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Douglass-SAS-DIMACS Computer Science Living-Learning Community for Women

Rutgers Launches Computer Science Living-Learning Community for Women

—John Chadwick, Senior Writer, Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, October 2016

Rutgers has started a living-learning community that aims to support women computer scientists and increase their numbers in the field.

The project, which has 18 students in its first year, is supported by a National Science Foundation grant, and reflects a partnership between the Department of Computer Science, The Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science (DIMACS), the Douglass Project for Rutgers Women in Math, Science and Engineering at Douglass Residential College, and the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS).

“Increasing gender diversity in computer science is our goal,” said Rebecca Wright, a professor of computer science, DIMACS’ director, and principal investigator on the grant. “Research shows that diverse teams produce better results, having a positive impact on technical innovation.”

Living-learning communities (LLCs) have been shown to have a beneficial effect on undergraduate students, especially during their first year. LLCs provide students a more integrated learning experience by connecting their living environment with the curriculum or a particular theme.

The Douglass-SAS-DIMACS Computer Science Living-Learning Community creates an immersive educational environment, providing support and resources that will increase recruitment and retention of women in the major. Residents have access to services such as graduate student mentors and mentor-led workshops, leadership training and career seminars. For first-year student Akanksha Srivastava, the LLC is also a warm, friendly place where she can connect with fellow students and learn more about the field. “It’s a very empowering community,” she said.



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