

## In Your Experience: Pathways and barriers for female students of STEM

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### **Abstract**

This study addresses the gender gap that exists in the STEM professions. The number of jobs in STEM is climbing rapidly, but participation by women is disproportionately low. Although they make up roughly half of the overall population, women account for only about one quarter of the STEM workforce. A similar gap exists among undergraduates majoring in STEM fields. To help identify and explore factors contributing to this gender gap, as perceived by undergraduate students, this study uses a mixed methods approach. Data were collected through an online survey of undergraduates at two universities in the southeastern United States, and follow-up interviews conducted to provide in depth information on specific experiences participants consider to be influential with regard to their decision to pursue or abandon a career in STEM.