



Women in Science and Engineering Initiative
McMaster University

Year End Report 2016-2017



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1. Introduction

The WISE Initiative was formed after a survey of female graduate students conducted during the summer of 2006 revealed a strong need for a forum at McMaster University in which female graduate students can identify, discuss, and learn about gender-related issues specific to their field of work and study.

2. Mission Statement

The McMaster Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Initiative is an integrated network of academics and professionals in science and engineering whose mission it is to support, celebrate and advocate for women in science and engineering at McMaster University.

3. Objectives

Our main objectives are to create a supportive network of female mentors, increase issue-specific education for students, and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and communication. The WISE Initiative uses a multifaceted approach, through:

3.1 Networking

- Networking: Social events and Mentor the Month lecture series
- Fostering academics: Professional development workshops and our annual multi-disciplinary research conference (Current Research in Engineering, Science and Technology, *CREST*)
- Showcasing research by undergraduate and graduate students in STEM

3.2 Mentorship

- Mentor of the Month lecture series, highlighting outstanding female mentors at McMaster and within the Hamilton community
- Panel discussions of invited speakers within academia and industry

3.3 Advocacy

- Instigating and facilitating discussion with senior administrations regarding women in science and engineering
- Communicating with other WISE groups across Canada

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For a directory of the 2017-2018 Steering Committee, see our 2017-2018 Prospectus

Reception for the WISE Executive Committee

Reception for the WISE Executive Committee

Graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty in the sciences and engineering were invited to attend a reception held in the Life Science Building (LSB) Student Lounge. The main objectives of the event were to provide an opportunity for students and faculty to network with members in different departments and encourage joining the WISE executive committee. The reception was attended by approximately 20 people.

Launch of the Mentor of the Month Lecture Series

In October 2014, WISE launched our Mentor of the Month lecture series where a female faculty or industry mentor is invited to lead an interactive discussion on career development, gender equity issues and/or non-academic aspects of being a female in STEM.

This past year, our monthly series was consistently well attended by over 35-40 undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty. This past year's mentors and topics were:

- Susan Searls Giroux: "The University We Are For" (October 5, 2016)
- Kim Jones: "Shifting Gears - The Benefits of a Crooked Path" (November 16, 2016)
- Gillian Goward: "Going Incognito: Using Merit to Minimize Gender Identity and Succeed in a Professional Career" (December 14, 2016)
- Sarah Dickson: "Maintaining Work-life Balance" (January 26, 2017)
- Emily Cranston: "How to Land Your Dream Job, Even if You're Not Sure What it is Yet!" (February 15, 2017)
- Judith West-Mays: "Getting Out of the Comfort Zone" (April 19, 2017)
- Alison Sills: "The Third Pillar" (May 24, 2017)
- Dawn Bowdish: "Speaking as an Expert... Finding Your Scientific Voice and Using it for the Greater Good" (June 21, 2017)
- Irina Pushkareva: "Finding YOUR Way" (July 19, 2017)

Cookie Decorating and Hot Chocolate Social

To end the Fall Semester, WISE held a cookie decorating and hot chocolate social that welcomed all undergraduate and graduate students. The aim of this event was to provide a safe space for women and allies in STEM to meet and socialize in a casual setting. Furthermore, it provided students with a more intimate setting to meet and talk to the WISE executive team to learn more about our mission, objectives and future events in the upcoming year. Approximately 20 graduate students attended.

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Our 10th annual research conference, CREST (formerly the WISE International Women's Day Conference) was held on March 10-11, 2017. The two day conference consisted of two interactive workshops, two career panels (academic and non-academic careers) and a total of 21 student oral presentations. Our keynote talk was given by Dr. Veena Rawat, a world-renowned Electrical Engineer and Expert in Telecommunications. Furthermore, this was the inaugural year to launch our community outreach program, EngSci Girl, that catered towards high school girls interested in pursuing careers in STEM. A portion of each CREST registration was donated to the "Visions of Science Network for Learning," a not-for-profit organization that aims to advance the education achievement and career aspirations of youth with an interest in STEM from low-income and marginalized communities. Approximately 100 people attended the conference.

Below are detailed highlights of each of the events held at the conference. Additional details can be found in the conference proceedings, which are available on request or via our website.

Our keynote speaker this year was Dr. Veena Rawat, the current President and CEO of Expert Strategies International. She is the former President of the Communications Research Center – the only Canadian federal government research lab performing research in communication technologies. Later on in her career, she worked as Vice President and Ambassador to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for Blackberry. Throughout her career, she received numerous national and international awards including the ITU's gold medal by the Secretary General, the Government of Canada's highest Public Service Award of Excellence and became an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2014 for her contributions in telecommunications engineering in facilitating global regulatory framework for radio spectrum management. Dr. Rawat's keynote talk entitled "Women in Science and Engineering: Challenges and Opportunities," discussed the experiences and challenges she faced throughout her incredible career being a female in a male dominated field with the aim of providing insights and strategies to guide women planning to pursue careers in STEM.

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CREST 2017 Conference (above) and EngSci Girl @ CREST 2017 (below)
Photo Credit: Nadeen Shaabana

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Final Social

Our final social for the 2016-2017 year consisted of an interactive tour of the McMaster Museum of Art facilitated by two tour guides at the Museum. After the tour, appetizers and refreshments were served at the Phoenix and attendees were able to closely interact with WISE executive members in a more casual setting. Being the last event of the year, the social was held to celebrate all the hardwork of the executive team in carrying out many successful events throughout the year. Overall, there were approximately 30 attendees at the social.

See Appendix 2 for a list of WISE Initiative events from 2006-2016.

Raising Funds

The WISE committee approached various internal and external sources to raise the necessary funds to cover our budget. We were thrilled to receive many positive words of encouragement for our initiative. Even during these difficult economic times, we were able to raise over \$8,000!

Summary of Fundraising

	Item Total
Social Events (see list of WISE events, pp. 3)	
- New Member Information Night	\$168.78
- Mentor of the Month events (9 total)	\$1946.76
- WISE December Social	\$129.78
- WISE August Social	\$116.62
WISE CREST Annual Meeting 2017 (see Table 2, below)	\$2,361.94
Subtotal (without conference):	\$2,361.94
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	Description	Item Total
Administrative	Advertising, "Thank-you" cards, Room Bookings with AV Rental etc., Name Tags	\$372.64
Food Services	Breakfast, lunch, wine & cheese social, coffee	\$3069.85
Finishing Touches	Floral arrangements, Gifts for Panelists, Speakers & Keynote, Prizes for Best Talks	\$459.04
Conference Package	Proceedings	\$342.12
Travel	Airfare, Accommodations & Rental Car for Keynote. Parking for Panelists	\$708.84
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The 2016-2017 WISE Initiative steering committee would like to extend their great appreciation to the following McMaster sponsors, without whom our goals would be impossible to achieve.

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WISE New Member Information Night (September 20, 2016)

Mentor of the Month:

- Susan Searls Giroux: "The University We Are For" (October 5, 2016)
- Kim Jones: "Shifting Gears - The Benefits of a Crooked Path" (November 16, 2016)
- Gillian Goward: "Going Incognito: Using Merit to Minimize Gender Identity and Succeed in a Professional Career" (December 14, 2016)
- Sarah Dickson: "Maintaining Work-life Balance" (January 26, 2017)
- Emily Cranston: "How to land your dream job, even if you're not sure what it is yet!" (February 15, 2017)
- Judith West-Mays: "Getting out of the comfort zone" (April 19, 2017)
- Alison Sills: "The Third Pillar" (May 24, 2017)
- Dawn Bowdish: "Speaking as an expert...Finding your scientific voice and using it for the greater good" (June 21, 2017)
- Irina Pushkareva: "Finding YOUR Way" (July 19, 2017)

WISE Winter Social: Cookie-Decorating and Hot Chocolate (December 7, 2016)

WISE Current Research in Engineering, Science, and Technology (CREST) Annual Meeting & EngSci Girl (March 10-11, 2017)

WISE Summer Social: McMaster Museum Tour & Refreshments at the Phoenix! (July 27, 2017)

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New Member Information Night (September 10, 2015)

Mentor of the Month:

- Meet the Faculty Mentors Social (October 28, 2015)
- Michelle Dion: "Networking: Why it's (always) important, why we (sometimes) hate doing it, and how to do it effectively (more often) (November 11, 2015)
- Kathryn Grandfield: "What I learned through international research" (December 9, 2015)
- Deborah Sloboda: "Work-life integration for female academics" (January 20, 2016)
- Natalia Nikolova: "Challenges faced by female academics in male-dominated disciplines" (February 24, 2016)
- Maureen MacDonald and Stuart Phillips "An expose of married academic life" (April 21, 2016)

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- Elizabeth Rowan: "My time working in government" (May 18, 2016)
- Sandra Montiero: "Finding work-life balance in academia – A personal story of success" (June 22, 2016)
- Sorina Dumitrescu: "Reflections on my journey from student to academic" (Jul 20, 2016)

December Social (December 15, 2015)

WISE Current Research in Engineering, Science, and Technology (CREST) Annual Meeting (March 10-12, 2016)

WISE August Social (August 18, 2016)

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New Member Information Night (September 9, 2014)

Mentor of the Month (October 2014 - August 2015)

Cookie Decorating Night (December 15, 2014)

WISE Current Research in Engineering, Science, and Technology (CREST) Annual Meeting (March 6-7, 2015)

Girls in Science Day (April 10 & 24, 2015)

Regional WISE Student Gathering (August 15, 2015)

Tour the McMaster Nuclear Reactor Facility with WISE (August 19, 2015)

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Meet n' Mingle Reception - for Students & Faculty (October 2, 2013)

Pottery Painting Night (November 28, 2013)

Whidden Lectures at McMaster: A Conversation with Joanna Aizenberg (January 21, 2014)

Tour the McMaster Nuclear Reactor Facility with WISE (February 12, 2014)

WISE Current Research in Engineering, Science, and Technology (CREST) Annual Meeting (March 7-8, 2014)

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Meet n' Mingle Reception - for Students & Faculty (October 23, 2012)

Planetarium Show (November 20, 2012)

Meet n' Mingle 2 Reception - for Students & Faculty (January 23, 2013)

WISE TED Talk Night (February 27, 2013)

WISE Current Research in Engineering, Science, and Technology (CREST) Annual Meeting (April 5-6, 2013)

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Student/Faculty "Meet & Mingle" Reception (September 14, 2011)

Movie & TED Talk Night (October 19, 2011)

WISE Colloquium (November 16, 2011)

WISE Charity Trivia Night (December 7, 2011)

Planetarium Show (January 18, 2012)

WISE Initiative 2012 CREST Conference (March 2nd & 3rd, 2012)

WISE TED Talk Night (April 18, 2012)

'Muffins n Mentors' (November 30, 2010 - January 14, 2011)

'Muffins n Mentors' - Dr. Terri Lewis (October 26, 2011)

- Dr. Leyla Soleymani (December 5, 2011)

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Welcome Pub Night (September 15, 2011)

Student/Faculty "Meet & Mingle" Reception (October 20, 2010)

TED Talk Night (November 17, 2010)

'Muffins n Mentors' (November 30, 2010 - January 14, 2011)

"1 Piece of Advice" (December 8, 2010)

Planetarium Show (January 20, 2011)

"A Treatment for Death by PowerPoint" (March 3, 2011)

WISE Initiative 2011 CREST Meeting (March 11-12, 2011)

'Muffins n Mentors' - Dr. Robin Cameron and Dr. Alison Sills (November 30, 2010)

- Dr. Laurel Trainor and Dr. Sue Becker (January 14, 2011)

- Dr. Sheila Singh (March 3, 2011)

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WISE Student/Faculty Meet & Mingle (October 29, 2009)

WISE Dinner and Movie Night, "Water" (November 10, 2009)

WISE Potluck and Movie Fundraiser (December 2, 2009)

WISE Initiative 2010 International Women's Day Conference (March 5-6, 2010)

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WISE Movie Night, "The Women" (April 8, 2009)

WISE Initiative 2009 International Women's Day Conference (March 6-7, 2009)

WISE Mentor Event (December, 2008)

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WISE Movie Night, "Asking Different Questions: Women and Science" (November 10, 2008)

Welcome Social at the Hub (October 29, 2008)

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WISE Initiative 2008 International Women's Day Conference (March 7 & April 19, 2008)

Movie Night, "Gorillas in the Mist" (February 7, 2008)

WISE Initiative Colloquium 2007: Fall Term

Movie Night, "Proof" (November 21, 2007)

WISE Initiative Social at the Hub (September 18, 2007)

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WISE Initiative International Women's Day Conference (March, 2007)

WISE Initiative Colloquium 2006-07: Fall Term

WISE Initiative Colloquium 2006-07: Winter Term

WISE Initiative Round Table Conference, (September, 2006)