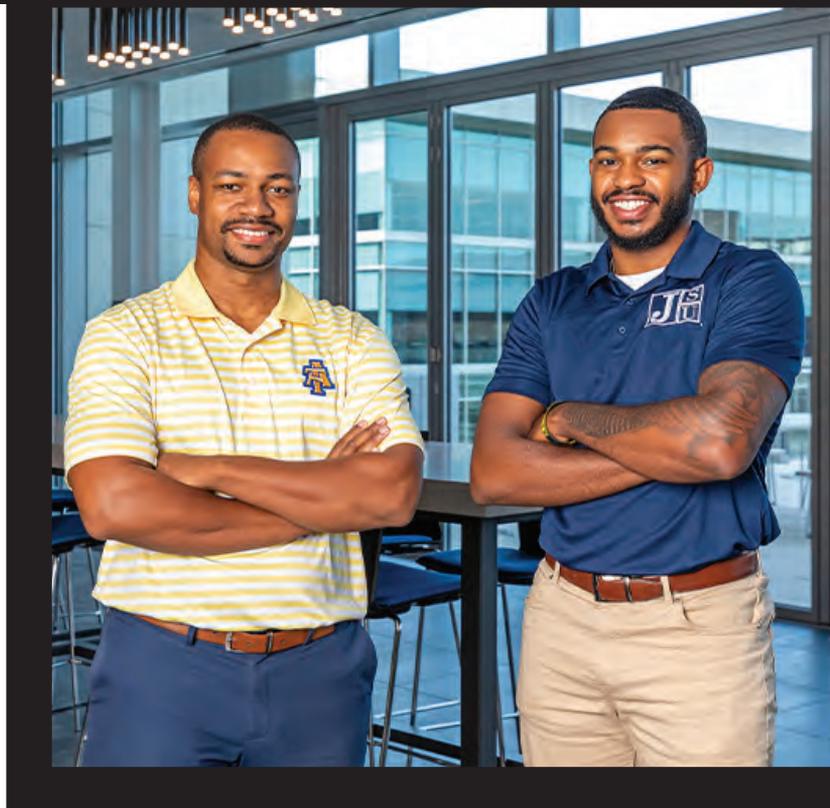
In the recent “Diversity Matters” study conducted by McKinsey and Co., one unnamed oil and gas executive described the importance of a diverse workforce simply in terms of staying relevant.

“This is a business decision,” he said. “By 2025 we are going to be a millennial and Generation Z workforce that is inclusive and diverse. If your business is not, you are going to get bottom-of-the-barrel workers.”

**Early-stage recruitment**

One of the first steps to instilling a more diverse workforce is understanding what diversity means, and what it looks like. Does it mean more ethnically diverse? More women in the workforce? More socio-economic parity?

“What we’ve done recently is taken a look at how we choose to interpret the words diversity, equity and inclusion [DEI],” said Tana Cashion, senior vice president of human resources with Devon Energy. “With diversity, we talk about it as being foundational to Devon’s success and that our team includes people with a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, experiences and abilities. That’s how we think about diversity.”



She added that equity is also a hiring priority at the company. “We believe that fairness is at the center of the core of our culture, policies and practices,” Cashion said. “We strive for all employees to have equal access to opportunities.”

“And then inclusion, we believe in relationships, and we’ll ensure all employees are seen, valued, heard and connected,” she continued. “If you look at each of those definitions, we try

to think very comprehensively about how everybody in the company should be on the same page about what those things mean, because [diversity] can mean a lot of different things.”

To build a foundation for diversity in the oil and gas industry workplace, industry associations and companies themselves are starting, in many cases, at the bottom floor: childhood education. It’s a long-term play, investing time and resources into programs and outreach efforts to plant the seed of, eventually, a career in the energy industry.

“We’re all trying to have a rising tide that lifts all boats,” said Leon Harden, DEI strategy manager with Burns & McDonnell. “That’s why we’re investing in K through 12 education and mentorship. That’s why we do over 400 job shadows for high school kids. At Burns & McDonnell we have a program called Battle of the Brains, where kids come in and we get them interested in STEM really early. Because it’s not just enough to recruit at diverse conferences and go to HBCUs [historically Black colleges and universities] and other minority serving institutions, as we do. We have to jump ahead a little bit and get kids interested really early so that they choose to go into STEM-related degree programs that are available to them in most colleges and universities.”

Devon Energy has taken a similar approach to early-stage recruitment, having instituted STEM programs at elementary

schools since 2016 in the areas in which Devon operates.

“We’ve been a part of opening more than 100 STEM centers in schools and learning centers,” Cashion said. “That’s been an amazing experience to see and be a part of, and it has really had an impact on hundreds and hundreds of students exposing them to this, the skills that they will need to have in order to have the types of careers to fill the pipeline of qualified people, ultimately being able to land in this industry.”

While making early investments in a potential future employee pool establishes the science- and technology-minded, it takes more to ensure those future employees are also culturally and racially diverse.

### Cultivating diversity

In addition to establishing education programs, Harden believes a key component to cultivating diversity in the industry is for companies and associations to create connections and relationships in their communities.

“We all have recruitment teams,” he said. “We all have a top-down diversity initiative, but I think it has to be more grassroots than that.”



Volunteers teach children about robotics at the Chevron-sponsored California State University East Bay Science Festival in Hayward, Calif. (Source: Chevron)





**You've got to convince people to utilize their network and even reach outside of their network to find, identify and attract diverse talent.**

— **Leon Harden**, Burns & McDonnell



Harden explained that a first step is ensuring total buy-in on diversity and discussing the business case for diversity.

"Once you've gotten there, you've got to convince people to utilize their network and even reach outside of their network to find, identify and attract diverse talent," he said.

Harden noted that a common practice for companies is for them to identify "that diverse person" within their organization and have that person "carry the mantle of diversity."

"I would encourage [organizations] to get our old white guys out there and really be carrying this mantle, because we need everybody to solve this issue, which is that we need more representation within the industry," he said.

Cashion suggested instilling a multifaceted approach to diversity recruitment, explaining that creating a diverse workforce is not enabled through just one strategy.

"If you change your hiring numbers, that doesn't result in a more comprehensively diverse, equitable or inclusive organization," she said. "If you just focus on unconscious bias training, that also isn't a one-shot deal in terms of becoming more sophisticated in diversity, equity and inclusion. It has to be a comprehensive package. So companies have to look at it through the lens of talent practices, in organizational expectations and conversations and areas of emphasis. It takes time and attention to all of those categories of diversity and inclusion."

At Chevron Corp., intentional conversations about diversity and inclusion continue.

"Where we have underrepresentation, we study it and undertake proactive efforts to address this. This could include broader outreach to underrepresented groups, mentoring programs, investments in the educational pipeline, and assessing and removing potential barriers to hiring or advancement," said Joesetta Jones, the company's chief diversity and inclusion officer. "Accountability for these proactive efforts is fundamental to ensuring the proportion of women and minorities at Chevron increases."

The San Ramon, Calif.-headquartered company has been recognized by several diversity organizations, including the American Association of People with Disabilities and the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, among others, for its diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Chevron's recent initiatives include a program called Welcome Back, which targets individuals who have left the workforce for child or family care, or other reasons. Launched in 2019, "the program is designed to help individuals re-hone their skills and accelerate the process of reentering the workforce," Jones said.

The company is also taking aim at goals toward increasing the number of women at senior levels by establishing its Global Women's Leadership Development Program in 2020. The program, Jones said, has three objectives: "provide strategic development planning for high-potential women earlier in their careers; offer access and visibility to influential senior leaders, job owners and personnel development committees; [and] establish resources to support development, including coaching, mentoring and skills growth."

In all, efforts undertaken by Chevron appear to be paying off.

"We continued to develop our diverse leadership pipeline and have increased the percentage of senior-level jobs held by women and racial and ethnic minorities to 44%," Jones said.

### **The case for diversity**

From a societal perspective, diversity and inclusion is viewed as the right thing to do. And, in a sense, that's true too of business and perhaps even more so the oil and gas industry, traditionally one of the least diverse and inclusive industries.

Findings from the "Diversity Matters" report bore this out, at least from a gender equity perspective. For its report, McKinsey analyzed data from 250 companies, evaluated its own data in women in the workplace and interviewed more than 20 current and former CEOs and senior executives.

McKinsey found that companies in the top quartile for women leaders are 15% more likely to have above-industry average financial returns. The company was careful to note that while no casual connection can be proved, it does point to a correlation that suggests "when companies commit themselves to diverse leadership, they are more successful."

Adopting a culture of inclusion and diversity can also help position a company for the rapidly changing makeup of the American population as a whole, Harden said.

"The Census that just came out said that in 2044 the workforce will be minority white," he said. "So for us, this is an opportunity to position ourselves, to be ready for the workforce of the future. This is a trend, and we have to be ahead of it."

Harden added that many of Burns & McDonnell's clients are asking more questions about how the company is attracting, hiring and retaining diverse talent.

"So it's critical that we start to talk about this, that we start to brand this [and] that we start to communicate it not only to our employees but externally as well," he said.

From an operator's perspective, Devon sees diverse talent acquisition as paramount to staying in step with the rapid evolution of the technologies used to grow their operations and business.

"[The business case for diversity] is extremely compelling in that our industry relies upon technology and innovation," Devon's Cashion said. "You cannot move forward in innovation and technology without having a diverse set of skills, experiences and characteristics of the members of your team to really be driving toward the best results or the best outcome possible. It's part of the fabric of how we operate."

Analysis of a study by McKinsey & Co. of more than 1,000 companies across 15 countries shows there is a strong business case for diversity and inclusion, and "the higher the representation, the higher the likelihood of outperformance."

The consulting firm reported in its 2020 "Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters" study that companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to see above-average profitability than their peers in the fourth quartile. The finding was based on 2019 analysis and was up from 21% in 2017 and 15% in 2014.

"In the case of ethnic and cultural diversity, the findings are equally compelling. We found that companies in the top quartile outperformed those in the fourth by 36% in terms of profitability in 2019, slightly up from 33% in 2017 and 35% in 2014," McKinsey stated in the report. "And, as we have previously found, there continues to be a higher likelihood of outperformance difference with ethnicity than with gender."

There are plenty of studies that show how a more diverse workforce leads to diversity of thought and more creative solutions, which in turn improves results, according to Stephanie Hertzog, CEO of Sodexo Energy & Resources. However, she has concerns about attracting talent and keeping them.

"Our industry is going through a tough time, and we really need the best and brightest minds helping us through the energy transition," Hertzog said. "While we've historically been able to attract them, we are seeing some of the best and brightest pause on their decisions."

As a mentor to a recent chemical engineering graduate from Texas A&M University, Hertzog faced the possibility of seeing

her mentee leave the industry after just entering it.

"She is still there now...so we'll see. Her concerns are a few fold," Hertzog said. "One is just where this industry is headed and if there are going to be great career opportunities."

The new hire, Hertzog explained, questioned whether oil and gas was the right industry to commit her career to. The timing of the global pandemic created another set of circumstances that compounded those feelings of doubt. Working from home meant little access to and guidance from experienced coworkers, something that was not limited to the energy field.

It helps to have a support network, Hertzog said. Such support systems can be a godsend when facing challenges. It can be helpful to have people, outside of immediate family or workspace, who have gone through similar experiences to talk to, she said.

Hertzog's network of confidantes was called the Alpha Girls, nicknamed by her father, she said after recalling a bad day when motherhood and work duties collided. She found herself out of town on business crying in a Houma, La., restroom having forgotten her breast pump in Houston.

"There are definitely challenges that women face that men just don't," Hertzog said.

Hertzog, who has worked in energy services, pointed out that during her career she has never had a female supervisor and rarely saw women higher than her on the chain unless they worked in human resources or legal.

Research unveiled in 2021 by the Energy Technology & Workforce Council, working with the consulting firm Accenture, on the U.S. oil and gas workforce showed the percentage of women and ethnic minorities in the sector still trails their representations in the overall U.S. workforce.

The study revealed women account for 47% of the overall U.S. workforce, compared to 19% of the U.S. oil and gas workforce (up from 15% in 2018).

The study concluded that ethnic minority representation, the first year the council included the category in the study, within the sector also lags the overall U.S. workforce. In all, Black/African American, Asian and Hispanic/Latino employees make up 36% of the overall U.S. workforce. For the U.S. oil and gas workforce, it's 28%.



**A culture that is built on a common purpose, teamwork, respect and feedback—and rooted in inclusion, trust and empowerment—is essential for everyone to be their best in the workplace.**

— **Josetta Jones**, Chevron



"It's hard when you don't see anyone who looks like you or has gone through similar things you're going through," Hertzog said. "You have no example of someone who made it through. There were definitely times when I felt like I was failing at all of it—I wasn't a good wife, I wasn't a good mother, I wasn't a good employee. But upon reflection, I was typically putting more pressure on myself than anyone else was."

Besides the so-called Alpha Girls, great bosses made the difference for Hertzog.

"I don't think they were necessarily any more understanding of the plight of the working mother than the working father," she said of her supervisors, "but I've been fortunate to work for empathetic leaders, and that's important regardless of gender or race."

### Prioritizing inclusion

Support networks have formed at companies that have put DEI among their priorities. These employee networks bring together people with common identities or experiences, providing supportive environments for career development and growth.

Sodexo has nine employee business resource groups, which include gender, race, veterans and disabled employees.

Companies like bp and Marathon Oil Corp. are among the energy companies with similar resource groups. Both have undergone strategic transformations: bp transitioned from an international oil company to an integrated energy company in 2020, while Marathon split into two independent companies in 2011. Diversity has been part of both companies' ambitions, and both have made additions and set new goals recently regarding their DEI efforts.

bp, which published its first DEI report in June 2021, is recognized as having one of the energy industry's most mature programs, according to Tamara Page, bp's head of Western Hemisphere workforce DEI.

"I will say we're still learning. This is a journey for us," Page said during the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston. "We don't have all the answers, and we are continually evolving and reinventing ourselves within the DEI space. When I started way back, it was just the D; it was just diversity. And then it moved into diversity and inclusion, and now it's diversity, equity and inclusion."

One of bp's latest awakenings came in 2020 with the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor. She said the company recognized the need to respond to what was happening in the world because "our people are our biggest assets."

The company held "listening lounges" for its employees to share their experiences with racial injustice. The lounges attracted about 6,000 people, Page said.

"I don't think I'm alone in saying this," Page said. "It was a change in our organization."

While bp has had DEI programs in place for a number of years, the company went further after its shared conversation. Its Framework for Action plan includes focusing on transparency, releasing an annual DEI report; accountability, linking diversity and inclusion progress to performance management; and



A bp employee is pictured at the company's chemical plant in Texas City, Texas. The company has about 43,500 core employees globally. (Source: bp)

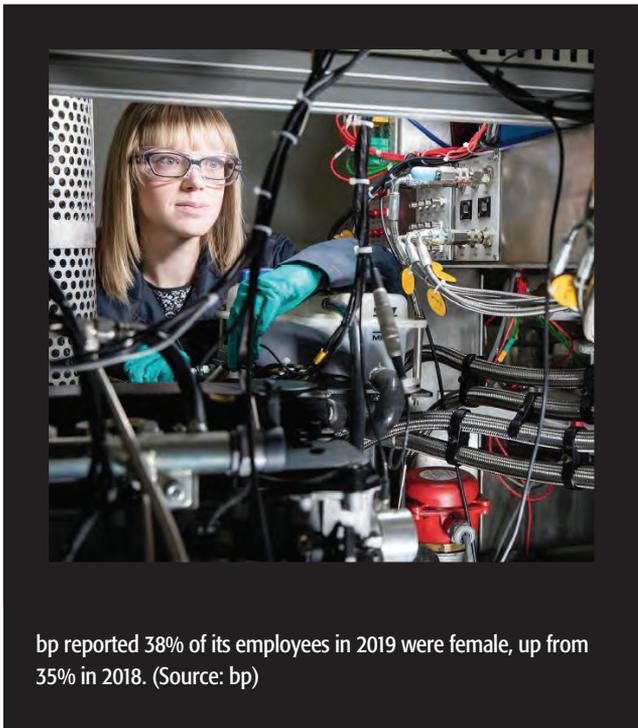
talent, targeting Black employee development.

The plan includes a goal to double spend with U.S.-based diverse suppliers by 2023, embedding DEI metrics into entity operating plans and the annual performance review process for all employees as well as doubling representation of African Americans in group leadership by 2023.

"To some of you, this may feel like we're focusing on one group of employees over another. To others, these actions will not be enough," Dave Lawler, bp America chairman and president, said in a statement at the time. "Balance is hard to achieve, but I'm confident this framework is the right path for bp's future. The bpLT, leaders across the U.S. and I are all committed to this important work. This is an ambitious framework, and we will dedicate the resources we need to achieve it."

The year 2020 was marked by a wave of racial unrest in the U.S. that was reignited by the deaths of Floyd, Arbery and Taylor. The deaths sparked protests and again put the spotlight on incidents of systematic racism toward Blacks in the U.S.

In 2020 Chevron evolved its long-term strategy toward improving racial equity. The change came in response to what Jones described as a "convergence of events that include the spread of COVID-19, an economic downturn that led to massive unemployment and social unrest growing out of the death of



bp reported 38% of its employees in 2019 were female, up from 35% in 2018. (Source: bp)



George Floyd and other Black citizens in the United States.”

The company’s effort focused on increasing investment and support in the education and development of Black talent and leadership.

“Our racial equity approach includes a \$15 million commitment that has four pillars: education, job creation, talent and leadership development, and community and small business partnerships,” Jones said. “We are also working to expand our existing relationships with community, business and educational partners such as K-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics organizations and historically Black colleges and universities.”

In 2020 Marathon launched its Black Employees and Allies of Marathon (BEAM) Network, which is open to all employees. The move was not performative, said Shara Hammond, leadership and inclusion manager with Marathon Oil. Speaking during the Houston conference, Hammond said the company started that journey in 2018 because of the gap in psychological safety.



bp instructors teach, mentor and guide at the company’s Houma Operations Learning Center in Louisiana. (Source: bp)



**Our continuing goal is to foster an environment where all employees can reach their full potential and improve the advancement of African Americans and other underrepresented minorities. This framework will help overcome our biggest employment progression and retention challenges, and we'll continue using it to make other improvements as needed.**



— **Dave Lawler**, bp America chairman and president,  
August 2020 note to bp's U.S. employees

According to Marathon's website, the BEAM Network enables employees to connect to support each other in personal and professional development; encourages Black employees to advance their careers through mentorships, networking and organizational partnerships; creates programs that increase awareness and understanding of different perspectives in the workplace; promotes a diversified workforce including in various job functions; and increases awareness within the Black community of opportunities within the oil and gas industry.

"They've just embraced that by creating dialogue circles where Black employees and allies are able to have conversations about inclusion, differences, commonalities and diversity," Hammond said of Marathon's workforce. "From that, they want to build a strategy so that we then take on leadership behaviors around allyship in our organization."

That year Marathon also partnered with the Chinese American Professionals Group to offer virtual training events on topics such as bystander training, feeling safe in the workplace, psychological safety and moving beyond crisis. The move came as anti-Asian harassment and attacks surged in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marathon's actions were a continuation of the company's grassroots, employee-driven DEI efforts. When developing such strategies and forming programs, it might be natural to take a top-down approach, implement best practices and let data drive decisions, Hammond said, but it's important to listen to employees.

"We often start with the data. The data will tell you one story; that's completely fine. We're data-driven people," she said. "But at the end of the day, your employees know exactly where you are and where you may need to go. So that's where you find your next best step, instead of just looking for a best practice."

Diversity, Hertzog said, was not talked about by her previous employer; however, it is "part of the DNA" at Sodexo. The onshore and off-shore food and facilities management services

company has a workforce that is 55% women. Like some energy companies, Sodexo offers DEI training with participation tied to compensation for executives, and job candidate pools must be diverse. The company also extends its DEI values to suppliers, having committed globally to spend 25% of its purchases with small- and medium-sized businesses with a focus on local and diverse by 2025.

"We have a long way to go on both gender and ethnic diversity," Hertzog said of the energy industry. "The most important thing we can do is be really intentional about it." ■



Sodexo knows that operational business continuity is essential to clients. Their site level teams are committed to delivering food and facilities management and client service in a safe environment. (Source: Sodexo)



# How to Make Real Progress



As the oil and gas industry moves toward a low-carbon future, experts take a closer look at the industry’s progress and next steps for a more diverse and inclusive workforce.



By **Faiza Rizvi**,  
Senior Associate Editor,  
Business & ESG

In the wake of significant social and political changes, diversity and inclusion (D&I) have long been on the oil and gas sector’s business agenda. Yet progress in the area remains tepid.

In the current environment, the oil and gas industry has to overcome and manage significant technological, economic and environmental challenges to survive and thrive. And with the scale and complexity of these challenges becoming more complex, oil and gas companies are recognizing the importance of D&I, engagement and collaboration between the workforce and companies.

Now more than ever, benefits of a diverse workforce are growing apparent as the industry seeks to refocus its attention to human capital amid monumental disruption to a low-carbon future.

**Workforce diversity: Where do we stand?**

“Even though the oil and gas industry has historically been male-dominated, we are seeing a shift,” said Kathy Eberwein, CEO of Houston-based Global Edge, a provider of recruitment services to the oil and gas industry.



Diversity has always been talked about, Eberwein told Hart Energy, noting that particularly over the last couple of years, she has seen more oil and gas companies “walking the walk as opposed to just talking the talk.”

“We have several clients who have boldly publicized numbers behind their diversity goals, and that’s definitely a shift in terms of what I’ve seen over my career,” she said.

Expressing similar sentiment, Gavin Rennick, Schlumberger’s vice president of human resources, said, “There is a high level of commitment, increasing visibility and strong communication from many companies to improve diversity in their organizations.”

He added that although companies have progressed in “several dimensions of diversity,” including nationality and gender diversity, there is still a long way to go to foster a more inclusive environment across the industry.

“That’s one of the challenges that we have out in front of us as an industry and certainly one that we’ve been taking on for the last couple of years at Schlumberger,” Rennick said. “Today we have active employee resource groups around

Embracing the broadest subset of talent is critical to addressing the challenges facing the oil and gas industry, said Deanna Jones with Baker Hughes. (Source: Baker Hughes)

gender, sexual orientation and race, and we’ll see more forming around other dimensions of diversity—such as disability—in the near term.”

Commenting on the current state of D&I in the oil and gas industry, ChampionX CEO Soma Somasundaram said the industry has made great strides in recent years.

“Although we need to acknowledge how much further there is to go,” he added. “There is growing recognition of the work that needs to be done and a collective commitment to action.”

Somasundaram said ChampionX has made good progress in D&I by adding an executive-level position to lead the company’s overall ESG efforts and establishing an enterprise-wide D&I Council. In addition, he said the company has nine Employee Resource groups with more than 2,000 employee members globally.

"I expect our industry and individual companies will continue to make great progress on diversity and inclusion in the years to come," he noted.

**Understanding diversity**

Global Edge's Eberwein pointed out that the term diversity has been heavily used, but it's extremely important to understand the actual meaning of diversity at work to make real progress.

"I know gender is one of the things that we've framed for this discussion, but in my view, [diversity] comes in many shapes and sizes, figuratively and literally, but it's not just gender—it's race, it's culture, it's generational diversity, it's diversity from industries, it's all kinds of diversity," Eberwein explained. "And the goal is to get diversity of thought, because that's what brings innovation and creativity."

There has been "a little bit of a shift in oil and gas," but the industry still has "a long way to go," she added. "Meaningful diversity is really what we should aspire to achieve, which means not only do you have numbers with diversity candidates, but you have them throughout an entire organization, you have them at all departments, all functions, all levels, including the board level, and that's really the goal—to have meaningful diversity."

Deanna Jones, chief human resources officer with Baker Hughes, added that a diverse talent pool is critical at her company as it deploys technology for a low-carbon future.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion will require conscious

action and close collaboration between the private sector, the public sector and stakeholder groups to have a comprehensive talent pool to address the challenges facing the oil and gas industry," Jones said.

**Closing the gender gap**

Statistics show there are fewer women in oil and gas jobs than almost any other major industry, accounting for less than one-quarter of employees in the sector worldwide—and these figures grow smaller the higher up the business ladder you go.

"It's true that our sector overall trails others in terms of gender diversity, but the numbers are improving," ChampionX's Somasundaram said.

Recognizing that the industry will not be able to make real D&I strides without a fundamental shift in culture, Somasundaram said policies for D&I must be embedded in the strategy and culture of the companies.

"Policies and programs are important, but even more important is winning the hearts and minds of the workforce," he said. "And it's up to the leaders at the top to have a personal commitment, accountability and stake in the transformation."

He continued, "I am chairing our D&I Council, I am an active member of all our employee resource groups and have made



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**There's no way that we can get to where we want to go without really embracing the broadest subset of talent that we can.**

— Deanna Jones, Baker Hughes



D&I a part of our business strategy, not just a standalone effort to be managed by the human resources department.”

According to Baker Hughes’ Jones, closing the gender gap begins with the hiring process.

“We are rethinking the way we create and post jobs in our company. As digital technologies and remote operations become the new normal, we have an opportunity to be more inclusive, especially from a gender perspective,” she noted.

Jones said Baker Hughes uses a tool called Role Mapper, which is a framework designed to create more inclusive job opportunity postings.

“It’s amazing how it changes the pool of talent that are applying to the roles we have,” she said. “We have a new plant here in Houston that’s part of our oilfield equipment prod-

uct company, and we were able to draw from a much more gender-diverse environment by removing requirements for heavy lifting and things like that.”

Jones went on to add that flexible work arrangements have significantly contributed to an inclusive environment at Baker Hughes, specifically from a gender perspective, because women tend to play a dual role to support their families.

“All of our leaders have talked about how [remote work] has given them access to a much more gender diverse talent pool,”

**Pictured Below:**

Diverse teams create a collaborative work environment where suggestions are welcome from everyone, said Deanna Jones with Baker Hughes. (Source: Baker Hughes)



**Pictured Above:**

Baker Hughes uses a framework called RoleMapper to create more inclusive job opportunity postings that encourage and attract a more diverse talent pool. (Source: Baker Hughes)

she said. “I also think our numbers in terms of representation from women have been higher than the average primarily because we’ve leaned into this flexibility and really supported women in the workplace.”

Schlumberger’s Rennick estimates that women make up about 23% of the total oil and gas workforce, which he said is “significantly better” than many other industries. However, he admits that it falls far behind comparators including airlines and financial services that report between 35% and 40% female representation.

He went on to explain that major energy industry companies have been promoting diversity for many years, with recruiting and development efforts and policies that support women and families, adding that Schlumberger tripled its rate of gender diversity progress in 2020 compared to the past decade.

“There is genuine momentum in our company, and I know that in talking to my HR peers in companies across other industries this is a relatively strong performance,” Rennick said. “While many industries have taken a step backward on gender diversity during the pandemic, we have made significant progress. Now, we must keep building on this.”

### **More females in the boardroom**

Statistics show the oil and gas sector continues to struggle to boost the number of women it has in leadership positions. The share of women on boards of oil and gas companies reached 14% in 2019, double the level in 2009, according to an S&P Global report. But with less than one female board member out of every five, the sector is ill-positioned to reap the gains that diversity can bring.

Somasundaram said it’s critical for the oil and gas industry to work toward getting more women representation across boardrooms.

“This starts with being purposeful in the composition of the board and making women representation an integral part of that thinking,” he said. “There are well-qualified women available to sit on our boards, and they can significantly enhance the thinking in the boardrooms. The best route to a board position is experience.”

He noted that oil and gas companies should also encourage and allow for board participation by female executives, focusing on allyship and continually developing capability for these roles.

“I am particularly proud of our ChampionX board,” he said. “Since our launch as a public company in May 2018, ensuring diversity at the board level has been a priority. Today, we have an independent chairman of the board, 88% of ChampionX directors are independent and two of our eight director seats are held by women.”

Somasundaram said he strongly believes that diversity of the board is crucial to a company’s success.

“Diversity yields a variety of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences, and those perspectives positively impact how an organization runs, makes decisions and, ultimately, on its success,” he said.

“How do we bring more female voice into the boardroom? It’s something we’ve been talking a lot about, specifically at

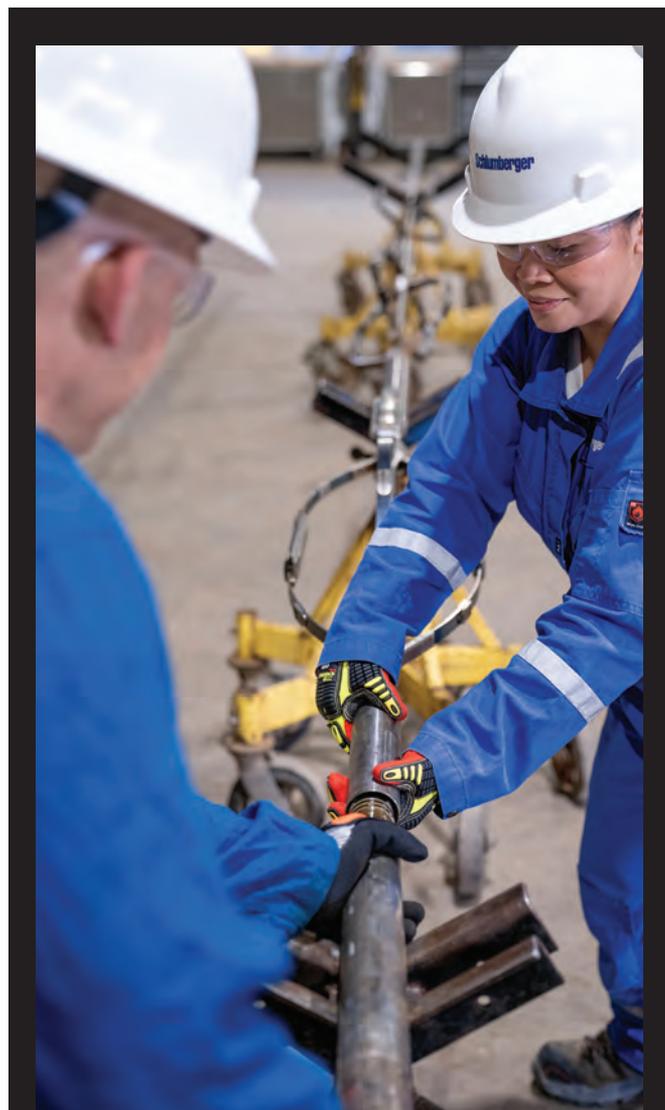
Baker Hughes,” Jones said. “We have to continue to foster an environment where women feel encouraged to take board opportunities.”

She added that, because of all the roles that women play within their lives, they need to know how to balance everything.

“Women need to know that their companies or their mentors are creating sponsorship and mentorship across the breadth of opportunity and career,” Jones said. “All of this is a really critical part of making sure that we increase the numbers we have on boards.”

### **New technological developments**

Research shows that workplace diversity has numerous business benefits, in addition to contributing to a fair and equal workplace and society.



Schlumberger’s commitment to national and cultural diversity fosters a way of working that is global in outlook yet local in practice. (Source: Schlumberger)



Within oil and gas, 94% of EY's survey respondents believe diversity of thought and experience are key to navigating the industry's high levels of disruption, with the majority agreeing that diversity contributes to both financial and non-financial business performance.

Jones said it is important to attract D&I talent to work on new technological developments needed to meet the oil and gas industry's net-zero targets.

"We need to think about diversity, equality and inclusion when working on challenges around technology and innovation and thinking differently about these problems is absolutely essential," she said. "We won't be able to meet the Paris agreement goals if we're unable to overcome these challenges."

Jones also noted that fossil fuels are here to stay for the next few decades, so the oil and gas industry needs a diverse workforce to bring "efficient solutions to the table."

"When you think about diverse teams, the thing that high-performing diverse teams do exceptionally well is create a collaborative work environment where they welcome suggestions from everyone," Jones said. "They listen to all of the voices around the table and work collectively to achieve their ambitions."

"There's no way that we can get to where we want to go without really embracing the broadest subset of talent that

Achieving improved gender balance has been a focus of policy and action in Schlumberger since the late 1970s, which is when the company began recruiting women for field operations roles. (Source: Schlumberger)

we can," she continued. "Everything that we do to create that opportunity to listen to and engage diverse talent, it just helps us in terms of our innovation and creativity to solve the industry's problems."

ChampionX Somasundaram pointed out that diversity will remain key to creating the new ideas that companies need to deliver a safe, affordable and sustainable low-carbon future.

He said the oil and gas industry is often perceived as backward and must highlight its technological innovation.

"We as an industry invest a lot in digitalization. Sometimes people can have the incorrect perception that our industry is old and tired and lags in digital adoption and ways of working."

He added that oil and gas companies must also publicly engage in conversation about their commitment to sustainable energy production including their net-zero goals to reduce carbon footprint and help fight climate change.

#### Outreach and training

To recruit and maintain a diverse talent pipeline, Jones also



**We must focus on making the oil and gas industry more attractive, communicating better about how interesting it is to work in this industry.**

— Gavin Rennick, Schlumberger



said it's important to encourage diverse talent in STEM careers as early as elementary and middle schools because it has a huge impact on the courses they choose to take. She also talked about Baker Hughes' initiative to engage and develop neurodiverse talent who are different thinkers needed for industry's transformation and low-carbon solutions. Baker Hughes has partnered with Potentia STARS—a company that specializes in training and developing neurodiverse talent—to recruit, engage and develop a diverse range of talent who have a unique approach to solve problems. "Our partnership with Potentia really has allowed us to tap into having conversations about DEI in a completely different way and to really access talent who are system thinkers and who are lending their skills into our energy transition, technology and manufacturing groups," Jones said.

**Mentorship and recruitment**

Rennick said there are no shortcuts to increasing diversity, rather a sustained systematic improvement is needed. From identifying where cultural change will help the process and then building all of the necessary tools, systems, processes and policies over time to support and accelerate the improvement.

"The oil and gas industry needs inspirational role models that represent all diversity dimensions," he said. "They need to be highly visible and in senior roles."

Schlumberger has employees from more than 160 nationalities and almost all of the company's top 10 executives are from different nationalities.

"This gives people a line of sight to what they can achieve being a diverse candidate," he said. "That visibility is important."

Secondly, Rennick said companies need to remove gender bias while recruiting new talent, adding that the industry as a whole also needs to address "barriers" faced by women at the workplace.

"There are practical barriers that we face today in getting women access to operational sites that still lack basic sleeping and hygiene facilities in certain places," Rennick said. "This makes it more difficult to progress. In addition, improving maternity conditions and flexibility is important. The industry has to really work together to be able to overcome these barriers."

He also said it's important for the industry to "open up the pipeline" to attract new talent.

"We must focus on making the energy industry more attractive, communicating better about how interesting it is to work in this industry," he said. "Secondly, [we need to be] supporting and attracting people at high school level, early in university and in tradeschools that typically have low representation of either minority populations or women or disabled people or any other diversity dimension."

**Cultivate: Investing in people**

"Some say the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, and the second best time is now," Somasundaram said. "The same could be said of developing people."

Somasundaram noted that people want to work for good leaders and companies with positive culture, adding that every leader should make a personal commitment to focus on developing a positive work environment that is inclusive and values people.

"It is never too late to start developing and investing in our people," he said. "It's one of the best investments you can make in the long-term future of your organization."

Somasundaram suggested implementing the following processes for a more positive workplace:

- Find new sources to recruit and attract talent to ensure diverse experience and perspectives;
- Focus on educating hiring managers about transferable skills and hiring for potential instead of relying solely on experience;
- Focus on your brand to tell your company's story and dispel negative stereotypes of the industry, which includes emphasizing how our sustainability efforts impact the world for the better, which aligns with our purpose-driven culture; and
- Insist on inclusion as part of the company's culture and embed education and reinforcement in daily practices.

**Future workforce**

The oil and gas industry is often perceived as "dirty and backward" by the young generation, Global Edge's Eberwein said. So it is critical for companies to convey the message about



**There are many candidates coming from different industries that may not have been in the oil and gas or energy space, but they bring other experiences and other thoughts, particularly on the digitalization side, which could be really impactful and powerful for the industry.**

— Kathy Eberwein, Global Edge





**It is never too late to start developing and investing in our people...It's one of the best investments you can make in the long-term future of your organization.**

— **Soma Somasundaram**, ChampionX



how decarbonization and digitalization are sparking a radical change in the industry, and recruiters need to be more open-minded when hiring fresh talent.

"The younger generation tends to think oil and gas is dirty and is responsible for higher carbon footprint," she said "Educating the gen old population and getting the right message out would be one thing that would be really impactful."

She also said recruiters should "cast a wider net," using social media platforms for instance, to attract diverse talent.

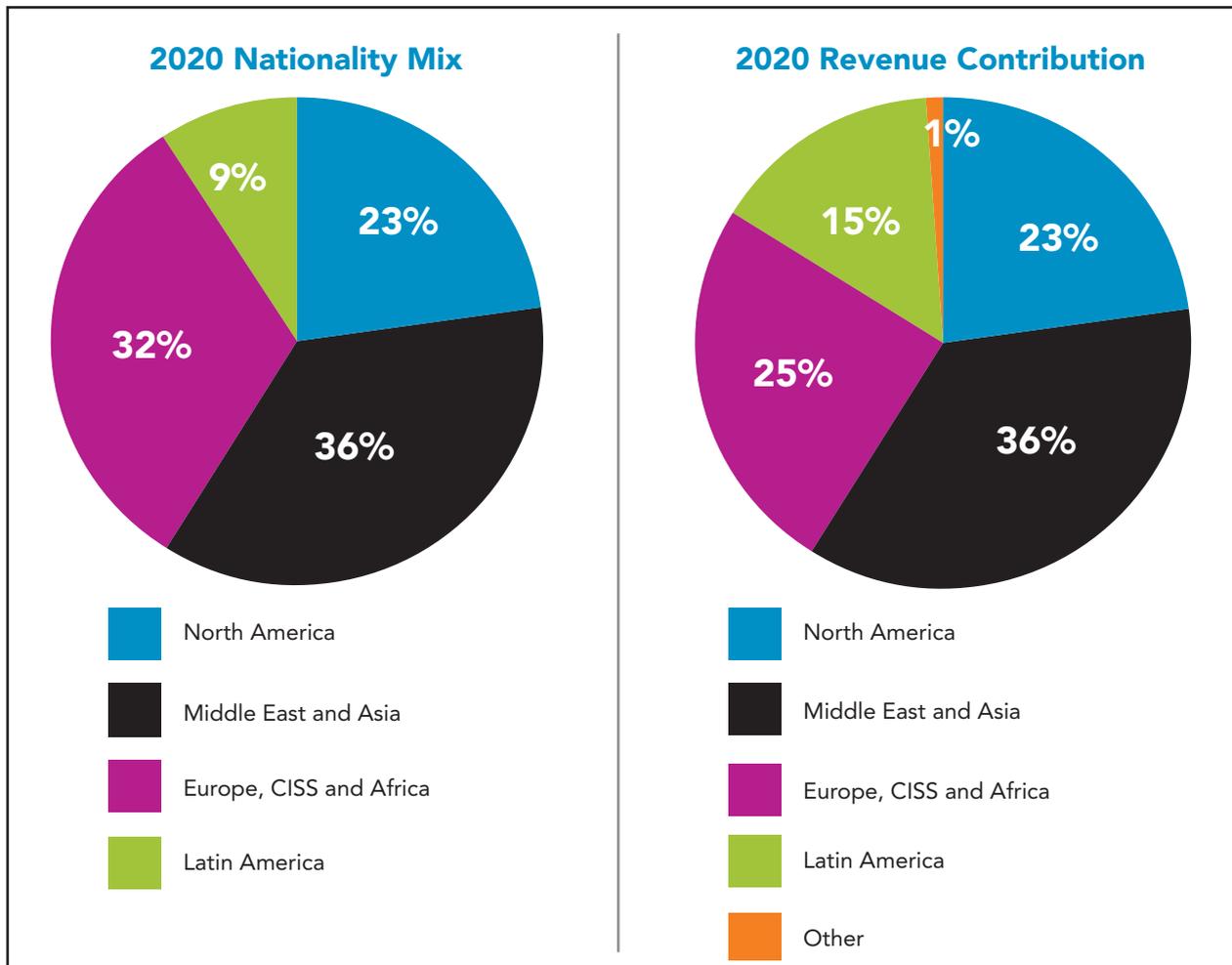
"Companies need to be open-minded when hiring," Eberwein said. "There are many candidates coming from different industries that maybe have not been in the oil and gas or ener-

gy space, but they bring other experiences and other thoughts, particularly on the digitalization side, which could be really impactful and powerful for the industry."

Expressing similar sentiment, Rennick pointed out that it is important for the industry to increase awareness about its role in sustainability.

"Firstly, we need to show all of the good things that the industry is doing," he said. "Secondly, we need to show how exciting and interesting it is to have a career in oil and gas." ■

**Editor's note:** Contributed photos were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Schlumberger's commitment to national and cultural diversity fosters a way of working that is global in outlook yet local in practice. (Source: Schlumberger)



# Nonprofits, Energy Companies Partner to Promote STEM Education



As efforts to encourage more students to embrace STEM go virtual, businesses and organizations aim to extend their reach to keep talent pipelines filled.

By **Velda Addison**,  
Senior Editor

A group of volunteers from Chevron Corp. work on STEM kits for students participating in the Techbridge Girls program. (Source: Techbridge Girls)



For Aileen Iniguez, the hook was the promise of free pizza. It's been more than a decade, however, since she participated in STEM sessions offered by Techbridge Girls. But she remembers it like yesterday and still has the robotic dog she built—plus memories and knowledge gained—as evidence of experiences come full circle.

"There really weren't any STEM offerings," Iniguez recalled, flashing back to her time as a middle schooler in Oakland, Calif. "For me, growing up in an urban community—I was raised low-income as well—those opportunities didn't exist. Actually, you know, at that moment, I had no idea what it meant to be an engineer or to have a STEM career. So this was really one of a kind for that area in that neighborhood."

The offering of pizza during an informational session for the nonprofit organization grabbed her attention. Now a data scientist for Chevron Corp., Iniguez credits Techbridge Girls, which develops STEM curricula for girls and educators, for piquing her curiosity in STEM. She also gives credit to Chevron, a longtime partner with Techbridge Girls, for building lasting relationships through mentorship and career guidance.

"The presence of these companies matters. Going in and speaking to students one on one [even virtually] is what's going to make the most impact," Iniguez said, noting she's given a few talks to middle and high school students. "Sometimes it looks

like they're not engaging but really these students take away what speakers are sharing with them. ... It really does make a difference. They are listening. They are curious, and they do have a lot of questions."

Her words were spoken as the industry tries to keep its workforce pipeline filled with qualified young people amid increasing competition for talent from non-energy industries.

"We believe that education is a critical pathway to achieving social equality and enabling human progress," said Joesetta Jones, Chevron's chief diversity and inclusion officer. "Limited access to education is a systemic inequality leading to differences in opportunities and success, ultimately suppressing the socioeconomic mobility of marginalized populations."

Like Chevron, many energy companies have fostered relationships with nonprofit organizations and K-12 schools. Their initiatives go beyond monetary donations. Their employees are volunteering their time and other resources. They are creating and assembling STEM kits. They are speaking to students about careers. They are sharing lessons in science. They are making videos about different aspects of the energy business. They are mentors.

In some instances, they are going beyond STEM, reaching deeper into communities, as nonprofit groups with similar missions expand their reach, grow their offerings and strive to attract and retain investment to make lasting impacts.



Techbridge Girls learn about chemical engineering during a science project involving candy and soda. (Source: Techbridge Girls)

“Our program is not only a life changer, but it’s a spark starter,” Collins-Puri said. “It sparks something in our girls that they ultimately want more of, and . . . we meet our girls where they are and then hook them into what is possible for their future by surrounding them with resources, exposure to new possibilities and a clear pathway on how to get there.”

Focus is not just on creating memorable hands-on STEM experiences. The organization takes a holistic approach, incorporating elements of chemical engineering, structural engineering and interconnections between different technologies, and showing how STEM disciplines show up for various careers while addressing their social and emotional development needs. The career exploration journey has taken girls inside companies, like Chevron, so they see first-hand what opportunities may await.

Techbridge Girls focuses on Black, Indigenous and all girls of color along with gender expansive youth who lack access to quality STEM education and support. In recent years, the organization has shifted to equipping what it calls “out-of-school time” educators with STEM curricula packed with lessons that spark curiosity in such subjects for younger girls. Older girls also develop skills via story-based learning and interacting with STEM professionals. Through a partnership with the National Society of Black Engineers plus

**Reengineering STEM**

For Techbridge Girls, it is about reengineering the way STEM education is taught and consumed, particularly for Black, Indigenous and all girls of color who experience income insecurity, according to Techbridge Girls CEO Nikole Collins-Puri.

investment from Chevron, Techbridge Girls offered its first middle school girl-only summer camp in 2021.

“As we expand more broadly and through the learnings and shifts that we had to make through COVID-19, we launched a new program called Ignite, which is a hybrid program that can



**Our program is not only a life changer, but it’s a spark starter.**

— Nikole Collins-Puri,  
Techbridge Girls





Students learn about biofuels at Chevron’s San Ramon, Calif., headquarters. Chevron partners with the Techbridge Girls program to encourage girls to study science and engineering. (Source: Chevron)

be utilized in a virtual space or in-person space to engage girls in elementary and middle school,” Collins-Puri said. “That is supported by asynchronous and synchronous training for OST educators to build up their equity practices around STEM education as well as have a turnkey program to serve their girls in their schools or communities.”

The 21-year-old nonprofit has already grown from being an afterschool programming provider in Title 1 schools in the Oakland area to communities in Seattle and Washington, D.C. Now the program has a presence in about 30 states, where it serves elementary, middle and high school girls. Techbridge Girls aims to reach 1 million girls by 2030 through partnerships, advocacy, technology and turnkey programs. Its sights are on expanding programming and mentor training to other cities, including Houston and New Orleans, in 2021.

“We really believe in creating a pathway for girls and creating stickiness of exciting, engaging, relevant, identity-affirming programming that our girls can continue to experience throughout their secondary life pathway or experiences,” Collins-Puri said.

Girls should see this journey as one in which they are not visitors or newcomers to the space but a space where they belong and ancestors have paved. Techbridge Girls said it “champions a sense of belonging,” showing the contributions of all to the STEM revolution.

“Unfortunately, STEM education has been taught through a white-dominant perspective and [has been] male driven. What that has done is it has left out the brilliance and the contributions that many, especially Black and brown women, have contributed to the field, so that our girls understand that they already belong in this industry,” Collins-Puri said. “Their ancestors and their sisters and aunts and moms that have come before them have already transformed this industry. So we, as an organization, really believe that STEM education needs to be delivered through the broad context of the story of all contributions that have been made to the STEM revolution.”



Techbridge Girls focuses on STEM education, including learning about circuit creation through spin art. (Source: Techbridge Girls)

Techbridge Girls said gatekeepers, or influential adults and corporations, have the ability to maintain or disrupt the status quo. Chevron is among the longtime disruptors.

The San Ramon, Calif.-based energy giant has supported Techbridge Girls for at least 15 years, Collins-Puri said. During that time, Chevron has contributed nearly \$5 million to the organization and countless volunteer hours plus guidance on human resource strategies and legal needs. Rhonda Morris, Chevron’s vice president of human resources, is on Techbridge Girls’ board of directors.

“They also are a strategic thought partner for us,” Collins-Puri said.

The company provided guidance when Techbridge Girls fine-tuned its mission, goals and shifted from being a direct service organization to equipping out-of-school time STEM providers.

“They were part of all of the strategic thinking by providing feedback and insight on how the changes could bode in the larger STEM education space given Chevron’s large presence,” Collins-Puri said.

The relationship has been a collaborative one. Chevron uses Techbridge Girls’ Role Models Matter program to train employees in their youth volunteer efforts.

“We create, sustain and expand social programs that enable our communities to reach their full potential,” Jones said. “We do this because our business succeeds best when the people we work with and the communities in which we operate succeed, too.”

For Chevron, support goes beyond financial contributions.

“Our employees serve as volunteers, we partner on science fairs and education forums, we have hosted girls on field trips to our facilities and have helped forge new partnerships with organizations such as the Oakland A’s and 49ers Foundation,” Jones said. “We also develop partnerships with universities designed to strengthen faculty, curriculum and student development.”

Collins-Puri called Techbridge Girls’ relationship with Chevron the “epitome and model of what a true partnership should look like between a nonprofit organization and a corporation, no matter what industry.”

### Going beyond STEM

Hess Corp. is focusing on areas where the company believes its efforts will have a meaningful and lasting impact. Houston’s predominately Hispanic Second Ward and African-American Third Ward are among the communities getting the attention of the global independent energy company, which has its operational headquarters at Hess Tower in Houston. The neighborhoods are adjacent to Hess Tower in downtown Houston.

In early 2021, Hess announced a three-year \$9 million financial commitment to its Houston Learning for Life Partnership that funds educational programs and support services for children living in economically disadvantaged communities. The partnership benefits more than 13,000 children in about 22 schools and expands Hess’ Learn, Engage, Advance and Persevere (LEAP) educational program, which has invested more than \$7 million over the last eight years to support students in Houston’s Magnolia Park and Second Ward neighborhoods.



Hess funds the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation’s My Home Library program, and employees volunteer their time sorting, packing and delivering books to schools as well as reading to students. (Source: Hess Corp.)

Education is “kind of our sweet spot,” said Will Rea, director of external affairs and communications with Hess, noting the company has been focused in that area for many years. Its efforts have included considerable investment to help the government in Equatorial Guinea establish a sustainable school system there, where Hess once operated.

As explained in Hess’ latest sustainability report, the company tailors external affairs and stakeholder plans for each of its operated locations. Its strategy includes a five-step process in which risks and issues are identified, internal accountabilities established, key stakeholders identified, engagements outlined, and progress is tracked and monitored. In the Houston area, the Hess team has worked with the city of Houston, the nonprofit Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF) and Houston Independent School District, among others, to help determine where volunteer efforts and financial resources should be directed.

About nine years ago, the needle pointed to Houston’s Second Ward. Partnering with the GHCF to identify areas of need in the Second Ward, Rea said Hess learned some children were behind a year or more in school, some were part of households where English was not spoken well, some needed school uniforms or some needed rides to schools or afterschool programs on certain days. So that is where Hess directed its efforts initially.

“Ultimately, we want all children in these neighborhoods to get a fair shot to succeed in life,” Rea said.



Hess has worked with the city of Houston, the GHCF and Houston Independent School District, among others, to help determine where volunteer efforts and financial resources should be directed. Nine years ago, Hess directed those efforts toward Houston's Second Ward, and more recently Hess' efforts have expanded into the Third Ward. (Source: Hess Corp.)

In the last two years, Hess' Houston area efforts have expanded south into the Third Ward, which is predominantly African American. Rea said the company wanted to "double down," especially in light of the conversation around racial injustice and what happened with George Floyd—the African-American man whose 2020 murder by a Minneapolis police officer was captured on video, shocking the world. Floyd grew up in Houston's Third Ward.

"It's just the right thing to do," Rea said of investing in the community. "We have a longstanding commitment to being a good corporate citizen, and we want to make a positive, long-lasting impact where we operate."

He added that Hess focuses on education needs over multiple years.

"For us, it's more than a financial investment," Rea said. "We get our folks personally engaged as Hess Force volunteers, which gives them a chance to make a difference."

Hess funds the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation's My Home Library program. Employees volunteer their time sorting, packing and delivering books to schools as well as reading to students.

"The kids light up," Rea said. "They are so excited to get a stack of books they selected."

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many to pivot to virtual offerings and plan for a successful return into classrooms when educators deem it safe for in-person campus visits.

"We lost a lot of time in our education efforts in the last year like everybody," Rea said.

He pointed out the potential need for more support, considering some students may have fallen behind or missed out on exciting enrichment opportunities due to the pandemic. Some Hess employees were able to engage virtually during the pandemic as mentors with students of two middle schools through Big Brothers Big Sisters, but they are ready to get back into classrooms, Rea said. Plans are for Hess employees to assist robotics teams and deliver Hess Toy Truck STEM kits to classrooms among other activities.



Hess volunteers engage students in STEM activities to heighten their interests. (Source: Hess Corp.)



“Our employees know they are making an impact on the lives of our children,” Rea said of volunteer opportunities. “So they are incredibly committed.”

It is all part of the company’s values to be socially responsible.

“We partner with the best non-profit companies in our city who care deeply and deliver on their mission,” Rea said.

Grants awarded by Hess through its Learning for Life Partnership pay for educational programs, equipment, curricula and teacher training, mentorship programs and guidance along with full scholarships for up to nine high school seniors each year to attend college or pursue vocation certification.

“The essays we read as part of the application process are moving and inspiring,” Rea added. “All these young adults need is an opportunity. We’re blessed to play a small role in helping them realize their dreams.”

Though volunteers engage students in STEM activities to heighten their interests, scholarship recipients are not limited to pursuing degrees in such fields.

“Our scholarships allow students to pursue whatever major they want,” he said.

Hess is committed to these initiatives for the long term.

“We’re not under the illusion that somehow this partnership can achieve its goals in just two or three years. It has to be sustaining,” Rea said. “We want to see it through.”

### Bridging the gap

The Independent Petroleum Association of America’s Energy Workforce Education Center considers itself the bridge between education and the energy sector, particularly oil and natural gas, according to Anne Ford, the center’s senior vice president.

The energy industry nonprofit started in 2006, partnering with the Petroleum Equipment & Services Association (now called the Energy Workforce & Technology Council), to strengthen students’ STEM skills and spread awareness of the energy industry. Since its beginnings at a Houston area high school, the program has expanded in scope and blossomed to serve nearly 163 schools nationwide, reaching about 20,000 students.

The program has a wide reach but specific targets.

“Our program is open to all students from all states and territories,” Ford said. “But we particularly want to reach underserved communities or minority and female student populations, low socioeconomic, rural, Native American, homeschooled students, students in alternative education programs [and] students who don’t have contact with the energy industry because there are no energy companies where they live.”

The center aims to address the projected loss of STEM professionals in the energy industry due to its aging workforce, Ford said, calling it a “win-win for schools and the industry”.

“We believe it’s a program to bridge to a better understanding and respect between the generations of corporate America,” she said.

The center said about three-fourths of the students it has historically served are economically disadvantaged and 41% are female. The demographic makeup of participating students are 61% Hispanic, 26% Black, 8% white and 3% Asian.

In this 2019 photo, participants of IPAA’s Exploring Energy program learn about wind energy. (Source: IPAA)





**We find that our very own students are the best promoters and teachers of what the industry has to offer.**

— Anne Ford,  
IPAA Energy Workforce Education Center



“Over these past 15 years, we have personally sat beside the families we’ve impacted. We’ve had moms and dads and neighbors of students we’ve supported that now have a different perspective on the industry and the careers the industry has to offer,” Ford said. “We find that our very own students are the best promoters and teachers of what the industry has to offer. We see the smiles and see the knowledge bridge being built, and we experience the gratitude from the families whose students have gone on to do great things.”

In addition to bringing live virtual guest speakers into classrooms, the center organizes national school competitions where students can showcase their skills, provides educators incentives and support, and offers videos featuring energy professionals speaking on energy-related topics.

The center’s Permian-based Power Your Future program for middle schoolers has reached about 3,700 students in 24 school districts through interactive simulations of STEM careers that include petroleum, electrical and mechanical engineers, geologists, landman and technical roles.

Its national Virtual Exploring Energy Program for high schoolers launched in January 2021, featuring energy industry videos, as the COVID-19 pandemic created more opportunities for virtual offerings. Just four months in, the program had already attracted about 4,000 students from 30 school districts, Ford said. The program features just over 100 videos on topics such as energy careers, energy tours, energy topics, leadership and personal strengths. Industry representatives, associations and employees in careers record and star in the videos.

“It doesn’t have to be Hollywood standard, but we’ve got Hollywood standard,” Ford said. “We also have some as simple as cellphone recordings of themselves talking about their careers.”

The video repository now includes the program’s first videos recorded in Spanish thanks to Nabors, which presented the idea to the center. Hopes are to add videos in Chinese and Arabic in the future, Ford said, later adding the center is also actively gathering content featuring careers in renewable energy. The videos are available on-demand, but the center has the ability to connect speakers, such as those featured in the videos, to classrooms virtually.

“We’re in conversations with colleges as well,” Ford said. “COVID-19 really has been a gift to us in terms of expanding outreach. So the potential is enormous—just limited by finances.”

Programs such as the ones offered by the center take money and time, and fundraising has been a challenge, especially during the oil and gas sector’s downturns or when there is great competition for limited dollars. The organization is grateful for

its partners and sponsors, which include Occidental Petroleum Corp., ConocoPhillips, Marathon Oil, Halliburton and AAPL, to name a few, but it is actively seeking multi-year investment commitments.

“Our program reach would be wider [and] it would be deeper if we had sustained financial commitment from the industry,” Ford said. “That’s an ongoing challenge for us, and we’re wholly dependent on donations to our foundation.”

Making a difference through outreach is fulfilling, she said.



The Energy Workforce Education Center’s Power Your Future program for middle schoolers has reached about 3,700 students in 24 school districts through interactive simulations of STEM careers. (Source: IPAA)



**Advancing racial and social equity aligns with the core values of The Chevron Way and helps us cultivate a more equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace.**

—**Josetta Jones**, Chevron



“We know it’s fulfilling for our board members and the organizations and individuals who support our work. Additionally, we want to make sure that once we support a group of educators and students in schools that we continue to support them,” Ford continued. “We don’t want to be fair-weather friends, so to speak. We don’t want to give an impression to students or teachers that we’re just there flying in and flying out and that they’re not a priority. That’s very important for us and the educators we work with.”

**Pursuing common goals**

With ESG initiatives at the forefront of companies’ agendas, partnering with organizations that focus on educating the future workforce is a positive, according to Ford. She called it the perfect vehicle for building brands, generating goodwill, providing development opportunities for an organization’s employees and counteracting negative stereotypes, particularly for the oil and gas industry.

“What we do is to help teachers bring real-world careers into the classroom. . . . We want students and teachers to see the full range of opportunities and ways to get there,” Ford said, adding the interaction builds employee morale. “Employees want to give back; they want to talk about their careers and their personal journey.”

Making a difference requires buy-in from the C-suite. It is fortunate that Hess’ leadership “gets it,” Rea added.

When he presented ideas for programs in Houston’s Third Ward that meshed with the city’s Complete Communities Initiative, it was an easy sell, he recalled.

“They said, ‘OK, we love this. Is there more we can do?’ They also expressed concern that the program might not be reaching kids early enough,” Rea said, recounting how executives asked him to find opportunities to be helpful at the pre-K level.

As the STEM revolution evolves and changes the cultural and economic landscape of societies, Collins-Puri added girls cannot be left out. They must have leading roles for not just their economic livelihoods, she said, but also to drive innovations that are impacting the communities in which they live.

“Our work has been really steeped and grounded in a lens of equity, but with a focus on creating economic opportunity

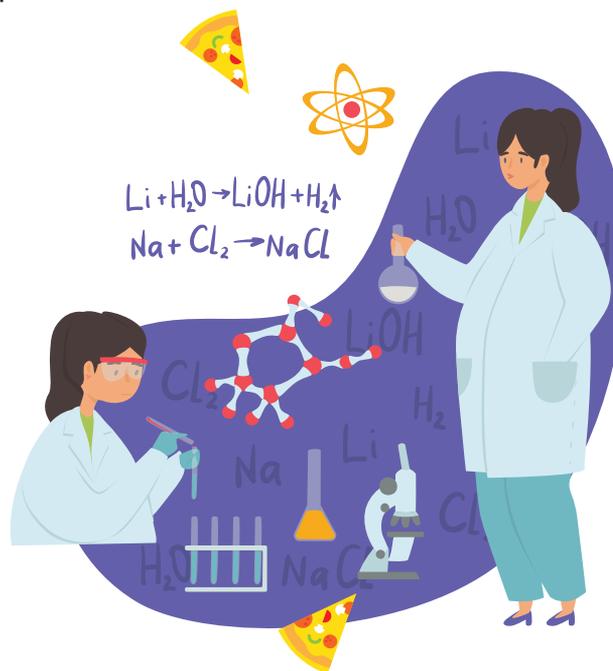
and really realizing our greatest potential as a nation around innovation in the STEM revolution,” she said.

Techbridge Girls ignited Iniguez’s curiosity with STEM and that passion carried on once she left the program. Iniguez remembered forming relationships with Chevron employees who participated in her high school mentoring program and staying in contact. She graduated from University of California, Berkeley, earning a degree in math. When the time came to find a job, Iniguez reached out to Techbridge Girls, which helped her navigate.

“It all worked out,” Iniguez said, who has now been working with Chevron for about four years. “I’m very happy with the relationships that I built with Techbridge Girls and Chevron.”

Looking at Techbridge Girls’ success stories, Collins-Puri remembered Iniguez and others like her.

“The free pizza was the hook because for her at that time free pizza was a gift,” Collins-Puri said. “But what she didn’t realize was that free pizza opened her eyes to a whole new world of possibilities.” ■



(Source: TF-vector/Shutterstock.com)



# CU Denver Global Energy Management Program

*Robust diversity and inclusion programs positively impact a company's culture, hiring efforts and bottom line.*

By Catherine Steffek, Founder, Momentum Consulting Group

Capex and opex are vital metrics when evaluating a company's viability, valuation and future direction. They are foundational to a company's growth and profits. Of equal prominence are the people who put these assets to work.

So why is investment in the industry's greatest asset, its people, not given the same level of importance or measurement? As the energy industry strives for diversity in its leadership ranks, a new concept with similar strategic value and revenue implications should be considered, "CapWx."

CapWx (W = workforce) is the counterpart to the investment dollars that go into physical assets and operations. It is the investment in a company's workforce and includes employee training and development. CapWx can demonstrate commitment to developing a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

## CapWx and its role in diversity, equity and inclusion

Robust diversity and inclusion programs positively impact a company's culture, hiring efforts and bottom line. The most successful programs have strong leadership support and viable metrics to measure their efforts.

Similar to capex and opex, CapWx can serve as a universal measurement tool for employee development, including DE&I efforts as well as investment in leadership training and advanced degree opportunities.

The two biggest roadblocks that deter an individual from seeking training or advanced degrees are time and money. That's why investment in CapWx is so crucial and includes budgeting not only money but also time, which often can be even more scarce. For the company, the time commitment for training and development means valuable time away from the office. For the individual, it means the time away from office as well as time away from family.

## A customized and proven solution

Since 2009, the Global Energy Management (GEM) Program at the CU Denver Business School has been delivering an all-energy, graduate business education for full-time energy professionals around the world.

"GEM's well-balanced curriculum continues to produce the next generation of leaders who embrace diversity of thought, understand market forces across all sectors and build sound business strategies that positively impact the bottom line," said GEM's executive director, Sarah Derdowski. "The accessibility of our hybrid-online delivery method has also allowed us to positively impact the gender gap in energy leadership. We contin-

ue to develop new market-driven, real-world applicable professional development programming beyond our master's degree, providing quality education for all levels."

## Tangible far-reaching impact of CapWx investment

Investment in advanced degrees and leadership training are vital components to building successful DE&I initiatives. The positive impact is often farther reaching than initially planned.

Natasha Herring, GEM alum, epitomizes just how much of an impact this investment can have.

Herring started her career as a consultant for a leading international consulting firm, conducting technical analysis and project management impact evaluations for utility companies across the nation. She recognized that to advance her career, she needed to diversify her knowledge and skillsets.

And her investment is paying off; since starting the GEM Program, Herring has been promoted several times and is now managing consultant at Guidehouse Consulting. Even more impressive is her commitment to giving back, serving in multiple capacities as a champion of diversity, leadership and STEM education for the next generation.

She is the president of the Denver Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers, serves as a board member for the Issachar Center for Urban Leadership, and a former member of the Dean's Council for the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College. Her efforts were recently honored with The Angela Williams Community Engagement Award for outstanding leadership and service.

"The real-world curriculum of the GEM Program opened my eyes to the global energy infrastructure," Herring said. "It honed my business acumen, broadened my perspective of energy markets and strengthened my ability to effectively communicate with executives. Furthermore, it helped me find and develop my leadership style and recognize that I am the architect of my career path. The program bolstered my confidence in my leadership abilities, empowering me to go after new opportunities in my career and within the community."

For more information on the GEM Program, visit us at [business.ucdenver.edu/ms/global-energy-management](https://business.ucdenver.edu/ms/global-energy-management). ■



GLOBAL ENERGY MANAGEMENT BUSINESS SCHOOL



Pictured Above: Natasha Herring

# From the Classroom to the Boardroom

For decades, junior and community colleges have played a role in educating the future energy workforce pipeline. Their reach has extended to students from diverse backgrounds, connecting them to internships, scholarships and shadowing programs.

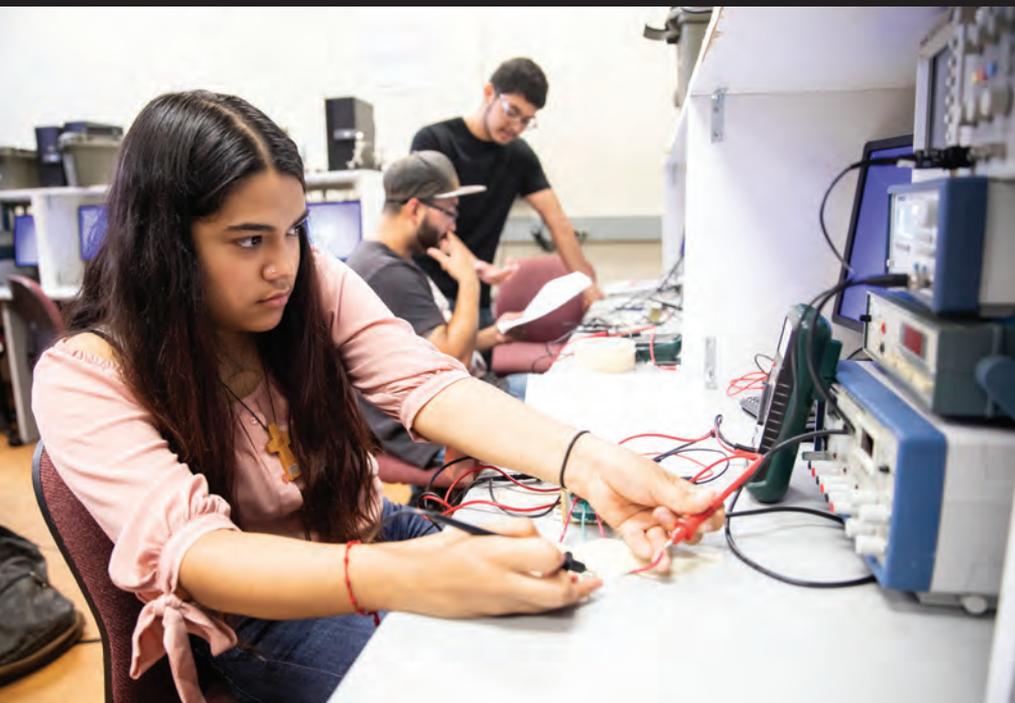


By **Madison Ratcliff**,  
Associate Editor

**T**he oil and gas industry faced serious layoffs in 2020 due to the sharp collapse in oil prices caused by the pandemic. However, as it reached the latter half of 2021, the market had already recovered a significant amount. Even with price improvements, the shadow of COVID-19 still looms with multiple strains and variants threatening another shutdown. As a result, some companies are hesitant to make any big hires until the smoke clears.

However, with production already picking up momentum, companies will need to fill large roles, and many are looking to hire more diversely in terms of gender and ethnicity. Hiring employees of diverse gender and ethnicity is beneficial in two ways: it allows energy businesses to explore a previously untapped pool of talent that can be profitable to their team, and it satisfies investors concerned with a company's ESG statistics.

Even amid a global pandemic, community colleges and universities are preparing their students to enter the energy workforce pipeline by offering access to scholarships and internships, hosting companies at career fairs and collaborating with nonprofit organizations to provide a network to help them succeed.



**Pictured Left:**

From chemical, civil, electrical and mechanical engineering, upon completion of Austin Community College courses, students will have a strong foundation to transfer and pursue a four-year degree. (Source: Austin Community College)

**Pictured Below:**

The manufacturing, automation and robotics technology specialization at Austin Community College trains students to install, operate, maintain and troubleshoot equipment used in manufacturing environments. (Source: Austin Community College)

### Partnering with schools

The pandemic and subsequent 2020 energy market crisis put a freeze on many companies' hiring processes. As those companies are moving toward recovery, many are looking to hire more diverse talent, namely more women and people of color.

Young professionals leaving school and entering the workforce for the first time are looking for anything to give them an edge in the highly competitive pool of candidates. In August 2021, GTI Energy created the role of director of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and appointed Amy Russell to the role to manage and implement DEI strategies for the company. The position's creation signified the importance the company places on the social aspect of ESG regulations.

"Our goal is to [focus on] the communities in which we serve from a diversity perspective, and when I look at diversity, we view it in the broadest sense, thinking about all the different dimensions and layers of identity that make us who we are as an organization," Russell said. "So we look for employees that are innovative and ambitious [with] great problem-solving capabilities and work well in a team environment. And when we say 'work well on a team' and a 'team environment,' we want to make sure that our employees are fostering relationships in a positive manner."

Since the DEI director position was implemented, GTI has been working on partnering with schools to find more diverse talent. According to Russell, the company sees the value in seeking out talented individuals themselves, but the pandemic made things harder on their end. In addition, college representatives have mentioned that COVID restrictions have made it harder for them to host companies who want to recruit on their campuses.

Getting potential employers on campus has been difficult,



despite social distancing restrictions lifting in some places, said Dr. Shasta Buchanan, vice president of student affairs with Austin Community College (ACC) in Texas.

"Even though we start opening our doors, that doesn't mean the business or industry partner has allowed their employees to start recruiting again for jobs," Buchanan said. "Being mindful of that and working with our business and industry partners when we are in that virtual environment space [and determining] how is that virtual information session more interactive, not just a talking head in a square."

Despite delayed efforts, GTI is making progress toward their diversity college recruitment programs. GTI works closely with the Women’s Energy Network, posting job position openings on its website and co-sponsoring events with the network. The company also participated in the “Empowering Diversity in Clean Tech” pilot internship program led by the Clean Energy Leadership Institute.

“It was an intern program specifically designed to provide Black, indigenous and people of color students for the paid full-time, 10-week intern programs,” Russell said. Then companies and organizations can actively build a diverse team and an inclusive work environment, she added.

With ESG influencing oil and gas companies’ spending decisions, many are following similar tactics to ensure a diverse workplace, amassing a larger pool of talent that will lead to more creative solutions for the future of energy.

### ‘Feeling of belonging’

While oil and gas companies may have stopped hiring as much due to the pandemic, community colleges and universities never stopped preparing their students to join the energy workforce. With a barrage of programs aimed at ensuring each one is ready, academically and socially, the schools do a great deal of work to showcase their students’ talents and skills.

For example, ACC implemented a tutoring program that gives students more one-on-one support. Tutoring is embedded into courses, which is especially helpful to those taking difficult STEM classes required to go into the energy industry.

“These student tutors become part of our faculty and staff, and I can really tell that they develop a strong sense of belonging, and they feel very valued as being part of the department,” said Dr. Alberto Quinonez, department chair of engineering technology with ACC. “In turn, they work with their fellow students [by] helping them with their studies, assignments [and] lab work. That’s one of the ways we tried to build more inclusion and more of a feeling of belonging with our students.”

Austin, Texas, is removed from the traditional oil and gas businesses that prevail in Houston, but renewable energy companies are starting to populate the Hill Country. Quinonez explained that the school helps prepare students who want to stay in the area but also want to work in the energy industry for the energy revolution that is occurring in Austin and will likely continue as the U.S. puts more emphasis on clean energy.

“We do have a renewable energy program that educates and



Austin Community College engineering students have the option to co-enroll in the Texas A&M-Chevron Engineering Academy, which provides a direct path to transfer to one of the best engineering schools. (Source: Austin Community College)





**“Our goal is to [focus on] the communities in which we serve from a diversity perspective, and when I look at diversity, we view it in the broadest sense, thinking about all the different dimensions and layers of identity that make us who we are as an organization.”**

— Amy Russell, GTI Energy



trains students to be technicians in that field, whether they go work for a solar installer or related business,” he continued. “Some go to work for utility companies in Austin. We have a municipality, so it’s Austin Energy. And some of the students have gotten jobs at Austin Energy, because Austin Energy has a renewable energy department.”

**Hands-on experience**

Linda Head, senior associate vice chancellor of the division of external and employer relations with Lone Star College in Houston and surrounding areas, ensures that her students are prepared for the workforce by implementing a hands-on learning approach to the classes. In the same vein as ACC’s tutoring program, students that graduate from Lone Star with an associate’s degree or certificate are hireable candidates based on the skill set they cultivated in laboratories and small classes, allowing teachers to spend one-on-one time with each person.

“It’s not sitting in a lecture hall with 500 other people listening to lectures or listening to videos online; there’s something that you can apply and truly do,” Head said. “Our largest classes are about 30 students, so the professors know our students and guide them in a different way than when you’re in larger classrooms. Everywhere our professors can, they have something the students can do.”

In addition to smaller class sizes and hands-on laboratories, Lone Star College has other methods of preparing students for the energy workforce. The school stays connected with human resources officials at energy companies and hosts advisory councils with company officials to give students a more in-depth look at the specific career they want. Furthermore, the school incorporates internships into the curriculum, allowing students to get paid during the school year for doing something that pertains to the energy industry, while also giving them real-world experience in their chosen profession.

“When I went to college, you worked on your bachelor’s degree [and] you did your internship at the end. I worked on my master’s degree; I did an internship at the end,” Head said. “[It’s] a different way of doing internships. You’re getting real world experience along the way.”

**Prepped for the next chapter**

Many schools also host career fairs to show students what the workforce has to offer. Colorado School of Mines holds these events to get students excited about different STEM fields they can pursue after graduation. Additionally, the school invites



Many industries need skilled workers who can transform and assemble materials into products. Lone Star College has a variety of specialized training areas for corporations with employees currently working or seeking a career in the mechanical, electrical, oil and gas, or automated (mechatronics) production industries. (Source: Lone Star College-North Harris)

alumni to speak to students about what it's like in the industries. According to Paul C. Johnson, president of the university, the school has close connections within the oil and gas industry due to the number of Mines alums who are "CEOs of the energy industry."

"Our alums will come to campus, and they will talk about the jobs that they do in the companies that they work for in the energy industry," Johnson said. "They'll talk about their view of what the future is going to be and why they're really excited about things. And so, the nice thing about Mines is we've got these really close industry connections. It's pretty easy for them to invite people from the industry to come talk."

Unfortunately, COVID has had a negative impact on these career fairs, as many of them were either canceled or pushed online. ACC's Buchanan sympathizes with her students who are tired of doing everything for school online.

"They don't mind online, but not minding it and wanting it 100% of the time are two different things," she said.

As more and more businesses and campuses open up, she expects to see more of a return to traditional learning.

"Bringing the network into the student space early becomes very important," Buchanan said. "When you think about diversity, you think about equity. We don't want our students to feel inferior at all in that next chapter and space they're going into. So it's not just about the introduction of the university or the introduction of this particular company; it's about what we do to make sure they feel like they have what they need to be successful in that environment."

### Reflective of the community

A company looking to diversify its workforce needs to be able to find suitable candidates at the schools from which it recruits. Therefore, schools are more inclined to help guide their students of different backgrounds to success and ensure that they feel included and welcomed.

"Big picture, our goal is for our campus to reflect the community that we serve," Johnson said of Colorado School of Mines. "We would like to ultimately have the demographics of our campus reflect [the state of Colorado], and so we work pretty hard on making the institution look very attractive as a

place to come and get a degree and launch a career. We also want it to be a place where a student can be very successful, no matter what background you come from."

To Dr. Quinonez and his department, inclusion starts with the faculty and staff at ACC. Having women and professors of color to look up to as role models is beneficial for students, he explained.

"For our small department, we probably have one of the most diverse, if not the most diverse, faculty and staff in the college with regard to gender and ethnicity," Quinonez said. "That helps because when students show up, especially new students, they see us."

Quinonez said it helps when students see that faculty, staff and the student body share a diverse background as well as when students can relate to a faculty member or a staff member has a similar background as them.

Quinonez added, "We're very diverse, and I'm very proud of that."

Another way ACC supports its students of color is clustering them in similar classes through two programs: Black Representation of Achievement in Student Success (BRASS) for the school's Black students and Ascender for the school's Latinx students. Through the organizations, students are able to find support among one another.

"What our students of color have shared in those particular programs is that, because they're clustered in those courses and then they have this learning community to come together later, it feels like they have an opportunity to just share and not feel judged because they're speaking from a place of their culture," ACC's Buchanan said. "We didn't want our Black student enrollment to decline, so this is an opportunity to bring community, and that's exactly what students wanted. When your data show something, you take action and think about what you could really be doing differently to support our students."

At Lone Star College, Head knows that a diverse student body is attractive to those in the energy industry looking to recruit. Companies in the oil and gas industry like NOV and Baker Hughes, as well as other technology companies like Dell, have expressed interest in Lone Star students.

**"We don't want our students to feel inferior at all in that next chapter and space they're going into. So it's not just about the introduction of the university or the introduction of this particular company; it's about what we do to make sure they feel like they have what they need to be successful in that environment."**

— Dr. Shasta Buchanan, Austin Community College





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— Dr. Alberto Quinonez,  
Austin Community College

“A couple of reasons why they’re coming to community colleges like Lone Star in the larger open markets is we have a diverse student base,” Head said. “They realize that if they come to Lone Star College, we are about 47% Hispanic. We are about 17-18% African American. We are about 10% Asian. They are going to get a diverse student graduate base, so that’s part of why they want to work with us.”

She also understands that diversity doesn’t just pertain to a student’s gender or ethnicity. Lone Star has set up an initiative to work with nonprofit organizations in Houston to help low-income students. Chancellor Stephen C. Head recently hired Carlecia Wright as chief diversity officer for the school. Wright and Linda Head have been working to provide a support system to students who need more help financially.

“When one of our students needs food, or is homeless, or just needs transportation money or daycare money, and those kinds of things, [we help them],” Head continued. “We reach out to students that might not be coming to us yet because maybe their parents didn’t go to college or don’t talk to them about college. Maybe their parents aren’t involved at all.”

Having support systems in place for diverse students ensures higher rates of success, which gives them opportunities and hope for starting a career in the energy industry.

### **Bridging the gap**

As companies and schools continue their pursuit for more diverse talent, some have employed the services of nonprofit organizations to help connect them with a broader pool of candidates. Organizations such as the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) help fill the gap between college-educated students looking to get into the energy business and employers hoping to hire more women and candidates of diverse ethnicities.

Contrary to what the name implies, SWE is open to women and men in different STEM fields. The organization is focused on providing a link between school and the STEM workforce and offering scholarships, educational conferences and networking workshops.

“One of the things for young women is that they may not know someone who works in a particular industry, or maybe they think that they’re in a discipline that’s not appropriate for that industry,” said SWE CEO Karen Horting. “Well...I’m not a petroleum engineer or I’m not a nuclear engineer, [so] what opportunities might there be in the energy industry for me? When those employers partner



**“When one of our students needs food, or is homeless, or just needs transportation money or daycare money, and those kinds of things, [we help them]. We reach out to students that might not be coming to us yet because maybe their parents didn’t go to college or don’t talk to them about college. Maybe their parents aren’t involved at all.”**

— Linda Head, Lone Star College



with a group like SWE, they're able to connect with those students and showcase their employees. It gives their employees an opportunity to talk about what they do, to talk about the organization, to highlight that the organization does embrace diversity and inclusion and that they are looking for diverse talent."

With SWE, members are connected with mentors and role models to help guide their transition between school and the workforce. This networking opportunity provides a way for members to meet industry officials and gain access to jobs that will further their career. Since there are SWE sections across the world, the organization also creates a support system for members who move to a job in a new place.

"Women are only 13% of the engineering workforce at this point, so still very much a minority," Horting said. "Being able to connect with other women in the field is very important, so I would say that network is the most important piece that we provide as an organization."

She continued, "Some of our members talk about 'I've never gotten a job outside of my SWE network. Every time I've made a career move, it's been through my SWE network. Or I moved to a



**Pictured Left:**

A scientist consults with an engineer as they connect a printed circuit board to a laptop and begin coding in a computer science research laboratory that develops robotic arm technology. (Source: Gorodenkoff/Shutterstock.com)



**"Women are only 13% of the engineering workforce at this point, so still very much a minority. Being able to connect with other women in the field is very important."**

**— Karen Horting,**  
Society of Women Engineers





**“Mines has the largest student section of SWE in the nation, so we are quite well known to SWE, and our students are very excited to participate in SWE.”**

— Amy Landis, Colorado School of Mines



new city and I immediately connected with the local SWE section, and all of a sudden I have this great network of women in a new area.’ It’s an amazing community for any woman that’s working in engineering or technology.”

Colorado School of Mines first partnered with SWE in 1968 and now has more than 800 members in its section.

“Mines has the largest student section of SWE in the nation, so we are quite well known to SWE, and our students are very excited to participate in SWE,” said Amy Landis, presidential faculty fellow for diversity, inclusion and access at Colorado School of Mines.

At Mines, SWE has helped connect students to internships and jobs as well as to each other. Through workshops and retreats, the organization has made the transition between school and a career in the energy industry easier.

Landis recalled the time an underrepresented, junior-year student approached the SWE faculty adviser raving about the connections she made at SWE.

“[The student] said, ‘Oh my gosh, I’ve had so much trouble making friends and making connections at Mines,’” Landis said. “She said that at SWE, ‘I’m so glad I finally got into a SWE leadership role because these women are so amazing, and I feel like I finally found my people and my friends.’ It was just so heartwarming that SWE does that for our students.”

SWE is one of many global organizations that exist to help connect institutions, students and the workforce and provide helpful resources along the way. As oil and gas companies flesh out their plans to comply with ESG regulations and meet ESG goals, these kinds of organizations will become increasingly valuable in helping companies find new talent.

**On the same page**

Based on how schools are supporting their students and encouraging them to succeed in the energy field, it looks like the future of the

industry could become more reflective of the population it serves.

“We do attract a lot of students who come to Mines because we have this specialty and this great reputation in the energy field,” Johnson said. “What helps us as well is I think this generation of students going to college is very much interested in tackling big thematic problems. So energy is this great topic that I think [is] fascinating for students going to college these days because there are just so many ways in which you can get involved. What we’re all having to deal with is what’s the future of energy.” ■



**“Energy is this great topic that I think [is] fascinating for students going to college these days because there are just so many ways in which you can get involved.”**

— Paul Johnson, Colorado School of Mines





# Cultivating the Future of Energy

The momentum of the clean energy transition has oil and gas companies actively promoting and adopting diverse and inclusive initiatives to aid the development of the future workforce.



By **Mary Holcomb**,  
Associate Editor

**E**stablishing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices in the workplace has become a greater focus for the energy industry. In recent years, the energy sector has developed mentoring programs and leadership training courses in an effort to recruit and retain more women and people of color.

The culmination of these efforts has awarded the industry with improved performance, greater innovation, and new perspectives and approaches to day-to-day business challenges. Realizing the value of diverse teams, industry titans Baker Hughes, Schlumberger and ChampionX have leveraged diversity and inclusion programs to cultivate talent and advance inclusivity in the workplace.

#### **Aspire, impact and cultivate**

U.S.-based Baker Hughes believes people are central to taking energy forward. To further cultivate its workforce, the company designed a trifold of leadership and training programs—Aspire, Cultivate and Impact—focused on growth, challenge and understanding.



“We understand that innovative minds, engaged employees and diverse perspectives are needed to meet the world’s pressing energy challenges,” the company said in its 2020 Corporate Responsibility Report. “There is no path to a new energy future that does not include diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

Aspire is a two-year rotational program offered to recent graduates and early career professionals aimed at guiding young talent through career-shaping experiences.

The program utilizes challenging assignments, learning plans and global cross-functional projects to grow leadership skills among entry-level workers. The rotational structure provides a job shadowing opportunity through various departments such as field engineering, digital technology, sales and commercials, and human resources.

The digital technology track trains graduates on cloud computing, cybersecurity and risk, data science, machine learning, and process frameworks Agile and Scrum. While the participants gain technical skills and capabilities through the rotational format, they have the opportunity to obtain certifications in their desired area of interest.

Ensuring integrity and compliance is a foundational element of Baker Hughes’ culture and a business priority. The company set high expectations outlined in its Code of Conduct, and they are reinforced through its leadership. More than 97% of employees completed training on the company’s Code of Conduct in 2020. (Source: Baker Hughes)

“This horizontal movement helps build the right talent on a long-term basis,” said Loretta Bersani, director of talent development and training for oilfield equipment with Baker Hughes.

The program also conducts roundtable discussions with senior leaders to help graduates draw from their experience and gain insight on how they can build their career.

Cultivate, a one-year non-rotational program, became a product of this mindset shift at Baker Hughes. The focus is put entirely on the progression of high-potential female leaders through immersive learning experience and one-on-one mentoring.

“Historically as an industry, we’ve struggled to have women staying in the industry,” Bersani said. “But we’ve had great success in terms of increasing the number of women in our executive leadership team, but it is still a journey so we can never stop.”

Cultivate pairs the women with senior leadership to build their career plans and discuss their career ambitions in depth.

"The women are able to meet the leaders in different fields and see how they can build their career," she said. "We give them a lot of support to get to the next level."

In 2020, 94 women graduated from the Cultivate program and an additional 101 women joined the next Cultivate class and are scheduled to graduate in 2021.

"We continue to build," she said. "We hope that the more women we attract, the more they can have a successful career with us and we can all grow collectively."

For mid-career employees looking to enter the executive pipeline, Impact is a three-year accelerator program geared toward prepping high-potential talent for senior-level positions. The program cycles the employees through different tracks that broaden their skills and build on their existing functional expertise.

"Often as women we're very active with day-to-day responsibilities, but we rarely take the time to reflect on our career," she said. "This type of program is an opportunity for the employee to reflect and network with their peers. It connects women with other women that may have endured the same challenge, so they may understand their journey better."

The initiation of these leadership development programs supported stronger hiring rates for women, moving from 22% in 2019 to 27% in 2020. It also contributed to the company's overall in-

crease of employees who identify as female, which moved from 17% in 2019 to 18% in 2020, the company reported.

"We understand that continued progress will require an ongoing commitment from our organization," the company stated in its Corporate Responsibility Report.

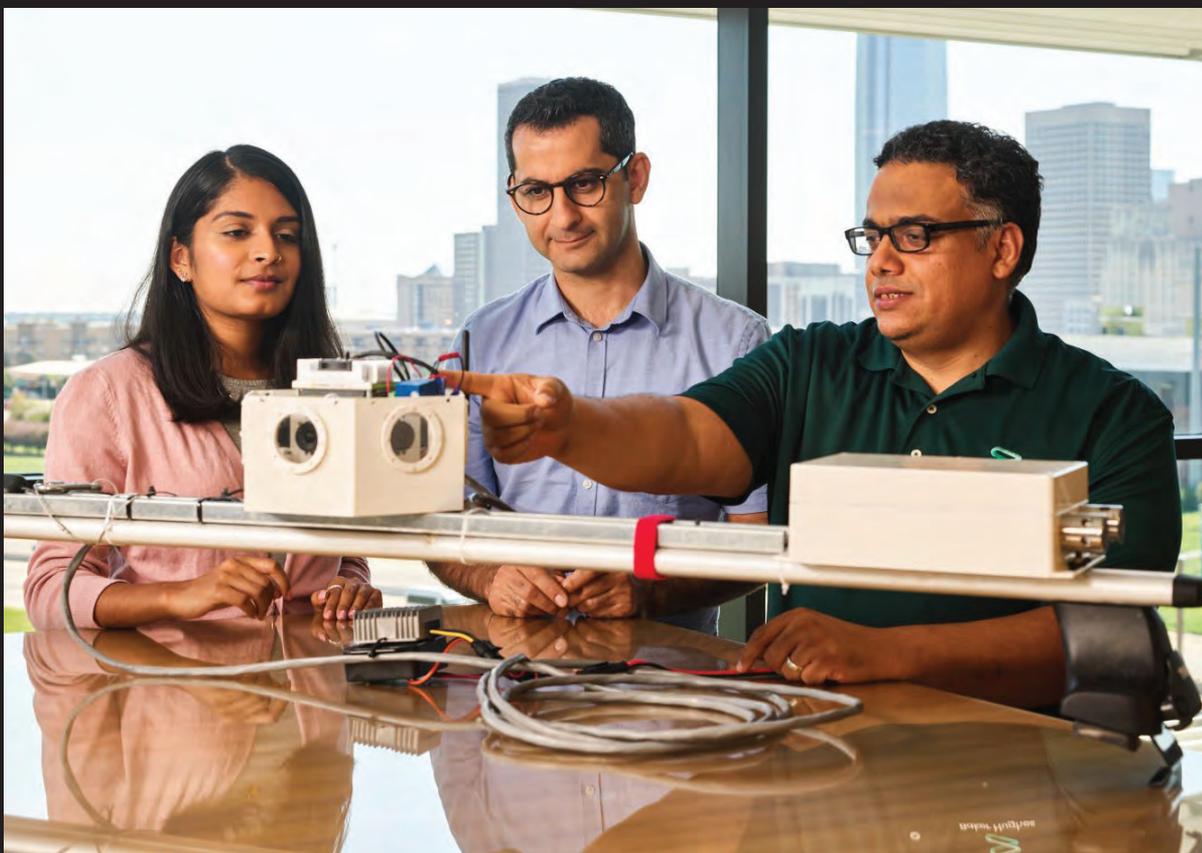
In 2020 these leadership development programs were 60% women. Baker Hughes also empowered leaders to embed DEI into the hiring process through the use of a new recruiting tool called RoleMapper. It is a framework designed to develop diverse and inclusive vacancy postings that attract the widest possible pool of qualified and diverse talent, according to the company.

The COVID-19 pandemic altered the program model in 2021, but the organization pivoted to a virtual setting with 6,155 employee participants, logging an average of 1.27 hours per participant. More than 29% of the employees completed performance reviews with their managers and 440 employees completed the enterprise talent development programs.

"The success of the company comes from bringing in different perspectives and having people that can be their true self at work," Bersani said. "So we strive to build an inclusive culture to make sure that we have representation in our workforce that reflects society."

Baker Hughes intends to continue prioritizing DEI metrics into its talent strategy to further institute behaviors in the energy sector that fosters an inclusive work culture and society.

Baker Hughes focuses on inclusion and diversity through awareness and education, partnership development, measurement and accountability. (Source: Baker Hughes)



“We know that advancing DEI is about more than implementing activities and programs,” the company stated in its Corporate Responsibility Report. “It’s about embedding the right behaviors to grow an inclusive culture. We seek to align our organization with the behaviors it will take to deliver on our strategy. These same behaviors will help us advance our culture—one that prioritizes trust, open communication, appreciation of differences and continuous learning.”

### Leadership development program

Millennials are shaping the workplaces of today and the future, and they’re placing an emphasis on cultural representation across every industry. Culture is considered to be the underlying value that dictates how we behave, the reason for certain beliefs and in part what gives identity.

Cultural diversity refers to a melting pot of practices, values, traditions and beliefs in the workplace, and it encourages an environment of inclusion. When successful, cultural diversity is mirrored in leadership roles. However, this depends heavily on the practices leveraged during the hiring process.

Schlumberger’s commitment to creating a multicultural workforce dates back to the 1960s when it began implementing national, cultural and gender diversity policies to solidify its position as a leader in the technology space. Today the company has succeeded in drawing in talent from non-west-

ern and emerging countries at all levels of its workforce.

“We never know where the best ideas are going to come from, so we cast our net as wide as possible to maximize the diversity of our talent and thoughts,” said Leila Hamza, Schlumberger’s diversity and inclusion director. “We’ve put in place programs to make nationality diversity and gender diversity part of the culture.”

Schlumberger began its leadership development program to help foster a global mindset among prospects and to build world-class leaders from within. The company utilizes case studies and experimental training scenarios to strengthen inclusive behavior among its employees.

“To get a global mindset, you have to enable that with training, practice and role modeling,” Hamza said. “It is one of the main requirements for a Schlumberger leader because we want someone that has been exposed to people from different cultures and different backgrounds. That type of mindset helps you understand what it is like to operate in a global environment.”

All of the employees are given the opportunity to draft their annual training and development plans with their managers, outlining their career intentions for the year. The employees receive performance appraisals each year to evaluate their development and determine their trajectory in the company.

“Your performance determines your advancement, and your potential will determine where you go in the company,” she said. “More than 90% of our leaders were hired as young



In 2020, 94 women graduated Cultivate, a Baker Hughes development program designed to accelerate the career development of female talent. An additional 101 women joined the next Cultivate class and were scheduled to graduate in 2021. (Source: Baker Hughes)



employees from university. Our leadership development program helps us to ensure a global growth mindset.”

One aim of the program is to advance the company’s diversity strategy, which is based on three pillars: nationality, gender diversity and diversity beyond gender and nationality.

The nationality pillar allows the organization to achieve a deeper threshold of diversity. Gender caters to employing more women in the workplace, which Schlumberger has been doing for more than 50 years. The beyond gender and nationality pillar is about all the other groups that aren’t always measurable but implied like LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities, according to Hamza.

“Right now, we’re working on taking our inclusion efforts a little bit further, even though it was implied by having people from diverse backgrounds working together, we want to be more intentional about it going forward,” she said regarding the third pillar.

Schlumberger employs roughly 85,000 people of more than 160 nationalities operating in over 120 countries, according to the company website. The company’s board of directors comprises 10 directors—three seats being occupied by women, four are citizens of the U.S., and the others are citizens or have dual-nationality from countries including Norway, Argentina and the U.K., Canada, France, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

“One of our greatest strengths is the diversity of our workforce, with people of many nationalities and backgrounds working together and sharing common objectives,” the company said. “Schlumberger does not have a nationality that describes its culture but operates in a truly global manner throughout the world. As a company, we encourage fair employment practices worldwide and offer equal opportunities to all our employees.”

Additionally, the program features implicit bias training to ensure hiring managers aren’t perpetuating discriminatory behaviors that would hinder inclusivity.

“It’s critical that our recruiters receive implicit bias training,” Hamza said. “We have two fundamentals that we go by: we recruit where we work, which means we always recruit people that represent the cultures and the communities in which we operate. The second principle is that we promote from within.”

To truly be diverse, she said, it is important for the hiring managers to identify with candidates from different walks of life, considering the

organization sources a significant number of its employees from colleges around the world.

“You have to be able to hire from a university in Malaysia just as you would hire from a university in Boston or New York,” Hamza said. “We want our recruiters to be able to hire from a diverse pool of candidates because we don’t want to miss out on high-potential contenders from universities that we may not have on our radar.”

She continued, “You want to challenge yourself because you will come into contact with ideas that are completely foreign to you. It is important to know how to lead an organization where there are a variety of customers with different needs and expectations.”

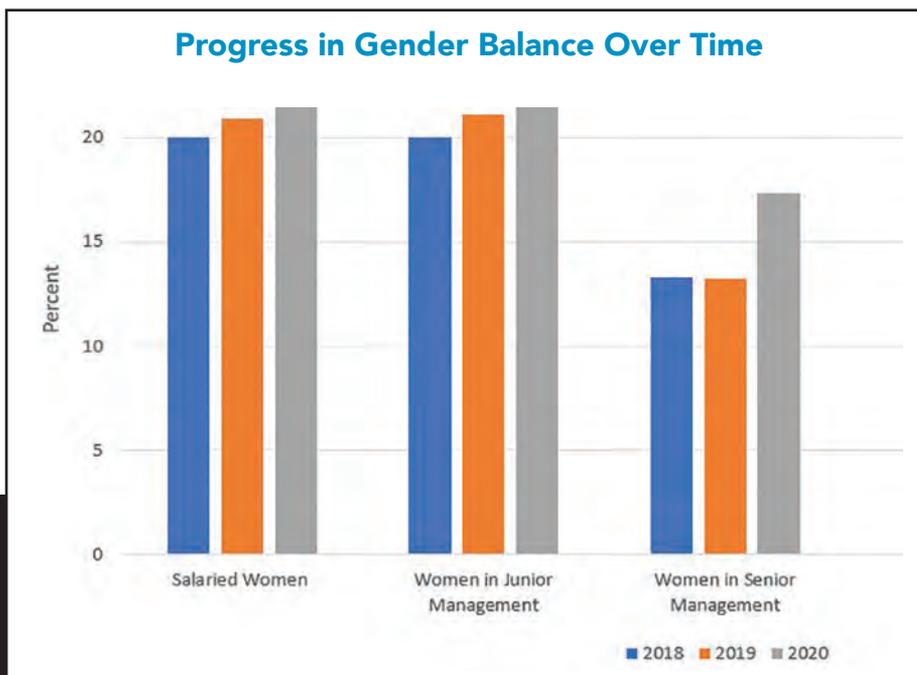
In 2020, 45% of the company’s STEM graduate hires were women. The candidates came from all disciplines of study and worked in field operations, applied research, engineering, manufacturing, business, sales, finance, legal and human resources, according to the company.

“Our recruiting strategy is based on a long-term vision,” the company said in its recent sustainability report. “We hire the best talent globally. Our investment in the accelerated development of our people—by exposing trainees to multiple experiences across a variety of locations and operations—helps us develop an agile workforce and the next generation of business leaders.”

**Gender balance**

Since hiring its first female field engineer in 1978, Schlumberger remains dedicated to achieving gender balance in its workforce.

From 2018 to 2020, Schlumberger increased the number of women in its workforce, junior management roles and senior level positions. (Source: Schlumberger)





**“We never know where the best ideas are going to come from, so we cast our net as wide as possible to maximize the diversity of our talent and thoughts.”**

— Leila Hamza, Schlumberger



“We started our gender diversity efforts back when having women in the field was completely unheard of,” Hamza said.

In 1994 the company set a target to have women comprise 15% of its workforce by 2015. With the goal met, and with the company on track to meet the current 25% milestone, the latest target is to have women represent 30% of the workforce at all levels of the organization by 2030, according to Hamza.

“It seems like it’s a shy level of progress, but it is hard work,” she said. “It is a constant effort to be able to achieve that on all levels. It’s a really big task in today’s environment, but with all the measures we have in place, plus our programs, I believe we can attain an inclusion culture for women in the workplace.”

In a long-term community-focused initiative run independently by the Schlumberger Foundation, the Faculty of the Future program aims to accelerate women in STEM. The long-term goal is to strengthen the talent and capacities of the women that come from developing countries for the benefit of their local communities, regions and nations.

Women are awarded fellowships for advanced research in STEM with the hopes of contributing to gender parity in the fields of science and technology. The fellows are expected to leverage their education to contribute to the economic, social and technological advancement of their home regions.

“We focus on countries where there is a big deficit in women in technical roles or leadership roles,” Hamza said. “We support their education, and then they go back to their home country with that knowledge. The goal is to help create an environment where women can have access to opportunities and help other women succeed, so really creating global role models.”

Since its launch in 2004, 770 women from 84 countries have received Faculty for the Future fellowships for doctoral and post-doctoral STEM research programs.

### **Recognize, inspire, share and engage**

Energy companies rely on teams that are diverse and driven by the combined capabilities of people from all walks of life to achieve success. ChampionX Corp., which specializes in chemistry solutions and highly engineered equipment and technologies that help companies drill for and produce oil and gas safely and efficiently around the world, has uncovered the benefits of actively increasing the engagement and inclusion of its people.

The company supports nine employee resource groups (ERGs) representing unique cultures, experiences, backgrounds

and ethnicities. RISE (Recognize, Inspire, Share and Engage) is a gender diversity-focused ERG that was created by ChampionX to support the advancement of women within the company. RISE’s mission is to provide educational development tools, networking, opportunities for leadership and collaboration for women and male allies. The group’s vision is to grow the business and become an industry leader in gender equality by inspiring all employees to promote a culture of diversity and inclusion.

“We provide leadership opportunities for our members to gain experience in a safe space,” said Julie Fidoe, ChampionX director of marketing for production chemicals and RISE Western Hemisphere lead. “The goal is to not only help women become well-rounded professionals, but to also provide opportunities for all employees to grow and learn in ways that may not happen organically in their daily work.”

RISE has 10 chapters across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Each RISE chapter is led by two co-leads and is supported by senior-level advocates as well as gender-diverse committees that recruit members, provide networking, mentoring and professional development events, and communicate and engage with employees.

Through the ERG, members may receive financial acumen training, career coaching or assistance on drafting their individual development plan, among other development opportunities. Past events include leadership panel Q&As, and external professional speakers have been brought in to discuss topics like building a personal brand, developing executive presence and maintaining resilience during change.

Some RISE chapters also offer mentoring circles—consisting of a small group of mentees and two mentors—with each group meeting regularly to discuss topics such as global leadership, teamwork, diversity and networking. The circles also serve as engagement platforms for employees to voice their opinions and share experiences.

“The advantage of the circle groups, as opposed to one-on-one meetings, is that they offer peer-to-peer mentoring and networking in addition to the insights gained from the senior leaders they’re paired with,” Fidoe said. “We’ve seen wonderful success stories of mentees growing exponentially while in the program. And, with the support of their mentors, they’ve often taken the next step into an expanded role or moved to a completely different department they would’ve never had the confidence to step into before.”

“The circle format creates a two-way street between the mentees and mentors,” said Leanne Hamilton-Thompson, ChampionX vice president of marketing. She serves as the RISE global lead and is a former mentor.

“I’d forgotten how much I learned throughout my career,” she continued. “Mentoring has allowed me to reflect back on my development while sharing my experiences and advice with others to support their progression.”

Her experience as a mentor helped her realize the need to expand the program globally to drive diversity of thought and inclusion of different cultural backgrounds.

“There may be lessons in our program that are culturally ideal for the U.S., but they don’t work as well in Latin American or Asia,” Hamilton-Thompson said. “By broadening it on a global scale, we gain cultural awareness and can integrate those learnings into every chapter of RISE.”

Moving forward, the company intends to build on the success of RISE to incorporate additional programs and other ERG chapters across its global organization.

Additionally, ChampionX recently launched a companywide diversity and inclusion council, led by President and CEO Soma Somasundaram. ■



A group of RISE mentees and mentors celebrate their graduation from the program in 2019. (Source: ChampionX)



Beth Schlitt, vice president of global planning with ChampionX, helped lead the RISE Mentor Circles kickoff in 2019. (Source: ChampionX)

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# Breaking Barriers

Energy consultant and former longtime Schlumberger executive talks about making history and pushing for diversity, equity and inclusion.

By **Velda Addison**, Senior Editor

*It's just before 3 p.m. on a weekday and Paula Harris is finally breaking for lunch—still working.*

*Despite retiring from Schlumberger in 2020 after 34 years, last serving as global director responsible for developing ESG programming among other duties, Harris' calendar stays full.*

*She started her own company, DPM Alliance Energy Group, which specializes in consulting on renewable energy, months before landing a new job with the Astros Foundation. Add to this board member for Chart Industries Inc., The Vessel Group, Houston Children's Museum and Energized for STEM Academy. Plus, this year Harris became the first black president and second woman president of the Petroleum Club of Houston's board of directors. It was one in a number of history-making firsts for this petroleum engineer with a passion for encouraging young people to embrace STEM.*

*"I keep a pretty busy schedule and that's by design," Harris said. "I'm always afraid that once you slow down, your mind slows down and your body slows down."*

*Hart Energy recently sat down with Harris, whose comments have been edited for length and clarity, to discuss diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the energy sector, her new role at the Petroleum Club and how she continues to inspire future generations.*



**Paula Harris**  
Energy Consultant

**Hart Energy: Did you ever imagine that you would become president of the Petroleum Club of Houston's board?**

**Harris:** I had never even thought about being the president of the board. I don't think it was until after they voted me as president of the board that I realized how kind of historic it was. It was just me taking the next step, going to meetings and making decisions.

**Hart Energy: How does it feel telling this story, making history this way in 2021?**

**Harris:** It's a special place, and I'm definitely honored. Most of my career in this industry has been about me being the first and working really hard to bring along the next 200. Whether it's being the second African-American woman to get a petroleum engineering degree at Texas A&M or being an African-American woman working offshore on rigs for Schlumberger, which 99.9% of the time I was the only person of color and female out on the rig. I recall saying, 'Hey, there's a lot of opportunities in the oil industry.' I've written books on it. I just pray and thank God he's given me the ability to do this—break a couple of barriers. . . . They should have been broken a long time ago—not saying that I'm not happy.

What really also made this special is [when doing research ahead of the Petroleum Club's 75th anniversary] I spoke with the family of the first president, R.E. Bob Smith. I had goosebumps, almost tears in my eyes, because the family said he was such an integrator and focused on helping people of color. He was a huge contributor to the African American community in Houston, specifically in Sunnyside, which is where I'm from. He and Howard Hughes were the two Houstonians on Forbes richest men list. So he was wildly successful in his career. Yet when he

gave land and helped pass the bond to build the Astrodome, he would only work with the city if they guaranteed the Astrodome would be integrated. I had no idea of the things that he did for the community.

**Hart Energy: Your new role as president comes when the energy industry and other sectors are stepping up their ESG efforts, including on DEI. How are your experiences as a Black woman in the oilfield services industry manifesting itself in some of the roles you serve today?**

**Harris:** Wherever I am—whether it’s president of the club or managing ESG with Schlumberger or serving on a corporate board, the governance and the commitment to the diversity environment is extremely important to me, understanding that this is just a small slice. If we want long-term growth, long-term sustainability or the next generation to buy in, we have to work with them and we have to work with everyone.

One of the challenges with the oil and gas industry right now is that people don’t know our story. We’ve been this very close-knit, monolithic, homogeneous group of white guys and Paula. No one knows our story. No one knows the impact because they haven’t been a part of us. They’ve watched from the outside. They don’t have family members or neighbors who have gone through the ranks of the Big Oil company until now. And so now it’s a little too late.

This new generation is like, ‘Hey, they’re bad and renewables are good.’ They don’t understand the lifestyle they live is because of oil and gas. That’s why they can flip a light, start a car, put on clothes or write with a pen. It’s because of the contributions of oil and gas. Do we need to make transitions? Absolutely. Do we need to look at renewables as part of our whole offerings? Absolutely. But I think that it wouldn’t be as tough on us if they understood the true story behind who we are and how we have positively impacted countries, lives [and] communities all over the world.

Until now, the profiles have been mostly male—white or European. But now, as we become more open, looking at governance, the environment, people of color, women—everyone is in on the decision-making.

**Hart Energy: What are some areas in which the energy industry has an opportunity to make progress when it comes to DEI in terms of both gender and ethnicity?**

**Harris:** One of the challenges is that people think they can just open the door once they are ready for more diversity. But it’s a process, meaning we have to get trust back in our industry. That trust may have to come through renewables, and then explaining how brain power from the oil and gas sector helped in the development of renewable energy sources. We’re all in this energy family together.

But it also takes some strategy, meaning kids need to know us in grade school. They need to know about our industry. They need to know that this is a place where you can be successful. You have to start early. You have to invest in these communities and invest in girls’ education around the world, especially in places where girls are allowed to be educated but it’s not a fair education.

I hear ‘Well, there’s no one ready; no one’s prepared.’ I tell these guys ‘Neither were your nephews; neither were your

neighbors’ kids. And we had them all day every day and helped them be successful. That same energy put into making sure kids who looked like you were successful should go into making sure girls and kids of color are successful.

**Hart Energy: What motivates you?**

**Harris:** I’m motivated by giving back to my community. I’m motivated by the fact that I know there are hundreds of little girls, like I was in Sunnyside at Law Elementary where I went to school, who have the same intellectual capacity as I did, who need support, who need a chance, that hasn’t heard of the energy industry. I’m motivated by helping kids to be strong in STEM, knowing STEM is a ticket and helping my community be better.

I served as an elected official in the Houston Independent School District because I wanted to represent, and I wanted kids to know and see that if you work hard, study hard in school and make good decisions, you can do it. I’m not some anomaly. Hundreds of people, hundreds of kids from Sunnyside could and should follow in my footsteps.

**“I was never the smartest engineer—not in school, not with Schlumberger—but I always said, ‘You’re not going to outwork me.’”**

—Paula Harris

**Hart Energy: Speaking to young people, what advice would you give to encourage them to pursue STEM careers, specifically in energy?**

**Harris:** My advice is sometimes to parents: go ahead and push. Go ahead and push. When we see girls and kids of color who are brilliant but have said, ‘I don’t like math’ or ‘I’m not good at math,’ I always say, ‘Well, I’m not good at free throws, but I bet if I stood outside and tried a thousand of them, I would get better. Practice, practice your education.’

Engage in your kids’ education early. Expose them to robotics. Expose them to coding. Expose kids to things that aren’t connected to their phone sometimes unless it is to be developers.

My father didn’t know much about engineering. But the Houston Chronicle (or it may have been the Post) published top salaries on the front page of the Sunday paper and petroleum engineering was always at the top. He said, ‘You can go anywhere you want to school, but I’m paying for a degree in petroleum engineering, and since Texas A&M has the best petroleum engineering school, I’m paying for a degree at Texas A&M in petroleum engineering.’ And that’s how I got here. That’s why I’m always providing camps, pushing camps and writing books on engineering, so that folks don’t just stumble into it.

You have an opportunity to put a strategy together and take advanced math in high school to help you with your college engineering degree. My advice is always study STEM if you can. That’s a big one. Do your best at all you do. I was never the smartest engineer—not in school, not with Schlumberger—but I always said, ‘You’re not going to outwork me.’ I’ll stay late. I’ll get there early. I’ll overperform based on my ability to deliver results. ■



# Organizational Culture in the Oil and Gas Industry: Stay Agile and Innovative in a Transforming World

*When D&I become the norm rather than the exception, it will bode well for oil and gas.*

By **Kendra Lee**, Merichem Co.

“There is clearly implicit bias throughout the industry, a condition that thrives in the darkness of ignorance—often held by the well-intentioned individuals who are unaware of their own shortcomings.”

—Kendra Lee, Merichem Co.



For more than 100 years, the oil and gas industry has provided a fundamental and sustained contribution to the global economy. It serves billions of people with abundant, affordable and reliable sources of energy. In terms of dollar value, the oil and gas industry is considered the largest industry in the world, employing more than 4 million people across the globe.

Despite its contributions, the industry has long endured negative stigmas, particularly noted by its exclusive club of good ol’ boys. In 2014, through its global reputation center, market research firm Ipsos took an in-depth look at the oil and gas sector across 24 countries and found its reputation the least favorable in the world.

## Culture of a company

Although there have been sincere attempts at increasing the representation of women and African Americans in the industry, there is still a great deal to do in its diversity and inclusion (D&I) efforts. According to a 2020 report from nonprofit analyst company Energy Futures Initiative, about 8% of the energy industry workforce is African American, while women make up between 23% and 32%. Additionally, a 2017 report from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, found that African American oil and gas workers earned 23% less than white workers in comparable roles. Adding insult to injury, the pandemic and dips in demand in 2020 led to mass layoffs, further challenging the industry’s D&I efforts.

Diversity, the first step for true inclusion and acceptance, is not only about striving for equality. Multiple studies across several industries have confirmed a strong and statistically significant correlation between the diversity of management teams and productivity, innovation and improved financial performance by the simple virtue of a diverse range of opinions and perspectives. Diversity also lends a hand to speedy responsiveness, which better positions companies for adaptation in the event of internal or industry changes. Despite this potential, there is clearly implicit bias throughout the industry, a condition that thrives in the darkness of ignorance—often held by the well-intentioned individuals who are unaware of their own shortcomings.

Results of a 2019 study conducted by EY determined that although lack of diversity in the industry is a real issue, culture and processes for inspiring and motivating personnel are paramount.

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast,” said Peter Drucker, the world-renowned management theorist.

It suggests that the culture of a company—the shared values, attitudes and practices that characterize an organization—determines success regardless of leadership strategy. It is the company’s personality and is the foundation for engaging internal and external stakeholders with integrity, instilling trust and developing a commitment to success. Although culture and leadership are inextricably linked, some believe one individual cannot dictate an entire culture; instead, it should be navigated and negotiated by various employees equally committed to walking the walk. Good leadership can quickly fail without a well-integrated, unified culture that all employees can support.

## ‘Ambidextrous culture’

In Erin Meyer’s book, “The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business,” she coined the term “ambidextrous culture,” an outline of two types of corporate culture: execution and innovative.

In an execution culture, the work environment leans toward process and tasks as the fundamental fabric of the organization. This culture, historically favored by the oil and gas industry, typically consists of a single authoritarian or decision-maker that assigns labor. Pertinent matters requiring research and recommendations are often presented as a synopsis to a key executive or board that then mandates orders of business. The oil and gas industry fits the execution culture employing myriad engineers who

naturally follow processes. Of course, this does not take into consideration safety processes that are government-mandated. Those disciplined frameworks for managing the integrity of procedures for handling hazardous substances are non-negotiable.

In stark contrast, an innovative culture is a work environment where unorthodox thinking is encouraged, and there are tools and processes in place to capture and progress ideas. Innovative cultures foster an environment of trust with leadership and with one another. Employees are motivated to get involved knowing that everyone else in the company is doing the same. Great ideas come when all are open to different backgrounds and perspectives. Within innovative companies, cultural and individual differences are embraced, rounding culture back to D&I.

“We’ve always done it that way” is one of the most dangerous phrases in business. Although it is most likely said with good intentions, they are not words employees can embrace. Creating a culture of change requires listening to employees and empowering them to question, “How can we do this better?”

### Change led from the top down

The oil and gas industry at large has a long way to go in its D&I efforts.

All the major oil and gas company websites have information on their D&I programs and policies. Why, then, is the industry still so male-dominated? It is thought to be cultural (e.g., a belief that women cannot handle the workload) and is laced with short-term thinking (e.g., the focus is on the next spike or drop). Despite so many claims, the industry fails to make gender equality a value.

There are still fewer women in oil and gas than almost any other major industry, and gender diversity decreases with seniority. Women hold only 17% of executive-level roles, and only 1% of oil and gas CEOs are women.

It is not just about gender. From the 1860s to the present, the oil and gas industry is thought to be the most racially homogenous industry in America. In addition to the lack of African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans and Millennials are also underrepresented. Although the American Petroleum Institute (API) has been actively developing strategies and programs to engage minority audiences, the impact has been benign.

Even with the collapse in demand for oil and gas during the coronavirus pandemic and the push for renewables, API predicts there will be nearly 1.9 million direct job opportunities in the industry through 2035. Minorities and women represent critically vital and available talent pools to help meet those future workforce demands. Current recruitment rates into the sector will struggle to meet that need. Recruiting and promoting will take diverse thinking and positive action, including identifying and addressing cognitive and cultural bias patterns. Bridging racial and gender disparity gaps must be approached with a broader framework, aiming to foster inclusive workspaces and diverse resources. Change is led from the top down, which means success will require leadership support and commitment and driving change from a compliance-focused perspective and a cultural shift.

### Attracting fresh talent

There are various factors that induce changes in business environments. In the oil and gas industry, an estimated 71% of the workforce is 50 years old or older, and are aging out. Dubbed the “Great Crew Change,” oil and gas companies face disruption in the workforce and have the choice of creating environments that attract young, skilled, diverse talents or else lose them to tech giants like Amazon, Apple and Google. Savvy companies are focusing on developing a culture that attracts and inspires all cultural, ethnic, health and gender identities.

The industry will win for its efforts. While the oil and gas industry continues to have a negative reputation, there are companies dedicated to inclusive environments. They value individual and group differences within their workforces and embrace the employees’ diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When D&I become the norm rather than the exception, it will bode well for oil and gas. ■



Merichem executives and rising leaders attended The Greater Houston Partnership’s Rise to the Top event where they were involved in captivating and candid conversations about challenges and triumphs of succeeding in today’s business world. (Source: Merichem Co.)

**About the author:** Kendra Lee has served as chairman of the board for Merichem Co. since 2012 and CEO since 2014. She has worked for Merichem Co. for more than 25 years, beginning her career in the research laboratories. Lee continued her progression with the company in chemical sales management and the corporate functions of treasurer and corporate secretary before being appointed to serve on the board of directors in April 2010.



## Thinking Globally Requires Local, Regional Mindset

*A one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across the world.*

By **Lamé Verre**, Lean in Energy

“There is great potential for the energy industry to play a prominent role in the fight for global equality.”

—Lamé Verre, Lean in Energy

The last few decades have seen businesses such as Home Depot, Mattel, Starbucks and Walmart try and fail to break into international markets. While these attempts have been varied, the crucial failing has been characterized by a common thread. These businesses often approached global expansion from a viewpoint that assumed that what is true of North America and Western Europe is true globally. This resulted in an oversight of cultural, social, ethnic and religious nuances present in the communities where they aimed to succeed.

The events of the last year have buttressed the importance and feasibility of leveraging regional-focused approaches to responding to problems.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, countries across the world closed their borders, and many were forced to look inward for solutions to problems and innovate around resources they once outsourced. The U.S., for example, became more aware of its reliance on China and India for pharmaceuticals, which led many to call for the reshoring and in-sourcing of supply chains. This approach is beneficial both practically and culturally.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that organizations that lead global projects from the top-down require a handful of people to tune in with hundreds of different groups’ cultural and religious nuances. Projects built from the ground up cut out this work, dealing with local issues at the source and allowing a community to ensure a project represents their group before it is brought into international dialogue. It ensures solutions to issues are applicable and relevant for each area.

Against this backdrop, the energy industry has seen many organizations currently putting localization at the top of their talent management and succession planning agenda by filling top positions with homegrown talents. In 2021 Shell appointed Elohor Aiboni managing director for Shell Nigeria, Tullow appointed Cynthia Lumor deputy managing director for Tullow Ghana, and in 2020 Aker appointed Kadijah Amoah country director of Aker Energy Ghana.

### DEI and belonging

The regional approach at Lean In Energy (LIEN) is designed to suit this need for locally focused and nuanced approach in the energy sector. Our subdivisions allow LIEN to build from the ground up, bringing the talents and struggles of different communities to the global stage in a self-defined and relevant manner. Our regional approach reflects our desire to ensure our conversations are adequately nuanced regarding diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and belonging.

When discussing female empowerment within the energy sector, for example, we do so from an inclusive viewpoint rather than any stereotypical lens. There is great potential for the energy industry to play a prominent role in the fight for global equality because the sector is heavily tied to enabling food security, access to clean water, resources and agricultural productivity. Therefore, getting women into leadership roles within the energy industry not only corrects the gender imbalance in a corporate context, but it provides an opportunity for these women to alleviate the struggles of others, men and women alike, at a fundamental level.

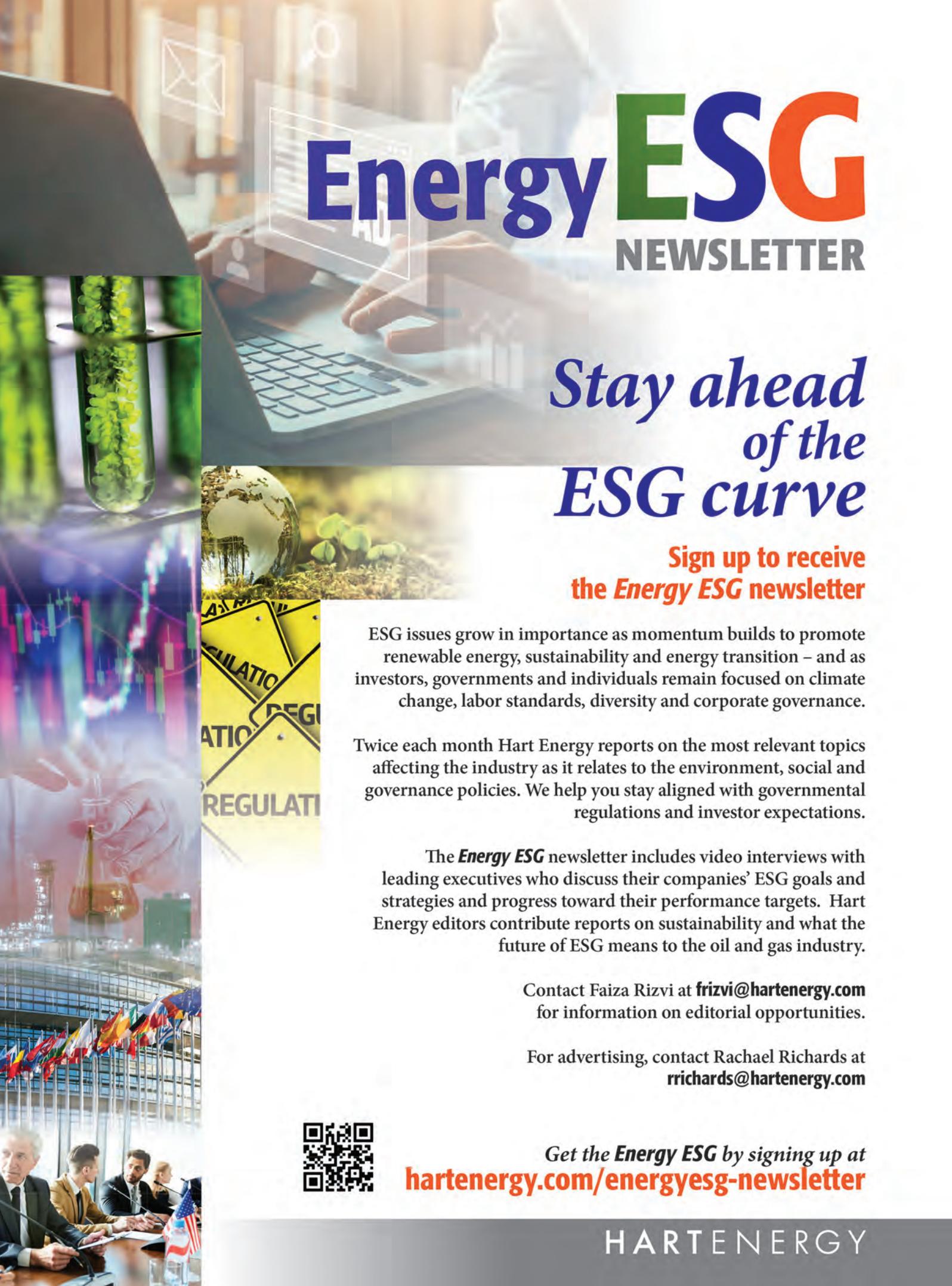
However, the success of this knock-on effect requires men and women who occupy these leadership positions to be sensitive to diverse experiences, see the importance of regional representation and become allies themselves to others who may not look like them.

Accordingly, our work at LIEN operates and empowers members to act in a manner that allows every community to self-represent. The result is an international movement toward gender equality within the energy sector, formed from effective localized and regional action, rather than a homogenous top-down system that could misrepresent many of the regions it aims to represent.

While there is a place for globalization, implementation of DEI efforts should be tailored to fit the part of the world in which companies operate. ■

**About the author:** Lamé Verre FEI is a fellow of the Energy Institute and co-chair of the European and Sub-Saharan African regions with Lean in Energy.





# Energy **ESG**

## NEWSLETTER

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