DIVERSITY 5:30 PM 12/11/17 S. KOCH

Numerically, UW-River Falls and in particular certain programs within the the college of agriculture, food and environmental science have very little diversity. Not only is this a loss of opportunity for potential female and non-white students, but it’s also a loss of opportunity for the university and the workforce in general. Sophia Koch (cook) has the story.

MP3 RUNS: 79 O/C: STD

SOPHIA KOCH: THIS IS YOUNGMI (YUNG-MEE) KIM, AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT UWRF WHO TEACHES COURSES WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY MAJOR.

NAT SOUND: KIM’S CLASS

SOPHIA KOCH: THIS PARTICULAR CLASS IS ABOUT WASTE MANAGEMENT, AND THE STUDENTS ATTENDING ARE COMPLETELY WHITE AND ALMOST COMPLETELY MALE. IN THIS MAJOR, KIM SAYS, A LACK OF DIVERSITY IS A DISTINCT ISSUE.

YOUNGMI KIM: SO, BUT IN OUR DEPARTMENT IT’S ALL, YOU KNOW, WHITE AND IT’S A VERY MALE DOMINANT DEPARTMENT. SO WE ROUGHLY HAVE FIFTEEN PERCENT FEMALE STUDENTS AND, YOU KNOW, EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT IS MALE STUDENTS.

SOPHIA KOCH: ENROLLMENT REPORTS AT UWRF SHOW THAT OUT OF SIX THOUSAND STUDENTS, EIGHTY-SEVEN POINT NINE PERCENT ARE WHITE. CAFES (KAH-FES), THOUGH SECOND-LARGEST, IS ALSO THE LEAST DIVERSE OF THE FOUR COLLEGES WITH NINETY-FOUR POINT TWO FIVE PERCENT OF ITS STUDENTS BEING WHITE. IT’S A SHAME THAT CAFES IS LESS THAN DIVERSE, KIM SAYS, BECAUSE A LOT CAN BE GAINED FROM HAVING A WIDE VARIETY OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN A PROJECT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS THAT THEY BRING TO THE TABLE. CHRISTIAN SOSA (SOH-SAH) IS A MAJOR IN DAIRY SCIENCE AT UWRF, AND HALF OF HIS FAMILY IS HONDURAN (HON-DOOH-RAN). HIS CULTURAL HERITAGE, HE SAYS, GIVES HIM AN ADVANTAGE IN THE WORKFORCE BECAUSE HE CAN CONNECT WITH HISPANIC WORKERS.

CHRISTIAN SOSA: BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, I HAVE THE, YOU KNOW THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CULTURE AND EVERYTHING, AND ACTUALLY, I AM FLUENT IN SPANISH AS WELL.

SOPHIA KOCH: PEOPLE LIKE SOSA HAVE A LOT THAT THEY CAN OFFER, BOTH TO THEIR SCHOOLS AND TO THE JOB MARKETS THAT THEY’RE THINKING OF ENTERING. FOR FALCON NEWS, I’M SOPHIA KOCH (COOK).

Kim has begun mobilizing efforts to fix issues with gender stereotyping within the agricultural engineering technology major by submitting research proposals that would look more deeply into the problem. She would like to see more female guests and professors within CAFES, as well as the addition of a women-in-science club on campus where female students can offer one another support.

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