

Dear Judges,

Thank you very much for offering your valuable time and expertise to provide feedback on my senior project. I greatly appreciate all of your consideration in sharing beneficial comments to further strengthen my senior project and its impact on the community.

My name is Ramsha Saleem and my senior project is “Closing the Gender Gap in STEM”. The purpose of this project is to investigate the development of the gender divide within the STEM workforce as well as possible solutions. Through this project, I hope to bring about a change within the educational and social environment, heavily undermining the STEM stereotypes that work to discourage young girls from the STEM field.

Interested in aerospace engineering myself, throughout my middle and high school career, I have always found myself intrigued with math and science. I had joined several robotics teams and competing in science fairs, further building upon my curiosity of the limitless opportunities to make a positive impact with STEM. However, as I delved deeper into the STEM community, I began to observe the difficulties women in STEM face by being underrepresented and consistently dissuaded through the dominant male portrayal found in the field. I wish to change this, not only through my senior project, but with my future education and career as well. If the STEM workforce continues to have a lack of diversity, experience, and background, the future of the world will remain gray. A successful engineer or scientist is not defined by gender, but by a plethora of skills and knowledge, all of which are driven by the passion to help make everything better.

Through the process of completing this project, I have gained an invaluable understanding of my topic and my relationship to it. I was able to learn the ways certain institutional practices discourage female members from upward mobility in the STEM field. I began to see how our current educational system has particular trends that don't work to empower girls in STEM. Instead, these practices adversely affect a girl's outlook on science and math. Through this project, I was able to find possible solutions to the oppressive gender gap in the field, as well as ways to inspire girls in the classroom and beyond. Moreover, the undertaking of the senior project to its completion has allowed me to develop my time management and communication skills. Overall, this experience has prepared me to be a contributing member of the community upon graduating from high school.

Once again, I thank you for your commitment to providing critical insight for my senior project. I am very grateful for the opportunity to present my senior project to you.

With sincere gratitude,  
Ramsha Saleem