



# AY25 Annual Report



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208 Bowne Hall

 **Syracuse University**  
Women in Science and Engineering

## ABOUT WiSE

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

Led by faculty and staff, WiSE supports 18 STEM departments across six colleges and schools. Our inclusive programs provide developmental opportunities including skill-building workshops, mentoring and leadership training, career planning, and community-building events. Rooted in evidence-based practices and a cross-disciplinary community, WiSE empowers students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty to achieve their academic and professional goals.

In our mission to build a strong, equitable and inclusive community, we welcome all self-identified women and STEM allies of any sex, gender, or race who can demonstrate a commitment to supporting and advancing the inclusion of women and women of color in STEM.

WiSE is administered through the Office of Academic Affairs | Faculty Affairs. To learn more about our mission and history, please visit the WiSE website: <https://suwise.syr.edu>

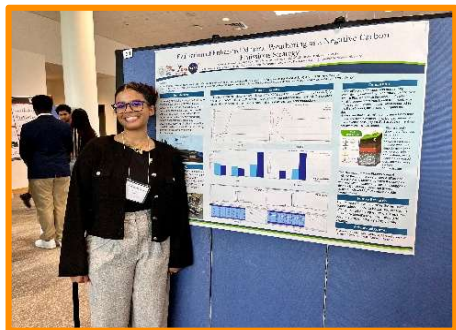


## PROGRAMS OFFERED

WiSE provides programs and support for STEM associates at all stages in their academic and professional careers. The graphic below provides an overview of WiSE offerings. We believe in the importance of peer and near-peer mentoring, and as a result, many of our participants are invited to attend intergroup events.



## DYNAMIC YEARS FOR WiSE | 2023-2024 and 2024-2025



Ayanna Peterson, Summer Research Poster Presentation 2024

These years were dynamic and transitional for WiSE, marked by program shifts and deeper cross-level engagement. The summer research and science writing programs concluded, while postdoctoral support was restructured through collaboration with the Faculty Peer Mentoring committee and the Office of Research Postdoctoral Collaboration Group. Events across the year brought together students, postdocs, and faculty to foster peer and hierarchical mentoring. Student-led Mentor Meet Ups/Peer Chats and STEM belonging discussions made sessions more inclusive and participatory. Dr. Dawn Johnson's session helped students connect research on belonging to their experiences and goals. The First Year Program continued to support early engagement and persistence through faculty connections.

Faculty programming expanded with reflective sessions on leadership and complex topics like “managing up.” Participant feedback throughout the year highlighted the relevance and lasting value of these offerings, reinforcing WiSE's commitment to advancing women faculty in STEM and building inclusive cultures with the support of engaged allies.

### WHY REPORT ON THREE SEMESTERS?

WiSE is transitioning the annual summary to focus on the academic year rather than a calendar year. We have found that our impact reporting is more powerful and useful when based on a single cohort of participants rather than mixed. Impact data for **spring 2024** included:

- WiSE Future Professionals Program (WiSE-FPPP) completion rate was 87% of the second - year associates. Overall, the group consisted of 55 students, 2 audited the program and 1 completed the program from AY24.
- FPP Associates completed on average 5.33 credits per year with 9 associates attending 8 or more. 90% completed portfolios. Participants must complete a minimum of 5 program credits and produce a portfolio each of the 2 academic years. They earned a stipend each year and a micro-credential with a certificate at the end of 2 years.
- Faculty leaders admitted 23 Career Preparation (CPP) associates, undergraduates, during AY2024. Twenty-two of which completed the program (96%). 14% of CPP students were international.
- 86% of undergraduates rated the sessions as excellent and strongly agreed that they gained new skills and confidence. Programs offered included Interrupting Bias/Amplifying your Voice, Undergraduate Research Panel and International STEM Women's panel.

### COMMUNITY-BUILDING

- Revived in AY24 by our Graduate Associate, Myla Thomas, our annual Teatimes with WiSE continued to be a big hit with our Associates. These gatherings create a warm and welcoming space for building community, conversation, reflection, and relaxation. The events highlight the importance of coming together to celebrate the community the cohort has built over the academic year. The evenings were a quiet yet meaningful celebration of community and continuity.
- Teatimes with WiSE remained a beloved tradition. Shifting from formal to informal gatherings with dessert, of course these teas helped ease feelings of isolation often felt in STEM. Strong turnout reaffirmed their role as a cornerstone of WiSE culture.



WiSE Teatime

## 2024-2025 OUTCOMES AND ENGAGEMENT

Consistently high ratings underscore the quality and intentionality of WiSE programming across domains of relational leadership, professional skill-building, mentorship, networking, resilience, and career planning and preparation. These outcomes affirm that our commitment to equity and excellence is not only reaching students and scholars but transforming how they envision and shape their futures in STEM.

- Graduate Students (WiSE-FPP) had an average score of 4.48 out of 5 for each workshop offered.
- Four career and relational leadership focused workshops for undergraduate students (CPP & WWoCS) averaged a score of 4.74 out of 5.
- First-Year Program Participant evaluations, spanning 4 foundational workshops, averaged a score of 4.58 out of 5. Topics included research - based practices for studying successfully, finding your strengths, communicating with faculty, and the power of networking.
- Faculty & Postdoctoral Scholars average score over their events was 4.79 out of 5.
- **91%** of graduate student attendees reported increased preparedness for academic and industry careers. FPP Associates strongly agreed that they increased their knowledge of effective strategies and techniques for resolving conflict. They also feel more motivated to incorporate learned communication strategies into their conversations.
- **98%** of AY25 CPP and FPP Associates successfully completed credit and portfolio requirements, earning program stipends, a digital micro-credential/certificate, and personalized faculty feedback. A very successful year.
- **95%** of undergraduate respondents felt more confident pursuing research, building professional networks, and identifying as scientists, engineers, or STEM professionals.
- *Building and Maintaining Your Network* workshop was attended by 30 undergraduate and graduate students. **100%** strongly agreed or agreed they learned more about networks and why they are important as well as feeling motivated to incorporate what they learned into their academic and personal life.

*"These sessions helped me redefine what being a scientist means to me and gave me tools to pursue new paths with confidence."*

*"Hearing from peers and faculty about real challenges and success stories helped me feel seen and more equipped to move forward."*

*"The Peer Chats have allowed me to meet people outside my department and feel less isolated in my experiences in graduate school."*

*"I felt like I was given very practical advice. It was helpful to listen to shared experiences. The guest speaker was very encouraging. I left feeling positive about building my network."*

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



AY25 WWoCS Career Preparation Class and faculty leaders

In Spring 2024 and AY25, WiSE offered student-centered programs focused on academic success and personal growth. Topics included Belonging in STEM, Undergraduate Research, Personal Statements, and Leadership and Focus for Fulfillment, with sessions led by Drs. Preeti Mahaveer Jagadev and Katharine Lewis. Faculty also participated in a dedicated session.

The Undergraduate Research Panel in November, moderated by Dr. Jessie Briggs Joyce, featured leaders from SOURCE, Biology, and CFSA who shared insights on getting started in research, interdisciplinary opportunities, and available resources. A winter Personal Statement workshop, led by Dr. Melissa Welshans, drew 30 students, with over 90% reporting increased confidence and new strategies.

## NORMA SLEPECKY UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PRIZE



AY24 Awardee Mariana Pérez Lugo (left) with research mentor Dr. Latha Ramalingam.

In April 2024, the Norma Slepecky Undergraduate Research Prize ceremony and memorial lecture featured Dr. Sharon Walker, Dean of Engineering at Drexel, speaking on *Inspiring Future Generations Through Metamorphoses in STEM*. Mariana Pérez Lugo '24 received the prize for her research on fish oil's effects on offspring metabolic health in obese mice, conducted under Dr. Latha Ramalingam. Dr. Mary Beth Monroe, Assistant Professor of BMCE, served as WiSE faculty chair for the event.

This year's Norma Slepecky Undergraduate Research Prize was awarded to Tessa DeCicco '25, a biomedical engineering major, for her work on tibial tubercle osteotomy in revision knee surgery, mentored by Drs. Timothy Damron and Era Jain. Dr. Joan-Emma Shea delivered the memorial lecture on *Tau protein self-assembly and its role in neurodegeneration*. Both events celebrated exceptional women researchers and student achievement, honoring Norma Slepecky's legacy of research mentorship.



AY25 Slepecky Awardee Tessa DeCicco (center) with her research mentor, Dr. Era Jain. Award Chair, Dr. Monroe, on the left.

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS



2024-2025 WiSE CPP/FPP Peer Chat Facilitators and Graduate Mentors. Pictured from Left to Right: Thalma Orado, Vanshika, Ratnakshi Mandal, Sierra Thomas, and Franki Compere

- WiSE-FPP AY 2024-2025 served 47 Associates from across the world. Programming integrated technical training with personal and professional development. It opened with workshops on writing career pathways, industry insights, and time management. Despite a stormy night, the Sun Queen screening and faculty panel sparked meaningful discussion.
- Peer Chats continued in 2024-2025, offering graduate students' mentorship from fellow WiSE-FPP Associates. The program is facilitated by current WiSE-FPP Associates.
- WiSE's Science Writing Workshops with Dr. Elizabeth Paley (Duke University) in February and August 2024 were highly rated 100% of students felt motivated to apply what they learned. One student shared, "The mentor was highly interactive using our own work, and it helped me tremendously!"

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR FACULTY AND POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

- **WiSE Leadership Development Grants** for women STEM faculty were awarded again in 2025. Grants were given for individual coaching and/or leadership development training. This program has provided over \$35,000 in grants over the past 5 years supporting faculty advancement.
- Faculty and postdoctoral scholar feedback underscored a shared appreciation for the transparency and collegiality fostered in these spaces, this year's programming reinforced the value of reflection, collaboration, and mutual support. WiSE also supports programs for postdoctoral scholars via the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.
- WiSE's faculty-driven approach, led by a dedicated team of faculty advisors and professional staff, continues to be a core principle. The list to the right details the AY25 leadership team.
- In addition to the 17 members of the WiSE leadership team, 30 different faculty delivered or supported program events, and 66 different faculty nominated students to our programs. 37 faculty and professional staff provided individualized feedback on 59 student portfolios. We appreciate all the support faculty and professional staff have provided to our participants and WiSE itself.

## HIGHLIGHTS - OUTREACH



*The WiSE staff team*

(left). We now have a revamped LinkedIn page for community engagement. It focuses on faculty, students and alumni of WiSE. Check us out at our website at [suwise.syr.edu](https://suwise.syr.edu). Or you can find us on YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram. **Our handle is @TheSUwise.**

- This year, WiSE was invited to participate in six campus welcome back fairs and we co-sponsored the Physics Undergraduate Conference.
- Our website and social media presence has shown great promise under our graduate associates, Sunidhi Jain (right) and Myla Thomas

## AY25 WiSE Leadership and Staff

### Faculty Co-Directors

Dr. Marina Artuso (AY25)

Dr. Shikha Nangia (AY25)

### WWoCS and WWoCS-CPP

Dr. Dawn Johnson (lead AY15-AY25)

Dr. Jesse Briggs and Dr. Deepika Das

### Graduate Mentors

Thalma Orado and Vanshika

### Norma Slepecky Undergraduate

#### Research Prize and Lecture

Dr. Mary Beth Monroe (Chair AY24-

AY25) and Sharon Alestalo

### General Undergraduate Programs

Dr. Katie Cadwell (lead AY22-AY25)

Dr. Katie Becklin and Dr. Moira

McDermott

### WiSE-FPP

Dr. Sucheta Soundarajan (lead AY21-

AY25) Dr. Sara Eftekharijad and Dr.

Bei Yu

### Peer Chat Facilitators

Franki Compere, Ratnakshi Mandal,

and Sierra Thomas

### Faculty & Postdoctoral Scholar

#### Mentoring

Dr. Aesoon Park (AY25)

Dr. Latha Ramalingam and Dr. Jen

Cook

### Faculty Leadership Development

Dr. Jennifer Ross (lead AY25) Dr.

Qinru Qiu, and Dr. Margaret Voss.

### Faculty Ambassadors

Heather Coleman (AY 24 - AY25) Sara

Burke (AY25), and Yiyang Sun (AY25)

### Professional Staff

Sharon Alestalo (Program Director

AY09-AY25)

### Graduate Program Assistants

Myla Thomas, Sunidhi Jain

## GOODBYE AND THANK YOU



*Dr. Shobha Bhatia*

Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) proudly honors our co-founder **Dr. Shobha K. Bhatia** who retired from Syracuse University in spring of 2024 after a distinguished career defined by innovation, leadership, mentoring, advocacy and inclusion. An internationally recognized expert in geotechnical engineering, she pioneered and advocated for environmental justice and sustainable practices, such as the Bubble Point technique. She was named a GeoLegend by her discipline. Beyond her research, she was a tireless champion for women and underrepresented groups in STEM since 1999. The WiSE programs she started will continue to shape future

generations. Though she is retiring from full-time teaching, her legacy of excellence, mentorship, and empowerment will live on at WiSE and beyond. Thank you, Dr. Bhatia, for everything you have given to our community.

In 2024 we celebrated the retirement of four long-time faculty, who in their various leadership capacities, helped shape WiSE. To pass on knowledge to the next generation of leaders we held a “WiSEdom” panel with **Drs. Shobha Bhatia, Susan Baldwin, Eleanor Maine and Karin Ruhlandt**.

All four remained active in WiSE from 1999 to 2024. Their leadership and wisdom will be missed.



*WiSEdom panel from left to right  
Karin Ruhlandt, Shobha Bhatia, Eleanor Maine  
and Suzanne Baldwin*



*Dr. Marina Artuso*



*Dr. Katharine Lewis*



*Dr. Shikha Nangia*

We also marked the transition in leadership of WiSE. **Dr. Katharine Lewis** relinquished her WiSE leadership role as a faculty co-Director which she held from 2018 - 2024. WiSE greatly appreciates her leadership and support. Drs. Marina Artuso and Shikha Nangia have assumed the role of Faculty Co-Directors of WiSE starting in the fall of 2024. The two WiSE faculty co-directors collaborate as a cohesive team on leadership assignments, and fiscal and strategic oversight ensuring that WiSE fulfills its mission and goals.

Finally, we are saying our goodbyes to Sharon Alestalo. She has been the program director of WiSE from fall of 2008 to spring of 2025. She has been instrumental in making WiSE a mission driven organization that is both an impactful program provider and a strong community of allies and women in STEM. Dr. Bhatia particularly noted that because of Sharon, “WiSE programs bloomed at Syracuse University.” And Dr. Lewis remarked that “so many lives have been enhanced, so much potential has been released into the world. What an amazing impact!”



*Sharon Alestalo*



*WiSEdom panel with Suzanne Baldwin, Karin Ruhlandt, Sharon Alestalo, Shobha Bhatia, Eleanor Maine and Katharine Lewis (Left to right).*

Each year we report on the progress in recruiting women to faculty positions. The number of women faculty in STEM in 1997 totaled 18 in 10 core STEM departments of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering and Computer Science (WiSE data). These core departments plus the iSchool and School of Education saw a doubling of the number to nearly 100 in 2017 during the SUAdvance project. SUAdvance was an NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant that WiSE initiated and remained heavily involved with from 2010-2017. In 2025, the 18 departments/schools WiSE now serves (November 2023) have 120 tenure/tenure-track women faculty and 54 not on track for a total of 175 full time tenure, tenure-track and not on track faculty. This is one more than last year. Given that at least six senior women faculty retired this year, we are glad we did not retreat in numbers. There is a total of 426 faculty in the 18 departments. Women comprise 41%. It is clearly important to continue efforts to include new and retain established women faculty. These figures were provided by Faculty Affairs. We greatly appreciate their help. The WiSE listserv contains over 223 STEM women plus allies/guests (WiSE data).

STEM women faculty in the WiSE served departments have been awarded nearly \$120 million in research funds through FY18 - FY24 according to the Office of Research. The average total per year was \$17,058,947. These awards have steadily increased annually during this time except in AY20 when COVID restrictions were at their highest. In AY23, two large awards were received by women faculty and colleagues allowing for a significant increase in the final total compared to other years. (Data provided by the Office of Research).

## **THE FUTURE**

WiSE is awaiting decisions being made across campus before a new staff leader for WiSE is appointed. For now, WiSE will continue to operate on a smaller scale with the support of the Faculty Leadership Team. Provost of Faculty Affairs and the WiSE Faculty Co-Directors continue to hold a strong commitment to WiSE.