

Abstract Submitted
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Should female enrollment in science and engineering increase?

MATHIEU BOUVILLE, Institute of Materials Research and Engineering — Many people hold this truth to be self-evident, that there should be more female students in science and engineering. However, the proposed arguments are generally vague and unsatisfactory, they motivate more than they really justify. ‘There should be more female students in science and engineering’ then means that women should want to study science and engineering and that science and engineering should want to attract women. This is only a contingent win–win situation, there does not *have to* be more female students in these fields for moral reasons. Moreover, this applies only to women interested in science- related fields. In particular, outreach programs—designed to attract more females to science and engineering— must respect the right of female students to choose freely (even if they decide to major in a non-scientific field). It would certainly be paradoxical to trample this right in order to enforce it.

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