Improving outcomes for underrepresented women in science: The Achieving Excellence in Mathematics, Engineering, and Science (AEMES) programs at Smith College

Laura A. Katz
lkatz@smith.edu

Kathryn M. Aloisio
Institutional Research, kaloisio@smith.edu

Yadira Flores
Smith College

Nicholas J. Horton
Smith College

Valerie Joseph
Smith College

See next page for additional authors

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In order to capture the full trajectory of students’ academic pathways, we focus our analyses on alumnae over time, comparing Smith students graduating before and after AEMES’ launch, with a particular focus on the early years of college. In each cohort, we compare students of color and majority students (i.e., those whose families have not historically been underrepresented in STEM) in STEM early in their time at Smith College.

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Smith College has a strong commitment to educating diverse women in the sciences. We designed the AEMES programs to ensure access for all students interested in STEM, with a particular focus on the early years of college. Since AEMES’ launch, the gap in gateway course performance has closed, with current students of color now having significantly higher levels of persistence in the life sciences compared to when AEMES began, exhibiting rates exceeding national rates for STEM fields. Additionally, the program has increased the number of students of color studying STEM early in their time at Smith College.


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