

Women+ in Computer Science Orientation



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the University of Waterloo is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee people. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted in legally binding treaty to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River



IMAGE CREDIT: SIX NATIONS COUNCIL



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

DAVID R. CHERITON SCHOOL
OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

WICS
WOMEN IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Schedule

2:30	Women in Computer Science (WiCS)	Jo Atlee Prof/Director of WiCS
2:55	How to Succeed Academically	Gwendolyn Culbert 2A Computer Science
3:05	Extracurriculars - Just Try Things!	Ravleen Kaur 2A Computer Science
3:15	Starting Over and Pivoting	Kim Hoang 4A Mechatronics Engineering
3:25	Building a Life Beyond CS	Gloria Wang 3B Software Engineering
3:40	Q&A	
3:55	Snack Break!	

Schedule

4:30	Getting your First-Co-op Placement	Iris Mo 3B Computer Science
4:40	How to Have a Successful Co-op Term	Mariya Turetska 3B Software Engineering
4:50	Co-op Q&A	Iris & Mariya
5:05	Networking 101	Madeline Pinto 4A Computer Science
5:15	Lessons Learned about Navigating First Year	Lin Hong 2A Computer Science Manya Singla 2A Computer Science
5:30	WiCS Undergraduate Committee (Little WiCS)	Madeline Pinto 4A Computer Science Iris Mo 3B Computer Science
5:40	Q&A	
5:50	Dinner + Panel: What I Wish I Knew in First Year	

What is WiCS?

WiCS exists to advance gender equity in computing by advocating for and supporting women, trans, gender-fluid, gender-queer, and non-binary students enrolled in computer science and related programs at the University of Waterloo.

Who is WiCS?

Jo Atlee

Director of WiCS

Renée Miller

Co-Chair WiCS Committee

Samantha Jewett

WiCS Outreach Coordinator

Sydney Brabazon

WiCS Event Facilitator (Co-op)

**Madeline Pinto,
Iris Mo**

Co-Directors of WiCS Undergraduate
Committee

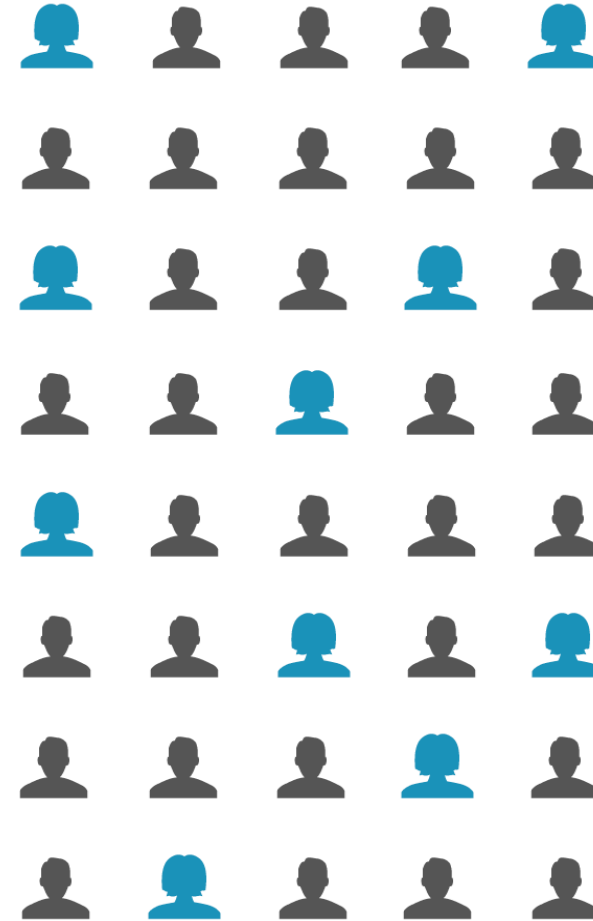
Women+ in CS at Waterloo

Admissions Fall 2026

- 100 (22%) in CS
- 16 (33%) in CFM
- 16 (25%) in CS/BUS
- 31 (24%) in SE
- **23.6% overall**

Enrolment

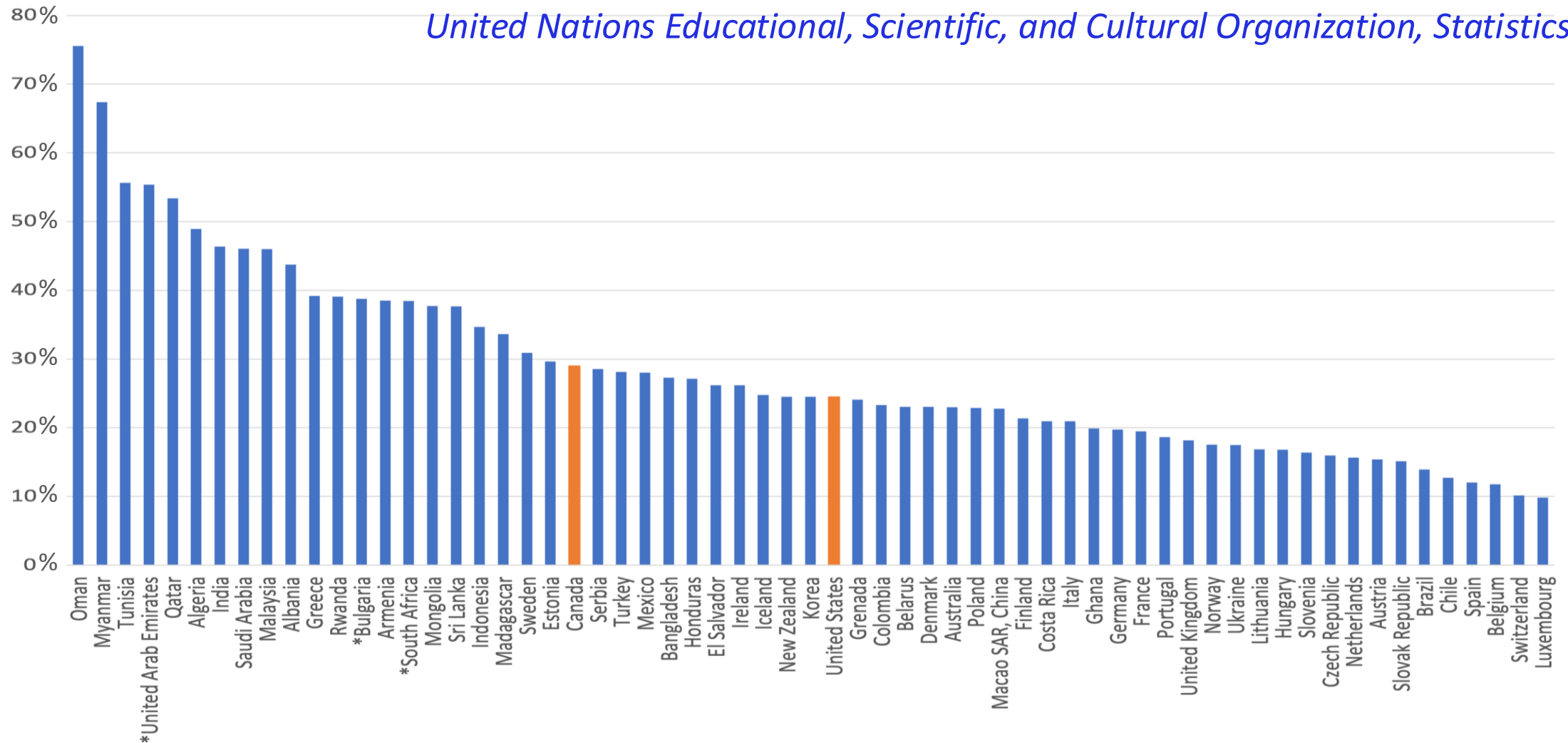
26% women



WORLD – Women Enrolment in CS

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Statistics 2018

Percentage of Women Enrolled in CS University Programs



WICS

Partners:



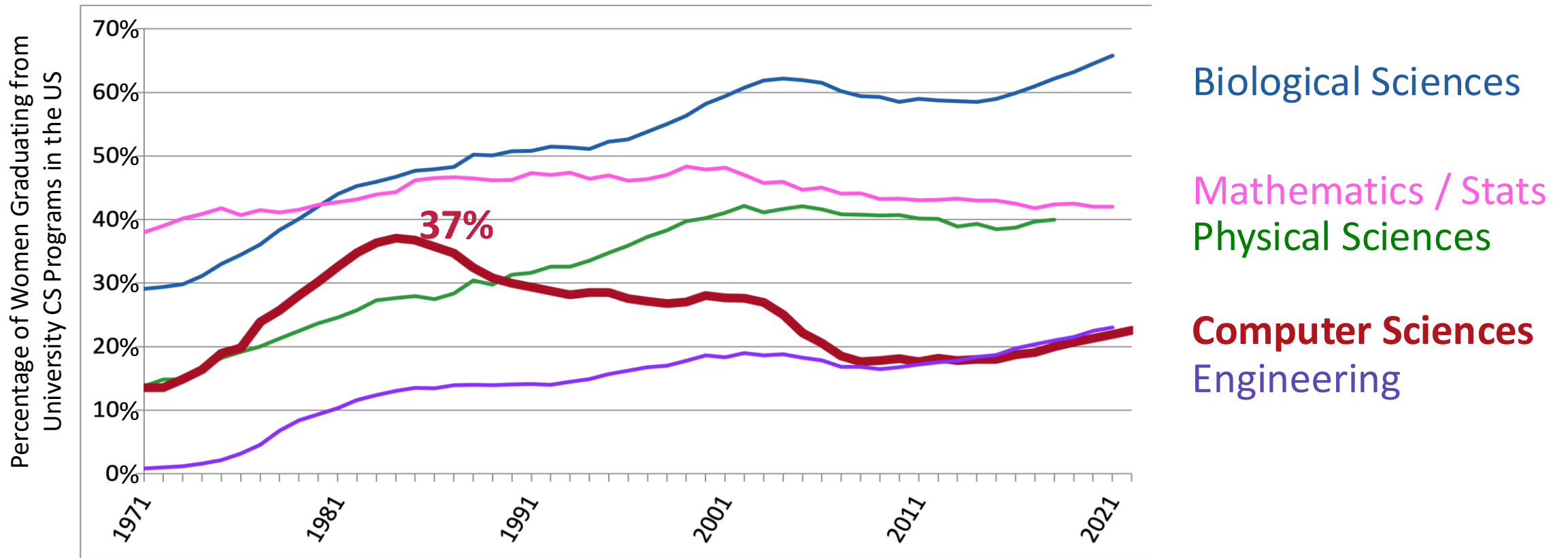
Manulife



CITADEL | CITADEL Securities



Women in University CS Programs



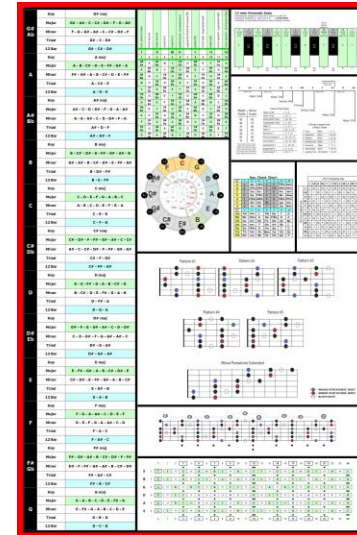
US National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics 1971-2022

Pre-University CS Experience

- Most students assume that everyone else in the class has more computer experience than they have.
- **Pre-university experience is not necessary for success**



VS



playing songs

formal music lessons

Pre-University CS Experience

- Most students assume that everyone else in the class has more computer experience than they have.
- **Pre-university experience is not necessary**
- Report nearly equal mastery of CS concepts in intro courses
- Have equal GPAs

men's and women's
experiences are different

Stereotypes and Biases

Good News

- Overt gender bias is rare

Bad news

- Unconscious or **implicit gender bias** remains widespread
- Women are as guilty of implicit bias as men are!
- Harvard Implicit Bias Test (implicit.harvard.edu)

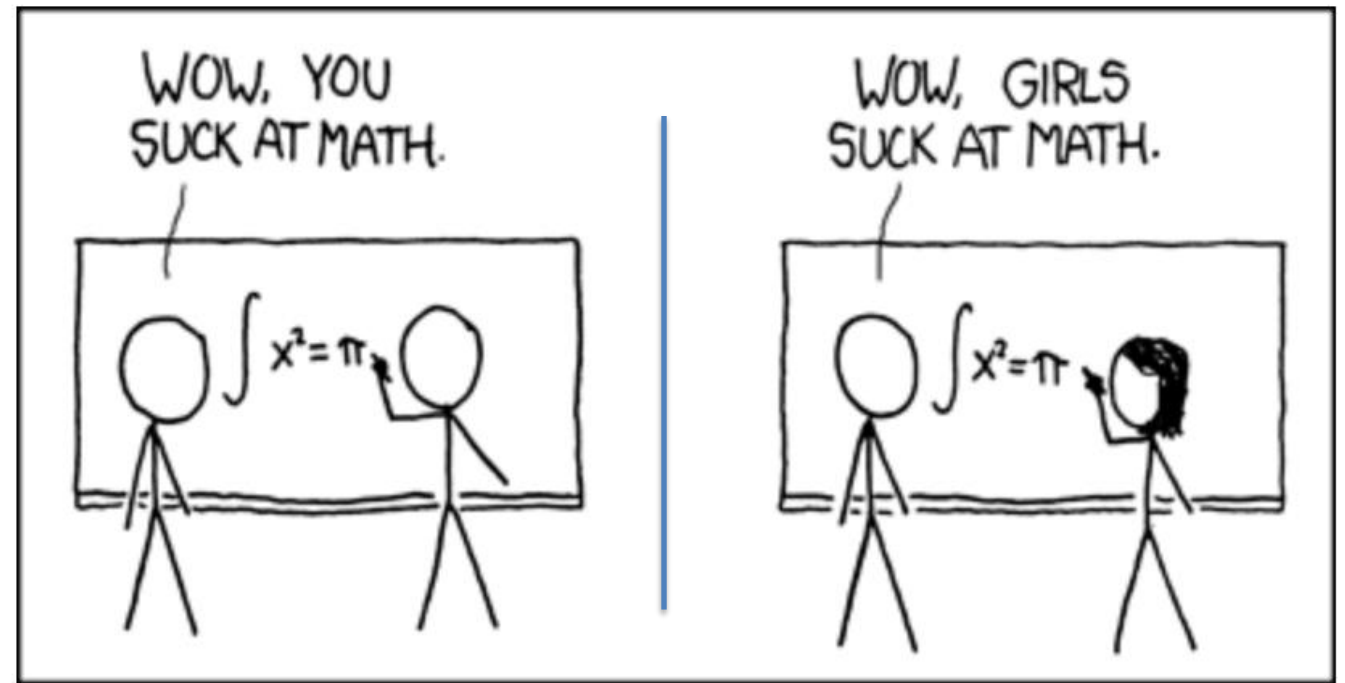
Self-Confidence Gap (Imposter Syndrome)



azilliondollarscomics.com

Letting the Side Down

Women students are less apt to speak out in class for fear that mistakes or dumb questions it will be taken as proof that women can't do CS



Micro-aggressions

social exchange in which a member of a dominant culture says or does something, **usually without intended malice**, that belittles and alienates a member of a marginalized group

Women just aren't interested in CS.

Really? You don't look like a CS major.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO HANG OUT WITH GEEKS?

Why would you want to study CS?

The guys will be better than you.

You only got into UW CS because you are a girl.

Want me to help you with your CS homework?

Some Sexism

- Undervalued by teammates on course projects
- Undervalued by co-op employers
 - Not given challenging work
 - Assigned quality assurance or technical writing tasks rather than development tasks

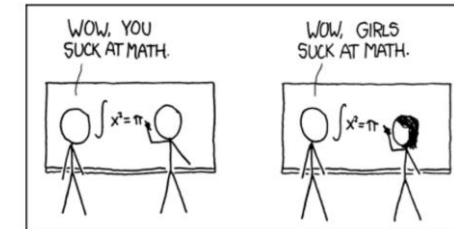
Stereotypes and Biases

Self-Confidence Gap (Imposter Syndrome)



Letting the Side Down

Women students are less apt to speak out in class for fear that mistakes or dumb questions it will be taken as proof that women can't do CS



Micro-aggressions

social exchange in which a member of a dominant culture says or does something, **usually without intended malice**, that belittles and alienates a member of a marginalized group

Women just aren't interested in CS.

Really? You don't look like a CS major.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO HANG OUT WITH GEEKS?

~~Why would you want to study CS?~~
~~Teggy will be better than you~~

You only got into UW CS because you are a girl.

Want me to help you with your CS homework?

Some Sexism

- Undervalued by teammates on course projects
- Undervalued by co-op employers
 - Not given challenging work
 - Assigned quality assurance or technical writing tasks rather than development tasks

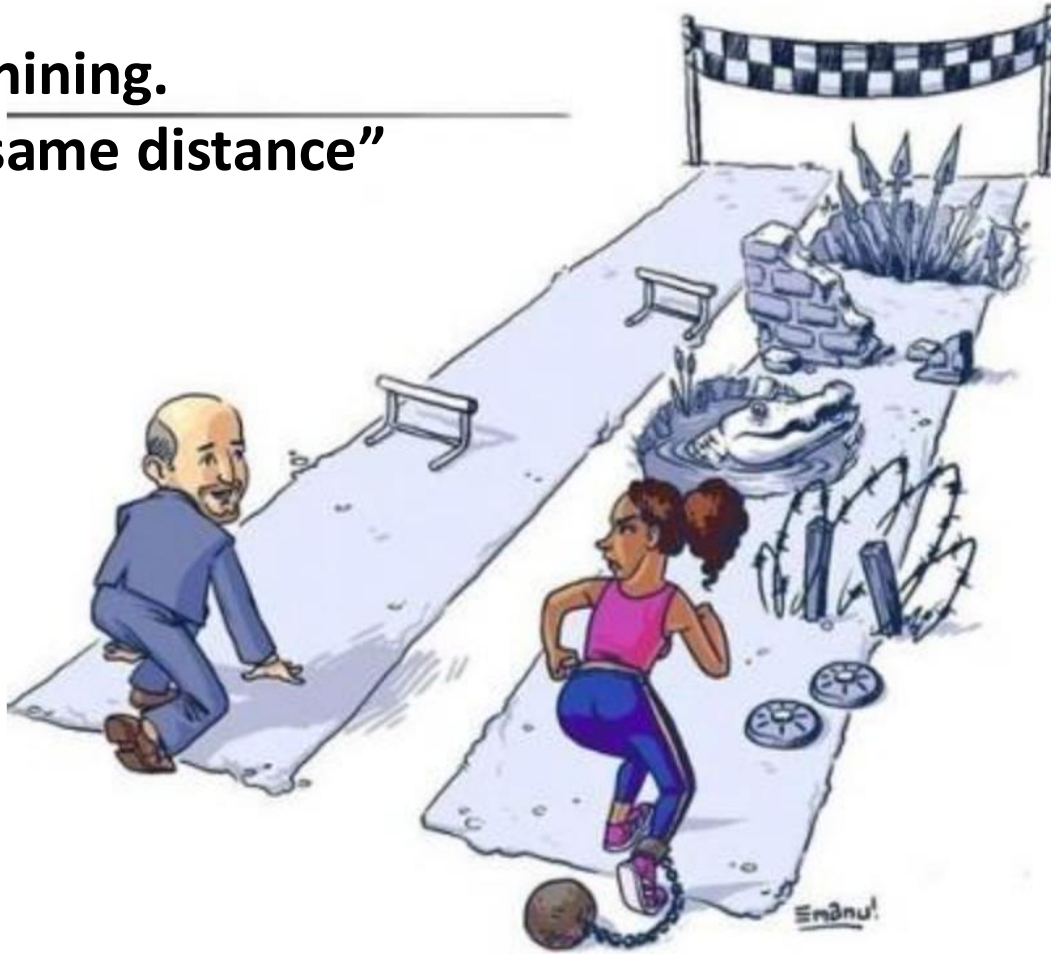
Technical Network

It helps a lot to build a network of technical women

- UW CS guys are great
 - They will be your best friends, study partners, project partners
 - But their experiences are not the same as yours
- Women friends (who aren't in STEM) are great
 - But their experiences are not the same as yours

WiCS

“Quit whining.
It’s the same distance”



WiCS exists not because women+ students need extra help to succeed in CS.

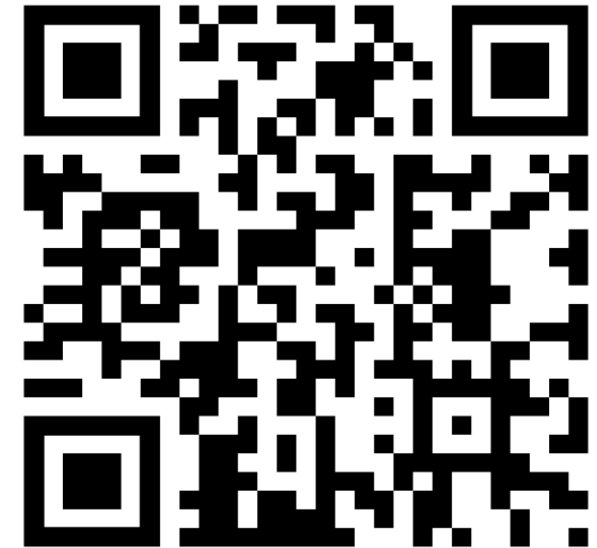
We exist to help remove, reduce and overcome the **extra** obstacles that women+ in computing might face.

WiCS

- Orientation
- Resume Critiques
- Technical Interview Prep
- Responding to Everyday Biases
- Panel on Careers in Tech
- Student/Industry Lunch
- Technical Workshops
- Professional-Development Workshops
- Speed Networking/Mentoring
- Speakers from the Trenches
- WiCS Con
- Grace Hopper Celebration
 - post-conference take-aways
- CAN-CWIC Conference
- Women Distinguished Lecturers

Upcoming Events (LinkTree to event registrations)

- Sept. 11, 9:00-10:30 **Breakfast** Resume tips and critiques (w/ [Google](#))
- Sept. 14, 5:00-6:30 **Dinner** Essential Interview Communicaitons (w/ [Google](#))
- Sept. 17, 4:30-5:30 **Dinner with Citadel Engineers** (w/ [Citadel](#))
- Sept. 18, 12:30-1:30 **Lunch** Algorithmic Trading (w/ [HRT](#))
- Oct. 1, 11:30-1:00 **Lunch** Interns -> Careers (w/ [OpenText](#))
- Nov. 20-21, **CAN-CWIC Conference**
(deadline for WiCS funding to attend is [Sept. 13](#))



What is “Little WiCS”?

- The undergraduate committee that is student-run!
- Events they regularly host:
 - Beginning-of-term event!
 - Speaker series
 - Mock interviews & resume critique
 - Panels
 - Discussion circles
 - De-stress events
 - Movie & bonfire night



WiCS Study Room (DC 2331)



LinkTree to event registrations
and Study Room fob form

Obtain a fob from <https://uwaterloo.ca/women-in-computer-science/wics-study-room>

Keep up with WiCS!

- Subscribe to WiCS newsletters:
<https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/wics-undergrads>
- Join the WiCS Discord Server
<https://discord.com/invite/2aAEEQP4qs>
- Follow us on Instagram
[uwaterloowics](https://www.instagram.com/uwaterloowics)
- Read announcements on the CS Undergraduate Community on LEARN
<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>

Parting Words

- Build and use your network of technical women.
- Be yourself. This is what a computer scientist looks like!

