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Women, minorities face prejudice in academia

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One of the main reasons why women and minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in academic disciplines, particularly in areas such as physics, computer science and engineering. Only 20% of the academic workforce are women and many academic disciplines, particularly in areas such as physics, computer science and engineering, are dominated by males. This disparity is a major problem for the American scientific community, as the United States is facing a shortage of qualified STEM graduates.

The basic question still remains. Why this disparity? In January 2005, Larry Summers, then president of Harvard University, gave a presentation at the Conference on Diversifying the Science & Engineering Workforce, sponsored by the National Research Council. In a controversial statement, according to some of the people attending the meeting, Summers claimed that the presence of women and minorities in science and engineering fields was "statistically de-facto." Although some claim that Summers' comments were accurate and based on sound research, most believe that such statements cost him his job at Harvard following the following commendation of a minority setting in the Obama administration. But regardless of the accuracy of the statement, the public reaction was one of controversy. So let's take a look at the facts.

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