Creating Connections Conference

This biennial conference brings together people of all genders and backgrounds to inspire, discuss issues of personal and professional development, and network. The conference supports anyone in the STEM community with the tools they need for increasing diversity in these fields.

Creating Connections 4.0

Creating Connections 4.0 took place May 22-23, 2015 in Burnaby, BC. Dr. Shannon was the Conference Chair and the conference hosted NSERC’s announcement of Dr Shannon’s NSERC Chair. The conference comprised of 170 attendees, 4 keynote speakers, 6 workshops, 7 panels, and networking time.

Creating Connections 5.0

Creating Connections 5.0 took place May 5-6, 2017 in Vancouver, BC. The conference comprised of 238 attendees, 3 keynote speakers, 4 workshops, 5 panels, and networking time.

SFU President’s Dream Colloquium: Women in Technology

This program is made up of a series of public lectures with speakers from outside of BC as well as a graduate course taught in tandem with the talk series. The colloquium topics are determined by competition based on proposals from SFU faculty members and must be supported by multiple departments. WWEST was awarded the Fall 2017 PDC for the proposal “Women in Technology: Attracting, Retaining, and Promoting Diverse Talent.” Speakers included: Juliette Powell (Founder, Turing AI and WeTheData.org), Dr. Maria Klawe (Harvey Mudd College), Shari Graydon (Founder, Informed Opinions), Dr. Stephen Spencer (Ohio State University), Dr. Cathy O’Neil (Author of Weapons of Math Destruction), Dr. Danielle Gaucher (University of Winnipeg), and Jo Miller (Be Leaderly). All sessions were recorded and are available to watch on SFU’s PDC website.

SFU STEM Outreach Collective

The SFU STEM Outreach Collective comprises SFU’s K-12 youth outreach groups who engage students in STEM activities. The groups meet once a semester to keep each other updated on upcoming events, collaborate, and brainstorm ways to make STEM more accessible for all.
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM (continued)

WWEST Outreach Apps

WWEST is creating free open-source desktop applications that engage youth in computing science and engineering activities regardless of their access to the internet or up-to-date computers. WWEST is directly funding two modules on sound engineering and image manipulation. To expand the initiative, WWEST partnered with Science AL!VE and Let’s Talk Science at SFU for an NSERC Promoscience Grant to fund: the development of a third module (machine learning), outreach groups traveling to more rural and aboriginal communities, and to develop a teacher’s toolkit with lesson plans to support BC’s new computing curriculum.

WWEST Associate Chairs Program

The WWEST Associate Chairs Program was established to increase the impact we have outside of BC’s lower mainland. Up to three satellite programs will be established at NSERC-eligible institutions in BC and Yukon, with $10,000 invested to support activities in each location. The WWEST Associate Chair has a one-year term with option for renewal and required a minimum of $10,000 in matching funding each year.

WWEST Associate Chair at Yukon College

In January 2018, we announced the first WWEST Associate Chair would be held at Yukon College. Alison Anderson, P.Eng, Technology Innovation Officer at Yukon College, was selected to head the program. She collected $24,500 in matching funds to support her projects to support women in STEM in the Yukon.

Website & Newsletters

Launched in January 2016, WWEST.ca is a hub to promote local events and provide resources to all audiences. It also houses the WWEST blog, full of original content including our “Depictions of Women in STEM in the Media” series. The website has had 47,613 Unique Web Views since September 2016. WWEST’s Newsletter has published 70 biweekly newsletters full of events, volunteer opportunities, and blog content. The newsletter has 328 current subscribers.

Social Media

We’ve expanded our social media networks to also include Instagram, which we have 101 followers and 228 posts on. We currently have 470 page likes and 467 page follows on facebook. We have 995 followers on Twitter. There are 237 people in our LinkedIn group and 43 followers of our company page.

Industry Partners Program

The Industry Partners Program aims to engage industry organizations that wish to improve the diversity of their employees. WWEST supports the partners by providing resources and best practices on recruitment, retention, and hiring, providing opportunities for the partners to participate in research regarding diversity in STEM, and connecting industry partners with community partners to support STEM outreach with role models from industry. The financial contributions of industry partners will be invested into programs like Funding Partners. The Industry Partners Program has been accepting partners since March 2017 and has raised $3000 so far.

Best of the WWEST Podcast

Each episode of this podcast profiles a woman in STEM, with the goal of providing role models and discussing a breadth of STEM jobs. Episodes are released every two to three times a month. Since it’s launch in April 2017, the podcast has had 28 episodes published and 1,305 downloads of those episodes. Starting in April 2018, the WWEST Associate Chair at Yukon College has been contributing one episode per month featuring women in STEM in the Yukon.
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM (continued)

White Papers
WWEST is working on many new white papers to add to the collection created by the last WWEST chair. Our new White Papers are focused on career awareness in STEM with a focus on Engineering developed with Engineers and Geoscientists BC. The first in the series compares education and career differences between Computer Engineering, Software Engineering, and Computer Science. This White Paper will be packaged with the new Tune Twister app. Along with the white papers are slide decks that go along with the white papers and are great for presentations. WWEST is also developing a white paper on negotiation in the workplace as well as developing reports by President’s Dream Colloquium students into fully realized white papers. [www.wwest.ca/whitepapers](http://www.wwest.ca/whitepapers)

Awareness & Self-Efficacy Surveys
These surveys were created by UBC’s WWEST and were first conducted first at Creating Connections 5.0 in May 2017. The survey results will allow us to analyze the short and long term impact of this regional conference on the attendees. Results of this were published in the Final Report for Creating Connections 5.0, which can be found on our website. These surveys will be repeated at Creating Connections 6.0 in May 2019.

Engendering Success in STEM Consortium
**Engendering Success in STEM** (ESS) is a research consortium that tests the long-term efficacy of interventions that harness the power of positive social interactions to mitigate subtle gender bias. Scholars from a variety of universities and non-academic organizations have partnered to conduct this research. SSHRC has awarded the ESS project $2.7 million over seven years. Dr. Shannon is a co-investigator and the Industry Liaison.

Funding Partners Program
This program brings together training, resources and funding to support community organizations and research groups that are undertaking activities to promote outreach, recruitment and retention for girls, young women and industry professionals in engineering, science and technology. The intention of the funding is to help establish or expand programs; organizations may apply for a 1 year grant of up to $5,000. WWEST has partnered with eng•cite to leverage further funding for the program for a total of $86,650 being invested into 33 projects over three years. A list of funded projects and groups can be found here.

Phylo(mon) Project: Women in Science and Engineering Deck
Supported by the funding partners program, AMBL at UBC’s Michael Smith Laboratories, led by Dave Ng, collaborated with a number of artists and designers to create a deck focused on awesome women in STEM, as well as issues pertaining to the challenges around gender equity. Decks can be ordered online or printed at home for free.

WWEST Advisory Committee
The WWEST Advisory Committee has representatives from many post-secondary institutions, SFU graduate and undergraduate students, industry partners and sponsors, as well as key community partners. The committee provides feedback and direction for our planned activities and helps facilitate connections to key stakeholders for new projects.

WinSETT Women’s Leadership Workshops
Hosted by WWEST, WinSETT delivered its full series of professional development leadership workshops for early to mid-career women in STEM, funded by the National NSERC CWSE Network. The workshops were delivered once per month January to May 2017 in Downtown Vancouver and many women attended 2 or more of them.
FUTURE PROJECTS

Creating Connections 6.0
On May 3rd and 4th, 2019 WWEST will bring together people of all genders and backgrounds for Creating Connections 6.0. The conference will include presentations and workshops surrounding issues of personal and professional development, networking and inspiration. Creating Connections 6.0 aims to engage industry, the community and students in BC and the Yukon to increase the regional awareness and participation of women and other underrepresented groups in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The Creating Connections conference series hopes to facilitate meaningful dialogue to create a space where everyone can explore and participate in STEM to better our world.

In Plain Sight Photography Exhibit
WWEST has developed a project for a photojournalism exhibit showcasing women in STEM fields called “In Plain Sight” which will debut in March 2019. The goal of the project is to showcase diverse role models in STEM fields as well as bridging the topic into the world of art in the hopes of reaching a new audience.

Gendered Language in Job Ads Research
This project comprises a study to be performed with our Industry Partners, to collect information on demographics of candidates. This will be collected from the responses to a series of job advertisements, each utilizing different language. Analysis of the impact of that language will follow.

Inclusive Computing Curriculum
To support the new British Columbia K-12 curriculum, which includes learning objectives for technology and coding, this project will create inclusive lesson plans and training. The aim is to ensure girls and minority groups, such as Aboriginal students, are inspired to connect with the new curriculum and teachers are provided with a comprehensive set of training materials. We are currently in discussions with industry partners to fund and support the program development.

CEO & HR Retention Event
WWEST is developing a day-long workshop which will be targeted at CEO’s and HR Managers in STEM fields to learn about recruitment and retention of women and other underrepresented groups in their organizations. The event will be based on the Friday Session that was held as part of Creating Connections 4.0 Conference in May 2015, which Dr. Shannon developed. We plan to host it in Fall 2019 and then share the workshop curriculum with the other NSERC Chairs of Women in Science and Engineering.
MEDIA

WWEST and Dr. Shannon have been featured in several publications and forms of media, including:

- April 12, 2018 - Yukon scientists and engineers featured in Best of the WWEST podcast series - Yukon College News
- March 8, 2018 - The deck stacked against women in science - Nature.com
- March 7, 2018 - Badass Women of SFU - SFU's The Peak
- January 25, 2018 - STEM satellite program planned for territory - Whitehorse Daily Star
- January 25, 2018 - Yukon College, SFU create new promotional position in Whitehorse - The Rush
- December 2017 - Carleton Radio Interview
- September 2017 - Roundhouse Radio Interview
- September 7, 2017 - SFU President’s Dream Colloquium examines women’s roles in tech - SFU News
- June 2017 - CBC Radio Yukon
- May 4, 2017 - Female CEO wants more women at work, including mothers - Kamloops BC Now
- March 27, 2017 - SFU engineering science professor Lesley Shannon named diversity champion - SFU News
- March 26, 2017 - 150 Days of Canadian Women in STEM - hErVOLUTION Blog
- March 13, 2017 - Gender disparities in engineering and computing science at SFU and its effects on female students - SFU’s The Peak
- December 2016 - CTV Interview
- July 20, 2016 - Dr. Lesley Shannon encouraging gender diversity in computer science - WestGrid.ca
- July 14, 2016 - Why these women chose a career in hpc - Compute Canada
- June 2016 - CTV Interview
- June 2016 - Roundhouse Radio Roundtable
- February 26, 2016 - SFU Technovation competition aims to get more girls into tech - CBC.ca
- October 19, 2015 - Congratulations to Dr. Lesley Shannon - WinSETT Centre
- September 23, 2015 - Have your Say: How can we encourage more girls into science careers? - The Globe and Mail
- May 26, 2015 - Two new NSERC chairs aim to encourage women in science and engineering - Automation
- May 25, 2015 - SFU welcomes NSERC Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering - SFU News
- May 25, 2015 - NSERC Appoints Two New NSERC Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering (one at SFU) - T-Net
- May 22, 2015 - Simba Technologies Joins With Simon Fraser University and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada to Fund New Chair for Women in Science and Engineering for BC and Yukon - Market Wired
- May 22, 2015 - Two new chairs will encourage women into science and engineering - NSERC News Release
- May 22, 2015 - Simba Technologies Joins with Simon Fraser University and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada to Fund New Chair for Women in Science and Engineering for BC and Yukon - Simba Technologies News
- May 22, 2015 - Lesley Shannon named NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering - SFU FAS News
- May 22, 2015 - Lesley Shannon named NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering - SFU Mechatronics News
- May 22, 2015 - 2015-2020 NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (B.C./Yukon) - La Foundation O’Brien
- May 1, 2015 - The Key to Increasing Innovation - Innovation Magazine (APEGBC)
- January 7, 2015 - Lesley Shannon named NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (B.C./Yukon) - IEEE Canada
Dr. Shannon has traveled all over the world to attend conferences, network with other STEM organizations, and to speak at conferences. Below are highlights from the last three years.

**United States**

- **March 2017**: Dr. Shannon was the representative of Canada in the “Science and Technology Education for Youth” project, organized by the US State Department as part of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). This program is a professional exchange program, allowing current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the United States and support the foreign policy goals of the country. The project’s aims included exploring the organization of the US education system to improve math and science instructional practices, examine best initiatives and public/private partnerships that accelerate student learning in STEM subjects, and review technological innovation in science education and programs that promote scientific literacy in the workforce. Dr. Shannon, along with representatives from 18 other countries, attended conferences, think tank sessions,

**Europe**

- **September 2016**: Paris, France - 9th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education, Speaker; “Canada’s Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering Program: 20 Years of Strategies to Increase the Participation of Women.”

**Canada**

- **June 2015**: Whitehorse, Yukon Territory - WWEST Workshops, Facilitator.
- **October 2015**: Richmond, British Columbia - BC Science Teachers’ Association Catalyst Conference, Workshop Host.
- **May 2016**: Vancouver, British Columbia - IEEE CCECE, Keynote Speaker, “Understanding Implicit Bias and Stereotype Threat.”
- **November 2016**: Victoria, British Columbia - Hooked on STEM Career Event for Parents and Kids, Speaker.
- **May 2017**: Waterloo, Ontario - Equals Conference, University of Waterloo, Keynote Speaker.
- **June 2017**: Yukon
- **November 2017**: Montréal, Quebec - Gender Summit, Moderator of the Sex and Gender Based Analysis in Specific STEM Topics panel
- **January 2018**: Whitehorse, Yukon
- **May-June 2018**: Edmonton, Alberta - CCWESTT Conference
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