

Ethics and Engineering: Gender Discrimination & Sexual Harassment



WELCOME!

Learning Objectives

1. Understand relevant terminology and concepts
2. Understand implicit biases and how they develop automatically
3. Learn the prevalence and impacts of (i) gender discrimination and (ii) sexual harassment in engineering
4. Learn how to prevent self and others from (i) gender discrimination and (ii) sexual harassment

1. Concepts and Terminology

Implicit Bias & Gender Discrimination

1. Cognitive Factors

- a. Categorization effects
- b. Confirmation bias
- c. External vs. Internal attributions
- d. Out-group homogeneity

2. Affective Factors

- a. In-group favoritism and out-group denigration
- b. Preference for homogenous social circles
- c. Perceived status threat
- d. Desire to maintain status quo

Prejudice



Stereotypes



Discrimination

Fighting Gender Bias in the Workplace



Implicit Association Test

The online Implicit Association Test, a result of collaboration among psychologists from Harvard, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington, was designed to help test takers assess their unconscious biases.

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

The test works by assessing how quickly the test taker learns to pair out-group faces with negative vs. positive terms. There are 14 test modules in all, and you can even create your own. Over 6 million people have taken the test.

2. Gender Discrimination

Gender Discrimination

- ❖ In 2018, women earned 81.1% of what men did (*Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019*).
- ❖ These gaps are even more pronounced for racial minorities; Black women (62%), Latina women (54%), and Native American women (58%) (*National Partnership for Women and Families, 2019*).
- ❖ Women are promoted less and “protected” from challenging “stretch assignments”, especially during pregnancy or motherhood (*Brown, 2010, Hoobler et al., 2014*).
- ❖ Men with children are rated more positively, while women with children face severe penalties (*Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Fuegan, Biernat, Haines, & Deaux, 2004*).

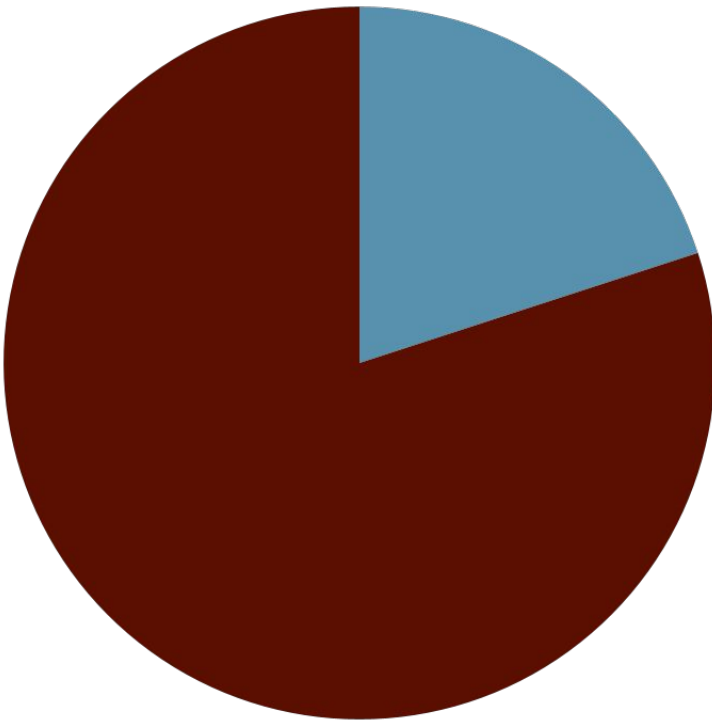
Gender Discrimination

- ❖ Women face the greatest barriers in achieving top-level positions (i.e., glass ceiling effects). As an example, women currently hold **6.6%** of all CEO positions at Fortune 500 companies (2019).
- ❖ Women face challenges in obtaining leadership positions, but also in being viewed and respected as leaders.

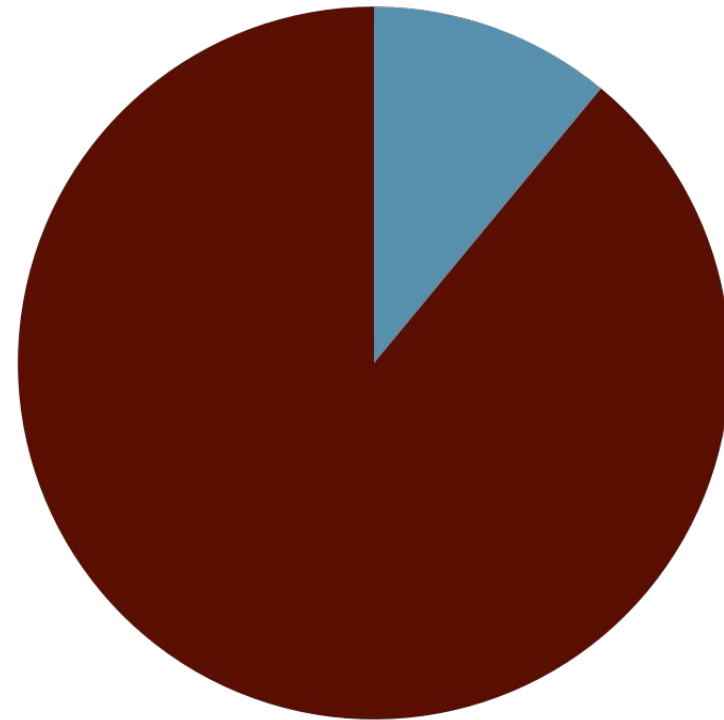


Gender Discrimination

WOMEN ARE 20% OF ENGINEERING
SCHOOL GRADUATES



WOMEN ARE ONLY 11% OF
PRACTICING ENGINEERS



Gender Discrimination on Campus

“I was offered an academic scholarship to attend [university] so my Mom took me there to check out the campus and talk to an academic advisor. He promptly **discouraged me from the engineering program**. I left and never looked back. I’ve had my BSEE for 28 years.”

“Shout out to the sexist boy in my health 210 class, when I said I’m going to nursing school he said ‘of course you are, **you’re a girl, you’re not going to be a doctor**’ so now I’m going to be a doctor, might go into his field too.”

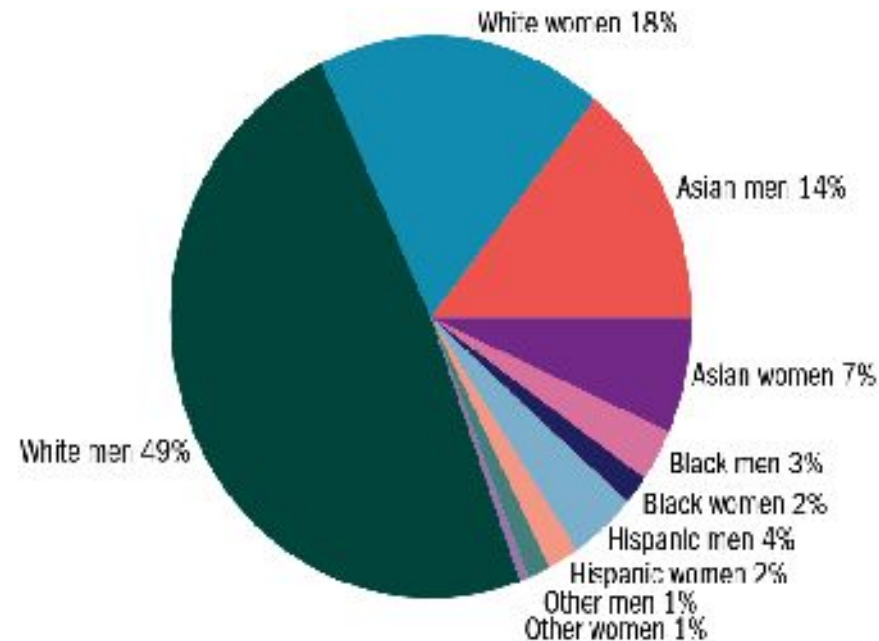
“Freshman year ENGR 111 class, the prof/dean stood up and told us that the **women should leave since we prob wouldn't pass**.”

Climate Control Survey



Demographics of Engineers & Scientists

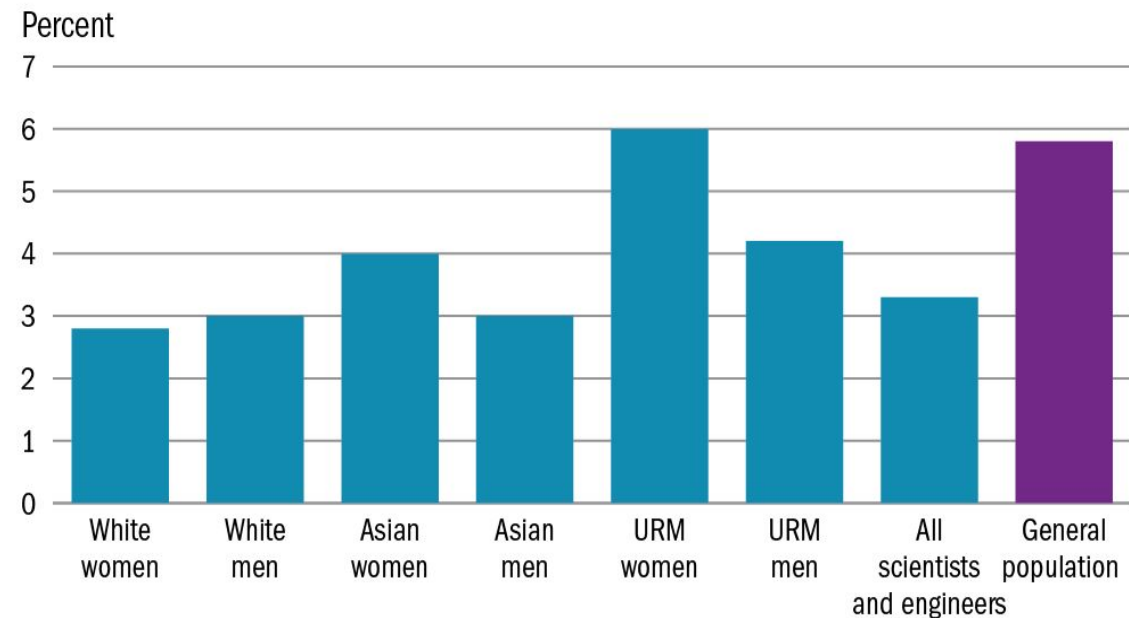
Scientists and engineers working in science and engineering occupations: 2015



NOTES: Hispanic may be any race. Other includes American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and multiple race.
Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2017

Unemployment Demographics

Unemployment rates among scientists and engineers: 2015



URM = underrepresented minority.

NOTE: The general population consists of the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and over.

Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2017

3. Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment

- Defined as, “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature” (Equal Opportunity Employment Commission)
- Can be verbal, non-verbal, visual, or physical conduct



Types of Sexual Harassment

Quid Pro Quo

Expressed or implied demands for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., a promotion, pay increase) or to avoid some detriment (e.g., firing, demotion)

- Harasser has some sort of power over the person they harass

Hostile Work Environment

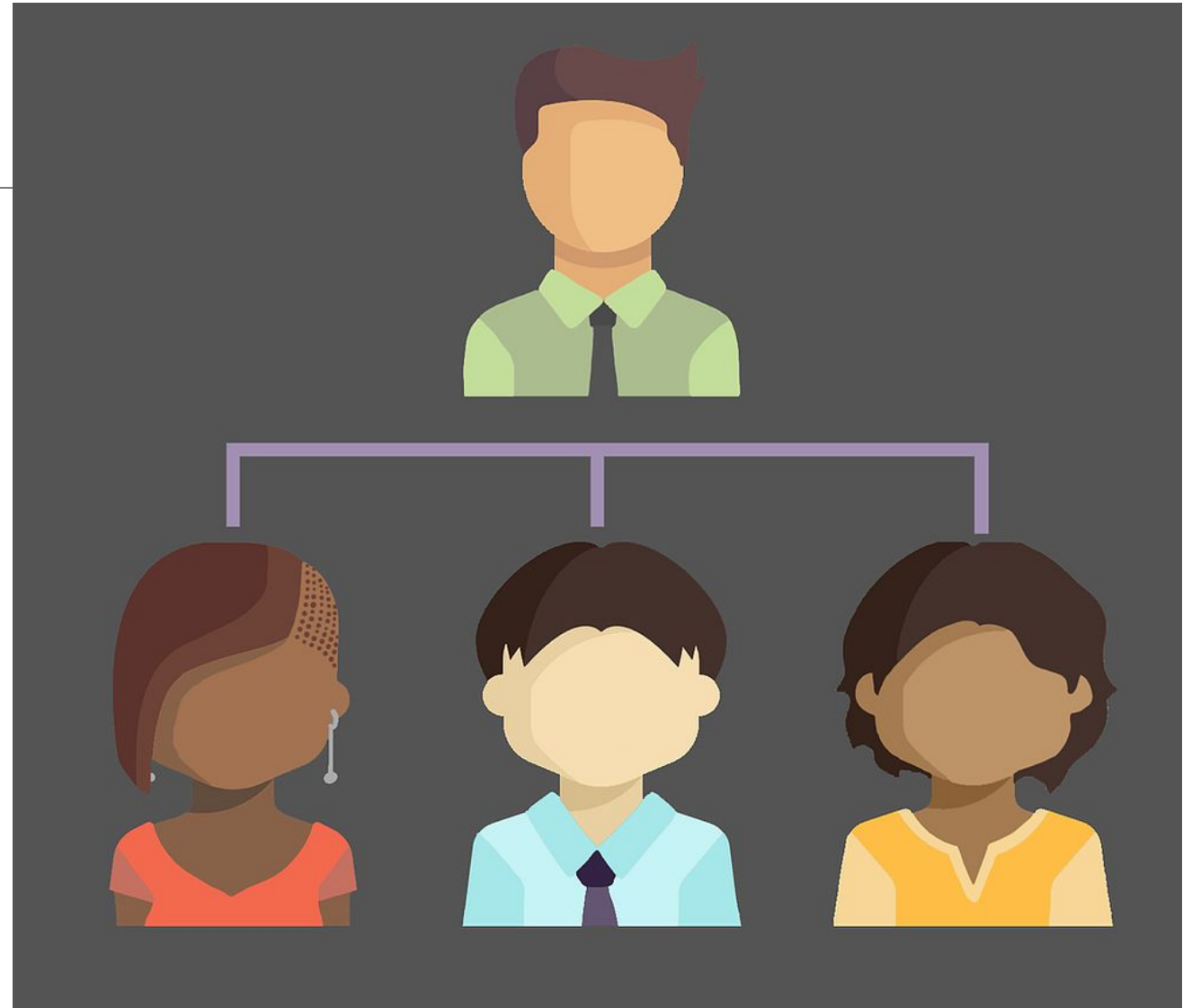
Any conduct directed at an employee because of that employee's sex that unreasonably interferes with the employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

- Anyone can be a harasser

Types of Sexual Harassment

1. When a new hire tells your co-worker that his sexual joke is not funny, he is told that he is overreacting and needs to relax; nobody else is bothered by the joke.
2. After a meeting, you overhear your male co-worker say to another male co-worker, 'I couldn't take her seriously in that presentation — did you see what she was wearing?'
3. After a positive performance review, a graduate student invites an undergraduate on a date. When she declines, he refuses to write a recommendation letter for her because he doesn't think she's a good fit for the lab culture.
4. A few times a week you see your straight male co-worker jokingly tell his straight male colleague how hot he looks and whistles whenever his colleague walks by.
5. After a bank teller is hired, her manager asks her to dinner. She turns down his request. The next day, she notices that her manager has reduced the number of hours she is scheduled for.
6. A woman at work talks a lot about women- her sexual relationships and famous men she thinks are "hot," None of your other employees have complained about her.
7. On Friday after work, a male coworker asks a female co-worker to go out on a date and is turned down. Afterwards, she tells the entire office how unprofessional it was for him to ask.
8. A new lesbian coworker is asked if her partner is as attractive as she is and how often they have sex.

Sexual harassment is about **power** (the ability to influence actions and choices of others), **NOT** sexual attraction



Contributors to workplace Sexual Harassment

A workplace that...

- ❖ tolerates sexual harassment
- ❖ does not talk about what sexual harassment is
- ❖ has high levels of unbalanced power dynamics

Sexual Harassment in Engineering

Dependence on advisors and mentors for career advancement

Male Dominated

“Macho” cultures

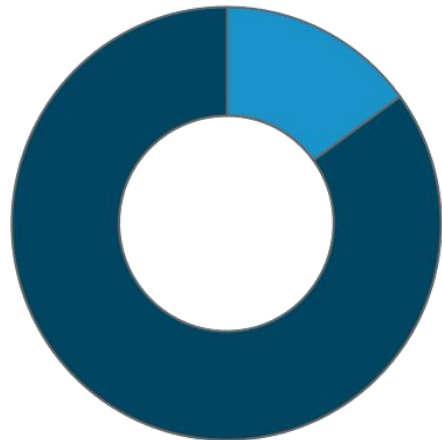
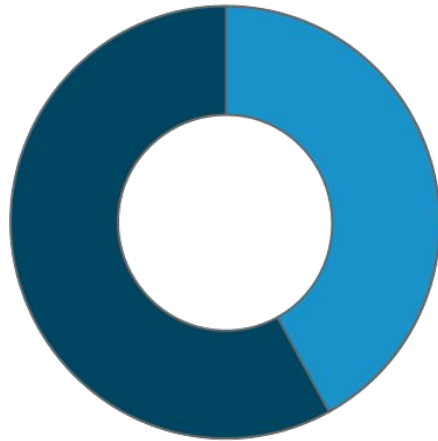
System of meritocracy

Informal communication networks

Organizational tolerance for harassment

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in Engineering

Experienced by
42%
of Women



Experienced by
15%
of Men

Harassment in engineering workplaces:

- **54%** of all female engineering students experience sexual harassment from faculty or staff
- **57%** of female engineers working in offices said they have been sexually harassed
- **66%** of female engineers working in plants said they have been sexually harassed

Why don't people report harassment?

Sexual harassment is only reported by 10% of people

- Fear reporting will affect their career (No promotions or fired)
 - “That’s just the work culture”
 - Feelings of guilt or shame
 - Worried it won’t make a difference
- ◆ 80% said reporting made no difference
 - ◆ 16% said going to a supervisor made the situation worse



Outcomes of Sexual Harassment

Low:

- Confidence
- Job Satisfaction
- Scientific Productivity
- Sense of Safety
- Job Performance

High:

- Rates of Depression & Suicide
- Anxiety & Post-traumatic Stress
- Organizational Costs
- Job Burnout
- Sense of Imposter Syndrome
- Sense of Isolation





Sexual Assault

“When I went public with being raped by a swimmer, multiple **people told me I deserved it** including a member of a sorority that has Domestic Violence as their philanthropy.”

“I had multiple Women of Color tell me they **never reported their assaults for fear of not being believed**. Who am I to tell them differently when all of my white privilege didn’t protect me from my university?”

“I was sexually assaulted on campus my freshman year I told friends but never took it up with admin because **I knew it’s my word against his..** especially after seeing everything that went down with girls assaulted by athletes”

4. A Case Study

Case Study

UBER according to a female engineer

“On my **first official day** rotating on the team, my new manager sent me a string of messages over company chat. **He was in an open relationship**, he said, and his girlfriend was having an easy time finding new partners but he wasn't. He was trying to stay out of trouble at work, he said, but he couldn't help getting in trouble, because **he was looking for women to have sex with**. It was clear that he was trying to get me to have sex with him, and it was so clearly out of line **that I immediately took screenshots** of these chat messages and reported him to HR.”

Source:

<https://www.susanjfowler.com/blog/2017/2/19/reflecting-on-one-very-strange-year-at-uber>

Case Study

UBER according to a female engineer

“I expected that I would report him to HR, they would handle the situation appropriately, and then life would go on - unfortunately, things played out quite a bit differently. **When I reported the situation, I was told by both HR and upper management that even though this was clearly sexual harassment and he was propositioning me, it was this man's first offense,** and that they wouldn't feel comfortable giving him anything other than a warning and a stern talking-to.”

Source: <https://www.susanjowler.com/blog/2017/2/19/reflecting-on-one-very-strange-year-at-uber>

Case Study

UBER according to a female engineer

“I was then told that I had to make a choice: (i) I could either go **and find another team** and then never have to interact with this man again, or (ii) I could stay on the team, but I would have to understand that he would **most likely give me a poor performance review** when review time came around, and there was nothing they could do about that.”

Source:

<https://www.susanjfowler.com/blog/2017/2/19/reflecting-on-one-very-strange-year-at-uber>



Discuss – 4 minutes

- 1) What **would you have done** if you had been the female engineer?
- 2) How **should UBER** have handled this situation?
- 3) What were the underlying **CAUSES** of this problem and what **STRATEGIES** could UBER use for preventing similar problems in the future?

UBER vs. female engineers

Outcome:

- ❖ A class-action lawsuit led to a \$10 million settlement (483 plaintiffs)
- ❖ UBER fired 20 employees including the CEO



5. Remediation Strategies

What you can do to help others

Workplace Intervention

- Know your workplace's sexual harassment policy
- Know who to report to
- Check your workplace
- Support your coworkers and take all complaints seriously

Bystander Intervention

- Notice event
- Acknowledge it as an emergency that requires help
- Accept responsibility for intervening
- Know what to do when intervening
- Implement intervention strategies

Strategies to Reduce Discrimination Within Self

- ❖ Examine diversity in your life
- ❖ Acknowledge and challenge your bias
- ❖ Individuation
- ❖ Recategorization
- ❖ Develop an understanding of privilege
- ❖ Perspective taking

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- ❖ Confront instances of prejudice
 - ❖ Call for better organizational laws, policies, and practices
 - ❖ Educate nonstigmatized coworkers about minority issues
 - ❖ Create, facilitate, or participate in workplace diversity groups
 - ❖ Report all instances of harassment and discrimination

Resources

Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC)

- ❖ Therapy/Counseling
- ❖ Referrals
- ❖ Victim Compensation

Baylor Scott & White

- ❖ Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Exam

Helpline

(979) 845-2700

Phoebe's Home

(979) 775-5355

National Sexual Assault Hotline

(800) 656 - 4573