



Increasing Gender Diversity in Game Development Programs

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE®

MOSCONE CENTER · SAN FRANCISCO, CA

MARCH 2-6, 2015 · EXPO: MARCH 4-6, 2015



Speakers

Clara Fernández-Vara, Associate Arts Professor, NYU Game Center

Celia Pearce, Associate Professor, Northeastern University

Elaine Gomez, USC

Deirdra "Squinky" Kiai, UC Santa Cruz

Elyse Lemoine, NYU Game Center

Julia Wlochowski, Northeastern University



What attracted you to the program that you're in?



What attracted you to the program that you're in?

- Elaine: Visible diversity of students, 3-year program
- Elyse: Visible diversity of students, having taken classes in the department already.
- Squinky: Full funding, Digital Arts program (not only games)
- Julia: Game design in relation with other disciplines, Co-op



What challenges may get in the way of having a more diverse body of students?



What challenges may get in the way of having a more diverse body of students?

- Julia: pre-existing lack of diversity of students.
- Elyse: Publicly available information doesn't often reflect the diversity of the students and the means available to attract them.
- Elaine: lack of events and programs that encourage and attract women, POC, LGBT population.
- Squinky: In grad school, TAships are so much extra work it can be hard to integrate in the community



What can programs like yours do to encourage and increase diversity of students?



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- Julia: encourage student groups, and funding
- Elaine: diversity fosters self-support among students
- Squinky: provide an inviting and safe environment
- Elyse: create a listening culture, mentorship



Aspects that help attract diversity of students

- Diversity attracts diversity
 - People: faculty and students
 - Disciplines: go beyond programming, relate to other fields
 - Promote events and associations
- Schools must actively reach out to underrepresented groups - let them know you want them!
 - Offer scholarships, counseling, encouragement.
 - Go to high-school fairs, conventions, festivals
- Public events and PR specifically addressing diverse students
- Ask people how they like to be addressed
(preferred pronouns, how to pronounce their names).



Thank you!

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Thank you!

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