AWSN

Scholarship Program

19th April, 2021

Content

A Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) was used to design this program. This document is structured through current Best Practices within the greater equity, diversity and inclusion space. AWSN is receptive to modifying and adjusting this program as needed.

Thank you to Canadian Equality Consulting for support on this project, specifically CEC Founder and President Marcie Hawranik BA (Hons) MA, and EDI specialist Shefaly Gunjal MScSM.

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Thank you to TC Energy for supporting this program.

Sponsor:

AWSN Background

AWSN is a non-profit organization that supports advocacy towards a more diverse and inclusive STEM future. AWSN has been supporting the greater STEM community in Alberta for over 25 years. AWSN's primary focus is to connect, unite, support, and promote STEM programs throughout the province.
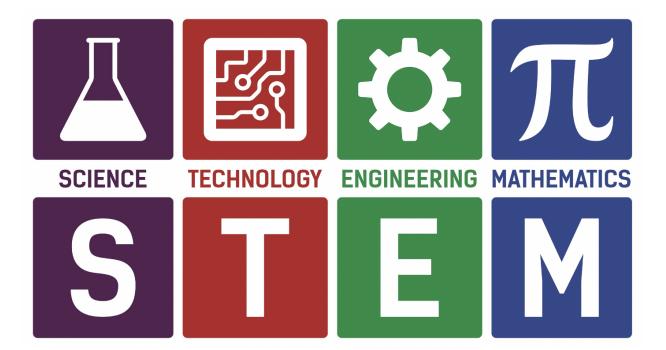
> *Advocacy, Networking & Support for Alberta STEM programs that Promote Equity, Diversity & Inclusion.*

Vision: A transformative 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 acts as a 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.*

AWSN Scholarship Program Design Theory

The AWSN Scholarship program is part of larger equity efforts within the AWSN network. Traditionally the AWSN Scholarship program offered one scholarship with a focus on *underrepresented* populations in STEM, specifically the attrition-prone third and fourth year of an undergraduate program. With the support of TC Energy, the program will be expanded to ten scholarships and will offer AWSN a chance to better define the word *underrepresented*.

Through the guidance of a GBA+, the updated program design will use an intersectional lens, which is defined as an interconnected analytical framework for understanding how the social and political identities of an individual intersect to create different types of systemic oppression and discrimination* and lived experiences. The award will be structured in a way that allows AWSN to distribute the scholarships in an equitable manner, limiting unconscious bias, stereotyping, and other barriers commonly faced by underrepresented groups within the review process, and to support AWSN's overall objective towards a more diverse and inclusive STEM future - where all can participate to their full capacity in STEM.

> *"Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strengthen the scientific and engineering communities and the quality, social relevance, and impact of research. Sound equity, diversity and inclusion practices increase access to the largest pool of qualified potential participants, enhance the integrity of a program's application and selection processes, strengthen the research outputs, and increase the overall excellence of research." - NSERC*

As individuals, each of us has identifying factors that make us who we are and influences how we experience our day-to-day life. The spaces we inhabit can also (re)produce cultures that are unwelcoming and restrictive. AWSN intends to design a scholarship program that will support dedicated and engaged STEM students with leadership potential who may otherwise be overlooked. Key factors that will be considered include:

1) **Intersectionality of Identities** - such as gender, race, ability, and diversity of lived experiences.
2) **Leadership** - this quality can be evident in many forms both inside and outside of STEM and can include formal and informal leadership experiences such as leading school projects, clubs, and community involvement, among others.
3) **Timing** - The third to final year of the undergraduate experience can propel increased attrition of STEM students. Meanwhile, for other demographics (such as re-engaging STEM professionals with a 2+ year career gap) the barrier can be financial, limiting STEM re-engagers to even consider going back to be re-educated.
4) **Programming History** - AWSN is cognisant to the historical hegemonic gendering of STEM programming and knowledge production, and how this can limit inclusivity of all students - from computer science to nursing.

*Columbia Law School - https://intersectionality.law.columbia.edu/

Process and Timelines

The scholarship application opens on May 1st, 2021, and the submission deadline is 11:59:59 PM MT on June 30th, 2021. The scholarship ($3000) will be advertised and distributed to the Alberta university/college faculty communities. Up to 10 scholarships will be awarded.

Applicants must fit into one of the following categories:

- **Current undergraduate students** who are going into the third to the final year of their undergraduate studies in Alberta
- **STEM re-engagers** with a career gap of 2+ years and re-engaging into STEM programs in Alberta.

The applicants will submit the following through an online application on https://www.awsn.org/scholarship-application:

- A copy of their most recent transcript. For applicants who are STEM re-engagers (2+ year career gap), a copy of acceptance into the Alberta-based STEM program is also acceptable.
- A completed application
- A reference letter to speak to the applicant's leadership demonstration

Note: Official transcripts at this stage are not required. Should the applicant become shortlisted, official transcripts and proof of enrollment will be requested by AWSN.

Note: In case of technology barriers, applicants can mail in their submission, which must include the items listed above, and a printed copy of application which can be accessed at http://bit.ly/awsn-scholarship-2021.

Mailing address: AWSN
                    Attention: Scholarship Committee
                    3553 - 31 Street NW, Box 53
                    Calgary, Alberta T2L 2K7

Submissions will be processed through the summer months. AWSN will contact the scholarship recipients in late August or early September. A formal announcement will be made during the yearly AWSN WinSTEM Week celebrations in October. Scholarship recipients will be asked to provide a short bio (picture is optional) to be used by AWSN's Communications team.

AWSN will contact the remaining applicants to inform them that their application is not successful at this time. AWSN will invite all applicants to become engaged within the greater Alberta STEM community, as there may be other supports available, such as peer and formal mentorship, volunteer opportunities, leadership training, etc. AWSN will also encourage applicants to subscribe to AWSN newsletter to stay informed on these topics.

Data Collection, Training, and Forward Process

Once the scholarships are announced and communications are completed, AWSN will delete the personal information of the remaining years applicants.

AWSN will retain a database of yearly scholarship recipients and overall qualitative and quantitative statistics gathered from the program, including application numbers, overall demographics and identity factors, program and institution enrolment, how the applicant heard about the program, and their feedback on barriers through the application process. AWSN will work with Alberta Status of Women to collect data on scholarship distribution from both organizations' scholarship programs. Between the two groups, up to 60 scholarships will be distributed each year. AWSN will also retain the essay answers (minus any identifying information) as qualitative data. The essays may offer AWSN insights into how the applicants are involved within and outside the STEM environment, and if there may be further ways the AWSN network can support STEM students. All data collected—both quantitative and qualitative—will be reviewed through a GBA+ lens to inform and support the AWSN Scholarship team to refine the application and adjudication process - such as identifying award distribution gaps, what community groups are being missed for scholarship application announcements, and to assist the adjudicators as they work together to combat unconscious bias and stereotyping through the evaluation process. Each year a report will be presented to the AWSN Board and to TC Energy with a recap on the program year and how the program may be adjusted to better serve the students.

AWSN continues to be a leader in equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Alberta STEM ecosystem, but we can always do better. As a team, it is important to continue learning the most up-to-date EDI practices. It has been suggested that AWSN offer EDI training at least every two years at the leadership level within the AWSN network. The training should include EDI 101, unconscious bias, the impacts of bias, continuums of bias, microaggressions, discrimination, oppression, as well as biases in hiring/recruitment/evaluation. The volunteer AWSN Scholarship Team of adjudicators should either be included within this training or individuals with experience in EDI should be recruited.

For review purposes, the adjudicators can use these resources:

Status of Women Canada: GBA+

NSERC Unconscious Bias Review

Rubric

AWSN Scholarship Rubric

Candidate Name:				
Scholarship Category:	3-last year undergrad student		Re-engager	

Identity Factors:

Self-identified Women	Self-identified Man	LGBTQ2S+	Persons with a disability
Non-binary	Black Person	Indigenous Person	Racialized Person
Under 30	Over 30	Another:_____	Prefer not to Answer

Program	Year	Institution	Previous Awards	Financial Dependents

Essays

Rank each area out of 5. An average answer scores 2.5, an exceptional answer that fully meets the criteria scores 5 and a weak answer or red flags scores 1. Use partial scores when needed.

Community Involvement /Leadership

Demonstrates leadership in STEM - formal or informal	/5
Demonstrates leadership outside of STEM - formal or informal	/5

Education and Career Goals

Clearly demonstrates genuine interest in pursuing a STEM career.	/5
Demonstrates personal attributes that will help them succeed in this career.	/5

Overall Impressions of the Essays

Candidate shows creativity, sincerity, enthusiasm, open-mindedness.	/5

Reference

Each ranked out of a score of 3. Note: Watch for unconcious bias in the reference letters.

Clearly states candidate has leadership skills with examples.	/3
Statement that says they "recommend this candidate" strongly.	/3
Total out of 31	

Comments:

Scholarship Announcements

Successful candidates will be notified that they are awarded in late August or early September. Each candidate will be asked to provide a short bio (500 words). A picture is optional.

The AWSN Scholarship Team will request the following information before distributing the awards:

- Enrolment in an Alberta STEM educational institution/program
- An official transcript
- Current contact information

Once these documents and contact information have been verified, the AWSN Scholarship Team will work with the AWSN Financial Team to distribute the scholarship cheques.

The AWSN Scholarship Team will then work with the AWSN Communications Team to prepare for the scholarship award recipient announcements to the greater STEM community during WinSTEM week (traditionally during the second week in October).

Resources

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