

# deir in lighting **NEWSLETTER**

The **DEIR in Lighting newsletter** is a quick and easy way to collect and share news, events, and resources. Check out our new [webpage](#) for past issues and spread the word via your own networks!

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## march meeting recap

### **Expanding Lighting Education in Minority-Serving Institutions: A Conversation with Bob Davis and Corey Strachan**

**In this quarter's meeting**, we had an insightful conversation with Dr. Bob Davis, Chief Lighting Engineer at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), and Corey Strachan, a 2022 architectural engineering graduate from Tennessee State University (TSU). Bob implemented a pilot lighting course at TSU, a historically Black university, to address the lack of diversity in architectural engineering education. Corey was one of Bob's students in the course, and now works as a research associate at PNNL. Together, they discussed the importance of introducing lighting education to minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and the challenges of scaling up these efforts.

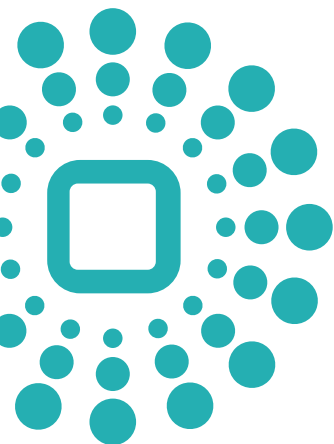
Corey talked about his experience at TSU, emphasizing the importance of early exposure to the lighting industry for students. He mentioned that real-life perspectives from professionals can help build passion and interest in careers in lighting. Bob discussed his role in bringing lighting education to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), recognizing the resource challenges faced by minority-serving institutions and the importance of finding champions within these schools to drive change.

Key points from the conversation included:

**Collaboration between academia and industry:** Professionals in the lighting industry can provide advice and opportunities for students to gain experience. Corey pointed out that Bob's involvement with TSU and his commitment to engaging with the architectural engineering program demonstrate the benefits of such collaboration. Bob added that large lighting institutions should engage with MSIs to help prepare students for the workforce.

**Encouraging passion for lighting early on:** Corey shared how early introduction to the lighting industry can help students develop their interest in the field. Exposure to real-life applications and interaction with professionals can inspire students to consider a career in the industry.

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## march meeting recap (continued)

**Scaling up lighting education:** While the initiative at TSU has been successful, the challenge remains to scale it up and reach more MSIs, including HBCUs and tribal schools. Overcoming institutional barriers, finding champions for lighting education within institutions, and exploring ways to make courses accessible across different institutions are all steps in scaling up these efforts.

During the conversation, participants discussed ways to bring real-life experience into the classroom, including inviting guest speakers from the lighting industry. They also touched on the possibility of scaling up lighting education efforts by collaborating with other institutions or creating online platforms, although this presents challenges in terms of logistics and institutional barriers.

Overall, the conversation shed light on the importance of introducing lighting education to minority-serving institutions and the need for more collaborative efforts to make it accessible to a broader range of students. Both Corey and Bob emphasized the need for intentional efforts from the lighting industry to engage with MSIs to help prepare and recruit students for successful careers in lighting. Through collaborations, guest lectures, and sharing resources, the lighting community can come together to support and encourage the next generation of lighting professionals from diverse backgrounds.

### Lighting Pipeline Update

Top priorities identified through the December survey include engagement, career benefits, career planning, and video. Planned actions to address these priorities include:

- Developing resources, such as a document outlining the benefits of a career in lighting
- Creating videos to inspire students to join the industry
- Encouraging manufacturers and labs to do more outreach to students

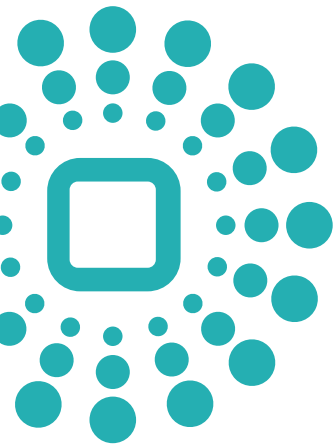
### Lighting Education Update

Top education priorities from the survey include identifying speakers, student opportunities, and partnerships. Planned actions to address these priorities include:

- Developing partnerships with educators, industry organizations, and like-minded groups
- Identifying speakers to go to schools
- Compiling a list of student opportunities, internships, and contests
- Posting student opportunities and resources on the DOE DEIR in lighting working group webpage
- Reaching out to educators and industry organizations to integrate talks into their curriculum

### Lighting Practice Update

Top priorities from the survey include identifying guest speakers for future working group meetings and compiling a list of shareable resources to promote DEIR within lighting businesses and in lighting implementation. We are actively looking for leadership in this area — contact Bernadette ([detboudreaux@gmail.com](mailto:detboudreaux@gmail.com)) if you are interested.



## how i got into lighting: Elizabeth Williams



**I've been in love with light my entire life.** One of my earliest memories is watching Tim Burton's "The Nightmare Before Christmas" and being enamored by Jack Skellington walking in front of the moon, one of the greatest silhouette scenes of all time. But I had no idea it was a career. I wrote an article for LD+A in 2022 describing my childhood obsession with Britney Spears — as a kid I wanted to pursue music. I started playing the violin at 10 and by high school I wanted to write movie scores. Simultaneously, I started working in high school and the highest paying job was a tech position at our auditorium, which hosted community theatre and dance performances throughout the year. Theatre became my second love, and I quickly gravitated towards lighting. In my senior year, I was both first chair of the orchestra and student tech director of the theatre program — I was a busy bee and that hasn't changed.

Because fate's a funny thing, my audition to my preferred school and opening night of the spring musical were scheduled for the same night — and a week before these milestones I spilled water on the lighting console, frying all of my work! I spent the next week fixing the show instead of practicing, and instead of traveling for my audition I decided to stay to monitor the performance. I was forced to make a quick decision, which is a great way to reveal one's priorities. In my experience the theatre world was more inclusive and immediately welcoming than (classical) music, and I felt I had a better chance of being successful early on. And by that, I mean quite literally I could work at local theatres during college to pay for it and my living expenses. Financial stability, or the promise thereof, tipped the scale. Echoing Mariel Acevedo's comments in the [October 2022 newsletter](#), the cost of education is a central issue for diversity in any profession.

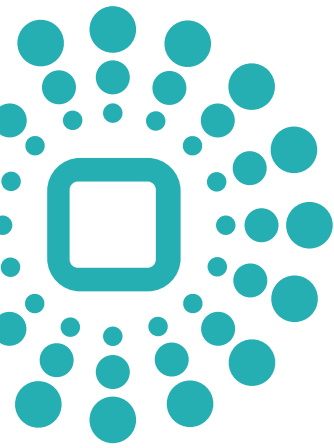
**"For those who are recruiting, I encourage you to expand your net."**

I worked as an independent contractor designing lighting for local and university groups throughout college and graduated with a BFA from the University of Michigan School of Theatre in 2014. I was already working in the field I had gone to school for and wanted to do more, and, frankly, make more money and have benefits. I started researching "lighting jobs" and discovered Light-Fair, applied for and received a grant, and took my performance resume around the show floor (which did not go well). Back home, I worked on a show that rented lights from the production company Fantasee, which at the time happened to be the sister company of Illuminart, both owned by Stefan Graf, FIALD. I talked with someone at Fantasee about my plans, and they recommended me to Stefan. He was impressed by my initiative and took a chance on the rest — I had no knowledge of architectural lighting, CAD, or the ecosystem of our market. I have been with Illuminart for 8 years and I am now a project manager, and I am grateful every day for that chance.

To increase diversity in lighting, firms must be willing to grant the same chance to minorities. To improve inclusion and equity, employers need to hire folks with backgrounds different from their own. In the [June 2022 newsletter](#), Bernadette Boudreaux said, "The great thing about lighting is that skills from other industries are transferable." So for those who are recruiting, I encourage you to expand your net, and if you find someone with drive, resourcefulness, and passion, give them a chance.

*We'd like to develop stories from all of you, to be collected and shared by all of us – via emails, newsletters, LinkedIn, and other means. Sharing your stories may alert others to existing opportunities, or spur ideas for future pathways we can create.*

*Ready to share your story? Contact [amy@akoyaonline.com](mailto:amy@akoyaonline.com).*



## events

### [LightFair 2023 - May 21-25](#)

If you are attending LightFair, check out these sessions (see the [Conference Schedule](#) for details and updates)

- **Empowering More Equitable and Accessible Cities, the Smart and Sustainable Way:** May 21, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
- **Amplifying Your DEI Strategies & Humanizing the Experience:** May 23, 4:00–5:30 p.m.
- **Light + Justice Indoors:** May 24, 9:00–10:00 a.m.
- **The Company Scorecard: What Companies Do to Retain Parents:** May 24, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
- **Everyone Wins: Measuring Impacts on Landlords and Tenants from Common Space Lighting Upgrades in Multifamily Buildings:** May 24, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
- **Life-cycle Liberty and Justice for All: Exploring social equity and justice from a life cycle perspective; activities and approaches to build a more sustainable world for everyone:** May 25, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.



## articles and reports

### [Nuckolls Fund for Lighting Education Announces 2023 Grant Recipients](#)

Congratulations to working group members Lauren Dandridge and Bob Davis — each received a \$30,000 Lesley Wheel Introductory Lighting Program Grant. Lauren, an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Southern California, earned a grant for “Exploring exterior lighting design and its effect on health, community, and nature.” Bob, an affiliate faculty member at Tennessee State University, earned a grant for “Expanding lighting education: A step towards a more diverse academic pipeline into the lighting professions.”

### [Playing the Long Game: DEIR initiatives shouldn't be one-offs](#) [accessible to IES members only]

Check out Bernadette Boudreaux's column in the April issue of LD+A Magazine, which includes a shout-out to the efforts of BUILD Up, WILD, NACLIQ, the IES DEIR Committee, and this DEIR in Lighting working group.