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Diversity in STEM

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Diversity in STEM

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Initial project goal:

Our project aims to create a website and social media pages to provide resources, information, and support for underrepresented groups interested in STEM fields and raise awareness about the state and advantages of diversity in science. The resources on the website will be very diverse and should be appropriate for our target audience of college students. This will include information about scholarships, student organizations, testimonials, networking opportunities, resources for teachers, and statistics/articles about the current representation of minorities in STEM fields. With this project we hope to raise awareness of issues related to diversity and provide resources for minority students who are trying to find their place in the STEM community.

Our initial project goal stated plans to create a website with information and resources. After starting up a formal Facebook page for our project, we quickly realized that some of the content we were sharing could be of interest to other demographics.

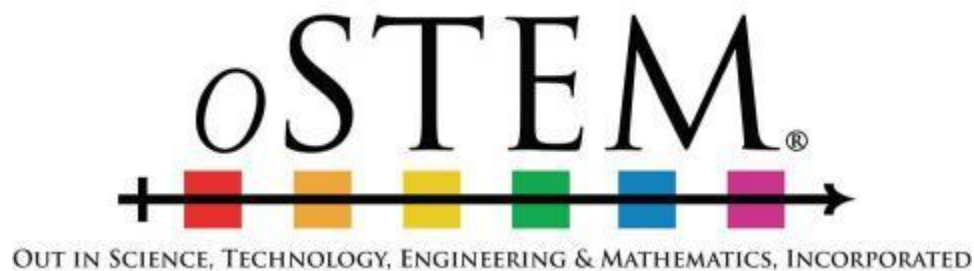
Thus we decided to take on the Benchmarks project to spread our message to the general Iowa City community. The Benchmarks project is very well known and highly respected among the city's population, and never fails to engage passerby.



After some more time passed and we continued adding posts to our Facebook page, we decided it would be a good idea to meet with other diversity organizations/departments on campus to see what was already out there, as we didn't want to be redundant.



After speaking with some student organizations, such as MAPS, WISE, and oSTEM as well as meeting with Director of CDE Nadine Petty to see what there is a need for, we found that there seemed to already be an abundance of websites with resources. What there was a need for was more outreach and engagement.



Thus we decided to add the tabling event to our project. This way we would be able to more actively engage students. At this tabling event, we collected data and statistics representative of UI student, faculty, and staff via a survey. One of the questions asked about what age people remember deciding that they did or did not like

science and math. From our response, we gathered that middle school was the most common age and, thus, the most important time to push STEM outreach.



We are currently working on a pledge for middle school teachers to sign agreeing that they will incorporate more diverse scientists/inventors into their curriculum throughout the year.

This project impacted 230 people and counting. We engaged multiple audiences - the community, college students, and middle school teachers - across three different modes of outreach. In the future we hope to continue this effort and spread the message: anyone can be a scientist!