The world of computing is known, even by other scientists, for not being fair to everyone. It lacks diversity, and this is a critical problem since it means computer scientists lack a wide range of viewpoints and knowledge that different perspectives can offer. But, the underrepresentation of women and people of color isn’t due to their lack of interest or talent. Rather, biased societal perceptions persist about who belongs in computing that ultimately limits underrepresented students’ access to quality and culturally relevant computing curriculum and pedagogy.

The more meaningful we can make computing to underrepresented students, the more engaged they will become in learning the material. Underrepresented students were asked directly about how to make computing more meaningful, and they shared about wanting creative freedom, clearer connections to real life, and caring teachers.

Since computing touches every career field and each of our lives individually, it is important to ensure that students from minority backgrounds feel confident in their ability to study computing. In particular, empowering students to use CS in ways that support their identity and agency while challenging discrimination in unfair computing systems will lead to greater engagement with the field.