



## ACM-W @ OSU: Grace Hopper 2017

Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing

From Oct 4<sup>th</sup> - Oct 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, twenty-four members of Ohio State's ACM-W chapter joined 18,000 other women in Orlando, Florida at the Grace Hopper Conference celebrating women in technology. The Grace Hopper Conference is presented by AnitaB.org in partnership with ACM and aims to support, empower, and nurture women and other underrepresented minorities in the technology field.



*From left to right, bottom to top: Allyson Boone, Stephanie Pirman, Megan Porter, Maria Emery, Nora Myer, Alyssa Neubauer, Sruti Chigurupati, Vicky Sandoval, Mary Catherine Good, Riya Lengade, Courtney Campbell, Yvonne Johnson, Aria Marean, Emily Engle, Kirstin Boni, Stacy Kauntz, Allison Salach, and Caitlyn Horn; Not pictured: Shiqi Zhang, Camila Robalino, Nidhi Bali, Astha Khetawat, Gabrielle Rigol, Anna Wolfe, Lisa D'lima*

# ACM-W @ GHC: By the Numbers

## Conference

**18,000+**

attendees

**3+**

days

**80+**

countries

## Attendees

**25** attendees from ACM-W (**doubling last year's 12 attendees**)

**4** seniors

**13** juniors

**8** sophomores

**16** Ohio State attendees sent on ACM-W's scholarship

**4** attendees with Anita Borg Institute scholarships

**2** attendees with Microsoft scholarships

## Interviews & Offers

**100%** of ACM-W attendees had at least **1 interview** at GHC

**52%** of ACM-W attendees had **3+ interviews** at GHC

**Companies interviewed with:** Tesla, Microsoft, Facebook, Disney, Two Sigma, LinkedIn, Allstate, Slack, GE, Amazon, Harris, Geico, Intuit...

**Companies extending offers:** Apple, Paypal, Microsoft, Nationwide, State Farm, Northrop Grumman, Bank of America...

# Conference Summary

## Opening Keynote

The conference began on Wednesday, October 4th and started with the GHC Opening Keynote featuring Melinda Gates and Dr. Fei-Fei Li.

Melinda Gates is co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest private foundation that is dedicated to giving everyone equal opportunity and access in life. Melinda is dedicated to helping girls and women realize their power and full potential. In her keynote, she spoke not only of her own journey through computer science, industry, and philanthropy, but of her lessons learned in doing so. Her biggest takeaway was the importance of changing what the average programmer looks like (the usual "brogrammer"). She emphasized to everyone in the audience the importance of understanding that because tech is revolutionizing today's world, we must not forget that great ideas will not always come from someone fitting the stereotype of a computer scientist. In her words, "The next Bill Gates may very well look nothing like the last. Great ideas don't always come wrapped in a hoodie."

Dr. Fei-Fei Li is Professor and Director of Stanford University's AI Lab along with being the Chief Scientist at Google Cloud AI/ML, researching machine learning, deep learning, computer vision, and cognitive and computational neuroscience. She spoke about the amazing world of AI, her work in the field, and how the world can benefit from having more women involved in the field. Dr. Li emphasized the importance of keeping humanity in AI; at a time where AI is booming and technological advances are made every day, slowing down to consider all consequences is just as important as innovation. Finally, Dr. Li addressed the fundamental issue of artificial intelligence and its intersection with diversity: if AI is to play a key role in our society in the future, we must ensure that it fairly caters to all. In her words, we must always remember to "humanize AI."

To watch either keynote, a replayed live-stream is available on the [Anita Borg website](#).

*"I was nervous at first because this was my first Grace Hopper Conference, but after hearing amazing women like Melinda Gates and Dr. Fei Fei Li speak, I felt empowered. These women had accomplished so much and are proof that there is nothing that can hold us back."*

- *Sruti Chigurupati, B.S. CSE, 2020*

## Career Fair & Sponsor Expo

The career expo at Grace Hopper Conference is 3 days long and this year, hosted over 350 different organizations dedicated to getting more women involved in the post-college technology industry. These organizations are comprised of technology companies, universities, government entities, and not-for-profit organizations. There were multiple opportunities to speak with companies during on-the-spot interviews, along with the ability to find research projects and graduate school opportunities.

*“One thing that was great about GHC was the way we were able to interact with companies. I was making actual connections with people who weren’t recruiters, but tech executives within some of the companies. I already couldn’t believe I was just casually chatting with a senior director at Nike, but on top of that she told me to go add her on LinkedIn so we could stay connected.”*

- **Gabrielle Rigol, B.S. CSE, 2019**

Because Grace Hopper is an international conference drawing attendees from all over the world, its career fair is similarly diverse in opportunities and because of this, ACM-W members in attendance were given a unique opportunity to network and interview with companies and graduate schools that they otherwise may not have met.

*“Some of the companies that recruit at the career fair don’t recruit a lot on the east coast, and therefore, the career fair was a really important part of the conference. I got to talk to a lot of companies I otherwise wouldn’t have had the chance to talk to and received an offer because of it.”*

- **Alyssa Neubauer, B.S. CSE & Data Analytics, 2020**

*ACM-W members pictured at the Facebook: Instagram booth during the Career Expo.*





## Sessions

Throughout the three days of the Grace Hopper conference, hundreds of sessions ranging in topic from professional development seminars to keynote speeches to technical workshops were offered to attendees. Each of our members had the opportunity to choose the sessions most relevant to them over the course of the three days.

Several sessions proved incredibly popular: most notably, five women from the technical team of the “Hillary for America” presidential campaign delivered a panel discussing their careers leading up to the campaign, their experiences working on the campaign, and the journey that resulted after the unexpected 2016 election. Each one of the panel members spoke about their passion for seeing change in the world, even now, and their willingness to drop anything and everything to pursue it. They all were excellent examples of role models many of our members now look up to.

Additionally, several technical sessions were popular with our members as well, including a seminar from Pinterest on how their machine learning algorithm is implemented and another seminar from Pandora discussing their song matching algorithm. Attending sessions like these were excellent resources for our members to explore new areas of computer science and learn more about ones they were already interested in.

*“My favorite session that I attended went over the song matching algorithm that Pandora uses. I thought it was fascinating how complex it was, and loved learning more about how my favorite software works.”*

- **Allyson Boone, B.S. CSE, 2018**

*“One of my highlights from the conference was building paper circuitry. The reason this activity held so much meaning, is that I got to see there is room for creativity outside of video games. The main speaker used a combination of electrical engineering and computer science to make interactive paper art. Many hobbies and pastimes that have been traditionally thought of as feminine can just as easily use computer science. I am able to see myself making applications which would use my unique interests and my knowledge of programming. “*

- **Aria Marean, B.S. CSE, 2020**

## Closing Keynote

Finally, on Friday, October 6th, the Grace Hopper Celebration concluded in the afternoon with a series of closing keynotes. Most notably, Dr. Ayanna Howard (Chair in Bioengineering in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology), Dr. Deborah Berebichez (Chief Data Scientist of Metis), and Maureen Fan (CEO and Cofounder of Baobab Studios) all spoke.

Dr. Ayanna Howard spoke about the research she is conducting at Georgia Tech that involves using robots to restructure the way that kids with disabilities learn. She also talked about how trusting humans have become with robots, displaying a video of students ignoring exit signs in an emergency and choosing to follow a robot's directions instead. Dr. Berebichez followed and spoke primarily about her career and her journey through education, research, and industry to become who she is today. She told stories of the unimaginable obstacles that she faced and conquered along the way, offering reassurance to every woman listening to her that we are all stronger than we think and have so much yet to accomplish.

Finally, Maureen Fan took the stage to talk about her journey in animation that led her to co-founding her own animation studio, Baobab Studios, after finding that existing studios were not doing the field justice. She spoke about the obstacles she faced repeatedly as a woman in the field and the frustration she felt with continually working with studios that seemed set in their ways and unwilling to progress. Hearing about her accomplishments, her tenacity, and her unwavering confidence that she was doing the right thing were all incredibly inspiring to other women listening. Her speech reminded us all that often, the right thing will be difficult and frustrating but ultimately, worth it.

*"I really appreciated the final keynote where Deborah Berebichez, the first Mexican woman to graduate from Stanford University with a Ph.D. in Physics, spoke about her journey. To see a Latina woman in the technical field overcome these difficult obstacles and get to where she is today was so inspiring and only made me feel more secure about where I am today."*

- **Camila Robalino, B.S. CSE, 2020**

# ACM-W @ GHC: Lasting Impact

At The Ohio State University, the ACM-W chapter aims to support and encourage women in computing through professional development, community building, outreach initiatives, and personal development. Through the support of OSU Advance and OCIO, ACM-W at Ohio State had the ability to further its mission by attending Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing 2017.

ACM-W members are no strangers to the lack of women in computer science at Ohio State, so having the ability to grow their network of fellow women technologists was transformative for many members. Through the many different sessions and workshops, members gained more confidence in their skills and abilities and began thinking about their individual paths to their current and future success. Many of the members felt like they were finally learning how to believe in their abilities in order to mentor the younger generation of girls interested in computer science that may be afraid to truly pursue it. Getting a chance to share ideas and insights about the world of technology with women who are in research, industry, and academia brought members connections that they wouldn't otherwise have.

Ohio State ACM-W members returned to Columbus with the courage to keep persevering and succeeding in their classes, but also with the stronger will to make sure everyone, no matter race, gender, or other differences, has a chance to work in computer science or technology. They are all more dedicated to making sure every girl and anyone who doesn't look like they "fit" into the typical computer science mold knows that they can excel in computer science. Each of our members brings their own background and ideas to the table, and because of this, they will make an even bigger impact to work towards a tech community that's willing to give everyone a seat at that table.



**Pictured:** ACM-W members Dana Brooks and Kirstin Boni (**left**) and Vicky Sandoval and Stacy Kauntz (**right**) all pose after the closing keynotes at GHC.



## In their words...

*“My favorite part of GHC was the strangers I met throughout the conference: at a tech talk, on the escalator, or getting a snack. These quick introductions and life and career advice formed bonds with strangers, and I felt connected to these other women who were so different from me but have shared many similar experiences.”*

- **Nora Myer, B.S. CSE, 2019**

*“Overall, I'm really lucky to have had the opportunity to attend the Grace Hopper Conference. I got to network and learn about so many different companies that value diversity and innovation. I was able to get interviews and possible internship opportunities for next year! Attending this conference made me feel proud to be a woman in tech, and it was great to see that I wasn't alone; I was surrounded by 18,000 other women in tech too! I'm so thankful for the friendships I made through this trip, and I'm forever thankful to ACM-W at OSU for giving me the opportunity to attend the Grace Hopper Conference.”*

- **Riya Lengade, B.S. CIS, 2020**

*“Attending Grace Hopper allowed me to greatly expand the opportunities available to me. In terms of networking, job opportunities, and education, the conference goes above and beyond what would normally be available to me. I met women from across the globe in technology, expanding my horizons and discussions to a global perspective. For jobs, I spoke with companies who I normally would have no connection to. And, for education, I attended sessions that expanded beyond the realms of what I learn in my classes at school.”*

- **Kirstin Boni, B.S. CSE, 2019**

*“...by the end of the week I realized that I shouldn't have to settle for less because I can reach my dreams, one way or another.”*

- **Maria Emery, B.S. CSE, 2019**



# Thank you to our Sponsors

ACM-W at Ohio State would like to give a huge thank you to its GHC 2017 Sponsors. These sponsors include the **Ohio State's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)** and **Ohio State ADVANCE**.

A special thank you to Helen Patton and Mike Hofherr from OCIO for their generous donation and willingness to support ACM-W members for years to come. We hope to send 25 girls next year on scholarship and wouldn't be able to do it without all of their enthusiastic support.

Because of our sponsors, we're able to make a difference for women in technology at Ohio State and leave a lasting impact on our members' professional and personal lives. Thank you for everything you do.

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