

Workshop 1

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Amanda Menier 19:26/00:00

So this is the first activity in the workshop shop series. And we're really hoping that this will bring us together to push past our disciplinary boundaries to produce policy practice and research for and by nonbinary and trans people in computing. With this panel and the one next month. We want to provide a common springboard from which we can launch our January co-working experience at the workshops. Tonight we have four outstanding panelists from a variety of computing, engineering and research backgrounds who are going to discuss their insights into the trans and nonbinary competing experience to help us better focus on the computing education, research and related research streams.

Before we begin, we would like to let everyone know that we will be recording the panel and for the as well and the ensuing discussion for those who cannot attend this evening. If you'd like to anonymize yourselves, feel free to change your screen name and or turn off your camera. If you need assistance doing so please reach out to Stacey via the chat box. We also have a real time transcript that is being generated by otter.ai. That's if you see the little thing that says this is being live streamed that's what that means. Stacey is going to put the link to that in the chat. For those who would like to reference it.

We have a few other housekeeping items to go over. We'd like to set up some norms. We recognize that this meeting is likely outside your standard work hours for many people. If you need to turn off your camera to attend to kids, pets, life please do so. We also as I mentioned before, encourage keeping the camera on when there are pets in the area. The fluffier, the better. But we also appreciate non fluffy pets. Two; where we'd like to encourage chat and connection please utilize the chat and respectful and constructive manner. And one of our big motivations for these panels and workshops is to bring people together and form a little community if possible. So don't you know don't hesitate to reach out to us or the other participants within their comfort level. And then third, and perhaps most importantly, this is clearly a trans-centered space, transphobia, homophobia, racism and other forms of dominance and oppression will not be tolerated in this space.

We will be using a shared notes document tonight so that we can collectively generate some thoughts, insights and questions. You should have access and be able to add your notes as they come up. Stacy is going to be putting that into the chat as well. Are there any questions for us before we begin? Okay, then without further ado, I'd like to invite our panelists to introduce themselves and you can unmute as you are ready.

Stacey Sexton 23:41/3:37

I'm about to turn the recording on so just wait.

Amanda Menier 23:45

Yes, actually, thank you Stacey.

Stacey Sexton 23:48

All right. Now, go for it. Why don't we have Andrea Haverkamp start?

Andrea Haverkamp 24:01/04:00

Okay, I was Yeah, I was wondering what the what the cue was. Hi, my name is Andrea Haverkamp Habercamp. I hold a PhD in environmental engineering and in queer studies from Oregon State University. My background is - I have I'm currently an adjunct instructor and did a three year National Science Foundation study on engineering and computer science, undergraduate students and their experiences in engineering and computer science education. I'm also a trans person with three engineering degrees, I've been around the block. My partner is a computer scientist, so fairly in that world both personally and professionally and currently also work as the political organizer for our state American faculty union faculty and graduate worker union here in the state of Oregon. Thank you

Amanda Menier 25:09

Let's see. Max, could you go ahead?

Max Skorodinsky 25:14

Sure. I'm Max. I am a PhD student. I'm currently dissertating and my dissertation is looking at trends and nonbinary people in computing. So both in education and employment and my sort of past there is that I was a perceived as a woman person in computer science education. Myself, I have a it's an undergrad and a master's degree in computer science and then worked in the field for a decade and then left the field, transitioned while being in the field, but left the field to teach high school where I felt like more queerness was needed. So I currently still teach high school part time and I am a part of a local organization called [Transponder](#). We focus on trans and nonbinary people in Oregon. Do a lot of policy work and resources and services. Yeah, that's me, I think.

Amanda Menier 26:37

Thank you, Morgan. You can go ahead

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 26:41

Hi, I'm Morgan. I use he/him pronouns. I'm a PhD candidate in information science at University of Colorado Boulder. So I'm also dissertating which is Yeah, a miserable process. No, actually, it's kind of fun. So my research has focused a lot on how identity is represented in computer vision technologies specifically. And my dissertation work is actually kind of taking a level higher and looking at how workers make decisions around identity and what is influencing those decisions when they're doing things like labeling data or deciding to build a product or handling a product that needs to be updated because it's been in production for like 10 years. So that's been really interesting. Yeah, I don't know what else to say. I I also have recently been asked to kind of like represent concerns around like trans

identities or this facial recognition bill in Colorado, but I haven't started it but I'm really interested to know what it looks like to be on like a government task force. So hopefully, I will have things to say if I see you again, next time and see what that's like. But yeah, that's me.

Amanda Menier 28:05

Thank you and Vagrant.

Vagrant Gautam 28:07

Hello, I'm Vagrant Gautam. I'm a PhD student in computer science at Saarland University in Germany. And my background in computing is I did- I did a bachelor's degree in Canada in computer science and linguistics, and I've kind of been involved in computational linguistics and natural language processing. So computer language stuff basically. My research so far has kind of been all over the place and my gender-involved computing research has actually been quite bad and I regret it and I aim to sort of do better than that. But it's also the thing that kind of got me onto this path of honestly even becoming trans myself in some sort of long winded fashion. And also just wanting better from computing education, computing research, all of it, from society at large. I'm also sort of autistic, queer, brown, immigrant, various other things. I am leading a disability sort of rights circle at the university. And, yeah, in terms of computing, education research, I used to do more like I used to do more of the, you know, teaching kids how to code stuff when I was in Canada. Here, most things happen in German and my German is unfortunately not yet good enough for that.

Amanda Menier 29:35

Thank you. I think just, we've had a bit of a touch point. On kind of that first question about gender and Computing and Engineering. And I'm curious, what has influenced folks onto their - What led people to Computer Science and Engineering in the first place? For some people that may be gender and for some, as been describing the gender came later?

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 30:16

You just want people to like jump in. If they have answers.

Amanda Menier 30:21

Yeah, I think that would be great. And also, feel free to talk amongst yourselves as panelists and to respond to each other. You don't necessarily have to wait for me to to move the conversation along, but I'll kind of jump in with additional questions and kind of manage the clock.

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 30:44

Well, I mean, I guess I can start since I asked the question. Yeah, it's weird because I still have a hard time seeing myself as like in computer science. Since I do a lot of like critical, kind of like qualitative social studies of representation in computer systems. I will say, I mean, it was an area that I was interested in exploring, and I've reflected on this a lot because I'm also like writing diversity statements and things like that for job searches. And just as like an AFAB person, I was pretty directly told that I shouldn't pursue computer science anyway by like my advisors at the time, like the college advisors. So it kind of I kind of came into it in a roundabout way. So I did, I wound up going into like common media studies and doing like a minor in gender studies. And that just kind of made me interested in the critical

perspective of technology because I had a lot of classes about that. And then when I decided to do a master's kind of in HCI, people were doing like accessibility research in the lab, and one of the topics that they were exploring was, could computer vision be an avenue for safety for people who are blind and so people I found out that people wanted to know, things like gender about people through computer vision and during that study, and that kind of just led me down this path of like, well, what about gender minorities and their perspective on these types of technologies? So that's kind of how I got there.

Vagrant Gautam 32:27

I can go next. Just in terms of what got me into computer science. I don't think I got into computer science just for the sake of computer science. It was very much like I wanted to get into computational linguistics, and it's actually kind of a cute story. It was - It all started with Google Translate. In high school, I was learning French and our teacher told us not to use Google Translate for our assignments. So of course we all did. And I found out that through it pretty quickly, I was able to point out a lot of very obvious errors with the Google Translate translations. This was pre-neural models for Google Translate. And I think I was just a cocky high schooler and I thought, wow, this is so shit, and I can do better with like two months of studying this language. So I should just grow up and like fix Google Translate. And so I think when I had to sort of look up what you know, college options existed, I found out that one of the things you would have to study to work on this would be computer science and linguistics. And I had no computer science or programming background before that before University. So so that's how I got into it. And I think at the end of my first year, I didn't feel like I was doing very well, so I thought it was going to drop the computer science but then something clicked and I'm glad that I stayed because if not for that, I don't think I would be doing a PhD in computer science now.

Andrea Haverkamp 34:09

Well, I wish I'm always in awe that that folks have like, clear interests. I think mine was like throwing a dart at a dartboard, I grew up in rural Kansas. Neither of my parents went to college. Our high school didn't have calculus, it didn't have AP. I was massively underprepared. But I did well at standardized tests. And so the engineering college that gave gave a large scholarship offer I was trying to choose between computer science because I loved computers. I was a you know, your typical kind of like semi closeted, 2007 era trans teen with a dial up connection in their bedroom. And I was like, I love computers, and I'm on it all the time but everyone says "don't make your hobby, your job or else you won't like it," so then I chose chemical engineering, which was actually a terrible choice, and I immediately didn't like it. So then ever since then, it's been trying to find not only survival, but like also a way to kind of get out of Kansas, which I remember my stepdad Gary, who was a truck driver said, "Oh, don't go out to San Francisco. They got men kissing men and men dressing as women out there." And to me, that sounded really, really good. So that led to eventually, you know, finding my way on the West Coast. And to I think, at least policy wise, a much more hospitable place and then, you know, just kind of weaving around the past 15 years trying to find a way where engineering and computer science can like work for me because, you know, it's I endlessly interesting, but the culture itself I was a musical and a theater kid I played the trumpet, I love to dance. And then it's so hard to mesh these all of these various parts together. So I think a mix of like survival and curiosity and also, if you're going to take out a bunch of student loans and pick a major from rural Kansas, everyone said don't do music. Do

something with STEM. And sure, I mean, truth to that there were jobs and I did find a way to move out of state with that degree. So I think survival is a key thing for me.

Max Skorodinsky 36:36

Yeah, but I think a very winding road to computer science. I didn't pursue it as a major until I was 27. And by then I had an English and Russian degree and lived in Thailand for two years and did all kinds of things, but I feel like my path to computer science began with my family immigrated. I immigrated with my family when I was 13. I was born in Ukraine, and when I got to Chicago, I had a cousin we're the same age and he had forgotten all his Russian and I didn't speak English yet. So we had a Texas Instruments computer, this like honkin' box that came with Basic and so we figured out that we could speak this language together, I had pretty good math ability, and so we figured out how to program this thing and it became this like, interesting way for me to connect and I understood it as this way that people can connect. And we write these things together. Like we would write stories together we'd make each other laugh with a voice modulator so we can like, program it to say things in really creepy voices. So simultaneously, I was very interested in this, this box that afforded so many kinds of creative opportunities to collaborate for people who might not speak the same language, and I also experienced a lot of tension around gender because my, like, I was pretty drawn to math. And math just made sense to me, I think because my world was so chaotic. It also afforded this way of stabilizing some reality for me, so where like my family life was very chaotic, I would run home to do math homework, like literally run home. I couldn't get there fast enough to be in this world that sort of provided more stability and structure. And the gender part that was difficult for me was that I also had a sense of being a boy like fairly early in my life, and it felt like the secret that I had to make sure I didn't disclose by being good at math. I'm kind of I felt like this some kind of exposing and so computer science was a similar thing. I really really liked tinkering I would like take televisions I found in the garbage dump apart to see like what was in there. And but I also did it like with a lot of fear around being discovered, like somehow, like my mom even told me you know, you shouldn't be good at math because men don't like women who are smarter than them. And they like really made this lasting impression. And of doing this gender thing of like wanting to be seen a certain way seeing who is seen that way, wanting it but then being afraid and so by the time I chose computer science, I went through rejecting art. Art seemed like a better place for me because people in art were weird. And I always felt like I was weird, but like somehow I made it into computer science and I kept having this tension of like, loving the subject matter like really like I love it like philosophy. It is to me a philosophical way of thinking about the world. And having this like very painful gendered experience in it, then, like constantly for me, is this tension. And I think that's why, you know, that's why I stayed in computing, I still teach computing. What I do research into in these ways that feels like very personal to me. It's like my own, it's me trying to research my own struggle.

Amanda Menier 40:53

That's a great segue. And the next thing what we're interested in is also not only your CS origin, but the origin of the research that you've done around gender. And I think Max, you've already touched on that. But another related question is, did you face resistance from your faculty or from people in your department when you wanted to when they said, oh, I want to focus on trans and nonbinary kids or for other people on their gender related research?

Andrea Haverkamp 41:41

Um, I guess when my research began to involve gender was coming at the tail end of again, like I love that. What, so what I think folks have said in the chat when he said all of our origins are so interesting and then I think we'll probably all similarly have really interesting tie ins into like how and why our research began to involve gender. I know for me, I was doing my master's - it was a non thesis Master's paid for by my employer, which at the time was the US government out of Oklahoma. And I managed to convince them that I should go to Oregon for that. And so I came to Oregon, was finally able to really like be out and live and use they/them pronouns and then took a class on engineering education research, and found out a niche that I think I could find home in engineering, which is like how do we teach engineers and computer scientists? What is the culture of engineering and computer scientists? I find it endlessly fascinating. But in 2015-2016, there wasn't a single paper that I found were in that course that even acknowledged the existence of nonbinary people. So I didn't see myself in the research or trans people right outside of this umbrella LGBTQ, which I think is a whole nother discussion on like, all the contradictions of politics even within the LGBTQ community on representation. So I was like, This doesn't seem right. And I was talking to my advisor, or the instructor, and they're like, No, that doesn't seem right either. And they're like, is there any chance you can stay? For a PhD? I'm like, I don't know. And so I eventually came back to do that. And I think there were a number of points of resistance and also lack of support, which is also a form of resistance, right? One is we had to scrub out of our NSF proposal, the word transgender at the time, it was the Trump era and we were just told under the table "Before you submit this, you should remove the word feminist and you should work remove the word transgender from the public abstract and from the title, because there are right wingers looking all across the NSF for the word transgender and the word feminist". And so it can be in the body, but what goes on the public Internet cannot have those words. And that to me was just like, Oh, I got punched by like the world we were in. And then during the public research portion, we reached out to a lot of campuses and email lists and stuff and there was a ton of hate speech put into our research, right like people see a survey for trans kids sent across their civil engineering or their computer engineering lists and there's a lot of people that just fill it with that sort of 4chan Twitter-type hate speech, right? And that's hard to read. It's hard to get emails from students at colleges you're not at saying that you are what is wrong with STEM, right, that you personally are what is wrong. So all of that was very, very discouraging. And then also just a lack of support after I finished my PhD and I moved on. I was about a year afterwards. There are three papers accepted pending revisions, and I said I I'm working 50 hour weeks elsewhere, I don't work on this project anymore. Can you all see these through the finish line and the cisgender lead on it has decided to just let the papers die in revision, rather than put forward work on those last remaining touches. And so I'm torn whether to do more unpaid work. Is this a passion of mine, or was this a job for five years that I had that helped pay for health insurance and stuff? And is it time to move on and I think that's a whole nother conversation but that lack of support to see these papers across the finish line, has also felt like a way of I don't know not valuing the actual work trans do once some cis researchers have to actually do work on it.

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 45:57/25:51

I can say I mean, I also have an example in my mind where I had like another student who was particularly anti trans and so I constantly had to deal with harassment from the student in my department who is no longer here at least but generally, I would say like, I had support from people

through my masters and my PhD, but some of that is very ignorant. So when I went into my master's, I did it kind of as a survival mechanism. Like I want to be in a higher paying position where there are plenty of jobs so I'll go be a UX designer and I wasn't necessarily intending to get involved in research. But when I started doing this master's thesis on trans perspectives of gender classification technologies, my advisors really didn't have a deep knowledge of what trans is at the time, I was very, like, Okay, I'm gonna live my life still. I presented very masculinely, had very short hair. So actually, it wound up being kind of like a forced coming out that I had to do because my advisors were like, pushing for us to have these positionality statements. And when they wrote them, they were like, We're all cis and like, that's not true, but interesting assumption given that we're talking about gender classification technologies. So I had to kind of deal with that also when they hired a copy editor and to deal with some really weird microaggressions from this copy editor, who was just like started asking really inappropriate questions because of the content of the paper. And now I feel like although the people around me understand trans issues, there's like a lot of stereotyping. So I constantly feel like very well meaning people are assuming things about my identity, because of my appearance. So generally, people now assume that I am a trans femme person and it becomes very frustrating to me because it's like they're, it's they're trying to be like allies or to support the trans community and oftentimes actually, this is other trans people who are who are the worst with this? Where it leads me to being like seen as something that I'm not and so that's really frustrating, because it's like, it's like you're supporting my research or you're supporting the things that I'm saying, but you're making all of these assumptions that directly kind of undermine the things that I'm saying and and creating this barrier or and like creating these like kind of stereotypes or correct way of presenting as trans. So I think that there's a lot of like support that I've gotten in my community, but there's also a lot of like, these like assumptions that are happening that I think are like holding back conversations about gender, and like creating this very, like binary kind of support. So I think it's a little more insidious than or a little I don't, I don't really know how to address it and in some ways, in comparison to like, ignorant comments, or this student who was just like, really, you know, aggressive towards me, I could kind of write off like, there's no changing the student's mind. So I'm just, you know, I'm, I'm gonna have someone step in and help him to please leave me alone. But yeah, I'm less sure of how to handle like this like support that is kind of misguided or kind of stereotypical. But yeah, that's that's been kind of my experience now.

Vagrant Gautam 49:31

Yeah, this is this is very interesting. I feel like I have some of that in my life as well. Definitely lots lots of misguided people who were trying to be good allies and failing a lot. But yeah, I mean in terms of resistance, I think there's sort of two kinds, both of which are quite disappointing one is the kind where people just dismiss whatever you're doing is not real computer science or not hard enough. And that's just a pain like if I if I want to do like natural language generation with neo pronouns, I should be allowed to do it and it is just as valid as generating any other kinds of language and just because, you know, I choose to work on this doesn't make what I'm doing any less valuable or less interesting, or honestly less technically challenging. But I do feel like people, when they just sort of silo you off as, yes, you're a queer person or you're is you're a trans person, you're one of those, then immediately they're dismissive of a lot of your work and and the value of your work and the other thing, which is, I think, more complicated for me to deal with is, so the project that I alluded to earlier was a gender gap tracker. It was the sort of thing that would troll through newspaper articles and find quotes and see who was being quoted and assigned gender based on names, which is problematic for a lot of reasons. I

can, you can look at my recommended reading list, in fact, to, to find some of the papers that sort of talk about why that's a terrible idea and it's transphobic and it's tied up with a lot of other things as well like race and culture. And in any case, the bottom line is I worked on a project like that in my undergrad degree. And I was the person who discovered a bunch of human computer interaction literature and trans studies literature, and sort of various other stuff that said, hey, maybe this is like, maybe there are issues with this that we should consider. And so I, you know, brought it up to the other people on the project. And I mean, I was 19 I was sort of getting into research, I didn't really know what I was doing. And it ended up just being, you know, still published and all of the caveats that are in there about what we were doing. And even you know, we had like a nonbinary category. We weren't a gender binary, we were gender ternary, we're so much better than everyone else. For legal purposes, that was sarcasm. But yeah, so I think the the resistance that I faced after that was I became off of that project pretty militantly, like, against gender gap trackers and like, I'm a proponent of the idea that all of the benefits that you get from gender gap tracking with automated methods that assign people into boxes, does not outweigh the people that you miss and does not outweigh the people that you misgender, and all of that. And so, you know, I talk on panels like this about that. And my advisor, my old advisor knows, but this project has continued and that is a different form of resistance. It is not a to my face, 'we reject you'. But it is, even saying that 'oh yes, you brought a lot of value to that project. You brought a lot of criticism to that project and we value that the paper is better because of it, but still continue to do it'. And that is that is a form of resistance that I really don't know how to deal with

Max Skorodinsky 53:25/33:29

Yeah. I have a lot of support in, in certain ways. Like my advisor is very supportive. I think my struggle is sort of feeling very isolated because of the kind of research I do. It feels like, in some ways, even though I know that it's a like, really, it's a topic that we can like, spin out and weave into pretty much everything. So, like Andrea Haverkamp, I looked at intersectional experiences in computer science, so you know students who identify as having a disability, being queer being a gender that that has expectations of presentation and not feeling like that presentation makes sense for them, or feels good for them, the variety. So like in this space, I feel like I'm providing sort of a lens that other people have offered like this one struggle is is very multifaceted and but I feel like because I do research in computer science education, it puts me in this like, tiny space in some way. So like I was thinking about doing something with the Queer Studies Sig of some sort. And when I look at things that happen there, I just feel so out of place. I feel like I don't even know if we're like speaking the same language. And so it's kind of a challenging place to keep being excited about because I, I teach computer science, you know, every day in high school so I can see, like all the things that we need to do and that constantly harm students, not just in computer science, but I feel like computer science is a bit unique in the kind of harm it allows and perpetuates. But it's hard to kind of feel like it's also somehow universal, you know, like, like when I see a study that's looking at, like all transgender teams. Experience in school, it's just it's like, what feels like universality and then when I add like in computer science, I instantly feel like who is going to care about this like barely a subject that exists in schools. We're still debating whether we should even have it in schools. So I think that part is hard for me like I I feel reluctant to get into conversations where they feel like they're reaching a much broader sort of something and maybe that's just me, but I really appreciate being in a room with, you know, people who are also looking at this so that I feel a little like less alone in it.

Amanda Menier 57:00

Max in your time teaching, have you been able to work gender expansive concepts into what you're teaching students? And if so, how is that connecting with the trans students? How's it connecting with the students?

Max Skorodinsky 57:20

Um, you know, I don't, I teach in a really small school. It's a small public alternative. So we have a disproportionate number of all the awesome kids, like we're disproportionately students of color, disproportionately students with classroom support, disproportionately queer and trans. And so in some ways, I feel like I'm maybe not a good example because I'm out as a trans teacher. I think sometimes people take my class because I'm trans. Like, I have trans students who take my class with me like they hate computer science, but like you're, you're a nice teacher. So we'll just play along

Max Skorodinsky 58:08

and but I also teach at the university, and I teach in the Education Department, I teach early foundations, so they're like, students, undergrads who are considering becoming teachers, and I teach an education technology class and it's this combination of we teach them computer science, and we teach them about education technology, and the argument is that you should always know how to do both of those things. However, the thing you bring into the classroom works, in addition to like, what it's going to do for your students, so in for those students. We do an exercise around the assumptions that are made around data about people so like, we had to make an avatar and we talked about like, what are the options for the avatar? Is it just boys and girls? What does it look like to have other options? You know, when we talked about the binary number system, like what does that mean for students that there's this underpinning in computer that like, right off the bat can signal to someone that there's not a lot of options here for me, like just at the very start of day one. And I think for the most part, I've had students be very open and at least, like, scratch their heads a lot. And then, you know, as the term goes, they'll come back and they'll notice, like, oh, there was this form, and there were only two options for you know, how I identify now they'll ask even questions like, why does this need gender? Like, why are they asking a student for gender in a system that doesn't, then it's not going to do anything with that information? It's not tailoring anything. It's not like, just the thing we'd say it was so I think I've been able to, like we've been doing but I also feel like I'm curating it's not a curricular thing that I like, seeing somewhere. It's just me like, weaving my life in and talking about myself as a trans person out myself, like usually day one and so I make it a very personal thing to talk about gender. I'm curious to hear what other people do.

Amanda Menier 1:00:37/40:42

Have other folks either as TAs or in other teaching experiences been able to do a similar thing?

Andrea Haverkamp 1:00:49/40:54

Yeah, we we had some modules we created for our first year masters and PhD students in our department. And we had a module on like, identity and intersectionality. And I think one thing that really connected with cis people, is like your gender is on a spectrum/continuum too. And even the right wingers know it too. I saw someone lately say, well, they have everything from alpha males to soy boys, you know, they have their whole their whole different dichotomies of manhood even in the right wing

sphere as well. So there's there's a lot of research on just the way that you've been on like, quantitative research, like do I feel like a man do I feel like a woman do I feel like other people who report themselves as cisgender are just as much all over the place as trans nonbinary people. So I really, I really hope that we're not creating new binaries between cis and trans, another binary between binary and nonbinary people. Another binary, right, like, it's so hard to resist them. So I think just like the more we can teach, there's so many ways for bodies to exist and for people to exist. I think that's really connected with cis people it's like, this isn't just other people. This is you too. You are also different and many other people are different and then words are just ways to differently approximate our experiences and embodiments and a cohesive snicker sized form for someone else to digest. And I think another way that it is really helped is definitely intersecting it with concepts like language and colonialism. That like it's really impossible to map out gender without like language that we use and different languages, therefore construct different gendered realities. Max was saying about folks hobbling, as we all do, to try to like pull gender out of things. I was reminded in some video games, they're like trying to make it less gendered. So instead of like choose your gender or choose your your 'Are you a boy or girl' they're like, 'choose your form'. But then it's a binary choice of two, it's clear when it's supposed to be, right and like with the bodies that they have one has a butt the other doesn't. It's just like, yeah, removing gender from where it doesn't need to be. It's also really important, and I think that that's something that in our course, we tried to also just like teach that there's nuance and spectrums, everything.

Vagrant Gautam 1:03:40/43:37

That's really nice to hear that you're working stuff like that into courses. Because I feel like when I've been in, I mean, there's obviously like a spectrum of places that don't address it at all. And now I find sometimes the more progressive spaces that I'm in, and classes that I'm in, will maybe like acknowledge that gender is nonbinary, but then still show like a binary, you know, like the traditional like Gaussian, two Gaussian distributions of like height and it's, it's just like, Okay, why can't you pick like literally any other example like, why would you Why do you have to do it this way? Like that, that example is decades old, and you could definitely come up with something better. Yeah, and it's really cool to hear that it goes way beyond that. In some of the stuff that you teach. I, yeah, I need more of that. I need more of that energy in my life.

Amanda Menier 1:04:43/44:39

We're about halfway through our time. And so we'd like to give the audience a chance to ask some questions. That one question that somebody has written in that I'll just read out regarding cisgender co-writers letting papers die in the review process. Have any of y'all scoped out ally-aligning co-writers and researchers who actually care and will walk the walk?

Max Skorodinsky 1:05:22/45:19

It's interesting for me, I'm curious what other peoples' experience is. I feel I am invited to be a co-writer often on things in broadening participation. I'm not always certain why I'm I'm being asked to participate. But when I look at like my publications, the ones that are about trans, I'm always the solo author. And then I have a whole library of things that I've written with other people in there and computer science education, but like transness is not in there. So it's very interesting. I just realized this. Yeah, I don't even know how to find co-writers because I think the kind of paper that I would like to

write would be with people who do work in - like a situate like, like Andrea Haverkamp -I situate my work in how gendered computer science education research is because we're either talking about a field that's male dominated, or we're talking about a field that needs more women. Those are kind of like the two poles of the gendering and I would love to write with people who do research in supporting women in computer science, but have this in paper conversation about what does that mean? Like how do we do that in tandem with supporting all the people you know, including, perhaps men who feel very alienated because of how they're men in the field. Like, I I haven't invited anybody I guess it's not really that it's not possible, but I'm just now realizing that the kind of working together that we'd like to do, so if anybody knows anybody.

Amanda Menier 1:07:42

Yeah, that is a great point. And Andrea Haverkamp is saying in the chat, having I think one thing that we haven't really touched on yet is this idea of, of the emotional and actual labor of being the go to person. That's okay. You're trans. So you're doing you're going you're reviewing my paper that mentioned something about transness right. And this kind of double edged sword of wanting to do this work, but also being seen as kind of a volunteer to do the work for other people as well.

Andrea Haverkamp 1:08:25

And such a shame because coauthorship doesn't even cost anything. Like you can just give a co-authorship like, like that's the thing is like is I feel like this kind of this is kind of a segue, but like, I don't know one thing that can be done it's just like give us our full capacity to, to have jobs and to be co-authors, and sometimes we're terrible. We're also assholes just as much as anyone else. But this idea that like a trans person needs to have the most amazing CV, it needs to do so much on paid stuff to perhaps get a tenure track position or an adjunct position. The bar is so high and I was even thinking about it how I feel even in organizing is like I feel like a lot of the conversation around gender is like oh, so and so isn't taken seriously as a computer scientist isn't taken seriously as an engineer, but for a lot of trans people, we aren't even taken seriously as human beings. We aren't even taken seriously as equal human beings more than just caricatures. Or, you know, oh, I have a trans friend, you know, it's like, it's it's so dehumanizing. So like, we need to be paid, we need to have jobs. We need to be given co-authorships and all that jazz. Yeah.

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 1:09:41

I wanted to also comment on authorship in general and like, I think when I first was publishing papers, I was taught this norm of like, whoever wrote the most is like the one providing the most intellectual labor. And this is something that I feel like I reflected on is like a very harmful practice because like the beyond just the writing, because I didn't know how to write the paper when I was first writing a paper right? It was providing all of the background knowledge for a cis author to then come in and say, they did all of the intellectual labor and I feel like that background knowledge that foundational knowledge of like, even how to talk about or view trans people is like, not valued as an intellectual contribution. And that's just really frustrating. So like, I don't see this very much now in my current lab, because luckily my lab is full of queer people and there are quite a few trans people here. But going forward, like if I'm going to be leading a project or I'm, I'm supporting as a junior student on a project I never want to do that like that is I've decided that is not a value is not that they wrote, technically wrote the paper and it's beautifully written but the fact that they contributed, all of the base knowledge to the paper, especially

around marginalized identities should just be seen as more valuable in my opinion than just writing. So I don't know if that's like a general norm, but it's one that I want to push back against, because that's what I was told is like, how you how you deal with authorship and co-authorship is like whoever really pushed the paper to be written well should get should get that acknowledgement of first author and I just don't agree with that anymore.

Amanda Menier 1:11:30

I'd like to give an opportunity for folks in the audience to ask more questions. You can add something in the chat in the shared notes doc, or also feel free to take yourself off mute to ask your question.

[Attendee] 1:12:19

I'll come off mute because I'm not sure how to formulate it. So I think this will be slightly faster than me attempting to type something coherent. So my department has an unusual number of PhD students for a university right now because we got a lot of funding for it a few years ago, and at the same time, we've instituted a change in the doctoral syllabus. So everyone has to take this class called Work technology and gender, which is basically a like very introductory Gender Studies course and it's framed around like how gender manifests and like is practiced across both competing education and industry. And not so much research but maybe a little bit at the end. And this has been like really valuable for us but there's also a weird sort of sandwiching effect where all of the PhD students have some sort of shared common ground about how to speak about gender, and like, how to think about theories that they haven't thought about before and like read outside of the field of computer science. But none of the professor's or faculty do. And none of our undergraduates or masters students do either. I don't know like where the question goes, but I just don't always know how to deal with this when I'm in positions where I'm a PhD student like trying to talk to well meaning faculty and I really just want to be like, just go take a five credit class and like, come back, and then we can have this conversation

Vagrant Gautam 1:13:56

I mean, is that an option? Could you actually do that?

[Attendee] 1:14:10

I've tried. Probably we can't fund it. Maybe we can get a workshop equivalent because oh, all of the faculty are too busy. Is the answer I've gotten.

Vagrant Gautam 1:14:23

Yeah. It really sucks. I also feel like this reminds me a lot of what working in tech was like and all the mandatory like DEI trainings that you have to do to check a box to make HR happy. Because even if people are doing it even if people are doing like a short workshop version of it, it's not the same as like, actually engaging with the ideas. Or actually yeah, committing to changing things about how you approach teaching, or research. So yeah, I don't know if you were looking for solutions. I unfortunately don't have any, I think people when they want to get invested in sort of different experiences of their students and how to sort of make environments more inclusive for a wider range of people. I think they will do that often. And they will be receptive to suggestions like this, but if not, I just I don't think you can

change the culture of your entire department as one person. I don't think you should. I mean, I think you can try but also don't burn out on it.

Amanda Menier 1:15:39/55:32

One interesting thing that I saw was people working with whoever's in charge of scheduling speakers for their department to kind of bend that social and networking and, you know, use the free bagels in the morning to push what they want the faculty to learn. And depending on your university that can be a high or low labor thing to do. But I have seen those speakers, whoever, whoever uses the speaker series has been able to get a good impact there I think.

[Attendee] 1:16:20/56:20

I like that kind of, you know, through structural response, right, just building something in because it's, it is so hard to know, basically, people from any kind of minoritized population are always going to feel like the burden is on them to do the educating of everyone else because you want that environment to be different, right? And you're the only one there so how can you make it different but as you're all saying, you know, it's just, it's so much work. It's like worth it and not worth it and you know, and where does it makes you sacrifice. Maybe your own career progression or I don't know what like you can only have so much energy right? So it's there's always a tension there. But I'm, I love the idea of coming up with things that are maybe low labor but could have a wide impact like that sort of thing.

Andrea Haverkamp 1:17:26/57:20

It's such a tough balance, right? Because I've seen so many cis people do do stuff that's like actively harmful like in an AICHE, chemical engineering journal, this cisgender ally wrote this paper on understanding gender diversity, but they drew like a an X and a Y axis and then they put sex on one and gender on one and it was so bad, right? Like that's just a bad way to map out human experience and like, okay, I guess intersex people are just like, not like, like have no gender like like, what does it? What does that mean? Right? What does it mean? So, but like, you're right, like, people need to just do more in it. I don't know if anyone else I got like trans burnout where it's like, I'm so tired of like, doing trans things all the time. What I really want to talk about is Jewishness right, like I really want to talk about anti semitism and Jewishness like that is the most fascinating thing to me right now. Um, but again, that's another part of my identity, but I would love to pivot to that, but there's just no way because you can't be, you can't be both.

Max Skorodinsky 1:18:33/58:30

I also, I wonder sometimes. Like, if it's like one option would be to talk to a gender or like if your university there's already a class that is like, sort of more deeply looking at gender to like, offer a syllabus or celebrate it like it like just suggest like, hey, you know, do you see any like ways to connect these? Because usually, it's like interesting people who like dive deep into gender like sort of in philosophy or in you know, literature or something can can can go or like sociology can like, add these deep dives and then the people who are mostly technologists and are kind of getting educated or giving a little bit of information, you know, they're like deep in some other topic so like a way to maybe utilize an existing resource, or just throwing out an idea. I decided to take a philosophy class like philosophy of gender class, to help me with my computer science education, just to get more and more contemporary ideas.

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 1:20:02

We actually have a very well respected center for Gender Studies, which I'm part of the graduate school for, and they already run this other class. So we've already done the outsourcing but I think in general like that is it's good because otherwise I'm the only gender person in the computing science departments. So otherwise, it's me.

Vagrant Gautam 1:20:27

Yeah, no, I feel the same here. And it is a tough burden. And honestly, like a lot of things have changed for me in this new situation that I'm in, in Germany, in the German academic context, which is quite different from the Canadian sort of tech context in the Canadian university context that I was in earlier. And it's just, honestly I've had to lower my standards. And I've had to deal with a lot more misgendering and a lot more much more basic education. A lot more invasive questions than I used to get like, I just feel like when I was in Vancouver, more people were more people had a higher baseline level of knowledge about transness and about nonbinary identities. And here, like if they know trans people exist, then they don't know that like nonbinary people exist. Agender as a word like no one's heard of other than like, the trans folks that I am friends with. And honestly, I have had to restructure my life, not just in terms of the things that I am not going to expend energy fighting about every single day, because I don't have the energy to do it. I don't have the desire to do it either. But also changing like my social circles and how I operate around social circles, because it would be natural for me to be like, friends with all my coworkers and like hanging out with them outside of work. This is how it's been like earlier in my life, but honestly, it is energy giving for me to be around trans people and around autistic people who get me and it is not energy giving when I have to explain, you know, the vast majority of like my entire existence to someone who is a friend like that's not a friend that is a different kind of relationship. And so I you know, I honestly encourage you to like get whatever support systems you need to get you through life so that you can honestly have trans joy. I focus like my I violently seek out trans joy every day of my life. It is why I go birding. It is why I'm friends with the people I'm friends with. It's why I read what I read. It's why I follow the people I follow on Twitter. You is why I'm not on Twitter at the moment actually, more accurately. So yeah. So I think that that stuff is is really important and you will find a lot of it often in my experience with trans community.

Amanda Menier 1:23:10/1:03:00

Any other questions from folks who are here tonight? There's one in the chat, actually, from Amy, considering how it's already very hard to sometimes collaborate with education folks from CS. Are there any tips or tricks for successful collaborations? Especially when there's a good chance that their partners will not be respected in computer science?

Max Skorodinsky 1:23:42/1:03:32

Part of it is tricky because I'm like, like math education or other sort of specific subject matter education, computer science. is weird in that, like, there are people in the College of Ed, who study pedagogy and things to do research. They often don't do a whole lot with computer science. And then there are computer scientists, who often don't really have any training and pedagogy. Who aren't so it's like this very strange sort of world that I feel like it's quite, and I feel like there's some animosity even within of like, like computer scientists who sort of feel ownership of this education versus educators who are like,

maybe trying to get in and impact how this education happens. Like when I think about the bulk of computer science, education, I mean, like aside from K-12, which is like a very nascent sort of area where education, computer science education is happening, and it's not. There are so few people who are actually receiving education on how to be a K-12 computer science educator. So the bulk of this education is, you know, professors in computer science with very little pedagogical, anything, even often regard for pedagogy, like it's a thing. You know, just go in and teach students the way they were taught like I was, I was one of these people like I got a degree in computer science and I was then, you know, a person who went in and taught undergrads computer science and I remember in my first couple lectures was like, Alright, here's a problem set. That's how I did it. You know, it took me a long time to figure out so it's even interesting. I think we're so early in this collaboration like even thinking about what does that mean? That there's CSed research that often comes out of not an education program at all. And then there is, you know, CSed research that comes out of programs were just like, not necessarily a lot of knowing about computer science as a culture and as a two people talking about the field as being like really lucrative and awesome and it's gonna lift everybody out of poverty and it's like going to solve all the problems because the meritocracy, you know, with a cherry on top without understanding like, like, have they ever worked in industry? Do they know where people actually survive? Who are not normative like? So yeah, I think you raise a great question. I don't, I don't have a super awesome answer other than I think we're early on and thinking about this and, you know, maybe our networking is what will allow for some of these collaborations. They're absolutely happy to meet you all and not feel so alone.

Andrea Haverkamp 1:26:54/1:06:50

I think what the only reason we were able to get a women's studies professor women Gender Sexuality Studies professor on our NSF grant and compensated throughout our NSF study and as a coauthor on our work is partially because my the the other one of the other professors on it had built a relationship with them and their department over 20 plus years. So there's, you know, I at first I was like, Oh, you just write him in the NSF grant, but like, I've no, I think about it, it's like her and that professor had decades of collaboration. And acknowledging the power dynamic that exists that see us and engineering are in power that have dominance, at least in the US at most institutions over these departments and over funding. So there's a lot of like, solidarity that needs to be built, whether it's in your faculty union, or your faculty senate to advocate and to build programs together and share resources. So I know that like, one thing that I felt particularly nasty about is our engineering and computer science program was going to create out of thin air new courses on difference power and discrimination but there's a whole department on campus that already does difference power and discrimination and now and then I felt a little guilty I'm like okay, I'm over here with my engineering degrees doing papers on gender but like there's there's people who've already done a decade of work on it as well, but they're not getting an NSF grant. And I am? and so I think it's it's a very tricky conversation. But relationship building is what comes to mind.

Wendy DuBow 1:28:42

Oh, I just wanted to reflect on that. to that. So I am a social scientist at the National Center for Women and Information Technology NCWIT and I've been there about 14 years and you know, so the mission there is to increase the meaningful participation of women in computing, because, you know, it's founded by certain kinds of feminists in the early 2000s. But what I've seen in my time, in this sphere is

that the broadening participation and computing movement has really gained steam and, and, and also within engineering, too. So across there's just been a lot more funding in NSF and also in the education research, but focusing on computer science or on STEM. And while I don't think there's any attention still to what we're talking the population, so you don't we're talking about here, trans nonbinary, queer, gender identities, those kinds of things, but they're, I think there's, I've seen so much more openness within engineering and computer science, in general, kind of across the spectrum, in departments, to working with social science, like at first, there was just kind of this I don't want to say arrogance, but I might use the word arrogance, you know, of like, oh, we can do this sort of thinking and make thinking they're the first ones to ever have thought about education research, for instance, you know, and then now I feel like there's so much more cross disciplinary work, like at least with tech folks and social scientists. So I guess, I guess I'm just saying I see a little hope. Like, I think there's starting to be a little bit more recognition that there can be synergy. And and so I think it's a really nice opportunity then to like, you know, to have I think that that this what Stacey and Amanda are doing here can have and then you all you know, to building on can have a really big influence I think it's a good point for that.

Amanda Menier 1:31:14

Yeah, it's really worth considering 10 years ago, it seems very unlikely that this workshop gets funded and that many of the other important work that's happening gets funded. So I think that's a good pivot to what will likely be our last question of the night and which is over the next decade. Where do you hope to see the field go with regard to trans and nonbinary gender and its relationship to research?

Vagrant Gautam 1:32:06

I can go. I hope we don't have any more gender classifiers. That would be great. In the next decade, and I think I'd also like to -something I've been discussing with some of my friends recently is this pattern in research where it feels like things are getting better, but I also feel like I see some papers where they've taken up the aesthetic of ethics or the aesthetic of, you know, trans inclusivity and nonbinary inclusivity but it's not at a very deep level. It's not really, it's like oh, I will cite the paper that says don't build gender classifiers but I will build it anyway and say, I'm gonna have like an additional category or I'm doing it more sensitively this time, I swear. And similarly, I think some of the things that Andrea Haverkamp was saying before about, you can't talk about gender in isolation. The construction of gender is completely intertwined with the construction of race, the construction of ability. It is you get like the whole package. Capitalism, patriarchy, like everything, and dismantling one thing if we're going to sort of have a future in the next decade of computing, research and education, where we are more trans inclusive, more nonbinary inclusive and more about like dismantling systems of oppression like how we treat gender right now. It also goes hand in hand with dismantling some of the other stuff. I would hope so. So that's that's what I want to see. I want to see more like deep engagement with ideas like intersectionality and power analysis and yeah, really like dismantling all systems of oppression.

Max Skorodinsky 1:33:59

Hey, I would love to see a space that maybe we could I mean, we broadly but also, you know, current company, develop that would be like a conference or a conference in a journal that could really elevate like this conference. I feel like I often go to conferences. And you know, I share many of the thoughts and feelings in the room and I have the side conversations. So my my attendance, you know, the conferences like the actual conversations that feed my soul have been like in some corners. You know,

with Stacey or, like people I know in CS who are looking at things more deeply. And I almost never experienced it as like the main item on the menu. So even at a conference like like RESPECT which is like, focused allegedly on these things. Still, mostly, I have very one on one conversations about things and then like, you know, deep dives, and so if we could, could we elevate this to like, you know, the main conversation, even if it's, you know, in its own space, because I feel like for me it's almost like learning new ways of speaking but in a community of people so, so then this can be like a living language that gets kind of developed, like I think it's difficult living in CS to talk about these things when it itself has such a rigid ideology. So Inside CS like I feel there's a lack of this powerful like, how do we talk about like, what is CS when it's not attached to the military when it's not attached to capitalism when it's not attached to colonialism, like it inherently is a thing. With how do we like, either detach it or like more? Talk about it more explicitly as this thing? Yeah, I don't know what I'm saying anymore. But but that's what I would like to see like in the next 10 years, like, I'd love to be a part of a community that brings this to be.

Morgan Klaus Scheuerman 1:36:44

Um, I feel like it's interesting because I feel like I may be part of different communities and the majority of people here whereas it's been really weird for me to go like, I've gone to conferences like, like, NeurIPS. And I was like, This is so uncomfortable for me. I think this conference, whereas if I go to like CSCW or CHI, I feel a lot more welcomed. But I would say, I mean, I think one thing is is viewing like transness as part of this like initiative to try to have more perspectives in these spaces because I just feel like it's it's considered something else like it's never included as part of like, diversifying or whatever that means. And also, a lot of the research in HCI seems to be focused on like deficits. So a lot of it is in response to CS so it'd be nice - I think it's maybe contingent on CS being terrible. But it would be nice to see studies that are able to be a little more focused on not just harms but also like what are benefits of these kinds of systems like can these systems be reappropriated towards something that is beneficial or promotes joy or promote some sort of expression? So maybe like more exploratory options for things like machine learning technologies that aren't just exploiting people were harming people would be nice. It also has started to move away from this a little bit but I'm, I would like to see less of like having to justify this specific population as an area of research is really frustrating. At least in HCI, it's moved away where like, I don't always have to cite the US Trans Survey and like how violence is prevailing against the trans community. But I'm sure that it's still very fundamental in other areas of CS as well. So I think that would also be a positive

Andrea Haverkamp 1:38:46/1:18:56

I just want to echo so much of what Morgan, Max, and Vagrant have said. I know that I took some notes and just like shouting out what Vagrant said about trans joy. And like, I think Morgan was touching on that too, like our lives are so much more complex than deficits or you know, etc. And even thinking about things like leaving a program is a success if that program was terrible. Like leaving a field if the field was hostile is success. Wow, you did it and like what a shame that like the field lost, a brilliant person. And what Max was also saying earlier about, like, you know, like the theory and the nuance and all that is really, really good. But like, you know, more practical stuff for people who are in the trenches doing the teaching, especially in K through 12 who really also just need like support and and you know, might not have time to dig into really theory heavy stuff. I think is a necessary counterbalance that to create praxis, you have to have both. And then also what what Morgan was saying also that the trans

community is not a monolith and that there's also a lot of inter community, intra community crap, right. And it's not just a big happy trans umbrella or LGBTQ umbrella, there's a lot of stuff inside so digging into those things instead of like, you know, blanket LGBTQ student research. I'm almost inclined to archive in my email because I just don't think it actually says as much as what it's trying to say. And I think the same could be true about a lot of like, blanket trans and nonbinary stuff. When you're in the community, you can read it and be like, okay, but out of those 100 Trans people, how many of them are this, that and the other. Um, I really also hope that in the next 10 years, we also look at, like more gender non conforming people so to say such as like, like, sissy men, tomboy women, there's like, you know, as we get into like, more like whether people identify as cis or trans or gender, nonbinary or gender fuck or whatever, like this, so much like, all of that is really interesting, as well as also the mundane that we're not inherently transgressive. We're mostly boring as much as anyone else is boring. So all those things are really, really interesting to me and I guess rounding it out climate change, like, do trans people exist on a dead, on, on a planet where humans no longer exist. I really think that social justice and radical transformation of this capitalist system and economy are really, really, really dire to all of our survival. So I don't know where to go with that other than it's very stressful.

Amanda Menier 1:41:44

That's a wonderful grounding statement. To bring us to to a close and recognize that we know we have the opportunity to do great work together. Both in terms of research that focuses and elevates trans and nonbinary folks and also probably other important work for ourselves as a as a community. And we're just about out of time, we are out of time. So thank you for joining us. We really appreciate everybody who's coming out tonight. And we'd like you to fill out a short survey. And we'll also send this out to everybody via email tomorrow. So if you if you see this your if you take the survey now and you see it tomorrow, it's not a different survey. It's the same one. We just like to since this is our first panel get some feedback so we can make the next one even better. Thank you so much to our panelists. We literally couldn't have done this without you. Be on the lookout for the next workshop. The next panel which is on December 8, also Thursday night 5pm. And we'll be focusing on the what makes intersectional research versus research focused on intersectional populations are also very excited about we think that as we touched on in this workshop, so far, that we don't think that you can have this conversation about gender without having related to conversations around race ethnicity, ability, disability and other other new sources of oppression for folks. Stacey, is there anything that I haven't said that you think we should make sure everybody's aware of?

Stacey Sexton 1:43:58/1:24:08

I think you did a great job and looking forward to seeing all of y'all back on December 8. Same, same. Not not going to be the same zoom link but same time of the day. Thank you so much. This is really like really wonderful and I appreciate appreciate the panelists. They appreciate those who came to listen for those who came to ask questions. And for everyone who was a participant in in the chat, we had a really good conversation.

Amanda Menier 1:44:31

Oh, and tell your friends we still have space space in the workshop. So the the form is on the website if you know anybody who you think who wasn't here tonight that should be here. Share it with them and the more the merrier. And we look forward to seeing you in about a month.

Stacey Sexton 1:45:08

Thank you Bye

Amanda Menier 1:45:09

Thank you. Thank you.