California State University, Northridge

Women Underrespresented,

By Lawrence Summers

Women in Mathematics, Science & Engineering

Professor Tovar

Philip D. Kim

ID: 108508736

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After reading the article written by PBS News, "Harvard President Summers' Remarks About Women in Science, Engineering" [1], it's hard not to have some sort of emotions whether positive or negative this will be discussed later. First, breaking down and analyzing his comments is essential in order to come to a conclusion on the former President Lawerence Summers. As described by Summers himself, attempt to adopt an entirely positive, rather than normative approach, and just try to think about and offer some hypotheses, why women are underrespresented in the science and engineering field. He gave three generally broad hypotheses in respectively orders: (1) high-powered job hypotheses, (2) different availability of aptitude at the high end, and (3) different socialization and patterns of discrimination in a search.

As Summers described, it is a "positive understanding" that high-powered jobs are not only disired by men but because of society, womens priority is getting pregnant and starting a family.

"Innately thus genetically different from men and lacked what he characterized as natural ability of men in these fields, [2]" Susan reads out loud quoting what Summers had said in 2005. This very controversy hypotheses claimed that men out-performed women on the lower and upper ends of the test score spectrum.

Lastly, different socialization and patterns of discriimination, which generally gravitates towards nature vs. nurture.

Providing my point of view, as a computer science student without a doubt, women are most definitely minorities and underrespresented just as Summers pointed out. However, I would completely disagree on the reasoning for the lack of female genders. First, I would like to point out, women were to ones to invent the first computer program, so if anyone were to say women don't belong in computer science or any science is making themselves look very ignorant. "Ada Lovelace is often regarded as the first female computer programmer, [3]".

Inversly, I believely socialization and patterns of discrimination has most attribute affect on why women are underrespresented. And for high-powered job hypothesis could be true but there isn't enough data or evidence to actually prove Summers to be correct. Then as for availability of aptitude, just as most people were outraged by his claims, I too, baffled by his egocentric ways.

Final thoughts, should Summers have resigned? Yes, he was already getting a lot scrutiny for his comments not just with women, but media, students and the general public.

References

[1] PBS NewsHour. *Harvard President Summers' Remarks About Women in Science, Engineering*. URL: `https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/science-jan-june05-summersremarks_2-22`. (02.22.2005).

[2] GRCC History Professor: Susan Williams. *Agamede's Legacies: History of Women in Science*. URL: `https://canvas.csun.edu/courses/81552/pages/lesson-plan?module_item_id=2783900`. (03.25.2009).

[3] J. Francis J. Fuegi. *Lovelace and Babbage and the creation of the 1843 notes*. URL: `https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/1253887/references#references`. (12.01.2003).