



# Thesis Defense

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Computer Science Master's Program

## **“Investigation of Social Networks In University upon Belongingness and Mental Health”**

By Rachel Izenon

### **Abstract:**

It has been shown that computing students have a statistically significantly lower overall sense of belongingness compared to other science students. A sense of community is important for many reasons. For example, there are studies that show that a student's sense of belonging correlates with improved academic performance. Our research aims to analyze students at a predominantly undergraduate public university in the United States for their sense of belonging through a network science lens. We surveyed for their sense of belonging, as well as their social network, to understand how friendships impact one's sense of belonging. When student responses were split by gender, males reported having a higher sense of belonging than females, and females reported higher belongingness than transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming individuals. The four nodes with the highest out-degree on the social network that was constructed were all professors, indicating the importance of student-faculty relationships.

**Date: Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Time: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM**

**Location: 14-232b**

**Zoom: <https://calpoly.zoom.us/j/5535567280>**

**Committee: Dr. Migler, Dr. Keen, and Dr. Wood**

