

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
2:50	Lessons Learned about Navigating First Year	Mariya Turetska 3rd-year Software Engineering
3:05	How to Succeed Academically	Momina Butt 3rd-year Computing and Finance Man
3:15	Use your Resources!	Erin Walshaw 2nd-year Computer Science
3:25	The Importance of a Balanced School Life	Lauren Nowe 4th-year Software Engineering
3:35	Imposter Syndrome coming into First Year	Lily Liu 2nd-year Software Engineering
3:45	Q&A	
3:55	Snack Break!	

4:30	Getting your First-Co-op Placement	Padena Rasouli-Baghban 4th-year Software Engineering
4:40	How to Have a Successful Co-op Term	Imane Yacoubi 3rd-year Computer Science
4:50	Co-op Q&A	Padena, Imane
5:00	How to Start on New Projects	Avery Lin 2025 Alumnae Computer Science
5:10	Finding your Academic Niche	Bhavika Dindyal 3rd-year Computing and Finance Management
5:20	Getting Involved in Extracurriculars	Caroline Huang 2nd-year Computer Science
5:30	Networking	Madeline Pinto 4th-year Computer Science
5:40	WiCS Undergraduate Committee (Little WiCS)	Yiyan Huang 2nd-year Computer Science Yuyeon Kim 2nd-year Software Engineering
5:50	Q&A	
6:00	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

Edith Law

Co-Chair WiCS Committee

Samantha Jewett

WiCS Outreach Coordinator

Duaa Ali

WiCS Event Facilitator (Co-op)

**Yiyan Huang,
Yuyeon Kim**

Co-Directors of WiCS Undergraduate
Committee

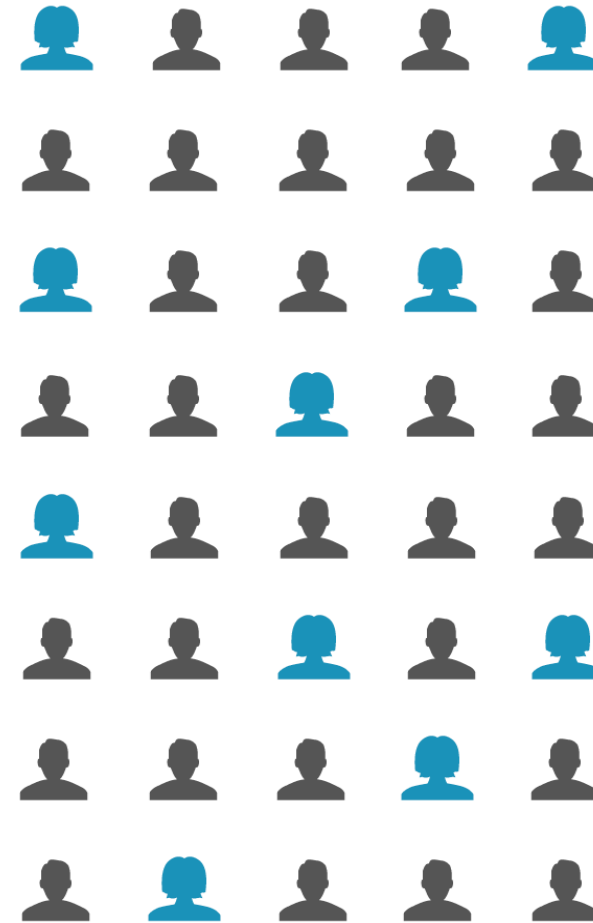
Women+ in CS at Waterloo

Admissions Fall 2025

- 95 (23%) in CS
- 11 (18.6%) in CFM
- 10 (27%) in CS/BUS
- 24 (16.4%) in SE
- **21.4% overall**

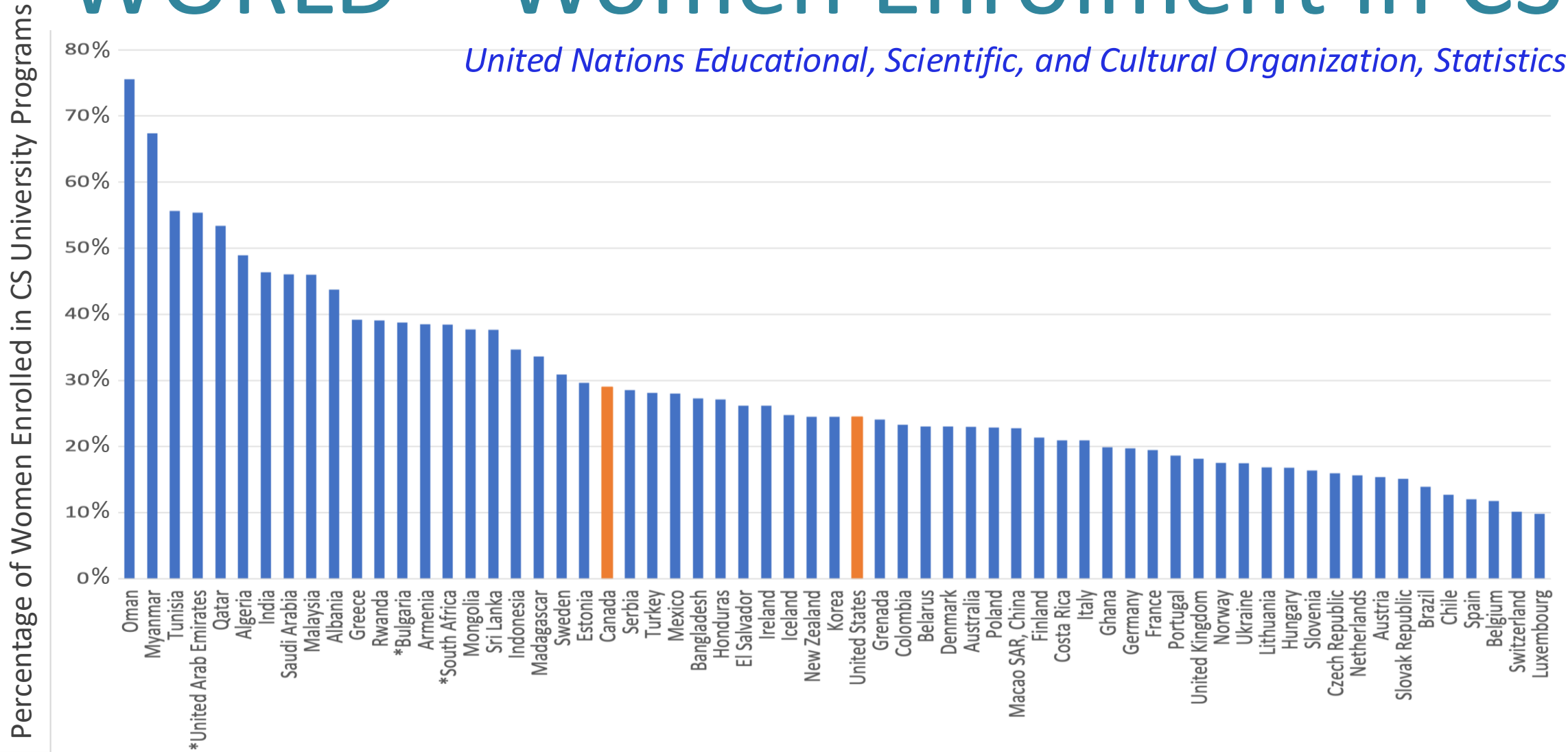
Enrolment

24.4% women

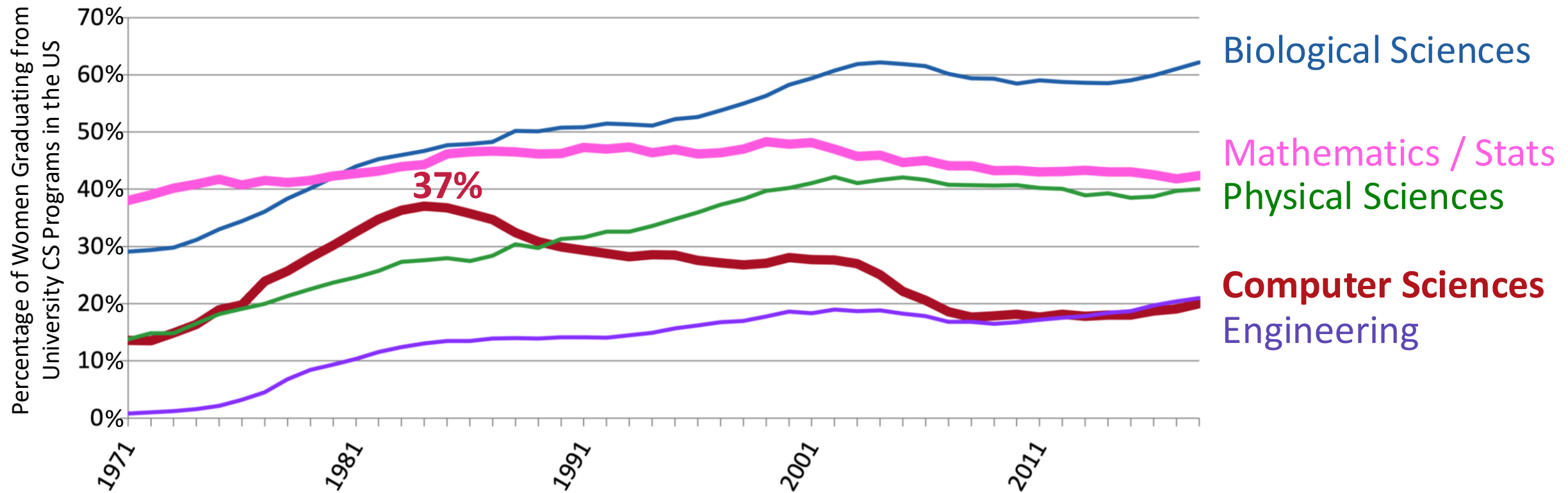


WORLD – Women Enrolment in CS

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



Women in University CS Programs



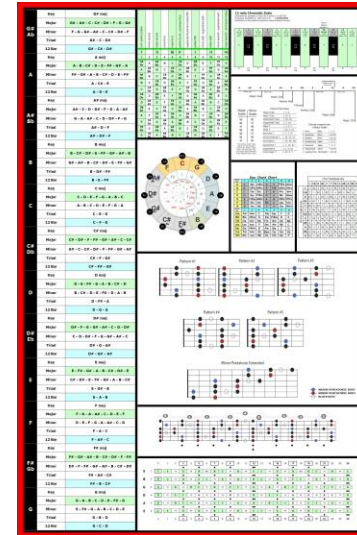
US National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics 1971-2018

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

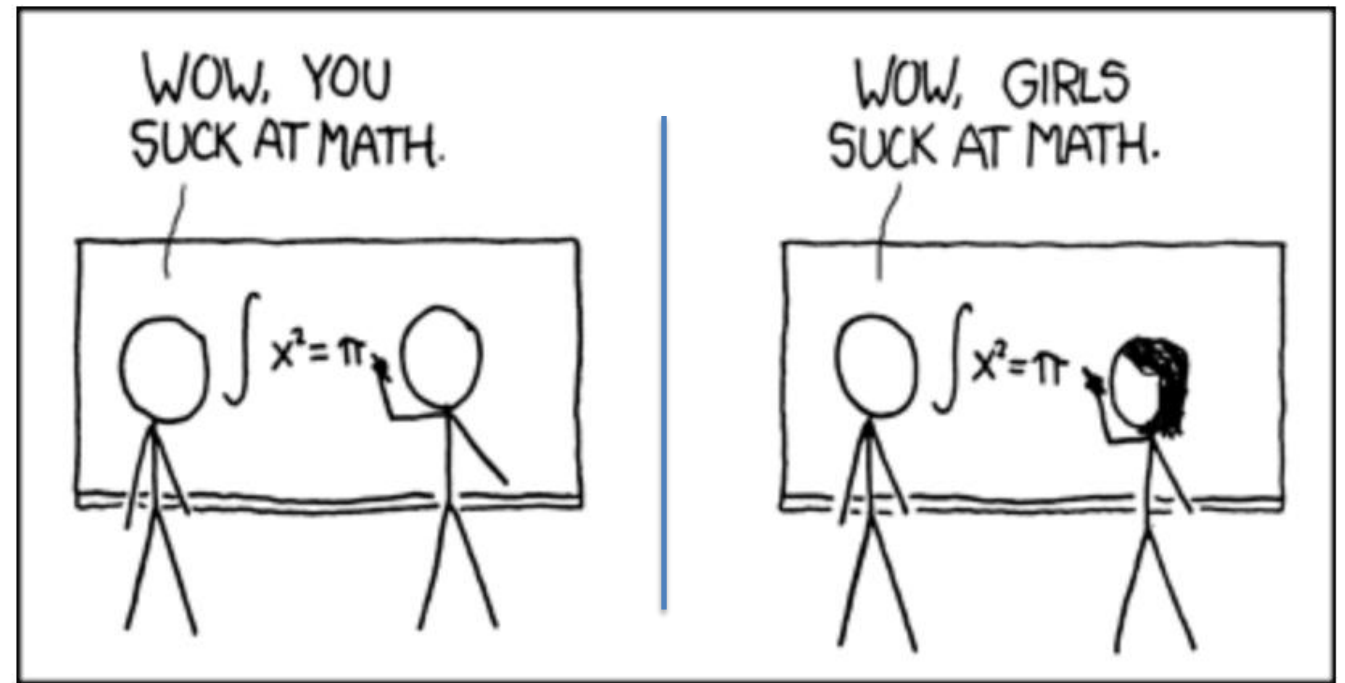
- Unconscious or **implicit gender bias** remains widespread
- Women are as guilty of implicit bias as men are!
- Harvard Implicit Bias Test (implicit.harvard.edu)

Self-Confidence Gap (Imposter Syndrome)



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

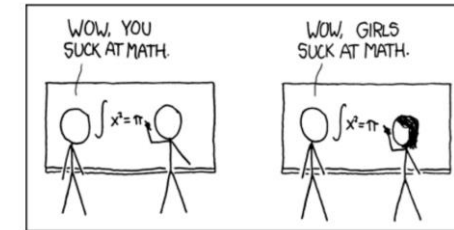
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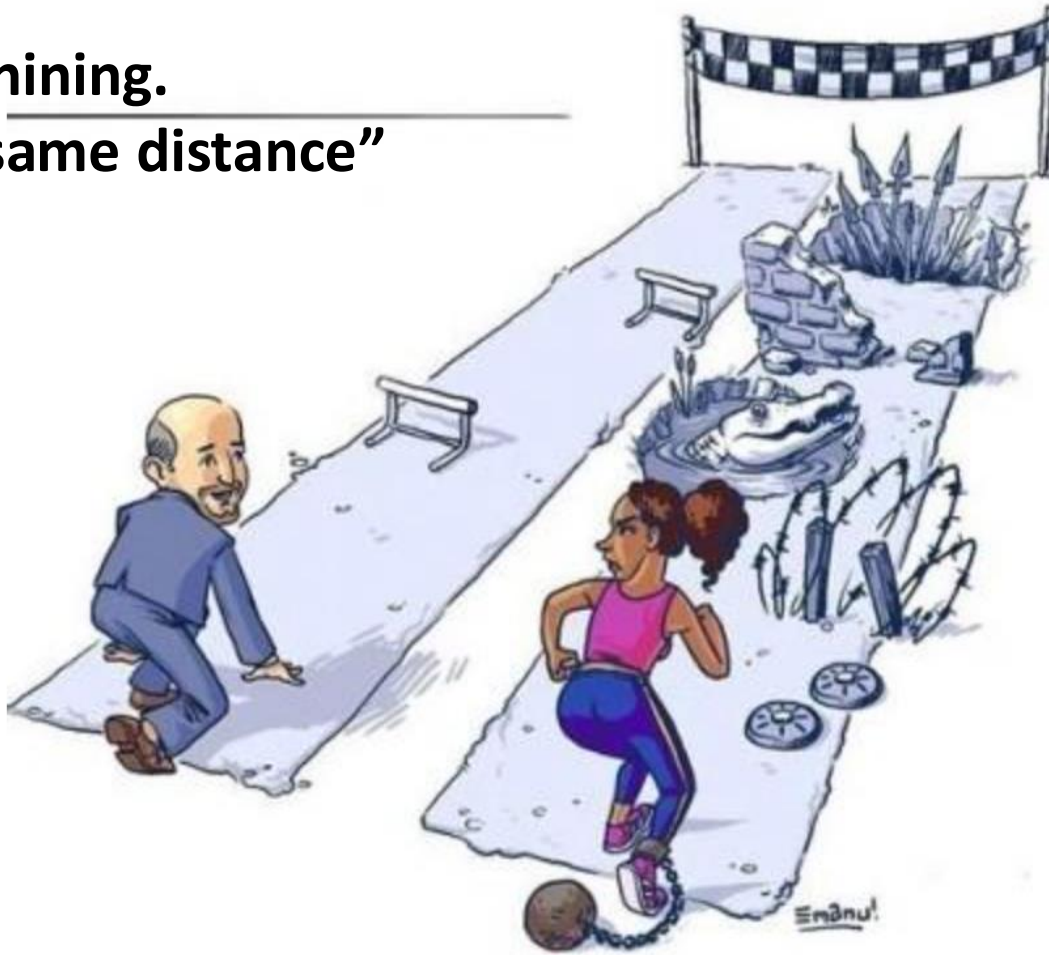
Technical Network

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, 11:30-1:00 **Brunch** Networking with Women Engineers (w/ [Citadel](#))
- Sept. 12, 11:30-1:00 **Lunch** Algorithmic Trading (w/ [HRT](#))
- Sept. 24, 4:30-5:30 **Dinner** Information Session (w/ [Balyasny Asset Manage](#))
- Sept. 26-28 Technova Hackathon!
- Oct. 2, 11:30-1:00 **Lunch** Former Intern Panel (w/ [Meta](#))
- Oct. 2, 5:30-6:30 **Dinner** AI at Meta (w/ [Meta](#))
- Oct. 8, 3:00-5:00 AI at Manulife (@ [Manulife](#))



🌟 **TechNova** : Empowering the Next Generation in Tech

Applications Reopened — Just for First-Year Students!

📍 In-person at the University of Waterloo

📅 Event Dates: September 26–28

🧠 **What is Technova?**

Technova is a 36-hour in-person hackathon focused on empowering women and underrepresented groups in tech. It's a space to innovate, learn, and connect in a supportive community.

🚀 **Don't miss this exclusive opportunity — limited spots available!**

📱 Scan the QR code to apply today!



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.gg/DaKDpGDr>
- Follow us on Instagram
[uwaterloowics](https://www.instagram.com/uwaterloowics)
- Read announcements on the CS Undergraduate Community
<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>

Parting Words

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

