Heather started as a journeyperson in the Electric Shop and worked her way up through the ranks of foreperson and general foreperson. With her recent promotion to Assistant Superintendent, Heather is the first woman ever to occupy a management position in the Shops.

Facilities Services undertook a diversity initiative a little over 10 years ago with a goal to increase diversity in the skilled trades within the Shops. We recognized multiple benefits to increased diversity, including increasing job applicant pools, bringing new ideas and cultures into the construction and maintenance business, and building better partnerships with our customers by adjusting the demographics of our workforce to be more consistent with the overall university community.

Participants in the former PDC diversity initiative recognized early on the many challenges to adding diversity across the Shops organization, from front line journeypersons to management staff. A major challenge was that the local, central New York workforce did not contain diverse individuals from which we could recruit. So we, Facilities Diversity & Inclusion Council, decided to “grow our own”.

Heather’s promotion is significant at multiple levels. It is significant for Heather because her hard work has paid off with a well-deserved promotion. It is significant for other diverse individuals in the Shops and elsewhere because it helps demonstrate that there are good opportunities within the skilled trades business. And it is significant for the Shops and for Cornell that we have placed an exceptionally talented individual in a position that, until recently, would probably not have been open to her participation.”