



UMSL Computer Science students and faculty at the *Grace Hopper Celebration for Women in Computing* in Orlando. Left to right: Dani Pavlat, Sharlee Climer, Ashley Maynez, Amarilda Dyrmishi, and Mrinal Rawool.

Women were prominent in the early history of Computer Science and Grace Hopper was one example, having designed the first compiler. She believed that a programming language based on English was possible – and accomplished this daunting task. In the process, she developed a high-level language that evolved into COBOL, which is still widely used today. The percentage of women in Computer Science has steadily fallen since the mid 1980's and the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing (GHC) is dedicated to reversing this trend, in fact taking on the ambitious goal of 50/50 representation by 2025.

UMSL Computer Science students Amarilda Dyrmishi, Ashley Maynez, Dani Pavlat, and Mrinal Rawool, along with Assistant Professor Sharlee Climer, experienced GHC firsthand. Climer, recipient of Microsoft's Faculty Scholar award, says "Despite the fact that the speakers are prominent leaders, they are surprisingly personable and somehow managed to feel like close personal friends to thousands of people at once. I think it might be the shared experiences that they openly recognized and honestly discussed."

Dyrmishi, a senior in UMSL's Computer Science program and President of WomenCAN, a student club aimed at increasing recruitment and retention of women in Computer Science, says "You could tell how great of an experience it will be as soon as you walk in for the opening keynote and you find yourself surrounded by 25,000 diverse women. Hearing amazing women leaders and innovators talk about their most recent research and creative ideas was inspiring and a learning experience in itself. I am glad I was offered the opportunity to attend the world's largest gathering of women technologists, thank you UMSL!"



Amarilda Dyrmishi (L) and graduate student Mrinal Rawool (R) pose with a Grace Hopper frame in the Career Hall and at a booth at the closing celebration.