



July 1, 2020

Dear Members,

With everything going on in the world, from the growing movement for racial justice to the enormous toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pride Month felt a little different this year.

While the LGBTQ+ community continues to raise awareness and celebrate the progress that's been made, these efforts are recognized as part of a larger struggle for equality. From criminal justice reform to the recent US Supreme Court decision making it illegal for employers to discriminate based on one's sexual orientation, the changes we are seeing are a testament to collective action, working together towards a common goal. Our organizations—SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers); and oSTEM (Out in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)—are proud to stand in solidarity with those on the front lines of that change.

SHPE and oSTEM are united in a steadfast commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity—in all its forms. Over the last three years, we've worked together including the creation of the LGBTQ+ Track at the SHPE National Convention.

Our commitment to equity is not the only thing that we share; in their own ways, our respective members have experienced the awful realities of discrimination and harassment. Whether it's a first-generation Hispanic-American who cannot get a job because of where she was born or a transgender scientist unfairly passed over for a tenure-track position, these experiences are doubled for members who belong to both communities. The struggles may be different, but the impacts—psychological, social, economic, and otherwise—can be similarly devastating.

Evidence of those struggles are reflected in our respective lack of representation in STEM. According to the Pew Research Center, Hispanics occupy a mere 7% of all STEM jobs—despite being 16% of the overall population. Similarly, according to a 2018 article in the journal *Nature*, LGBTQ+ humans are 17-21% ***less*** represented in STEM fields than expected.

Yet as history has shown time and again, when traditionally marginalized people come together for a common cause, great change is possible. This is why it is so important that our organizations continue to collaborate—to advocate for greater inclusion across the STEM spectrum, from corporate America to academia.

Taken together, the intersectional identities that encompass our organizations provide a window into a possible future. A future where our communities are central to reshaping America. This work has started but we cannot lose our momentum. Now more than ever, we must continue to move forward—together.

Fifty years ago, this week, members of New York’s LGBTQ+ community came together in remembrance of the Stonewall Riots. At the center of that uprising were Black and Brown gender expansive individuals. Their legacy lives on today as June is globally recognized as Pride Month. Yet, the demonstrations taking place in our cities and towns serve as a reminder that the struggle for equality is not over.

With the recent end of Pride Month, we acknowledge how far we have come and how far we still have to go. Every Pride Month going forward, we must honor the sacrifices of those who came before. We recommit to the work of creating a world that celebrates you as you are, together.

Sincerely,


Lilian Martinez
Executive Director & CEO
oSTEM


Raquel Tamez
CEO
SHPE