

Increasing the number of African-American engineers through tutoring outreach partnership



By Joëlle Walls

Roneisha Worthy, assistant professor in civil and construction engineering at Kennesaw State University, is always seeking opportunities to involve KSU engineering students in community engagement and outreach. Her

latest research endeavor not only does so, but also fulfills the missions of two nonprofit organizations. As a member of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), she wanted to help support its goal to graduate 10,000 African-American engineers by 2025.

In talking with a NSBE member who also is a part of 100 Black Men, she found a connection that would benefit both organizations. 100 Black Men is a civic organization and service club whose mission is to educate and empower African-American youth. The organization was looking for more tutors, especially college students for its Mentorship for Tomorrow program, which helps high school students strengthen their math and science skills.

Worthy and NSBE members suggested KSU engineering students could serve as tutors. They would also introduce the tutoring program participants to engineering careers through hands-on activities, preferably on a weekly basis. With leadership from both NSBE and 100 Black Men embracing the idea, Worthy is studying the effectiveness of the partnership over a two-year period with a control group – one tutoring locale without the activities—and one tutoring program with the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) activities.

“It is a wonderful opportunity for us to really evaluate a partnership between the two organizations to

determine whether or not these organizations can strategically focus on developing a pipeline of students interested in engineering who will ultimately graduate in that field,” she said.

KSU students, to include members of the student chapters of both organizations, will receive a stipend for tutoring thanks to funding provided by 100 Black Men. They will also help Worthy develop the hands-on projects that will feature the various sub-disciplines of engineering through a career-connected lens. Worthy said she is very excited about the collaboration between KSU students and community partners.

“When we can engage our students in any type of process related to research it is very important, even more so from a community engagement standpoint,” she said. “Not only should our students have opportunities to become academically exceptional, but they should also have experiences that support civic-mindedness to make them well-rounded professionals.”



KSU engineering students will introduce STEM-related careers to high school students through unique partnership.