



# **The Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing**

October 1-4, 2019 in Orlando, Florida

# What is the Grace Hopper Conference?

From October 1st to October 4th, 44 Ohio State students attended the [Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing](#) in Orlando, Florida, supported by Ohio State's [ACM-W](#) chapter. Grace Hopper Conference (GHC) is an international technical conference highlighting and celebrating the achievements of women in the technology field, as well as empowering all minorities in tech to make a place for themselves in the tech industry.

The conference's namesake, Admiral Grace Hopper, was a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy in the late 1900's and a contributor to the compiler for the COBOL programming language. She was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2016 for her contributions to the technology industry and humanity, and is today a worldwide role model to women in the technical field.

GHC is an annual 3-day technical conference featuring speakers, technical talks, workshops, a career fair with hundreds of companies, networking, poster showcases, and awards for remarkable technical women. Students, young professionals, and seasoned pros alike are all welcomed at Grace Hopper Conference to expand their technology skills, explore the industry, and meet peers.

Of Ohio State's 44 students in attendance at GHC this year, 31 were selected for ACM-W scholarships.



Pictured above: the ACM-W group at Grace Hopper

## What is ACM-W?

[ACM-W](#) is a student organization at Ohio State and a university chapter of the national ACM organization. [ACM](#) features hundreds of local women's chapters (all known as ACM-W) and Ohio State's ACM-W chapter is actually the oldest in the world, founded in 2003.

ACM-W has 75+ active members in the organization and hosts dozens of events each semester, ranging from company info sessions, to technical workshops, to networking nights, to socials. ACM-W's mission is to empower all women in the technical community and do so through community outreach, campus outreach, and technical development of other students. All genders and majors are welcome at our meetings as allies or supporters of our mission.

In the past few years, ACM-W has greatly increased our presence at GHC. In 2016, ACM-W sponsored 12 women to attend the conference. In 2017, ACM-W sponsored 25 women to attend. Over the past two years, we are proud to announce that we sponsored 30 or more Ohio State students to attend the conference, as well as supported an additional 13 students to attend through shared travel arrangements.

Every spring, ACM-W advertises Grace Hopper Conference in the local community and recruits students to apply for our scholarship. By offering several tiers of financial assistance ranging from 50% of conference costs covered up to 100% costs covered, ACM-W is able to offer a scholarship to almost every student who would like to attend. This approach has helped us scale quickly by sending 4x the number of students to the conference this year compared to three years prior.



Pictured: ACM-W Exec Board members past and present: ACM-W VP Lillian Chow (left), ACM-W Student Advisor Courtney Campbell (center), former ACM-W Treasurer and current Google Software Engineer Edrienne Co (right).

## By the Numbers: who went to GHC?

### Conference

**20,000+**

attendees

**3+**

days

**80+**

countries

### Attendees

**45** attendees from Ohio State

// **43** women      **2** men

**28** attendees sent on ACM-W's scholarship

// **27** women      **1** man

**1** attendee with Google scholarship

**1** attendee with Capital One scholarship

**3** attendees with Anita Borg Institute scholarships

**1** attendee with OSU USG scholarship



## Why do we do this? In the words of students who attended...

The Grace Hopper Conference is a life-changing conference for the dozens of students that ACM-W sends each year. From securing their first internship, connecting with the company of their dreams, meeting their role models, to simply improving their technical skills, conference attendees can find anything and everything they need to further their professional development at Grace Hopper. Grace Hopper is a defining moment in an Ohio State student's career and will be remembered for a lifetime.

We don't want to speak for them though. We asked our attendees to tell us how the conference impacted them. These are their words:

*"As soon as I entered the room for the opening keynote, I knew that this was going to be such a unique, empowering, and amazing opportunity. I could see the strength we had together as we worked towards the goal of a 50/50 representation in the technology workforce by 2025. The Grace Hopper Celebration reminded me that I had the power to make a positive impact on the world along with every woman who dares to try something different."*

- **Sara Miskus, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**



*"I really enjoyed the keynote at the end. The speaker showed videos of her VR projects where people could experience world events through VR- a new kind of journalism. Though these experiences were tragic and unnerving, viewers had a greater understanding of what had occurred in Syrian attacks, a diabetic man having a seizure, and others."*

- **Stacy Kauntz, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

*"My favorite experience at GHC was the keynote and listening to Abie award winner Jhillika Kumar's story about how she got into technology. She talked about how technology, specifically tablets/smartphones, has helped her brother who has autism communicate and interact with the world. Her brother's ability to interact through technology inspired her to create a start-up called AxisAbility to help*

*improve the lives of people with disabilities. Hearing this story really opened my eyes to how much good technology can do for us and improve our lives.”*

- **Isha Satpalkar, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

*“I learned that so many more people support women in tech than I had initially thought, and they certainly can overpower those who do not.”*

- **Jenni Silverstein, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**



*“One of my favorite moments was walking up to Northrop Grumman having a predetermined notion that I wasn't good enough and then being offered an intern position after speaking to them. They were very sweet and accommodating and that whole experience taught me to be less harsh on myself. I walked out with a positive and uplifting mindset and I will forever be grateful for this experience.”*

- **Bhavya Jayashankar, B.S. Computer & Information Science**

*“One thing I noticed when talking to women at GHC is that women seem to often get introduced to computer science and technology by chance, which needs to change. I was under the impression that I was an anomaly in the way I learned to code, but GHC taught me otherwise. I am now more determined than ever to support girls in computer science, and encourage "uncovering" the field for girls in middle and high school, so to speak.”*

- **Jing George, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

*“My favorite experience was seeing the progression of women of color attending the conference since I attended 3 years ago. It isn't perfect of course, but the fact that there has been a definite growth of black women speaking at the keynotes, to more of them at the career fair booths, which has been so awesome for me. I was also able to attend a lunch with women from Capital One, and there were multiple black women and quite high positions at the company that were more than willing to give me advice for my future and hear my struggles. I am really hoping GHC keeps this momentum going for future conferences.”*

- **Courtney Campbell, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

*"My favorite experience was learning from product leaders such as Dawn Manley and her work at Splunk through a mini-breakout session. Only at GHC can you gain exposure to such influential women in tech. I am immensely grateful to OSU for providing me this experience and will remember it fondly for the rest of my life."*

- **Amy Book, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

*"The chance to hear from inspiring women in tech always allows me to come back to school rejuvenated."*

- **Vicky Sandoval, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**



*"I loved to see all the women in tech coming together. In most of my classes there is less than 25% women, so getting to see a majority of women was really motivating to me. It made me want to volunteer and get more young women into tech!"*

- **Olivia Wolf, B.S. Electrical & Computer Engineering**

*"I attended several talks ranging from quantum computing, to edge AI, to virtual reality. These talks had larger impact on my tech and career goals than I had originally expected. I also found it a good experience to learn the perspective of women in technology, from industry experts in*



*the field. I was originally apprehensive about attending as a man, but found the environment welcoming, informative, and never excluding. ”*

- **Alex Reichard, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

## Conference Summary

The Grace Hopper conference took place over 3 days in October, beginning with an opening keynote Wednesday morning and culminating in a closing keynote Friday afternoon and a celebration Friday evening. In between the keynotes, conference attendees had the opportunity to attend a 3-day career fair, hundreds of technical talks and workshops, dozens of featured speaker series, and dozens of company networking events.



Pictured: The Opening Ceremony of GHC 2019

## Opening Keynote

Wednesday's opening keynote featured several notable speakers: Dr. Jackie Bouvier Copeland, COO of AnitaB.org, Aicha Evans, CEO of startup Zoon, Dr. Fei-Fei Li, winner of the 2019 Technical Leadership Abie Award for her work in STEM diversity and AI, Dr. Natalya Bailey, winner of the 2019 Emerging Technologist Abie Award and a leader in the field of small satellite propulsion, Ana Roca Castro, Founder and CEO of Genius Plaza, and Brenda Darden Wilkerson, President and CEO of AnitaB.org. The keynote kicked off with a reading of a piece titled "Flip the Script", encouraging conference attendees to "make computing a field where we are valued and recognized".





Pictured : Dr. Jackie Copeland - "In this digital global economy, tech is not just a career, it is the new human right."

Aicha Evans focused her talk primarily on her journey from Chief Strategy Officer at Intel to CEO of startup Zoosk. She gave three key points of advice to listeners: first, "understand different viewpoints". During her time at Intel, she might not have always agreed with her colleagues, but she strived to understand their perspectives as "nothing in life is to be feared, only understood". Second, "life is not linear," as she spoke about how risks in her life such as opening a restaurant or moving to Israel were turning points in her career. Finally, she encouraged, "take the path less traveled: the

jobs, the assignments, and the projects that people are running away from." Those most complex, challenging, and risky challenges also pose the greatest opportunity for learning, impact, and growth.

Next, Ana Roca Castro took the stage to speak about her journey with Genius Plaza, startup helping district and government leaders track and improve the health and academic outcomes of their students. She encouraged attendees to reflect upon the person who "ignited the genius" within us and how we can develop that support system for others. She also spoke about the obstacles she's overcome as an immigrant not only in the technology field, but in early education spaces. Castro hopes to leverage education tailored to the cultural backgrounds of students of color. This revolutionary strategy allows students to "see themselves" in their learning and encourage perseverance in education.



Pictured: Ana Roca Castro

Finally, closing out the keynote, Wilkerson advocated for attendees to increase the visibility and eliminate the erasure of women in tech, commit to help, and bring others along on our technology journey.

## Career Fair and Sponsor Expo

Throughout Grace Hopper Conference, hundreds of the conference's industry sponsors participated in a three-day career fair and sponsor expo. Attendees could network with companies, connect with recruiters, participate in interviews and for a lucky few, even receive offers. The career fair is renowned for the number of companies that attend it each year and their enthusiasm for hiring women at the conference.

Additionally, the sponsor displays each year are a sight to see. In stark contrast to the typical career fair of gray tables and folding chairs seen at many universities, Grace Hopper's Career Fair is known for its companies' elaborate displays and generous swag. Depending on a company's sponsorship level, they may have much more than just a table at the fair - many have full-blown rooms to themselves.

## Technical Sessions

GHC offers hundreds of technical sessions and workshops throughout the course of the 3 days, ranging in level from beginner to expert. Popular beginner topics often include overviews of computer science topics such as security, cryptography, machine learning, big data, and more. Expert topics will often delve deeply into a speaker's research and more.



Pictured: Google's career fair booth

A popular talk (pictured below), addressed how technology is empowering women in developing countries.



*"I really loved listening to the speakers and their unconventional paths to success. Although I am currently confused about my future, I know that these women were also confused at some points in their lives. Yet, they've still ended up as leaders and role models. I know that I can figure it out as I go, even without planning years into the future, and still be happy."*

- **Swathi Pillalamarri, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

## PitchER Competition

This pitch competition brings leading women entrepreneurs to GHC with the goal of supporting, encouraging, providing new funding opportunities, and inspiring the next generation of women entrepreneurs.

Yulkendy Valdez is a social entrepreneur, storyteller, public speaker, and Co-founder and CEO of Forefront. Forefront is a subscription-based digital platform designed for global employers where employees can access curriculum-based lesson plans about cultures around the world, highlighting the rich narratives of real people and the intersection of our identities.



Pictured: Yulkendy Valdez



Pictured: Dr. Sanna Gaspard

While earning her graduate degree, Dr. Sanna Gaspard received two patents for two medical technologies she invented: an infant therapy device to support preterm infants' health and an optical device for early bed sore detection. To support the commercialization of these two technologies, she founded two medical device companies: TLneoCare, LLC and Rubitection Inc. As CEO of both startups, she developed the vision, business strategy and plan, the IP strategy, and raised initial financing.

*"My favorite experience was the PitchER competition. It was incredible to hear eleven different ladies, each passionate about very different fields, pitch their ideas within a 3 minute time period. Each woman was very knowledgeable and incredibly qualified, and it was so cool to be the presence of such unique solutions to problems in the world."*

- **McKenzie Kennelly (B.S. C.S.E.) will be pursuing her startup Sitti (instagram: @joinsitti) upon graduation and is backed by a prominent venture capital firm in Columbus.**



## Company Networking

Outside of the talks, workshops, speakers, interviews, and more that the conference itself offers each day in Orlando, many of the conference's sponsors hosted networking nights and similar events each evening. These events are known for being excellent places to connect with company engineers, ask questions, and have fun.

*"It expanded my network of women engineers. It was also nice to meet and talk to people who were at a different stage in their career, particularly because at school I mostly talk to other students or professors."*

- **Yvonne Johnson, B.S. Computer Science & Engineering**

With the focus on attendees' professional development, these company events have become excellent places to learn new skills (technical or otherwise!) and meet peers in the field as well.



Pictured: ACM-W members at a Google Networking event.



## By the Numbers: Interviews & Offers

Grace Hopper is an excellent place for our attendees to get their first internship, connect with their dream company, discover new corners of the industry, and more.

Our attendees routinely both interview and get offers at Grace Hopper. We collected data from 30 of Ohio State's 44 attendees about their interviews and offers. This is a bit more about their success.

## 84 interviews & 32 offers

**60%** of our attendees interviewing received at least one offer within 1 week of the conference

**87%** of ACM-W attendees had at least **1 interview** at GHC

**73%** of ACM-W attendees had **2+ interviews** at GHC

**40%** of ACM-W attendees had **3+ interviews** at GHC

## Where we interviewed

Accenture  
Activision  
ADP  
American Express  
**Apple**  
Bank of America  
Barclays  
Bloomberg  
**Boeing**  
Capital One  
**Cisco**  
Cognizant  
Comcast  
Cox  
CrowdStrike

Garmin  
GE Healthcare  
**Google**  
Groupon  
Gusto  
Honeywell  
**IBM**  
IKEA  
**Intuit**  
JP Morgan Chase & Co  
Liberty Mutual  
Mastercard  
**Microsoft**  
Millennium

Prudential  
Publicis Sapient  
**Qualcomm**  
Raytheon  
**Reddit**  
Rockwell Automation  
Samsara  
ServiceNow  
SIG  
**Square**  
Target  
**Twitter**  
Ultimate Software  
UBS

Datadog  
**Dell**  
**Disney**  
DraftKings  
Expedia  
**Facebook**

Morningstar  
NetApp  
Nike  
Northrop Grumman  
**Oracle**  
Playstation

United Airlines  
US Army  
Walmart  
Wayfair  
Xilinx

## Where we received offers

ADP  
American Express  
**Apple**  
Bank of America  
**Boeing**  
Capital One

**Cisco**  
**Disney**  
JP Morgan Chase & Co  
Liberty Mutual  
MasterCard  
Northrop Grumman  
**Oracle**

Playstation  
Raytheon  
Rockwell Automation  
Target  
Ultimate Software  
United Airlines  
Walmart



## Closing Keynote

Finally, the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing closed on Friday afternoon with a keynote. They awarded many prizes to notable women in technology, ranging from high schoolers pitching startup ideas, to execs at existing companies dedicated to fostering an inclusive, diverse environment in their workplaces.

The closing keynote featured in particular the Dr. Vivienne Ming who spoke about courage, and how it helped her create an AI system to reunite refugee children with their extended families.



*“Ambitious men have been promising us self-driving cars and artificial intelligence and spaceships. If every little girl had been given the reins to her own potential, we’d already have them.” - Dr. Vivienne Ming (pictured left)*

Finally a panel of women entrepreneurs and executives discussed the opportunities available for women in tech. They explained, “Founders are people that solve problems and build solutions. Founders are people that generate wealth and create jobs. Founders are people that change the world, and founders are most definitely women. On your trip home from Grace Hopper, I challenge you to ask yourself - ‘What if you are one of those founders? What if you are the one we’ve all been waiting for?’”.

## Thank you to our sponsors!

Finally, we would like to say a *huge* thank you to the sponsors who have made attending this conference possible for ACM-W.

We would like to thank the College of Engineering's Diversity Outreach and Inclusion program and Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Ohio State, particularly Olga Stavridis, Lisa Barclay, Dr. Chris Stewart, and Dr. Tamal Dey for their support and generosity during a period of significant financial setbacks. Our successful trip to Grace Hopper this year would not have been possible without their help.

We would also like to thank OCIO at Ohio State, the Office of the CIO, and specifically Helen Patton and Mike Hofherr for their continued support of ACM-W. Their generous donations and repeated support to the ACM-W organization has made it possible for us to send so many students to Grace Hopper each year. For that, we cannot say thank you enough.

Finally, we would like to thank our corporate sponsors for their commitment to empowering the next generation of women computer scientists. We are immensely grateful to ENGIE, Northrop Grumman, Google, Facebook, JP Morgan & Chase, Capital One, Caterpillar, Marathon, 84.51°, Target, FAST Enterprises, and Upstart. We would especially like to thank ENGIE for their generous contribution to every ACM-W member attending Grace Hopper, without which our trip would not have been possible.

Without our sponsors and Ohio State's support, we would not be able to do this. Thank you.



**THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

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