

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 held on campus at Western University in 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.

“Beyond Content”

The Theme for WCSE 2019 will be “Beyond Content”. Although broadly applicable innovation, research, and wisdom of practice related to teaching disciplinary content is always welcome at WCSE, in 2019 we encourage participants to think bigger and beyonder. This Conference Theme offers a large conceptual tent within which conference participants can examine a wide diversity of current issues in post-secondary science education. For instance, you might wonder: How do you and your students leverage the institutional, geographical, cultural, community, andragogical, policy or built environment to enhance learning? How do you and your students locate one another within the shifting landscape of your respective roles, rights and responsibilities? Which of your educational outcomes are content-independent? Do your students develop skills and attributes that will support their thriving in an unpredictable future? What barriers to inclusive practice do you encounter? How do you promote well-being for yourself and your students?

We also welcome work that maintains our attention on previous conference themes such as making, embracing change, indigenous ways of knowing etc.

You could present a completed body of work or you might offer an in-progress report on a project for comment and discussion with interdisciplinary peers. Work arising from student/faculty partnerships is particularly welcome.

Session Formats

WCSE 2019 invites six types of open submissions to highlight innovative practices, developing ideas/policy, works in progress, and/or research findings:

- **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.
- **Workshops:** Workshops are highly participatory hands-on 80 minute sessions allowing participants to come away with a product, tool, or skill.
- **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.

- **Reflective Practice:** New for 2019, 30 minute reflective sessions will be strategically scheduled throughout the conference program. Presenters will draw on their particular experience or share ideas to facilitate a session encouraging conference participants to engage in meaningful reflection and conversation.
- **Welcome To My Laptop:** New for 2019, presenters will offer insights, experience or advice regarding some aspect of the effective use of software tools or digital artifacts to support teaching and learning. WTML sessions will be 15 minute presentations (given twice, back-to-back) in our active learning classroom. Seven presentations will be offered simultaneously to small groups. Examples could include static artifacts such as photographs, infographics or documents, in addition to software tools useful in active learning, assessment, course administration etc.
- **Digital Posters:** New for 2019, the traditional poster sessions will be offered digitally. Seven static posters will be offered simultaneously for 30 minute sessions in an active learning classroom. Digital posters may include embedded video but no audio.

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 www.thewesternconference.ca
 The required information for all submissions is shown below. To facilitate the blind review process please do not include identifying information in the initial title or abstract; this information can be added to the final submission after review.

- **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, Digital Poster, Welcome To My Laptop, and Reflective Practice
- **Keywords** - 4-6 keywords
- **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. If references are cited, please use APA formatting.
- **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 2019 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 regarding proposal criteria will be provided for consideration by authors. With consideration of reviewers' recommendations, and, where appropriate, authors' revisions, the WCSE 2019 Program Committee will make the final decision regarding the acceptance and programming of proposed sessions.

Timeline for Submissions

Although we appreciate receiving submissions between Monday, March 4 and Monday, April 1, 2019, we understand that this deadline might not work for some colleagues. If necessary, just contact us and we will work out a more generative timeline.

Submit proposals at www.thewesternconference.ca.

Find additional information or clarification at:

E-mail: WesternConference@uwo.ca

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

Twitter: @WestConf