

***FIRST*[®] Longitudinal Study:
2020 Survey Results (84-Month Follow-Up)**

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FIRST® Longitudinal Study: Findings at 84-Month Follow-Up¹

“FIRST challenged me to problem solve in a fast-paced and rewarding environment. It built up my confidence to pursue Engineering. I learned that I am a great problem solver and I very much enjoy it. Having been an artist for so much of my life, FIRST showed me that engineering problem solving tickles the same spot in my brain as creating art; they are both inherently creative processes.”

“FIRST has made such a large impact on my life that I don't know where or who I would be without it. I have been involved with FIRST for seven years, and the experiences that I have had have given me public speaking skills, confidence in my abilities, and life-long friendships. FIRST also has given me the opportunity to inspire others in STEAM fields.” (FIRST participants)

Background

FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a global nonprofit organization that operates after-school robotics programs for young people ages 4-18 in the United States and internationally. The mission of FIRST is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills, inspire innovation, and foster well-rounded capacities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership. The sequence of FIRST programs begins with FIRST® LEGO® League and includes Discover (ages 4-6), Explore (ages 6-10) and Challenge (ages 9-14), followed by the FIRST® Tech Challenge serving grades 7-12, and FIRST® Robotics Competition, serving high school-aged youth (grades 9-12). FIRST estimates in 2019-2020, the programs reached over 679,000 young people worldwide.²

In 2011, FIRST contracted with the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University's Heller School for

KEY FINDINGS AT 84-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

- FIRST® participants continue to show positive impacts on STEM-related interests and attitudes seven years (84 months) after they entered the program. Impacts include higher interest in STEM, involvement in STEM-related activities, STEM identity, STEM knowledge, and interest in STEM careers when compared to a matched comparison group.
- Participants from all major population groups and community types show positive impacts, including both males and females, multiple racial and ethnic groups, lower and higher income youth, and youth from urban, rural, and suburban communities.
- Impacts on STEM attitudes and interests continue to be significantly greater for young women in FIRST than those for young men.
- FIRST's impacts persist into college. Through the fourth year of college, FIRST alumni:
 - continue to show significantly greater scores on STEM-related attitudes than comparison students;
 - are significantly more likely to be interested in majoring in computer science and engineering;
 - are two to three times as likely to take computer science and engineering courses in college; and
 - are significantly more likely to declare a major in computer science, engineering, or a STEM-related field than comparison students. By the end of their 4th year of college, 81% of FIRST alumni had declared a STEM major; 68% were majors in computer science or engineering.
 - Female FIRST alumni continue to pursue STEM-related courses and majors at a high rate in college. By their 4th year, female FIRST alumni were majoring in engineering at a similar rate as male alumni.

¹ This report is based on data from the seventh round of follow-up surveys, which were administered approximately 84 months after students entered the study (baseline).

² <http://www.firstinspires.org/about/at-a-glance>

Social Policy and Management to conduct a multi-year longitudinal study of *FIRST*'s middle and high school programs. The goal of the study, building on more than a decade of short-term evaluation studies by Brandeis University and others, is to document the longer-term impacts of *FIRST*'s programs on participating youth and to do so through a design that meets the standards for rigorous, scientifically-based evaluation research. Three major questions guide the study:

- **What are the short and longer-term impacts of the *FIRST* LEGO League Challenge, *FIRST* Tech Challenge, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition programs on program participants?** Specifically, what are the program impacts on a core set of participant outcomes that include: interest in STEM and STEM-related careers, college-going and completion, pursuit of STEM-related college majors and careers, and development of 21st century personal and workplace-related skills?
- **What is the relationship between program experience and impact?** To what extent are differences in program experience – such as time in the program, participation in multiple programs, role on the team, access to mentors, quality of the program experience – associated with differences in program outcomes? What can we learn about “what works” to guide program improvement?³
- **To what extent are there differences in experiences and impacts among key subpopulations of *FIRST* participants?** In particular, are there differences in impacts for young women, youth of color, low-income youth, and youth from urban or rural communities? If there are differences, what can we learn about why those differences occur and their implications for the program in the future?

To address these questions, the *FIRST* Longitudinal Study has been tracking 1,273 students (822 *FIRST* participants and 451 comparison students) over a seven-year period beginning with entry of the *FIRST* participants into the program. Team members were recruited to the study from a nationally representative sample of “veteran” teams from the *FIRST* LEGO League Challenge, *FIRST* Tech Challenge, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition programs over a two-year period spanning the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. Comparison group students were recruited from math and science classes in the same schools and organizations where the *FIRST* teams were located. Once recruited into the study, team members and comparison students were surveyed at baseline and post-program in their first year, with annual follow-up surveys each spring thereafter. A baseline survey of parents provided additional background information on the family context for team members and comparison students, and Coach/Mentor surveys at the end of the first year of team involvement in the study provided additional contextual data on the *FIRST* teams. In several study years, team member surveys have also been supplemented by interviews and focus groups with team members and comparison group students.

³ To be addressed in a separate report.

Impacts at 84-Month Follow-Up

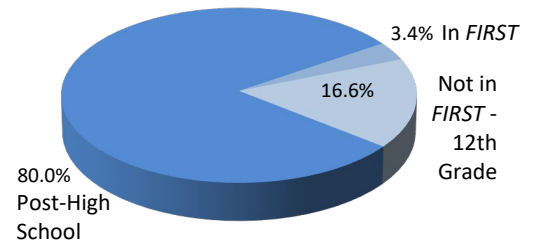
This report presents a summary of the impact findings based on seven years of data, including survey data from baseline and post-program surveys and five rounds of annual follow-up surveys. As such, it reflects the impacts of participation in *FIRST* seven years after study participants entered the program. Of the 1,273 students who began the study, 943 students (74%) completed the 84-month follow-up survey, including 554 *FIRST* participants (67% of those at baseline) and 389 comparison students (86% of those at baseline). Of the *FIRST* participants responding to the follow-up survey, 80% were post high school and 19 (3.4%) were still active in the program.⁴

Data Collection through 84-Month Follow-Up

GROUP	Baseline	12-Month Follow-Up (Post-Program)	24-Month Follow-Up	36-Month Follow-Up	48-Month Follow-Up	60-Month Follow-Up	72-Month Follow-Up	84-Month Follow-Up
<i>FIRST</i> Participants	822	677	665	636	611	602	550	554
Comparison Group	451	259*	411	409	406	397	386	389
Total	1273	936	1076	1045	1017	999	936	943

*The initial group of comparison students did not complete a post-program survey but have participated in all subsequent follow-up surveys.

84-Month *FIRST* Survey Respondents



The findings from the 84-month follow-up surveys extend the positive impact findings from the prior (2015-2020) annual impact reports: ***FIRST* participants continue to show significantly greater average levels on STEM-related attitudes and interests than comparison students and are statistically significantly more likely to show higher levels in STEM-related outcomes than students in the comparison group.** These positive impacts hold true for participants who originally enrolled in any one of the three *FIRST* programs in the study (*FIRST* LEGO League Challenge, *FIRST* Tech Challenge, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition), across key demographic groups, and for those living in different types of communities (urban, rural, suburban).⁵ Data on students in their first four years of college also point to positive, statistically significant long-term impacts. **Through their fourth year of college, *FIRST* alumni show stronger STEM-related attitudes and interests than comparison students; are more interested in majoring in key STEM-related fields (engineering, computer science, and robotics); are more likely to take engineering and computer science courses; and are more likely to have declared majors in engineering and computer science. By the fourth year of college, of the *FIRST* alumni who had declared a major, 81.3% were majoring in a STEM-related field.** In most cases, these college impacts apply to both male and female *FIRST* alumni. Major findings are as follows:

⁴ Of the 554 *FIRST* participants who responded to the 84-month follow-up, 535 were no longer active in the program. Of those, 441 had graduated high school and were no longer eligible for *FIRST*; 92 were still in high school but no longer active in the program. Overall, 20.6% of those eligible to participate in *FIRST* were still active in the program after 7 years.

⁵ Note: Throughout this summary, “impact” refers to the differences in outcomes between *FIRST* participants and corresponding members of the comparison group, after controlling for differences between the two groups on key measures at baseline. For example, impacts for *FIRST* participants as a whole are based on the difference in outcomes between all *FIRST* participants and all comparison group members; impacts for female *FIRST* participants are based on the comparison with female members of the comparison group. Impacts that are “statistically significant” are those that are large enough to be unlikely to have occurred by chance (less than a 5% probability).

Impacts on STEM-Related Attitudes (All Participants)

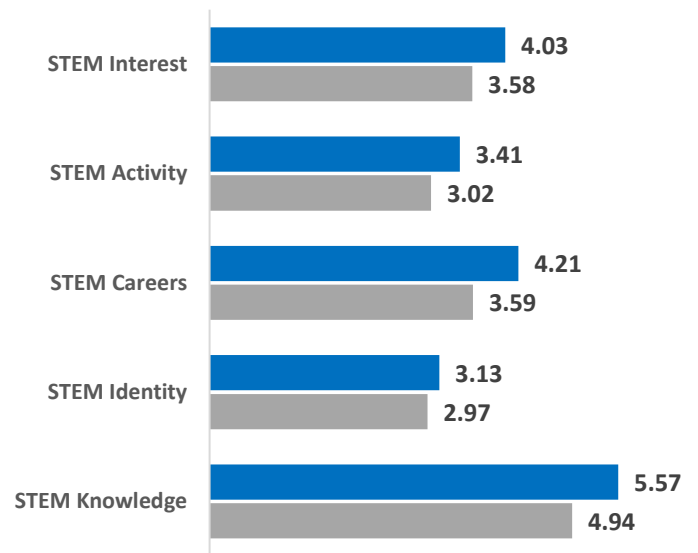
At 84 months, *FIRST* participants continue to show positive, statistically significant impacts on all of the STEM-related attitude measures in the study, including interest in STEM, involvement in STEM-related activities, STEM identity, STEM knowledge, and interest in STEM careers. *FIRST* participants are approximately twice as likely to show higher levels on STEM-related measures seven years after entering the program as students in the comparison group.

- ***FIRST* participants continue to show significantly higher levels on all measures of STEM-related interest and attitudes than members of the comparison group.** In each case, the “effect size” (a measure of the magnitude of the impact being measured) was large enough to indicate a *practical* difference in attitudes and interests.⁶ The STEM-related measures include:

- *Interest in STEM,*
- *Involvement in STEM-related activities,*
- *Interest in STEM careers,*
- *STEM identity* (for example, “I see myself as a math, science, or technology person”), and
- *STEM knowledge/understanding* (items include: “I want to learn more about science and technology,” “I have a good understanding of how engineers work to solve problems,” and “I can use math and science to make a difference in the world).”

- ***Consistently, FIRST participants have significantly higher levels on STEM-related measures than comparison students.***⁷ After controlling for differences in baseline characteristics and baseline scale scores, *FIRST* participants at 84 months continue to show significantly higher levels in STEM interest and attitudes.

STEM-Related Interests and Attitudes at 84 Months
(Averages in Scale Scores)



Note: All results are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. All impacts showed a medium to large effect size. STEM Interest, Activity and Careers are based on a 5 point scale; STEM Identity on a 4 point scale, and STEM Knowledge on a 7 point scale.

⁶ Based on “Linear Mixed Models” analysis (“Mixed”). The “mixed” analysis estimates average differences for participants vs. comparison students taking into account differences between the groups at baseline and using data from all available points in time (baseline, post-program, and follow-ups). In this instance, the “mixed” results measure whether the average levels for *FIRST* participants were greater than those experienced by comparison students and whether the differences were large enough to be statistically significant. The effect size (omega squared - ω^2) was “large” for the impact on STEM interest and “medium” for the other STEM outcome measures. Control variables are gender, race, any honors course, parental income, and parental support for STEM.

⁷ Based on “Logistic Regression” analysis (“Logit”). Logit analysis estimates the relative probability that participants and comparison students will achieve a particular outcome, after controlling for differences between the groups at baseline, including gender, race, any honors course, parental income, parental support for STEM, and interest in STEM at baseline. In this case, the Logit analysis measures whether *FIRST* participants are more (or less) likely than comparison students to show an increase from baseline to follow-up on each STEM-related measure (such as STEM interest) and whether those differences are statistically significant (i.e., unlikely to occur by chance). The “odds ratio” is the measure of the relative likelihood that *FIRST* participants will achieve that outcome (for example, “2.0 times more likely to show higher levels in STEM interest than comparison students”).

STEM INTEREST: *FIRST* participants are 2.2 times more likely than comparison students to be interested in STEM, from baseline to 84-month follow-up. *FIRST* participants are also:

- 2.1 times more likely to report a stronger *STEM identity*;
 - 1.9 times more likely to show higher interest in *STEM careers*;
 - 1.9 times more likely to show higher involvement in *STEM activity*; and
 - 1.8 times more likely to score higher in *STEM knowledge/understanding of STEM*.
- **The 84-month data also continue to show positive, statistically significant impacts on STEM-related outcomes for participants from all three *FIRST* programs in the study (*FIRST LEGO League Challenge, FIRST Tech Challenge, FIRST Robotics Competition*).** Participants from each of the three *FIRST* programs (program type at entry into *FIRST*) show significantly greater gains on STEM-related measures than comparison students from the same age/grade span.
 - ***STEM-related impacts continue to be evident across all major population groups and among students from historically underrepresented communities (compared to similar students in the comparison group).*** Each of the following groups – males and females, lower and higher income students (family incomes below and above \$50,000), White youth and historically underrepresented racial groups in STEM, and urban, suburban, and rural youth – shows significantly greater levels in STEM related attitudes for *FIRST* participants over counterparts among comparison group students.

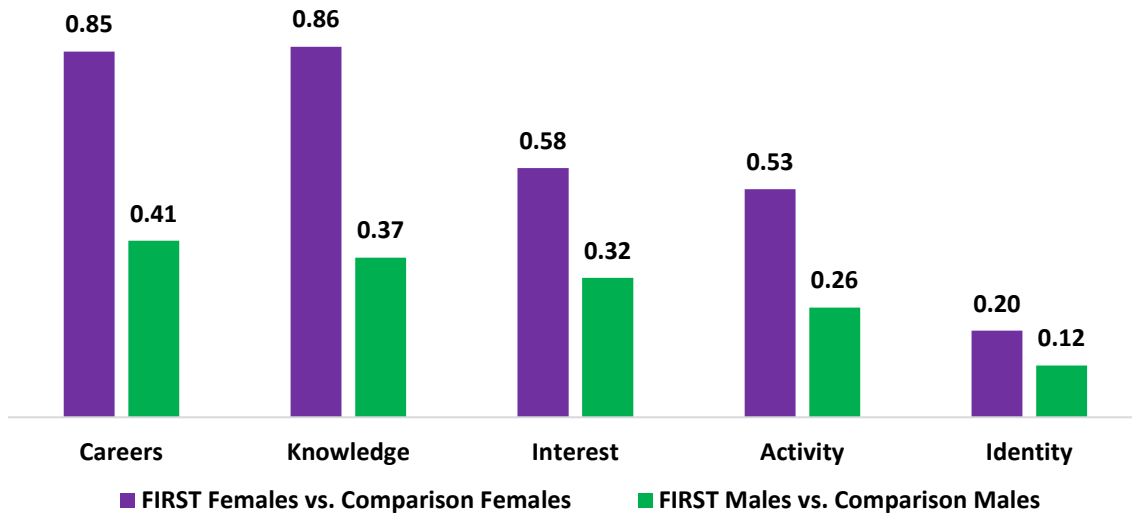
Positive and Significant Impacts for Underrepresented Communities

Outcomes	Girls and Young Women	Economically Disadvantaged	Underrepresented Racial Groups	Urban	Rural
STEM Interest	+	+	+	+	+
STEM Activity	+	+	+	+	+
STEM Careers	+	+	+	+	+
STEM Identity	+	+	[+]	+	+
STEM Knowledge	+	+	+	+	+

Note: + indicates a positive, significant impact at p<.05, [+] at p<.10. Impacts are relative to comparable subgroups in the comparison population (for example, girls and young women among *FIRST* participants are compared to girls and young women in the comparison group). Economically Disadvantaged is defined as those whose family income is below \$50,000. Underrepresented Racial Groups include Black or African-American, Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Multi-Racial. The number of youth who responded as non-gender-binary was too small for analysis.

- **While the data show positive impacts for both male and female participants in *FIRST*, female participants continue to show significantly greater impacts than male participants on all of the *STEM-related attitudinal measures*.** The chart below shows the differences in outcomes for young women in *FIRST* compared to young women in the comparison group, and for young men in *FIRST*, compared to young men in the comparison group. While all of the differences between *FIRST* participants and comparison students are statistically significant, the impacts for female participants in *FIRST* on each measure are also significantly greater than those for male participants.

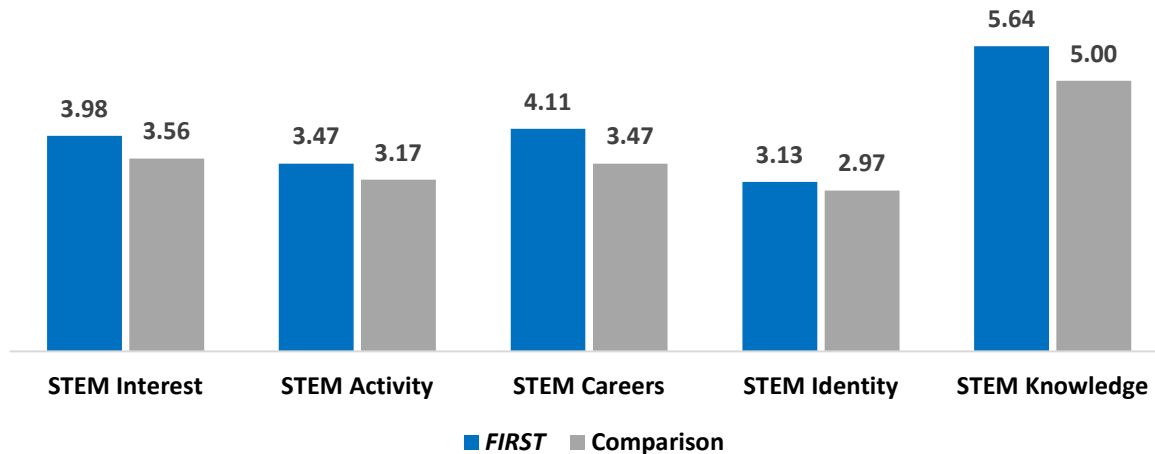
Differences in Scale Scores on STEM-Related Outcomes for Male and Female *FIRST* Team Members



Note: Values on the chart represent the differences in outcomes (estimated scale scores) between *FIRST* participants and students of the same gender in the comparison groups (i.e., the difference in scores between males in *FIRST* and males in the comparison group and between females in *FIRST* and female comparison students). All differences are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$.

FIRST's impacts on STEM-related attitudes and interests persist into college. *FIRST* alumni continue to show consistent higher scores than comparison students on measures of interest in STEM, STEM activity, interest in STEM careers, STEM identity, and STEM knowledge and understanding through the fourth year of college. Both male and female alumni show significant impacts; however, female *FIRST* alumni continue to show significantly higher levels than male alumni on all STEM measures.

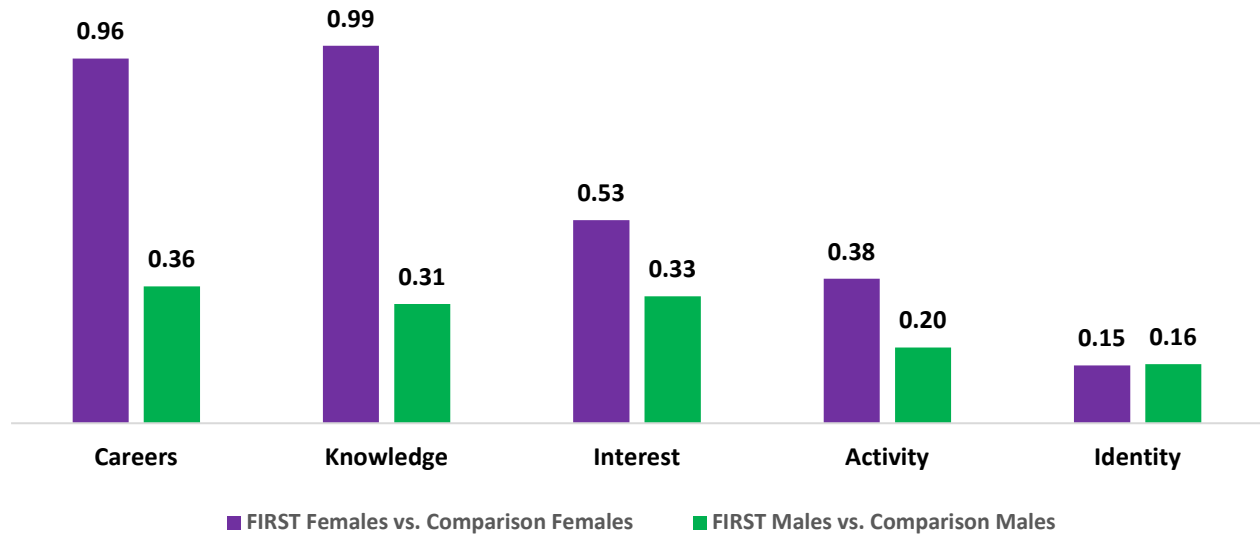
STEM-Related Interests and Attitudes in 4th Year of College



Note: All results are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. STEM Interest, Activity and Careers are based on a 5 point scale; STEM Identity on a 4 point scale, and STEM Knowledge on a 7 point scale.

FIRST participants consistently show significant higher levels on STEM outcomes than comparison students of the same gender. These differences are greatest for young women when comparing *FIRST* participants with female comparison group members.

Differences in Scale Scores between *FIRST* and Comparison Group on STEM-Related Interests and Attitudes in 4th Year of College, by Gender



Note: Values on the chart represent the differences in outcomes (estimated scale scores) between *FIRST* alumni and students of the same gender in the comparison groups (i.e., the difference in scores between males in *FIRST* and males in the comparison group and between females in *FIRST* and female comparison students). All differences are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$.

Impacts on College Pathways through Four Years of College

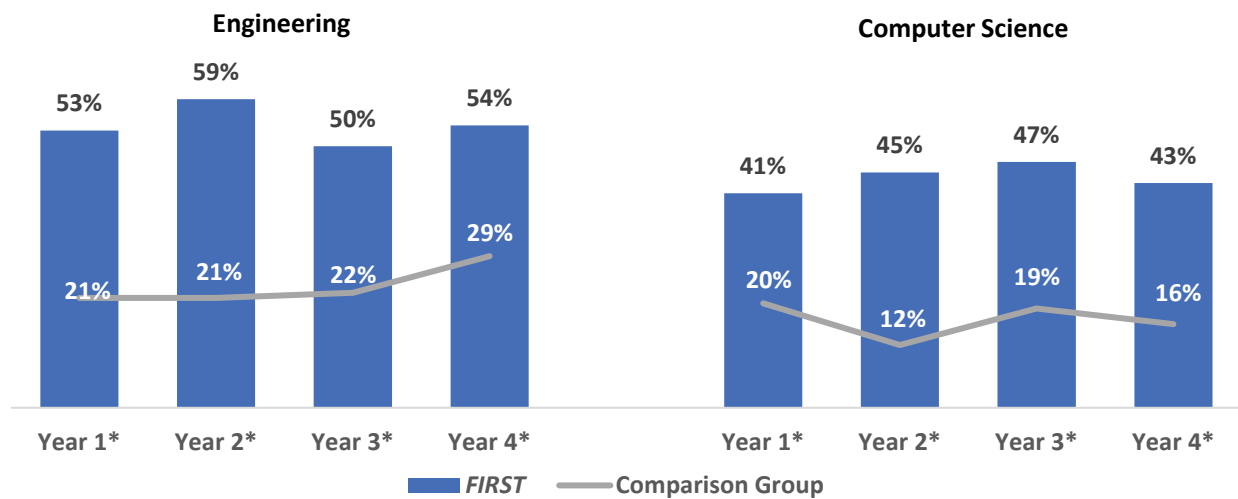
In addition to its impacts on STEM-related interests and attitudes, participation in *FIRST* has a significant impact on the education trajectories of *FIRST* alumni attending college. Through their fourth year of college, *FIRST* alumni are significantly more interested in majoring in engineering and computer science than comparison students; are more likely to take engineering and computer science courses; and are more likely to have declared majors in engineering and computer science. By the fourth year of college, 81.3% of *FIRST* alumni were majoring in a STEM-related field compared to 57.9% of comparison students; 68.0% had declared a major in engineering or computer science vs. 29.3% for comparison students. In most cases, these differences held for both male and female *FIRST* alumni.

- ***FIRST* alumni report significantly stronger interest in majoring in engineering and computer science than comparison students through the first four years of college.** *FIRST* alumni were significantly more likely than comparison students to be “very interested” in majoring in engineering and computer science than comparison students throughout four years of college.
 - In engineering, the difference in interest was also statistically significant in all four years, though the gap narrowed slightly by Year 4. In Year 1, *FIRST* alumni were more than 2.5 times

as likely to be interested in majoring in engineering than comparison students; 2.8 times more likely in Year 2; 2.3 times more likely in Year 3; and 1.9 times more likely in Year 4.⁸

- In computer science, the gap in interest between *FIRST* alumni and comparison students widened from Year 1 through Year 4. *FIRST* alumni were 2.0 times more likely to be interested in majoring in computer science than comparison students in Year 1; 3.8 times more likely in Year 2; 2.5 times more likely in Year 3; and were 2.7 times more likely in Year 4.⁹

Interest in Engineering and Computer Science Majors, Years 1-4 in College (Percent "Very Interested")

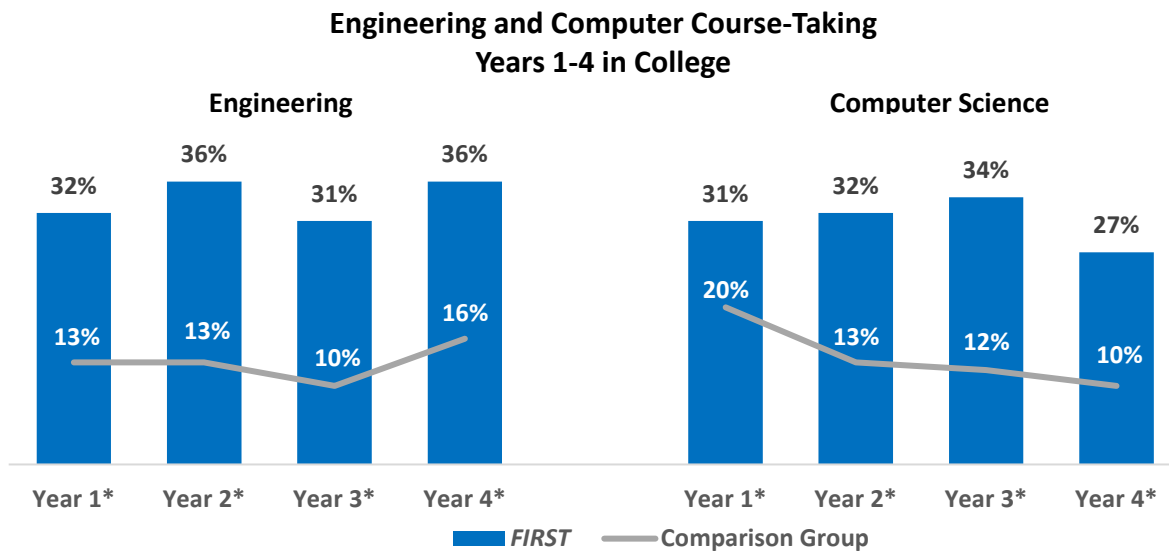


Note: Based on a question asking students to rate their interest in majoring in each of the listed subjects. Values shown are percent of students who are "very interested" in the specified major (i.e., reporting 6, 7 or "already declared" on a scale from 1 "Not Interested at All" to 7 "Very Interested"). Asterisk (*) indicates statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. *FIRST* alumni also showed significantly stronger interest in majoring in Robotics (not shown) in all four years.

⁸ In the discussion of college outcomes, the percentages used represent raw, "unadjusted" percentages. The relative likelihood of an outcome (example, 3.2 times more likely to be interested in an engineering major) and analysis of statistical significance are based on Logistic Regression analysis adjusting for differences in baseline characteristics.

⁹ In the discussion of college outcomes, the percentages used represent raw, "unadjusted" percentages. The relative likelihood of an outcome (example, 2.8 times more likely to be interested in an engineering major) and analysis of statistical significance are based on Logistic Regression analysis adjusting for differences in baseline characteristics.

- FIRST alumni are also significantly more likely to take engineering or computer science courses during their four years in college than comparison students.** In their first year of college, 32% of FIRST alumni were taking an engineering course, compared to 13% in the comparison group, and 20% a computer science course, compared to 20% of comparison students. In their second college year, 36% of FIRST alumni were taking engineering and 32% computer sciences courses, compared to 13% of comparison students in each field. By the third year of college, 31% of FIRST alumni reported taking at least one engineering class and 34% reported taking at least one computer science course compared to roughly 11% of comparison students. By the fourth year of college, 36% of FIRST alumni reported taking an engineering course and 16% for the comparison group. For computer science, 27% of the FIRST alumni reported taking a computer science course, compared to just 10% among the comparison group.

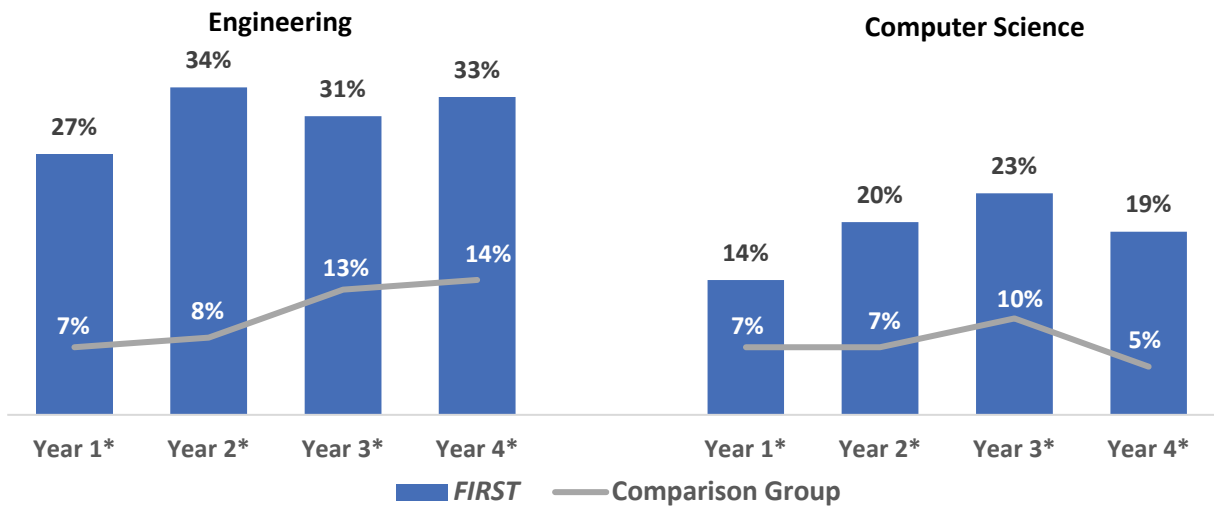


Note: Percentage of full-time students who reported taking at least one course in Engineering and/or Computer Science. Asterisk (*) indicates statistically significant at $p \leq .05$.

- Consistent with their greater interest in engineering and computer science majors and increased course-taking in those fields, FIRST alumni are significantly more likely than comparison students to declare a major in engineering or computer science during their four years of college. They are also significantly more likely than comparison students to declare a major in a STEM field generally by the end of their fourth year of college.**
 - Engineering majors:** FIRST alumni were also significantly more likely to declare a major in engineering through four years of college than comparison students: 27% vs. 7% in the first year of college, 34% vs. 8% in Year 2, 31% vs. 13% in Year 3 and 33% vs. 14% in Year 4. In Year 4, FIRST alumni were more than 2.3 times as likely to major in engineering as comparison students.
 - Computer science majors:** In all four years of college, FIRST alumni declared a major in computer science at a significantly higher rate than comparison students: 14% vs. 7% in the first year of college, 20% vs. 7% in Year 2, 23% vs. 10% in Year 3 and 19% vs. 5% in Year 4. Overall, in Year 3, FIRST alumni were nearly twice as likely (1.9 times) as comparison students to major in computer science.

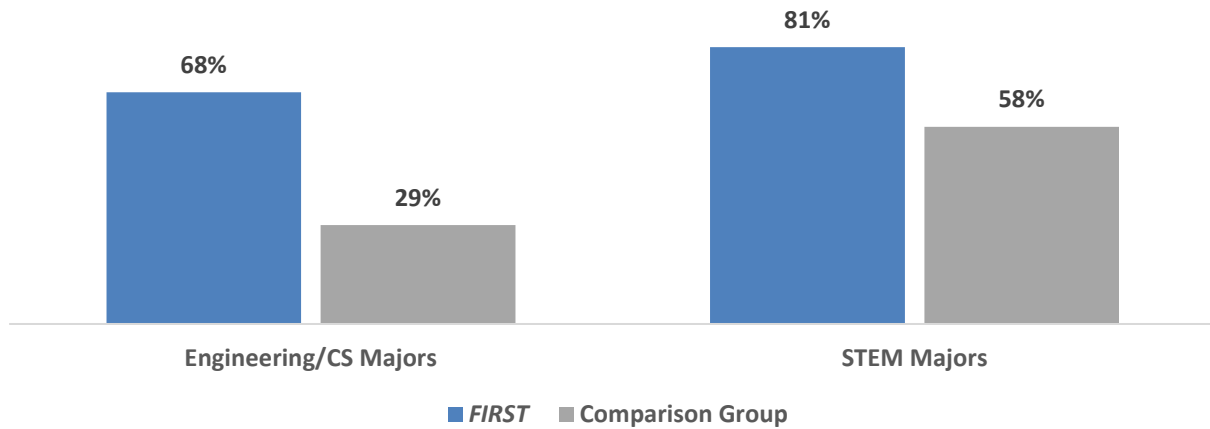
Engineering and Computer Science Majors Years 1-4 of College

(Percent of those who Declared Majors)



Note: Percent of students who declared a major in specified fields as a percentage of all those who declared a major in that year. Asterisk () indicates statistically significant at $p \leq .05$.

Engineering/Computer Science Majors and STEM Majors - Year 4



Note: Data represents percentages of those who declared a major in years 1-4 of college. All differences are statistically significant, $p \leq .05$. STEM fields include: Biology, Computer Science, Engineering, Health Professions, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, vocational/ technical fields, and Robotics.

- *Engineering/Computer Science*: By Year 4, 68% of FIRST alumni had declared a major in either computer science or engineering vs. 29% of students in the comparison group.
- *STEM majors overall*: FIRST alumni were also more likely to declare a major in a STEM field generally. By the end of Year 4 in college, of those who had declared a major, 81% of FIRST alumni overall had declared a major in a STEM-related field compared to 58% of comparison students.

- In addition to the greater likelihood of taking courses and majoring in STEM fields, *FIRST* alumni were also significantly more likely to be engaged in STEM-related activities during their first and second year at college than comparison students.** As the table to the right shows, in most years *FIRST* alumni were more likely to have a STEM-related internship, join a computer or engineering club, participate in a computer or engineering competition, receive an engineering-related grant or scholarship, and have a STEM-related summer job than comparison students. The exceptions to this overall trend were participation in computer science competitions in Year 3 and Year 4, where a smaller percentage of *FIRST* alumni participated than in prior years, and in STEM-related summer jobs in Year 4, where the difference in percentages was still substantial (22% vs. 10%) but not statistically significant.

STEM-Related Activities in Year 1-4 of College

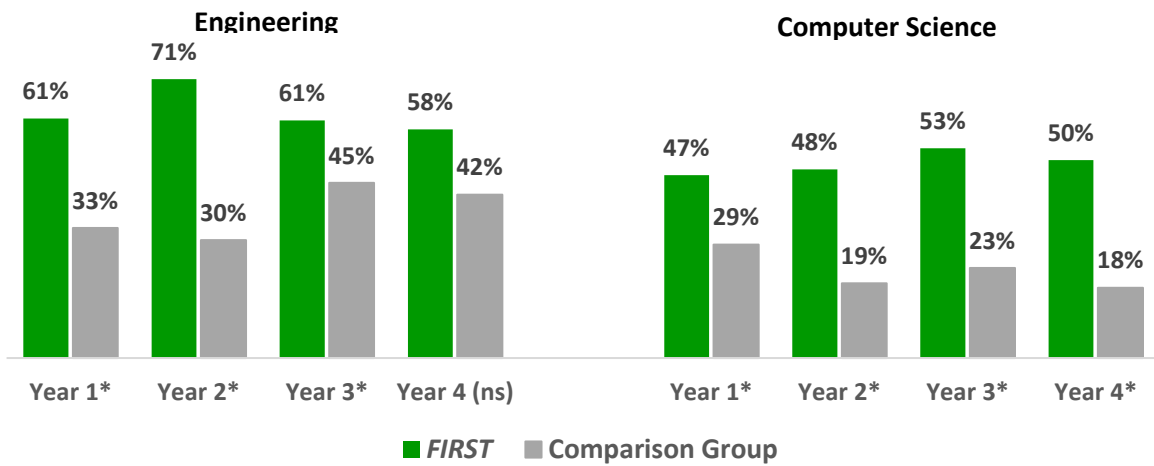
Activity		<i>FIRST</i>	Comparison
STEM-Related Internship	Yr1*	15.9%	5.8%
	Yr2*	19.4%	13.3%
	Yr3*	33.5%	17.1%
	Yr4*	37.1%	23.2%
Joined Computer Club	Yr1*	15.3%	6.0%
	Yr2*	18.0%	5.6%
	Yr3*	16.1%	6.7%
	Yr4*	18.1%	6.1%
Joined Engineering Club	Yr1*	26.3%	10.2%
	Yr2*	26.1%	7.1%
	Yr3*	26.2%	8.4%
	Yr4*	23.4%	7.5%
Participate in a Computer Competition	Yr1*	7.3%	3.2%
	Yr2*	6.9%	2.7%
	Yr3	4.8%	3.0%
	Yr4	3.5%	2.8%
Participate in an Engineering Competition	Yr1*	9.8%	3.5%
	Yr2*	10.2%	3.1%
	Yr3*	8.9%	3.6%
	Yr4	7.9%	3.9%
Received Engineering-Related Grant or Scholarship*	Yr1*	7.5%	3.8%
	Yr2*	8.4%	4.2%
	Yr3*	9.6%	2.4%
	Yr4	6.7%	3.1%
STEM-Related Summer Job	Yr1*	13.5%	6.7%
	Yr2*	14.6%	7.6%
	Yr3*	17.2%	11.6%
	Yr4	22.2%	10.0%

Note: Asterisk () indicates differences that are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$. Significance tests do not include adjustments for baseline differences.*

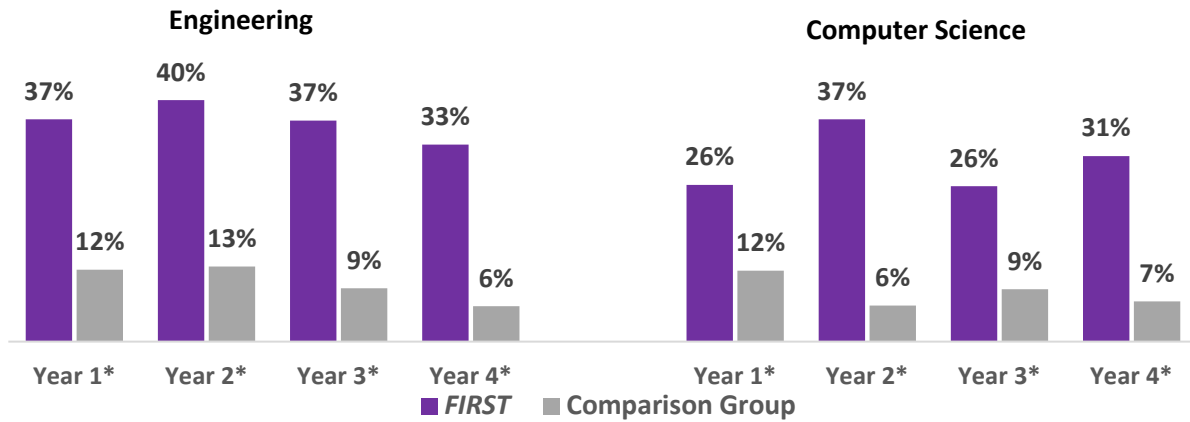
Gender Differences in College Pathways

In general, the impacts on college pathways were shared by both male and female *FIRST* alumni. By the fourth year of college, both male and female *FIRST* alumni were significantly more likely to have majored in engineering or computer science, and in STEM majors generally. At the same time, the college outcome data show somewhat different patterns of impact between males and females during the four years of college. In general, the gap between *FIRST* and comparison group males in interest in engineering and computer science majors, engineering and computer science course-taking, and declared majors in engineering and computer science narrowed over time, largely through increased involvement of comparison students in engineering and computer science. In contrast, **the gap between female *FIRST* alumni and comparison students continued to widen through the four years of college, with female *FIRST* alumni significantly more likely to be interested in engineering and computer science, to take engineering and computer science courses, and to major in engineering.** More Female *FIRST* alumni majored in computer science through all four years, though the differences with young women in the comparison group were not statistically significant. Next, we present these patterns in more detail.

Percent "Very Interested" in Engineering and Computer Science Majors in Years 1-4 of College - Males



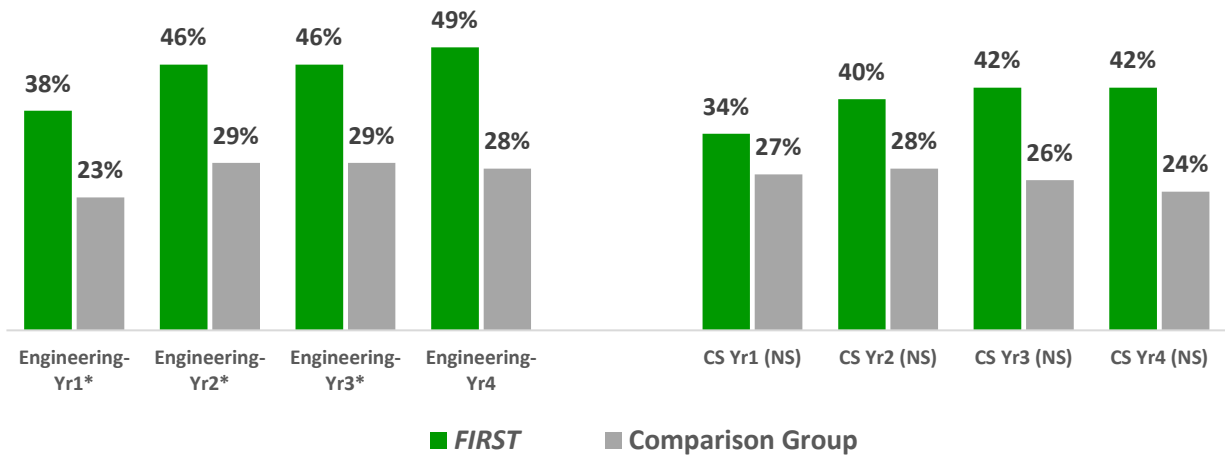
Percent "Very Interested" in Engineering and Computer Science Majors in Years 1-4 of College - Females



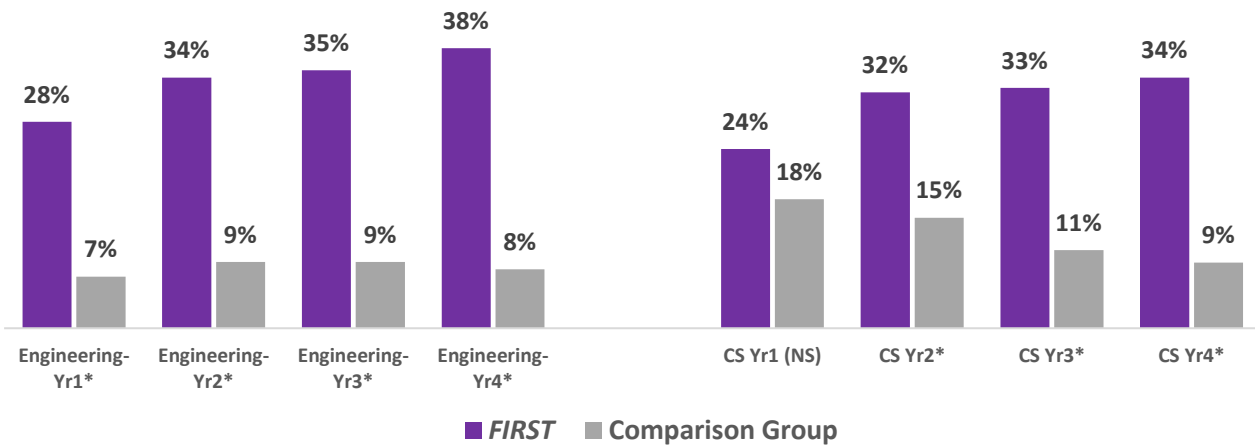
Note: Values shown are percent of students who are "very interested" in the specified major (i.e., reporting 6, 7 or "already declared" on a scale from 1 "Not Interested at All" to 7 "Very Interested"). Asterisk (*) indicates statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. NS indicates that differences are not statistically significant.

- While FIRST alumni were significantly more likely to be highly interested in majoring in engineering and computer science than comparison students, the patterns for male and female alumni were different.** Over four years of college, the gap in interest in engineering majors narrowed between male FIRST alumni and male comparison group members as interest grew among comparison group members, so that by Year 4, the difference in interest was no longer significant. (Male FIRST alumni continued to be significantly more interested in computer science majors through all four years.) Female FIRST alumni, in contrast, were significantly more interested in both engineering and computer science majors through the first four years of college, with the difference in computer science growing more substantial over time.

**Engineering and Computer Science Course-Taking
in Years 1-4 in College - Males**



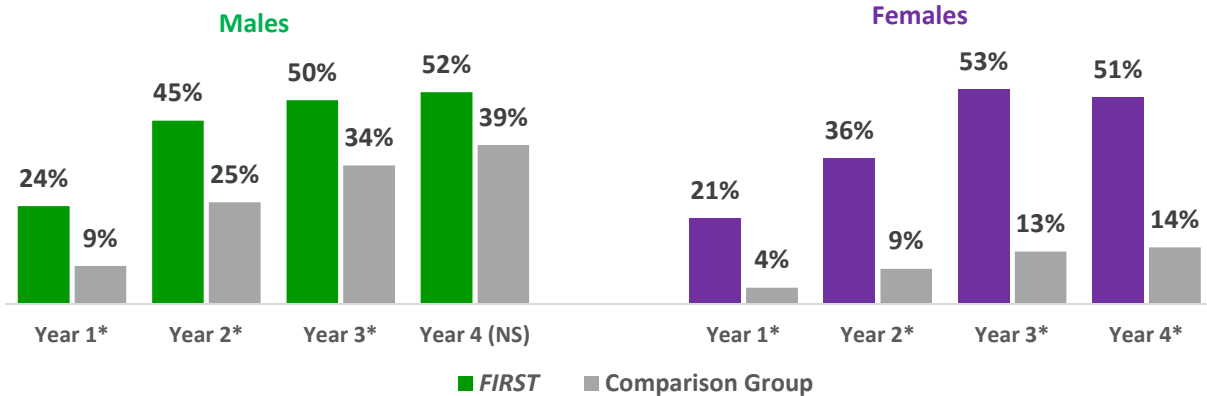
**Engineering and Computer Science Course-Taking
in Years 1-4 in College - Females**



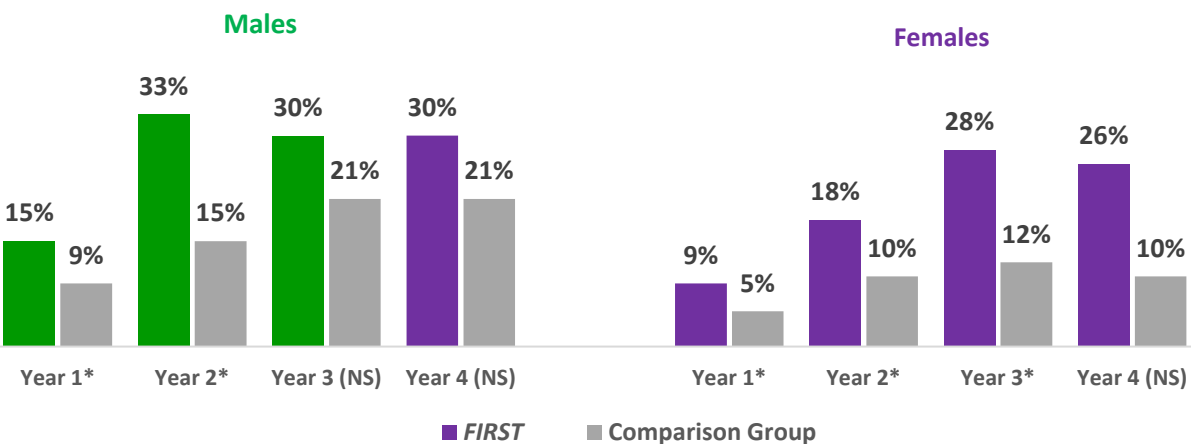
Note: Percentage of full-time students who reported taking at least one course in Engineering and/or Computer Science. Asterisk () indicates statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. NS indicates that differences are not statistically significant.*

- **Over the first 4 years of college, the gap in engineering and computer science course-taking remained relatively stable (and in the case of computer science, not significant) for males, but grew and became statistically significant between female FIRST alumni and comparison young women.** By Year 4, the percentages of female FIRST alumni taking courses in engineering and computer science were both three times higher than that for young women in the comparison group (38% vs. 8% in engineering and 34% vs. 9% in computer science).
- **In terms of declared majors, the gap in declared majors in engineering between male FIRST alumni and comparison males narrowed substantially over the four years of college, largely as a result of a substantial increase in engineering majors among comparison males.** By Year 4, the difference between male FIRST alumni and male comparison group members was no longer significant.
- **Among young women, however, the gap widened substantially, and female FIRST alumni continued to declare majors in engineering at a significantly higher rate than women in the comparison group.** Notably, by Year 4, 51% of female FIRST alumni had declared majors in engineering, a rate comparable to that of their male counterparts.

Declared Majors in Engineering, Years 1- 4 in College



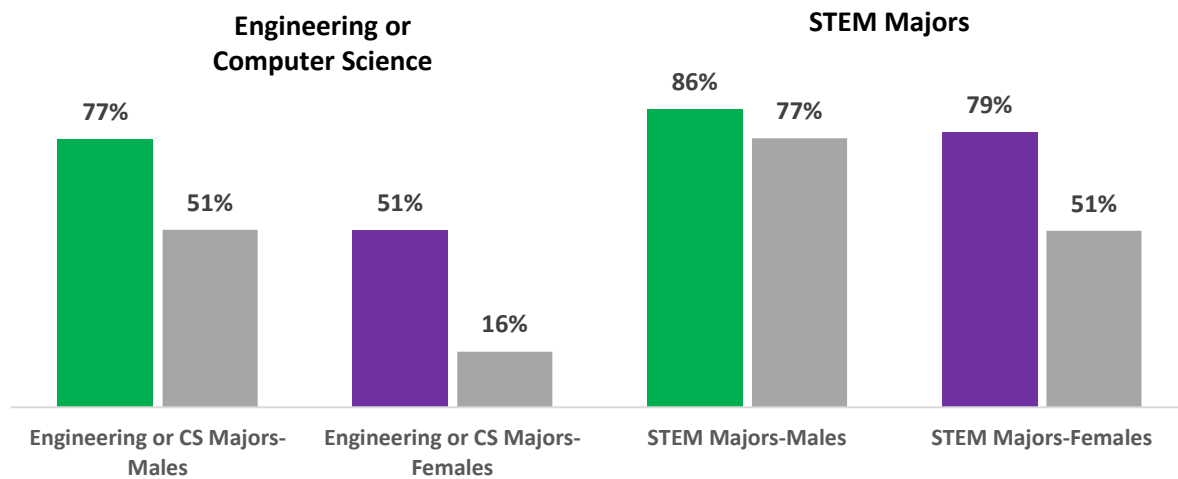
Declared Majors in Computer Science, Years 1-4 in College



Note: Percentage of students who declared a major years 1-4 of college. Asterisk (*) indicates statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. NS indicates that differences are not statistically significant.

- **In computer science, the pattern was similar:** by Year 4, the gap in computer science majors between male FIRST alumni and male comparison students had narrowed, while the gap between female FIRST alumni and comparison women had grown, though because of the small numbers of women in computer science overall, the difference was not statistically significant.
- **Finally, while there are variations between results for male and female FIRST alumni when engineering and computer science majors are looked at separately, when engineering and computer science majors are combined and when looking across STEM majors as a whole, both male and female FIRST alumni are significantly more likely to major in STEM fields than their comparison group counterparts.** Overall, 77% of male and 51% of female FIRST alumni declared a major in engineering or computer science by the fourth year of college (compared to 51% and 16% of comparison students respectively); 86% of male and 79% of female FIRST alumni declared a major in a STEM-related field (compared to 77% of male and 51% of female comparison group members).

Engineering and Computer Science Majors and STEM Majors - Year 4, by Gender



Note: Data represents percentages of those who declared a major in years 1-4 of college. All differences are statistically significant, $p \leq .05$. STEM fields include: Biology, Engineering, Computer Science, Health Professions, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, vocational/ technical fields, and Robotics.

Conclusion

Seven years after entering FIRST, program participants continue to show consistently greater increases in STEM-related interests and attitudes than similar students in the comparison group. Positive impacts on STEM-related attitudes and interests are evident across all three FIRST programs in the study and across all of the major population groups. FIRST's impacts on STEM-related attitudes are particularly strong for female participants who generally show significantly greater levels than those experienced by male program participants. Data on students through their first three years of college shows FIRST's positive impacts on STEM-related attitudes and interests continue into postsecondary education, with FIRST alumni continuing to show positive impacts on STEM-related attitudes through the fourth year of college.

For those in college, the data from the study also show that FIRST has a positive impact on students' engagement in college pathways in engineering, computer science, and STEM-related fields in general.

Through the fourth year in college, *FIRST* alumni are significantly more likely to be interested in technology-related majors, take courses in engineering and computer science, and declare majors in engineering, computer science, and STEM-related fields more broadly. Here, too, while both male and female *FIRST* alumni show positive impacts on interest, course-taking and declared majors, the results for female *FIRST* alumni are particularly strong, with female alumni consistently engaging in STEM-related fields at a rate significantly higher than female comparison students. While the study will continue to follow students to and through postsecondary education, the results to date already indicate that *FIRST* is making a lasting difference in career interests and educational choices for the young people who participate in the program.