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Physics Education Research efforts to promote diversity: Challenges and opportunities

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We begin this talk with a brief description of the gender and ethnic diversity of the physics community. We then discuss several current efforts within Physics Education Research that have the potential to further our understanding of issues surrounding underrepresentation. These efforts include research into (1) the role of community and strategies for developing effective communities; (2) physics identity and self-efficacy; (3) the affordances that students from underrepresented groups bring to physics learning; (4) socioeconomics and its impact on mathematization. One of the challenges to conducting this research is the relatively small proportion of underrepresented minority students in current physics classes, and the small number of women in physics and engineering majors.

In collaboration with Stephen Kanim, New Mexico State University.