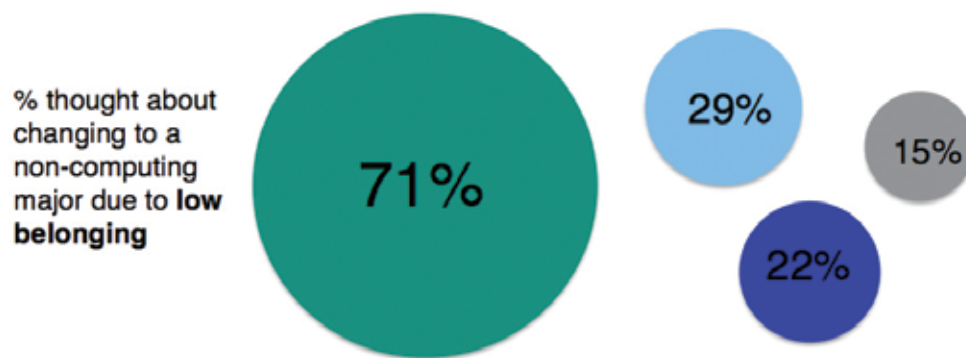


Shining the Spotlight on Undergraduate LGBTQ Women

By Heather Wright, CERP Research Associate

Among undergraduate students, LGBTQ women are more likely to think about switching to a non-computing major due to a low sense of belonging

LGBTQ Women | LGBTQ Men | Heterosexual Women | Heterosexual Men



CERP surveyed 101 undergraduate students majoring in a computing field who indicated that they had seriously considered changing to a non-computing major. Of those students, 7% identified as LGBTQ women, 7% identified as LGBTQ men, 27% identified as heterosexual women, and 59% identified as heterosexual men. When asked to indicate the *reason* they thought about changing their major, LGBTQ women were significantly more likely than their male LGBTQ and heterosexual peers to have considered leaving their major due to a low sense of belonging in computing, $p < .05$. These findings suggest the field of computing should take significant efforts to enhance LGBTQ women's sense of belonging in computing.

Notes. LGBTQ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, or Queer. We define "computing field" as either computer science, computer engineering or electrical and computer engineering, computing information systems, or another computing-related field including interdisciplinary fields with a strong computing component (e.g., computational biology or digital media). Students who had thought about leaving their major were asked: *How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements: I have considered changing to another major because: (1) I do not feel welcomed in the computing community; and (2) I do not feel like I "fit" in the computing community*, using a scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. These items were then aggregated into a single variable, belonging, used for the analysis presented here.



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