

Women face many challenges while pursuing a STEM degree, such as the lack of women mentors and the feeling of being out of place. Women in STEM and Women in Science and Engineering are two organizations through ASU that have created a community for women in STEM to connect.

Amiyah Moore is a senior at ASU majoring in biochemistry. "I didn't have any women in my life who were in STEM, which is why I joined Women in STEM," said Moore in an interview. Moore found Women in STEM as an outlet to talk with other women about problems and give class and professor recommendations. "For me, just having someone to get advice from or bounce ideas off of is super nice and they are the only people that understand my experiences," said Moore. "Without Women in STEM, God knows where I would've been," shared Moore.

Depending on the class, Moore can have mainly male classmates, which impacts her experience working in groups. If she is the only woman, "there is just something there that isn't the same when they are talking to their male peers," said Moore.

Sarah Mathias is a senior at ASU majoring in biological sciences. "In high school, I felt like I was always told that I would never succeed in a STEM major or in the medical field," said Mathias in an email interview. However, when it came to college, "My professors have always encouraged me and pushed me to reach my full potential," said Mathias.

Mathias has only worked under female leadership, but has worked alongside men who have showed respect and support. "This has made me feel less alone in STEM, and more excited for the changes happening before our eyes as women enter the field and champion for changes and visibility," said Mathias. Mathias has also found a community within Women in STEM.

Rachel Hayden graduated ASU with her bachelor's in engineering mechanical systems and a minor in human systems engineering. "Like many engineers, my curiosity for the subject started with Legos," said Hayden in an email interview, "I was also deeply inspired by my grandma, who was a high school physics teacher."

Hayden was often one of the few girls in a room of 30 to 40 students. "It felt intimidating walking into those rooms, fearing not being taken seriously (which sometimes was the case)," said Hayden. Hayden also encountered challenges when working in groups, "When roles were designated to members of the team, I was often placed as the "notetaker" or project manager versus a more "technical" role," said Hayden.

Hayden found a community within Women in Science and Engineering. "We made small study groups and met through WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) where we would be able to discuss struggles in the classroom and how to overcome them, or at least find comfort in each other's stories knowing we had each other's backs," said Hayden.

Aarushi Bharti is majoring in technological entrepreneurship and management and pursuing a certificate in informatics. "The main challenge was feeling discouraged because there were not many women or non-binary individuals in the classes," said Bharti in an email interview.

Bharti looked for campus organizations that supported women in STEM. "I joined women in Science and Engineering (WISE) at Poly at the beginning of my sophomore year and instantly felt welcomed," said

Bharti. "Through WISE, I found a support group, made more friends, and built my leadership and soft skills because of the opportunities and support provided by the members," said Bharti.

"It can be intimidating to enter a STEM field as a woman, but there are support networks within and outside of ASU that are very helpful and impactful!" said Bharti.