Biology vs. Socialization & Structural Bias

PEERs, Fall 2013
Biology vs. Socialization

• Achievement gaps exist between groups.
• What causes them?
• Do certain groups tend to be innately talented? Or are there other factors in play?
Socialization

• Assigning a role to someone based on their gender, race, etc

• Has the ability to impacts one’s beliefs, attitudes and choices
Studies

- Gaps based more on personal beliefs and experiences than innate biological differences
- Video game study showed practice eliminated performance gaps

Source: “Mars and Venus Here on Earth,” Sommers
Structural Bias

• Disparity in distribution of opportunities

• Institutionalized opportunity gaps
“When high scoring students from low income families are compared to similar high scoring students from high income families, 80% of those in the top quarter go on and get college degrees, 44% of the lower income families, go on to get college degrees.”

Structural Bias: Bias in distribution of opportunities

- A common hiring practice is to ask for referrals from current employees
- Resources in schools aren’t evenly distributed
- Lack of Upward Mobility
Impacts engineering

• Prevent us from using all our talent

• Less fortunate may make less impact in society.

• Social justice
What can YOU do?

- Encourage dialogue
- Be aware of your attitudes
- Change policies to correct these issues
- Ask questions
- Growth mindset
Questions?