

WCSE OVERVIEW

The biennial *Western Conference for Science Education* (WCSE, pronounced “wixie”) creates an ongoing organizational infrastructure that invites teaching and research faculty, students, librarians and other educational professionals, regardless of their experience level, to collaborate on the improvement of post-secondary Science education through the exchange of experience, innovation, ideas, and research in teaching and learning across disciplines.

Although situated in the context of Canadian higher education in Science, the Western Conference recognizes that fundamental issues in teaching and learning often transcend disciplinary, institutional, and national boundaries. Participation by colleagues working outside the country, or outside the traditional disciplines of Science, is welcome.

Specifically, the Western Conference for Science Education is designed to sustain an ongoing organizational infrastructure that:

1. enhances a Science education community by enticing faculty and educational staff to venture out of their respective discipline-specific circles to meet, discuss, and collaborate with one another;
2. promotes ongoing improvement in post-secondary Science education through support of a range of scholarly approaches to teaching and learning;
3. contributes to the professional development of Science educators by providing access to educational leaders, resources, and training;
4. promotes productive inter-relationships between educators and various private sector academic publishers, suppliers, technology providers etc;
5. provides an avenue to share ideas, innovation, and research;
6. ensures that Conference proceedings are archived and accessible.

Conferences are planned on campus at Western University for early July of odd-numbered years. In even-numbered years, we encourage other colleagues, organizations and institutions to host synergistic events that benefit from, and in turn increase, the momentum created by the Western Conferences.

“Embracing Change”

As the WCSE 2017 organizing committee discussed a possible conference theme, our thoughts continually spiraled back to some aspect of our relationship to change. We trust this consensus will have broad appeal and we invite you to think about how you avoid, approach, banish, invite, follow, lead, despise, relish, ignore, engage, fear, or give a big hug to change in your practice as an educator.

How are you responding to changing technologies? Changing curriculum? Changing student interactions? Changing scholarship on teaching and learning? Changing policy? Changing careers? Changing learning spaces? Changing educational resources? Changing minds?

In what ways are you or your students or your institutions agents of change? And, of course, in what ways are all of the above staying just the same as they always have been, even though they change?

This Conference Theme offers a multi-faceted lens with which conference participants can examine a wide diversity of shared experience, innovation and research on current issues in the shifting landscape of post-secondary science education.

You could present a completed body of work or you might offer an in-progress report on a project for comment and discussion with experienced peers. Collaborative work with undergraduate or graduate students is particularly welcome.

Sessions will be organized around the following five broad topic threads:

Thread A: Teaching and Learning Science

Thread B: Evaluation of Learning

Thread C: Curriculum

Thread D: Education Technologies and Innovative Resources

Thread E: None of the above

Session Formats

WCSE 2017 welcomes five types of open submissions to highlight innovative practices, developing ideas/policy, works in progress, and/or research findings:

- **Workshops:** Workshops are highly participatory hands-on 80 minute sessions allowing participants to come away with a product, tool, or skill.
- **Presentations:** Presentations are 30 minute sessions providing the opportunity for presenters to involve their peers in an engaging paper, novel demonstration, provocative debate, or other creative formats.
- **Ignite! Talk:** The tagline for Ignite Talks is “Enlighten us, but make it quick!” This format challenges presenters to make their points using exactly 20 slides that automatically advance every 15 seconds. We get the whole story in 5 minutes flat. See ignitetalks.io for samples.
- **Posters:** Posters are self-explanatory visual displays offered in a format that promotes informal dialogue between the poster’s author(s) and their peers. At least one of the poster's authors will be available for discussion during the Poster Session.
- **Panel Discussions:** Participants are encouraged to collaborate on panel presentations. Panels should have 3 to 5 main presenters, no more than two of which are from the same institution/discipline. Timing can be flexible between 60 and 80 minutes, depending on panel composition and format.

Participants are always encouraged to pitch proposals for hands-on, brains-on interactive experiences in all formats.

Proposal Format

Proposals are submitted online through the link at thewesternconference.ca

The required information for all submissions is as follows:

- **Proposal Title** - 25 word maximum
- **Presenter(s) Information** - first name, middle initial, last name, e-mail address, title, and institutional affiliation
- **Session Type** - Workshop, Panel, Presentation, Ignite or Poster
- **Keywords** - 4-6 keywords
- **Conference Thread** - A - E
- **Abstract** - 250 words maximum
Abstracts should convey clear outcomes relating to the provision of new knowledge or perspectives with broad applications across a range of science disciplines.
- **Elements of Engagement**
Conference presentations are all too often structured as a single presenter talking to a passive audience that may then ask some questions at the end. At WCSE we like to shake things up. What elements of engagement will you include in your presentation plan?

Review Process

The WCSE 2017 Program Committee will oversee a double-blind process by which each appropriate proposal will be reviewed by at least two invited scholars in the field of science education. Formative feedback with regard to Proposal criteria will be provided for consideration by authors. With consideration of reviewers' recommendations, and, where appropriate, authors' revisions, the WCSE 2017 Program Committee will make the final decision regarding the acceptance and programming of proposed sessions.

Timeline for Submissions

While we appreciate receiving submissions by Monday, March 6, 2017, we also understand that this deadline might not work for particular colleagues in particular circumstances. If necessary, just contact us and we will work out a more generative timeline.

Submit proposals at thewesternconference.ca.

Find additional information or clarification at:

E-mail: WesternConference@uwo.ca

Telephone: 519.661.2111ext. 86502 (Tom Haffie, Conference Coordinator)

Twitter: @WestConf