



**Advocacy, Networking & Support for Alberta  
STEM Programs that Promote Diversity & Inclusion**

# **Annual Report**

## **2016-2017**



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*This version of the AWSN Annual Report reflects programming from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017 and the Financial Year of March 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017.*

**In its 24th year of operation,** led by its strategic planning committee, AWSN initiated a comprehensive review of the organizations purpose, mission, vision and overall strategic direction. This work comes at a critical time for AWSN and its member programs, helping to re-shape and support STEM programs during a transitional time in Alberta’s economy. Along with this strategy work, 2016-2017 focused on enhanced communications, website and brand development, and better serving membership with career-focused events and resources.

AWSN’s primary focus is to connect, unite, support and promote STEM programs throughout the province. As a network, AWSN creates a collaborative environment where member groups and volunteers help each other, learning from each others’ experiences, successes and challenges. Along with our long-term volunteers, we have been fortunate this year to gain many new creative minds, who are lending their time and expertise across the board and our various committees.

AWSN activities focus on supporting host programs through funding, in-kind support and volunteer resource connections. We categorized these activities under three core ‘pillars’:

**Recruitment, Retention and Recognition.**



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

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AWSN has enjoyed 24 years engaging and supporting the STEM community in Alberta. We are currently gearing up to kick off our 25<sup>th</sup> year next fall. Please keep an eye on our website and social media pages over the next year—you do not want to miss out on the many opportunities we are planning, as we get ready for our BIG 2-5!

But first, let's focus on this past year. We have many highlights to share as AWSN hosted or supported several events. Fall 2016 saw the launch of WinSTEM week celebrating Alberta Women in STEM - past, present and future. The week had 26 events and activities including turning the Calgary Tower and the Edmonton High Level Bridge purple for Women in STEM. The week ended with a BANG! AWSN hosted the STEM Affair, a fundraiser that highlighted STEM mentorship in Alberta.



The year also comprised of the creation of a new strategic plan. This plan includes an updated mission, vision and future goals. AWSN is committed to providing support for the recruitment, retention and recognition of girls and women in STEM fields, but we have expanded our mandate to include all under-represented populations in Alberta.

Our new Mission emphasizes that AWSN acts as a platform where STEM programs can be initiated and/or supported. AWSN works with partners and stakeholders who amplify, magnify, or accelerate systemic and social change within the greater community.

As our Vision states, AWSN would like to see a transformative future with equal opportunities for all in STEM. AWSN provides services to many, and we could not do this without the commitment of our volunteers and support of our sponsors.

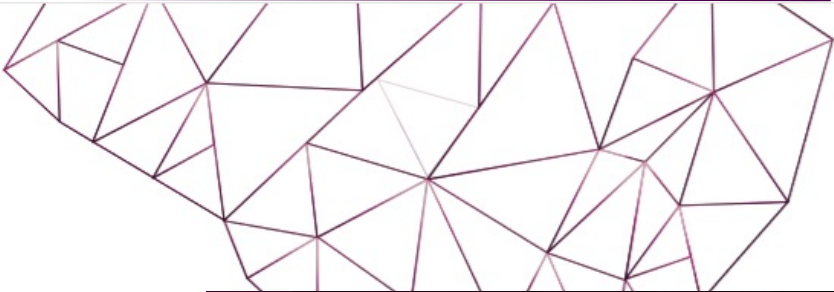
We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers and sponsors from across Alberta for their commitment to diversity in STEM. To those of you who are not involved, we ask that you consider volunteering, and/or financially contributing to our organization. As our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaches, there will be many opportunities to get involved!



**Alicia Bjarnason**  
*President*

**STEM:**

SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY,  
ENGINEERING &  
MATHEMATICS



**VISION** A transformed future with equal opportunity for all in STEM.  
*With strong STEM literacy at a public level, and where all can contribute to and have access to STEM.*

**MISSION** Enabling a culture of diversity and inclusivity through STEM Programs.  
*AWSN is acting as the platform that initiates or supports programs, partners and stakeholders who amplify, magnify, or accelerate systemic and social change within the greater community, allowing all to participate to their full capacity in STEM.*

**WE** have passion for STEM and the STEM community.

**WE** aim to transform the STEM landscape.

**WE** are champions through Leadership and Advocacy.

**WE** use guiding principles of integrity, collaboration, and empowerment.

AWSN assists both hosted and member programs through grants, mentorship, non-profit status for new initiatives, advertising of events, volunteer recruitment and opportunities to communicate and learn from like-minded organizations and people.

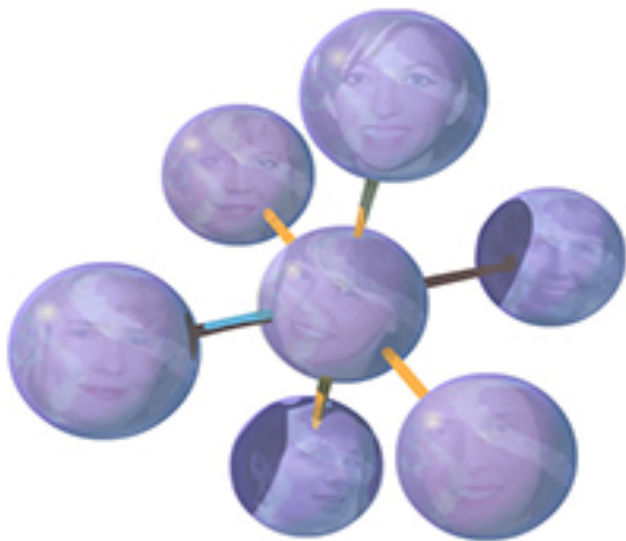
## THREE 'R' PILLARS

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AWSN's initial focus was supporting programs for girls and young women. Soon after, it grew to include scholarships and the Minerva Mentoring Award, recognizing significant contributions in mentorship. With the continued growth of the organization over the past 23 years, AWSN found itself connecting an increasing number of diverse groups and programs.

AWSN has evolved, focusing its strategic direction under the guise of three pillars - **Recruitment**, **Retention** and **Recognition**. Each pillar focuses on specific programs, services and activities, ensuring direct support for these populations and programs under that pillar. Interconnectivity between the pillars further serves to facilitate collaboration and aid the programs in supporting one another.

The **Inner Core – AWSN**, supports programs by providing services to these STEM based programs, including mentoring, grants, program promotion and IT support. For hosted programs, this also includes: not-for-profit status, insurance coverage and financial reporting.



### RECRUITMENT

It's about giving young people the opportunity to **EXPLORE** STEM subjects and careers.

### RETENTION

It's about assisting the talent that exists in the STEM fields and reducing the struggle and **CHALLENGE** to advance their careers.

### RECOGNITION

It's about the recognition of excellence in STEM - the people who **INSPIRE** us.



AWSN provides support through event funding, services, and information sharing that recruits young women and Aboriginal youth into STEM careers. We help new ideas and fledgling projects evolve into long-term, sustainable endeavours. Below are the groups we supported this year, many of which are long time members.



**Operation Minerva Calgary:** Providing grade eight girls the opportunity to experience STEM career choices through job shadowing activities with female role models in STEM workplaces.

**Power To Choose:** Aboriginal youth grades seven to 12 attend science summer camps that encourage aboriginal careers in STEM, with Aboriginal focused mentorship and science programs.

**Intimitrons from Area 51:** Inspiring and encouraging young women in engineering, science, and technical vocations through building robots and competing in the FIRST Robotics Competitions.

**WISEST:** A University of Alberta network, empowering women in the fields of science, engineering and technology with conferences, lecture series and summer research programs.



In 2016-2017 the Recruitment pillar grew as we welcomed First Light Initiative. Focused on Aboriginal youth, students are exposed to telescopes and astronomy, supported by traditional indigenous knowledge and cultural traditions about the sky.



AWSN supports individuals at all stages of their STEM careers, including undergraduate students who are learning about careers options, advanced degree holders trying to break into industry, individuals trying to come back to work after an extended leave, those seeking mentoring to advance their careers or those looking for a supportive community of like-minded individuals. Below are the groups we supported this year, many of which are long time members.



**AVE Network:** Fostering passion for geoscience, engineering and technologist roles in Calgary through speaker series and networking events.

**GeoWomen:** An AWSN hosted program providing speaker series events and other networking resources to advance the careers of women working in the geoscience professions in Calgary.

**MentorUP Alberta:** Supporting under-represented young STEM professional populations with early career networks.

**SAIT-WISE:** In 2017, the retention pillar welcomed SAIT-WISE. Student led, the group is focused on supporting and encouraging females interested in STEM fields.



**Work Re-Engagement:** AWSN program that identifies barriers to STEM-trained women as they re-entering the workforce after an extended leave.

**WISER:** A WISEST Network, designed to help early career professionals connect each other and with resources, support, and professional development opportunities.

**UA-WISE:** University of Alberta WISEST Network, designed to help support undergraduate students in the science and engineering fields.

**UC-WISE:** University of Calgary network, engaging female undergraduate students in activities with faculty and peers to promote their success in the science and engineering professions.

**WWIN:** Developed by AWSN to support women in the STEM professions with access to childcare.



One of the most important things AWSN does is recognize individuals and organizations that are making a difference in the community and/or their STEM field. Recognition comes in the form of biographies, mentor stories, Minerva Mentoring Award, AWSN scholarships and educational bursaries.

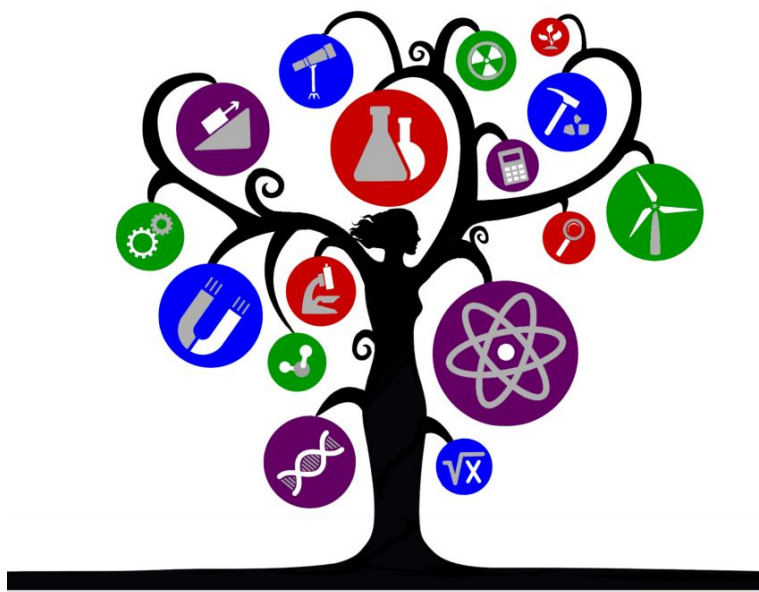


**Minerva Mentoring Award:** AWSN recognizes an single individual each year, who has made an inspirational contribution towards the mentoring of women and girls in the areas of STEM.

**AWSN Scholarship:** This annual \$3,000 scholarship is offered Alberta-wide and is awarded to third year and above post-secondary student (with approximately 50 or more applicants).

**WinSTEM Week:** Celebrating the careers of women in STEM, AWSN supports this week-long celebration by communicating the many events held in the province. WinSTEM week always begins the second Tuesday in October, coinciding with Ada Lovelace Day.

**STEM Affair:** Honouring leaders in the community and celebrating the achievements of AWSN, members programs and others in the community who have supported further STEM initiatives.



# LEADERSHIP

In the past two years, AWSN has modernized our organizational structure and leadership team. The new structure allows for greater efficiency and accountability. In addition, we have launched an Advisory Board to support strategic initiatives during our time of rapid growth.

## EXECUTIVE

<b>PRESIDENT</b> Alicia Bjarnason <i>(Geology &amp; Human Geography)</i>	<b>CO-PRESIDENT</b> Samia Sarkar <i>(STEM field)</i>	<b>PAST PRESIDENT</b> Shoma Sinha <i>(Nanotechnology)</i>
<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b> Sanah Jowhari <i>(Biomedical Technology)</i>	<b>CO-VICE PRESIDENT</b> Hanah La Plante <i>(Geology)</i>	<b>TREASURER</b> Carol Slomp <i>(Mathematics)</i>
<b>CO-TREASURER</b> Jim Thomson <i>(Petroleum Engineer)</i>	<b>SECRETARY</b> Zabeen Gale <i>(Geology)</i>	<b>CO-SECRETARY</b> Shagufta Tasneem <i>(Electrical/Computer Engineer)</i>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b> Monica Cordon <i>(Microbiology/Biochemistry)</i>	<b>CO-COMMUNICATIONS</b> Sandra Meagher <i>(Environmental Geography)</i>	<b>PROGRAMS MANAGER</b> Anna Noga <i>(Biology)</i> Anne Marie Hearn <i>(Chemist/Chemical Engineer)</i>

## BOARD

<b>RECRUITMENT</b> Jacqueline Gorman <i>(Hydrogeology)</i> Patty Rooks	<b>RETENTION</b> Sahar Banisoltan Kylie Toh <i>(Nanotechnology)</i>	<b>RECOGNITION</b> Anne Marie Hearn <i>(Chemist/Chemical Engineer)</i> Angeline McIntyre
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b> Karen Sagar <i>(Engineer)</i>	<b>STEM AFFAIR CHAIR</b> Wendy Hutchins <i>(Biomedical Research)</i>	<b>SPEAKER SERIES</b> Madeleine Jenson-Fontaine <i>(Chemistry)</i>
<b>ADVISORY</b> Lesley Rigg <i>(Environmental Geography)</i>	Gail Powley <i>(Industrial Automation)</i> Susan Rancourt <i>(Engineer)</i>	David Lloyd <i>(Biochemistry)</i> Jordanna Heller <i>(Communications)</i>

*We can only serve our community when we work cohesively as a well-rounded team of Executive and Board Members.*

Committed to setting the direction of AWSN over the next decade, 2017 saw the development of the organizations 10-year strategy - taking AWSN through to its 35 year! With a refreshed Mission and Vision, the focus of the strategic plan is on developing a resilient future for AWSN, as it enhances its efforts in promoting diversity in STEM.

Led by an advisory committee, work focused on establishing a thorough organizational and marketing analysis. This work included setting 1-year, 5-year and 10-year goals, outcomes, key performance measures and action plans. The direction for each year includes:

## Year 1 – Planting Seeds

In taking the first step in this new journey, the first year is focused on celebrating annual events including:

- The CCWEST Conference being held in Alberta for the first time in several years
- Ada Lovelace day 2017

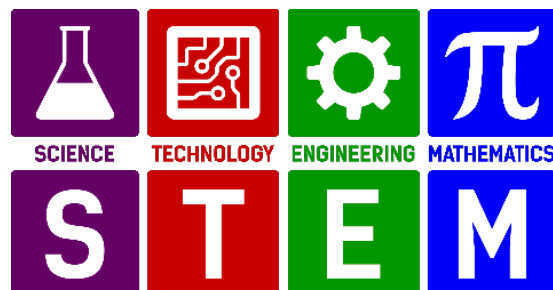
## Year 5 – Building the Canopy

As the organization focuses on supporting members in the initial years of the strategic plan, AWSN will continue to develop its presence as a leader and platform:

- Continued partnerships
- Support, government/policy influence on topic related to diversity and inclusion in STEM
- Service support to assist in program sustainability
- Have a dedicated home space

## Year 10 – Maintaining the Forest

- Established and long running presence, provincially and federally
- Top tier influencers on policy for industry and local/provincial governments
- Financially standing, with long-term partnerships and corporate programming



## Work Re-engagement Program



This program is funded by Status of Women Canada and is entering its third year. The team is currently writing Leading Practices to support both professional STEM women returning from an extended leave and companies willing to support this demographic. The next stage of the program will be to work with 5 companies on a pilot project to onramp this demographic back into the workforce.

## Speaker Series

The AWSN Speaker Series was launched in March 2017 with the theme of “Ideas to Reality: Perspectives from Local Entrepreneurs” at the University of Alberta Faculty Club. It was an evening of networking that featured an interactive panel discussion with Edmonton-based entrepreneurs from different sectors. Panelists included Kendal Barber Co-Founder at Poppy Barley, Dana DiTomaso President and Partner at Kick Point Inc and Technology Columnist (CBC), Chris Lerohl CEO and Co-Founder of Honest Dumplings and Alex Villeneuve Director of Ceres Solutions. AWSN thanks the many sponsors of this new Speaker Series.

## WinSTEM Week



In recognition of Ada Lovelace Day, AWSN was thrilled to launch WinSTEM Week in October 2016, celebrating the achievements of women who study, research or contribute to STEM subjects. Throughout the week, groups across Alberta organize and celebrated Women in STEM! There were 26 events and initiatives including the lighting of the Calgary Tower and Edmonton High Level bridge in purple! We hope to make 2017 just as memorable and encourage all groups to participate by planning their own WinSTEM week activity, big or small. See all the great events on AWSN’s social media channels at #WinSTEMWeek.



Join the UA-WISE/WISER/IEEE NCS WIE  
*Industry Mixer*  
for career and networking opportunities!

Date: October 13, 2016  
Time: 6-8 pm  
6 - 6:45 pm | speaker presentation  
Rossitza S. Marinova, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Mathematical & Computing Science  
Concordia University of Edmonton  
6:45 - 8 pm | industry mixer  
(list of companies and associations coming soon)

Location: ETLC Solarium,  
University of Alberta  
(Light refreshments will be served.)

RSVP by Oct 11 at  
<https://wiseredmonton.ca/>  
For undergrads, grads, and early career professionals



# ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## STEM Affair

To bring WinSTEM Week 2016 to a close, over 70 attendees enjoyed the AWSN STEM Affair evening events held on Saturday, October 15. In conjunction with the ICEI conference held during the day, the Affair included hands-on science activities with Let's Talk Science and FREDsense Technologies. The evenings formal program included award presentations, greeting from the Government of Alberta, and the presentation of the 2016 Minerva Mentoring Award to Dr. Margaret Ann Armour. Attendees were then treated to an amazing keynote speech from Dr. Lesley Rigg, Dean of Faculty of Science at the University of Calgary.



Balance Sheet FY17 vs. FY16 Income	2017
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash	64,571
Other Current Assets	136,606
Long-term Assets	550
<i>Total Assets</i>	<i>201,727</i>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accounts Payable & Other Current Liabilities	18,722
Deferred Income	118,775
<i>Total Liabilities</i>	<i>137,497</i>
Total Fund Balances, End of Year	64,230
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balances</b>	<b>201,727</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Federal & Provincial Grants	184,714
Contributions	21,584
Special Events	12,466
Interest Income	13
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>218,777</i>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Program Expenses	52,528
Support Services (Administration)	166,493
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>219,021</i>
<b>Fund Balances</b>	
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue Over Expenses	-244
Funds Balances, Beginning of Year	64,474
<i>Fund Balances, End of Year</i>	<i>64,230</i>

AWSN financial year is from February 28, 2016 – February 28, 2017.



## SPONSORS



AWSN is grateful to our sponsors and partners for their support of our programming from June 2016 to June 2017.



## AWSN

Box 53, 3553 - 31 Street  
NW, Calgary, AB, T2L 2K7  
Ph: 403-808-8126 Calgary  
Fax: 403-282-1238  
Email: [info@awsn.org](mailto:info@awsn.org)

