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(G*) A Canada-wide assessment of the gender gap in high school physics

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While tremendous progress has been made, women and other gender minorities remain largely underrepresented in the Canadian physics community, a problem which first manifests at the high school level. All efforts to narrow the gender gap at the undergraduate level and beyond will continue to be hampered by the lack of gender diversity in students with the necessary prerequisites for a physics degree. Despite this, data characterizing gender representation in high school physics is not widely available. To address this gap we have collected detailed administrative data from all provincial Ministries of Education across Canada. This includes male and female enrolment rates in university-track STEM courses for all publicly funded secondary schools across the country.
In this talk, we will present these data to describe the current gender gap present in high schools across the country. In the past decade, the continuation rate of male and female students from grade 10 science through to grade 12 physics has remained nearly constant, restricting the growth potential of physics departments across Canada. In the same time period, there has been only minimal growth in the median proportion of female students in grade 12 physics. At the current rate of growth, parity in male and female enrolment in high school physics would not happen until ˜2100. In contrast, the continuation rates of female students in all other high school STEM courses have increased dramatically, greatly increasing female representation. Efforts to address the gender gap in STEM appear to have been successful –just not in physics.

Keyword-1

Gender Gap

Keyword-2

High School Physics

Keyword-3

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