

CWSE-Prairies Newsletter

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*The goal of the
NSERC CWSE – Prairies*

*is to develop and successfully lead
strategic activities that promote
greater opportunities for women,
particularly Aboriginal women, in
science and engineering across the
Prairie Region.*

Prairies Chair for Women in Science and Engineering Launches the ICAN-WISE Scholarship for Undergraduate Students

It's official! Details of how to apply for the 2014 ICAN-WISE Scholarship Award have been sent to 57 female faculty at the University of Manitoba and to 13 female faculty at University of Saskatchewan, as well as the following student organizations UMASA, UMSU and USSU.

The ICAN-WISE Scholarship will help facilitate women to form mentee - mentor academic research collaborations in natural sciences and engineering. Two ICAN-WISE scholarships are available for 2014. Each scholarship is valued at \$6,000, and must be used by the chosen undergraduate students (mentees) in the summer 2014 for a research project in the laboratory of their chosen mentor. Mentors must be women at the assistant, associate or full-professor level, and be in one of the natural sciences or engineering fields. They can be located at the University of Manitoba or the University of Saskatchewan.

Student application forms can be downloaded from <http://www.cwse-prairies.ca/node/1118>. Deadline to submit the application is April 2, 2014, midnight. Submit your application electronically to Jacqueline.onagi@umanitoba.ca.

A selection committee will review all applications submitted before the deadline. The committee will use three criteria in choosing the successful applicants:

- The excellence of the justification provided by the applicant. [50%]
- The academic marks the applicant obtained in courses that are in natural sciences or engineering fields. [25%]
- The uniqueness of the mentee-mentor research opportunity. For example: cross-departmental or cross-university mentor-mentee opportunities are encouraged; research that impacts the well-being of Aboriginal communities in the Prairies is encouraged; Applications from First Nation, Métis or Inuit students are encouraged. [25%]

The selection committee is looking forward to reviewing your application!

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Enhancing Indigenous Content to Promote Science to Youth



Isca Spillett is a Cree woman whose roots can be traced back to communities in Northern Saskatchewan (La Ronge) and Manitoba (Opaskwayak Cree Nation). She is passionate about re-establishing traditional food harvesting methods that have been severely impacted because of colonization. Isca spent a considerable amount of her research effort going to northern First Nation communities and talking to Elders and traditional harvesters about their knowledge of ceremonial practices related to traditional foods and medicines.

Isca was the recipient of a 2013 NEAHR (Manitoba Network Environment for Aboriginal Health Research) student research award that supported her work as an undergraduate research assistant supervised by Dr. Annemieke Farenhorst. As a part of her summer internship with NEAHR, Isca developed a workshop called Niteh Maskihikiy as a way to engage youth in traditional harvesting methods as well as cultural reclamation.

Congratulations to Isca for having a version of her Niteh Maskihikiy workshop chosen to be part of the sixth edition of the science.gc.ca activity book (<http://science.gc.ca/>) which will be launched, on-line, by the end of March. Through her hard work, Isca helped make sure that youth and educators throughout Canada and the world can learn about how food and nutrition is valued from both Indigenous and western science perspectives. And perhaps, learn a word or two in the Cree language along the way.

Previous versions of the science.gc.ca activity book were downloaded more than 353,000 times between April 2012-March 2013. We invite all youth and their educators to download the sixth edition and try out Isca's Indigenous Food Science activity at school, home, camp, alone or with friends!



“Make Your Move” on International Women’s Day

WISE Kid-Netic Energy hosted over 50 grade eight and nine female students at its “Make Your Move” event on International Women’s Day, March 8th.

This inaugural event was developed by WISE Kid-Netic Energy, University of Manitoba, Faculty of Engineering. The purpose of the event was to have the opportunity to celebrate women and to provide young female middle school students exposure to engineering in a unique way. Sixteen Winnipeg schools participated in an interactive, challenging yet fun day of engineering.

“Make Your Move” is expected to be an annual event.



Congratulations to Karin Rose and Sirajum Munira!

The 57th Annual Manitoba Soil Science Society Meeting was held in Winnipeg from February 6th and 7th, 2014. Karin Rose, a M.Sc. student supervised by the Prairie Chair for Women in Science and Engineering, won the award for the best graduate student paper. When Karin was asked about how it felt to win the first prize in the oral competition she said *"I felt proud that I was able to effectively communicate on a complicated topic that people are not typically aware of. Within the research community, each of us focuses so intently on a single subject that it can be challenging to communicate the practical importance of the work we do."* Karin's M.Sc. research has focused on antibiotic and steroid estrogen in livestock and human waste products. She is expected to earn her degree in the next few months and has already lined up a full-time position as the Research Project Coordinator and Manitoba Corn Growers Association.



Sirajum Munira, a Ph.D. student supervised by the Prairie Chair won the award for the best graduate student poster. Winning the poster competition made Sirajum *"so happy"*. Sirajum decided to pursue her degree abroad, and moved from Bangladesh to Canada on December 31, 2012. When asked to identify the main differences between living as a woman in Bangladesh versus Canada, Sirajum said *"Motherhood with little external support, widespread poverty, and a lack of political stability are the main obstacles to the success of women careers in Bangladesh. In Canada, the socio-economic conditions are more supportive for women in comparison to Bangladesh"*.



Both Karin and Sirajum feel that they have benefited from women role models in their lives. Karin believes a good role model is someone who *"demonstrates leadership and dedication to their subject, while encouraging others to pursue their own subject with the same passion"*. When Karin was asked whether she sees herself as a role model for other women in soil science she said: *"Absolutely- the future of the scientific community is defined by personal interactions and previous accomplishments. Everyone has the potential to be a role model to the next generation of scientists and professionals."*

Sirajum mentioned that the Prairie Chair inspires her and helps her to find courage in pursuing her career goals. When asked whether Sirajum sees herself as a role model to other female students in agriculture, she said *"I want to be a role model to other female students so that I can encourage women to take part in the field of science and engineering and create a supportive environment for them. Empowering women in science and engineering sector would allow us to maximize economic prosperity"*.

Congratulations again to our women role models, Karin and Sirajum, on their deserving awards

NSERC Awards Ceremony in Rideau Hall, Ottawa



On February 3, 2014, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, hosted the NSERC awards ceremony in Rideau Hall, Ottawa, which celebrated Canada's top natural sciences and engineering researchers. Special congratulations to two outstanding women: Zhihui Yi, Department of Chemical Engineering, École Polytechnique de Montréal, who were awarded the NSERC Giles Brassard Doctoral Prize for Interdisciplinary Research, and Dr. Milica Radisic, Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering, University of Toronto for being awarded the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship. The NSERC Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering were invited to the ceremony, where they had the opportunity to meet with delegates and researchers from across Canada.

Prairie Chair Participates in Western Vice-Presidents (Academic) and Provosts and Vice-Presidents (Research) Conference

The Prairie Chair for Women in Science and Engineering was invited to participate in annual meeting of Western Vice-Presidents (Academic) and Provosts and Vice-Presidents (Research) conference on March 6-7, 2014. Dr. Annemieke Farenhorst was one of four speakers who talked about the importance of building partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

One university program that she highlighted was the NSERC CREATE H2O program, which is a collaborative effort between universities and First Nations communities to combine technical water and wastewater management training with Indigenous theory, law and methodological skills training. Check out this program at <http://create-h2o.ca/>.

Workshop on Effective Communication for Women in SETT, May 21, 2014 in Regina

The Canadian Centre for Women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology (WinSETT Centre), with support from the NSERC Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering National Network, is pleased to offer a special day-long pre-CCWESTT Conference workshop. The Effective Communication for Women in SETT Workshop will be held on Wed. May 21, 8:30 to 4:30 at the Ramada Hotel in Regina. Senior post-secondary students, early to mid-career women in STEM, or more experienced professionals will benefit from this workshop.

If you are a female post-secondary student or post-doctoral fellow in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba, and you want your registration costs to be covered by the Prairie Chair, contact Jacqueline.onagi@umanitoba.ca. Contact us soon because we have only five free registrations available - first come, first served.

The link for more information on the workshop and to register can be found at <http://cwse-prairies.ca/>. We hope that you will be able to join us for a rewarding event. Registration is limited to 25 participants.

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