

NCWiE Report – by Kimberly Noel

NCWiE has established that there is certainly no shortage of advice for women who want a more level playing field at work. Throughout the three streams we explored the sensitive issues and how to communicate them, we identified where the challenges were in engineering, and we viewed the execution of solutions in the workplace and in education.

Friday's lunch was accompanied by several speakers, one of which included a woman named Angie. Angie described how each and everyone one of us face a certain "ism" no matter our gender, age, race, ability, etc. Many talks emphasized that we all somehow fit into diversity, and that not only is it an issue that women feeling excluded, but other minorities as well. There is no question that the ECA should be, and is, creating a safe and healthy environment for students. Particularly due to the fact that Concordia is a university which is jam-packed with people from all kinds of different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. The ECA should also be questioning how it portrays the association and whether or not its actions are having nothing but positive impacts on various groups, and or individuals.

It was repeated again and again about how we need to understand that there is work to be done. There needs to be a discussion about how we are not all equal and about how we can dedicate resources to improve minority situation. We need to consider whether or not all ECA societies and groups are really doing their part. For example, we need to realize that we will never reach equality with only one gender putting in all the effort. Programs like the UNWomen initiative #HeForShe campaign aims to raise awareness that women's issues are men's issues too. This weekend has highlighted the importance for men to get involved so they can understand the issues and learn what they can do to help.

Although the conference brought to light many good questions we, as individuals and as a collective, should be asking, it did not provide many solutions. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as the ECA can now try and come up with our own solutions to many of these questions and problems. NCWiE has paved the way for the right path we can begin to take. This path includes starting the conversation, bringing injustices to the surface, identifying how we all fit into diversity, and creating solutions that work for us.