Diversity in student space activities in the UK

Abstract #2380

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The space workforce is not diverse but the incoming generation is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census All Ages</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Science Undergraduates</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Undergraduates</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Student Space Conference</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy &amp; Geophysics Workforce</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Workforce</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures above present gender, ethnicity, and sexuality statistics from the following datasets:

- UK population (Census 2011)
- Physical science and engineering undergraduates (Higher Education Statistics Authority survey 2016)
- National Student Space Conference attendees (pre-event survey 2019)
- Astronomy and geophysics workforce in the UK (Royal Astronomical Society Demographics Survey 2016)
- Engineering workforce in the UK (Engineering UK 2018)

The UK’s space sector employs over 40,000 people in a variety of roles, and is growing rapidly. Like other science and technology sectors, it is not very diverse and is struggling to meet its recruitment demands.

UKSEDS is the UK’s national student space society. It organises the National Student Space Conference (NSSC) every year, the largest student space event in the UK. NSSC draws an audience of more than 350 students, about two thirds of whom are undergraduate physics and engineering students.

Attendees were asked to complete a survey. In this poster we compare the results of that survey to similar data from other sources.

We can make the sector more inclusive

We have implemented the following inclusivity measures:

- **Gender Pronoun Badges**
  Badges that state people’s pronouns are recommended as best practice for inclusivity by the transgender community.

- **Colour Communication Stickers**
  Traffic-light coloured stickers that allow people to express their communication preferences during networking have been recommended by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network to make events more inclusive for people with autism.

- **Code of Conduct**
  Public codes of conduct set out which behaviours and actions are acceptable, both in person and online, creating safe space.

- **Breakout Zones**
  Quiet areas at events allow those who struggle with sensory overload to take a break before rejoining the programme.

There is more work to be done

- **Understand Our Audience**
  We want to understand why NSSC attracts a much more diverse group of people than the wider student body of the subjects they study.

- **Identify & Remove Barriers**
  We want to identify and remove barriers that restrict students from entering and staying in the space sector.

- **Raise Profile**
  We want to raise the profile of diversity and inclusion in the space sector and advocate for more comprehensive data collection in order to identify the extent and nature of this problem.

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