



2021 ANNUAL SUMMARY

Women in Science and
Engineering (WiSE)

suwise.syr.edu
@TheSUwise

Link Hall 267B



ABOUT WiSE

Since 1999, Syracuse University's Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) has proudly supported the recruitment, persistence, and advancement of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Led by women faculty and professional staff, WiSE serves a total of 19 STEM departments at the University. Our diverse programming and events offer women in STEM a wide variety of networking and learning opportunities, as well as support, encouragement, and inspiration. Through research-based strategies and an active community of mentors and peers, we help women students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty achieve their professional goals. For more about our mission and history, please visit the WiSE website's About page at: <https://suwise.syr.edu>



PROGRAMS OFFERED

WiSE provides programs and support for women in STEM at all stages in their academic and professional careers. The following chart provides an overview of WiSE offerings during 2021. We believe in the importance of peer and near-peer mentoring, and as a result, many of our participants are invited to attend events planned primarily for a different group.



For Undergraduate Students

WiSE Women of Color in STEM (WWoCS)*
and Career Preparation Program (WWoCS-CPP)

Norma Slepecky Undergraduate Research Prize
and Memorial Lecture

Summer Research Support

**Also open to graduate students of color in STEM*



For Graduate Students

WiSE Future Professionals Program (WiSE-FPP)
and Peer Chats

Scientific Writing Workshops



For Postdocs

Professional Development Opportunities

Virtual Coffee Breaks

Peer Writing Group



For Faculty

Professional Development Opportunities

New Faculty Lunch and Lunch and Learns

Faculty-2-Faculty Peer Mentoring Opportunities

Leadership Development Grants

ANOTHER YEAR OF GROWTH

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, WiSE delivered another active year—full of valuable networking and learning offerings for women in STEM. **The number of events again increased—by 44% in 2021!** See graph at right.

The following are selected 2021 highlights:

Highlights - For Undergraduate Students

- WiSE successfully piloted a new sub-program, as part of WiSE Women of Color in STEM. The offering, named the **Career Preparation Program** (WWoCS-CPP), was launched in the fall of 2020 and designed for sophomores and juniors. Modeled after the long-standing WiSE Future Professionals Program (WiSE-FPP) for women in STEM graduate students, participants were required to complete five program credits and submit a portfolio for review (to receive the program's certificate, digital badge, and small stipend). See also page 6 and this article about the program's launch: <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2020/10/25/wise-launches-pilot-career-preparation-program>



Participants at the **WWoCS Social Hour: Peer Networking and Fun** on October 13, 2021

- WiSE hosted the first online Norma Slepecky Undergraduate Research Prize Ceremony and Memorial Lecture, with the Humanities Center and the Department of Biology as co-sponsors. While the public event has been held annually since 2003, this was the first to be offered via Zoom, with close to 100 people in attendance! **Dr. Ahna Skop '94**, Professor of Genetics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (pictured right), presented her fascinating talk, *Too Creative for Science*. The first place Slepecky Award was presented to Laurel White (Physics), and second place was given to Aliza Willsey (Aerospace Engineering). See this article: <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2021/04/26/undergraduate-students-awarded-the-2021-norma-slepecky-research-prize>
- WiSE supported **Summer Research** for twelve undergraduate women students, through collaborations with the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) and the Syracuse Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement (The SOURCE).



Highlights - For Graduate Students

- WiSE-FPP had its **largest cohort ever** for 2020-2021 with 55 Associates. More graduate students were nominated by faculty to participate in the program than there were slots available. See also page 6.
- **Peer Chats** were added to WiSE-FPP events in fall 2021, modeled after the successful WiSE Postdocs Virtual Coffee Breaks (see below). Five current and former WiSE-FPP Associates were recruited as facilitators.
- WiSE, in collaboration with the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), delivered two well-attended **Scientific Writing Workshops** with Dr. Elizabeth Paley of Duke University.
- WiSE worked with the Graduate School to offer **Landing an Industry Position: Women in STEM Panel Discussions**. The informative and encouraging events featured six recent graduates sharing their experiences and advice on job searching, interviewing, and negotiations.
- WiSE recruited **more portfolio reviewers** than in previous years (35 total). These faculty and professional staff members volunteered their time to review WiSE-FPP (and WWoCS-CPP) Associates' documents and provide helpful feedback.

Being a part of WiSE-FPP for the past two years has been an empowering experience.

Through the numerous opportunities to learn from brilliant women, I feel more prepared and inspired to forge my own path as a scientist as I am nearing the end of my time in graduate school.

Being a woman in science often comes with unique and unfair challenges, and to have a network of supportive, successful women who are willing to share their wisdom and experience has been invaluable.

-From WiSE-FPP portfolio reflection

Highlights - For Postdocs

- WiSE Postdocs continued **Virtual Coffee Breaks** (which had been trialed in 2020). These informal events provided women postdocs with peer networking and mentoring opportunities—building new and lasting, supportive relationships.
- WiSE Postdocs held a successful three-session **Difficult Conversations Book Club**. The group read *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* by Stone, Patton, and Heen. Participants discussed scenarios and communication strategies from the book and shared their own experiences.



*Participants at the **WiSE Postdocs Picnic** on July 26, 2021*

Highlights - For Faculty

- **More WiSE Leadership Development Grants** for women in STEM faculty were awarded in 2021 versus 2020 (the first year offered). Eleven grants were given for individual coaching and/or leadership development training.
- WiSE, in partnership with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, held three **Disrupting Academic Bullying Workshops** with Dr. Bryan Hanson, Ombudsperson, Virginia Tech Graduate School (one for WiSE Faculty, one for all University faculty, and one for women postdocs and graduate students in STEM). The events were co-sponsored by the Graduate School, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office of the University Ombuds.
- WiSE continued its **strong grassroots, collaborative approach**, working with a dedicated team of faculty advisors and professional staff. See list at right.
- WiSE faculty advisors and staff began planning **Celebrating 22 Years of WiSE**, a special event for participants, partners, and friends to be held on April 1, 2022.

Highlights - Outreach

- WiSE organized an **outreach panel event** for the Syracuse Academy of Science (Middle School). The diverse panel of women undergraduate students discussed their STEM degree programs and career plans and shared their advice for the students.
- WiSE Program Director Sharon Alestalo was interviewed about WiSE and the mission to support women in STEM for **Behind the Monitor**, a podcast conducted by Syracuse University ITS (Episode XVIII). See this link: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/behind-the-monitor/id1508349626>



WiSE Leadership and Staff (2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years included)

Faculty Co-Directors

Dr. Shobha Bhatia and Dr. Katharine Lewis

WWoCS and WWoCS-CPP

Dr. Dawn Johnson (lead), Dr. Michelle Blum,
Dr. Shikha Nangia, and Dr. Ruth Phillips

Graduate Mentors:

Ashley Douglass, Jasmine Gomez, Megha Jayachandran,
Sucheta Lahiri, Isabel Munoz, Elizabeth Oguntade,
Eloise Eyo Parry-Nweye,
and Momina Toseef

Norma Slepecky Undergraduate

Research Prize and Lecture

Dr. Shobha Bhatia, Dr. Katharine Lewis,
Dr. Heather Coleman, and Sharon Alestalo

General Undergraduate Programs

Dr. Katie Cadwell (lead 2021-2022) and
Dr. Katie Becklin

WiSE-FPP

Dr. Shikha Nangia (lead 2020-2021),
Dr. Sucheta Soundarajan (lead 2021-2022),
Dr. Heather Coleman, Dr. Heidi Hehnly, and
Dr. B. Jakubiak

Peer Chat Facilitators:

Alona Kulesha, Lauren Mayse, Subhasree Sengupta,
Emily Watts, and Julia Zeh

Postdoc Mentoring

Dr. Samantha England (lead), Dr. Carla Frare,
Dr. Huan Gu, Dr. Susan Parks, and
Dr. Paula Sanematsu

Faculty Mentoring

Dr. Julie Hasenwinkel (lead) and
Dr. Latha Ramalingam

Leadership Development

Dr. Eleanor Maine (lead), Dr. Amy Criss,
Dr. Qinru Qiu, and Dr. Jennifer Ross

Professional Staff

Sharon Alestalo (Program Director) and
Amanda Latreille (Program Support Coordinator)
Graduate Program Assistants:
Ellen Connuck and Isabel Munoz
Undergraduate Program Assistants:
Viktoria Jakubikova, Kate Kemnitz,
and Candice Ogbu

IMPACTFUL AND VALUED

The following is a closer look at WWoCS and WiSE-FPP and the programs' evaluation highlights for the 2020-2021 academic year. The findings illustrate significant, positive student impact and consistently valued programming, as well as strong alignment with the overall mission and goals of WiSE.

WWoCS

Percentage of survey respondents indicating increased knowledge, confidence, and/or skills as a result of attending events: **98%**

- Event topics: Amplifying your voice, STEM careers in industry panel/advice, community engagement, stress reduction, personal statements, mentoring, career planning, celebrating women of color in STEM achievements, fostering diversity and inclusion.

Percentage of survey respondents indicating:

- They felt supported in their pursuit of a STEM career: **91%**
- Their sense of belonging in STEM increased: **78%**

Percentage of survey respondents rating WWoCS events as above average or excellent: **96%**

Above findings taken from WWoCS anonymous event surveys 2020-2021.

Of the 2020-2021 pilot cohort of WWoCS-CPP Associates, **14 (of the 16 or 88%)** completed the program and earned a certificate and digital badge (WWoCS-CPP is a one-year program).

- Requirements: 5 program credits and portfolio submission (for faculty/professional staff review)

WWoCS-CPP Associates selected for 2021-2022: **19**

Getting to know more about the real history of women of color in STEM was so inspiring and reaffirming! I appreciate the confidence boost.

-Feedback from event survey

It was really useful to hear from someone about their personal experience with using social media as an academic, and specific examples from their experience and what they've seen on social media.

It was also great to have a breakout group to talk about our personal goals and connect with other people! I'm definitely going to think more about social media for community and connection in the future.

-Feedback from event survey

WiSE-FPP

Percentage of survey respondents indicating increased knowledge, confidence, and/or skills as a result of attending events: **97%**

- Event topics: Conflict and culture, STEM careers in academia panel/advice, sexual harassment and gender discrimination, social media in academia, maximizing your visibility as a scholar, portfolio tips, STEM careers in industry/advice, navigating the pandemic job market.

Percentage of survey respondents rating WiSE-FPP events as above average or excellent: **88%**

Above findings taken from WiSE-FPP anonymous event surveys 2020-2021.

Of the 2019-2021 cohort of WiSE-FPP Associates, **19 (of the 24 or 79%)** completed both program years and earned a certificate and digital badge (WiSE-FPP is a two-year program).

- Requirements: 5 program credits and portfolio submission (for faculty/professional staff review) each year

WiSE-FPP Associates (first and second years) selected for 2021-2022: **55**