

# Conference Report



## **Supporting the Career Progression & Retention of Women in SETT**

Halifax, N.S.

May 3-4, 2017

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6 June 2017

Dear Reader,

The second Atlantic ConnecTions (ACT) Regional Conference towards advancing women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology (SETT) took place in 3-4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. The first ACT conference was held in June 2015. The ACT conferences will take place on the years between the Canadian national conference for supporting and promoting women in SETT, organised by CCWESTT (Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Technology and Trades).

The 2017 ACT conference was organised by an enthusiastic steering committee with parallel streams organised by volunteers from various sectors. This year the streams were: women in technology, women in engineering, women in academia and women in trades. This report summarises the structure and outcomes from the 2017 Atlantic ConnecTions Conference.

I encourage you to share this report with others, to brainstorm ways in which you can make a difference for women in SETT in Atlantic Canada and to take individual action.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal

NSERC Atlantic Chair for Women in Science and Engineering,  
Professor of Biology  
Mount Saint Vincent University

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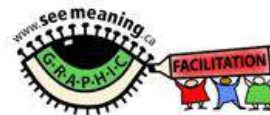
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## INTRODUCTION

The second biennial Atlantic ConnecTions Conference was held at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) in Halifax, NS, on May 3-4, 2017. This conference provided a unique opportunity for women across multiple sectors in science, engineering, trades and technology (SETT) to meet together. The focus was on understanding the unique challenges in Atlantic Canada and on taking actions that serve women in this region. Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Atlantic Chair for Women in Science and Engineering, chaired an organizing committee (See Program in Appendix One – page 22) for the 2017 conference. They chose the theme: ***Supporting the Career Progression & Retention of Women in SETT***.

Over 100 participants from across SETT sectors throughout Atlantic Canada responded to the invitation. Participants came from businesses, universities and colleges, not-for-profit organizations and government. The conference was made possible thanks to the major sponsorship from NSERC and the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering Science Trades and Technology (CCWESTT) and other sponsors (See page ii), the conference would not have been possible without this support. This report is a brief summary of the proceedings.

## DESIGNING THE SPACE TO ACT!

The conference vision called for a highly participatory conference design. The committee worked with the facilitator and with teams from each of the SETT streams (Academia, Engineering, Trades and Technology) to bring their vision to life. Donna Clark with Courage Group International designed and facilitated the plenary sessions and process to integrate output from stream sessions back into the plenary. See Meaning prepared graphic templates for the plenary sessions. Teams from each stream planned and facilitated the parallel workshops held during the conference. The organizing committee selected speakers to share new ideas into the space, yet ensured there were opportunities to learn from the wisdom of the people who chose to come. The plan incorporated processes that maximized networking amongst participants. Key ingredients included spaces for sharing stories, celebrating successes, discovering opportunities for new actions and documenting the stories and ideas for action.

The complete Program of Events for the conference, including speaker biographies, is provided in Appendix One (page 22. Brief highlights of the output from the plenary sessions and the SETT streams are provided in this report.

Three pre-conference workshops were also hosted on Tuesday, May 2, 2017. These included two special topic WinSETT workshops: Networking and Professional Presence, and

Microaggressions in the Workplace, facilitated by Donna Clark; and a Writing Compelling Commentary workshop led by Shari Graydon of Informed Opinions.

## OFFICIAL WELCOME

Dr. Elizabeth Church (VP Academic) and Dr. Franz-Odendaal (WISEatlantic Chair) from MSVU welcomed participants to the conference at the opening reception on May 2, 2017. The reception was hosted in the foyer of the McCain Centre, a space that honours the contribution of inspiring women. The McCain Centre is the only building on a Canadian university campus to celebrate the accomplishments of women. The women who had gathered for the ACT conference were invited to share what attracted them to the conference. This was the first of many opportunities to network during the conference.



## FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal, Conference Chair, and Nan Armour, Board member of CCWESTT set the stage for the conference. Dr. Franz-Odendaal provided a recap of the 2015 conference. Nan Armour shared the CCWESTT national strategic plan priorities and invited participants to join CCWESTT as an individual member. She also encouraged participants to attend the CCWESTT conference May 30-June 1, 2018 in Edmonton, Alberta. Natalie Weiskopf from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada extended an invitation to attend the international Gender Summit 11 North America 2017, November 6-8, 2017 in Montreal. The theme is “Embracing pluralism and thriving through diversity – shaping science and innovation”. Our regional ACT conference is one of many ways women in SETT nationally and globally are supporting each other and working together for systemic change.



Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal



Nan Armour



Natalie Weiskopf



# QUESTIONS PARTICIPANTS BROUGHT TO THE CONFERENCE

Participants were invited to share with each other the questions they were bringing to the ACT conference. Several common threads emerged from the process:

- What has changed for women in SETT?
- Are women's organizations in SETT/STEM<sup>1</sup> acting as silos? What are common concerns?
- How do we encourage women to enter SETT? How do we increase the number of women in STEM in academia? How can we get quicker progress?
- How can we work with industry to encourage more women in SETT? How can we retain women in SETT?
- What are the workplace challenges/issues that need to be addressed? How do we impact culture change?
- What can we do to address the pay gap between men and women doing the same job?
- How do I find a mentor in SETT?
- How do we engage men as allies?
- How do we educate all people to respect/understand women's contribution to SETT?
- How do we support diverse women in trades and technology?
- What can I do as an individual to help increase the number of women and retention in SETT?
- What are strategies for advancing in your field?
- How can I give myself permission to be more assertive?



<sup>1</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

Updates on activities and progress regarding women in SETT in Atlantic Canada were provided by several organizations.

- Denise Pothier - Engineers Nova Scotia have focused their efforts on empowering their Women in Engineering Committee, increasing staff to support outreach effort and expanded partnerships to deliver high quality experiential learning for girls in Nova Scotia. They have developed relationships and facilitated events with Girl Guides of Nova Scotia, Scouts, NS Dept of Education and school boards. They are also supporting mentoring for engineering students in Nova Scotia.
- Hélène Savoie - NB Mentor Apprentice Program has developed curriculum for mentorship programs that includes modules on diversity and generations in the workplace. Their New Boots program is a 3 year initiative designed to improve the completion rates of female apprentices in the building and construction trades.
- Bonnie MacKay - Dalhousie University Faculty of Computer Science (CS) created a Culture of Respect Committee in 2015 “to enhance the learning, social and working environment for everyone by encouraging respectful and bias free behaviours through a process of engagement, communication and education”. There are two initiatives for the Dalhousie 200<sup>th</sup> celebrations that feature women in Computer Science: 1) an exhibit highlighting women’s contributions to the field and 2) “We are all CS” – an initiative to create a more inclusive discipline with Dal CS serving as a catalyst for change. The goal is to double the number of female students in undergraduate programs by the 2018-19 academic year and achieve 40% of women in the undergraduate student population in five years.
- Eva Martinez - Women in Aerospace Canada – Nova Scotia Chapter has been organized in the last two years. The goal of the organization is to create networking opportunities with a focus on professional development and advancing women who are working in aerospace companies, in any capacity, not just technical or engineering roles.
- Jeannie Isnor - Women Unlimited supports diverse women as they build careers in the trades and technology fields in Nova Scotia. Since 2006, more than 700 diverse women have participated in programs. They support women with a 14 week Career Exploration Program through to securing employment, their apprenticeship and on to certification. Women Unlimited has worked with more than 175 employers. An industry specific program developed since the 2015 ACT conference will shortly graduate 20 diverse female shipbuilders from NSCC to work in Irving Shipbuilding’s Halifax Shipyard. Another program with Emera Newfoundland and Labrador led to 19 women graduating in a steel tower assembly program in Sydney, NS. Women Unlimited works to champion gender diversity and partner to drive change.

- Tamara Franz-Odendaal - WISEatlantic continues to focus their programs to promote science to girls through summer science camps, science retreats, and mentorships. Several new initiatives were shared. WISEatlantic sponsored the full WinSETT leadership program series in Halifax and second series in Saint John's NL. An academic advancement workshop for women faculty in science and engineering was offered in Halifax, NS in 2014 and in Saint John, NB in 2017. Support was also provided to Immigrant Women in STEM new to Halifax. WISEatlantic created a Diversity Poster Series. The series includes seven posters that feature local women working in SETT – these are distributed to classrooms throughout Atlantic Canada free of charge.

Participants were then invited to share examples of the progress they were seeing in their organizations or academic institutions. Several highlights emerged from the stories and experiences that people shared in table conversations:

- Conversations and interest in women in SETT seems to be growing. In both academic and professional networks there are women supporting each other and men having conversations about inclusion.
- Men are beginning to recognize that women need to be in SETT. Men are becoming allies for women in SETT.
- Conversations about intersections of gender identity with race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other social identities are emerging.
- There is more awareness about unconscious bias.
- There is a new federal government policy change that extends maternity leave.
- Diversity is being incorporated into goals and mandates (e.g. NS Apprenticeship) and use of gender neutral terms (e.g. journey person). The business case for diversity is beginning to be recognized.
- Workplace changes are beginning to emerge. Examples included new corporate programs to support women in professional engineering firms, more attention to diversity, and some policy changes around hiring – e.g. blind assessment of job applications. More men are taking parental leave and there appears to be a new wave of balancing work/family responsibilities. There is a shift in how traditional women's issues are now seen as an important topic by male colleagues (e.g. flexible hours of work)
- Language is beginning to shift and stereotypes are being challenged.
- There are several initiatives and partnerships that support women in trades.



- There is military recruitment, outreach and support to women in SETT.
- Conversations and networking across sectors has improved.
- WinSETT workshops and advancement of women in leadership are generating a ‘buzz’.
- There is an increase in the number of female role models in workplaces. Females are being portrayed in SETT roles in the media/social media.
- There is a variety of 10 and 20 year reports published that highlight some progress for women in SETT.
- New jobs in technology are emerging that make use of women’s strengths

## GUEST SPEAKERS

Two guest speakers were welcomed to the conference. Highlights of their presentation are provided below.

### Advancing Women in Science & Engineering: Engaging Men and Building Inclusive Leaders

Vandana Juneja, Senior Director, Catalyst, shared research on engaging men in gender inclusion, the qualities of inclusive leaders, and how we can leverage this model to create more inclusive cultures and transform workplaces.



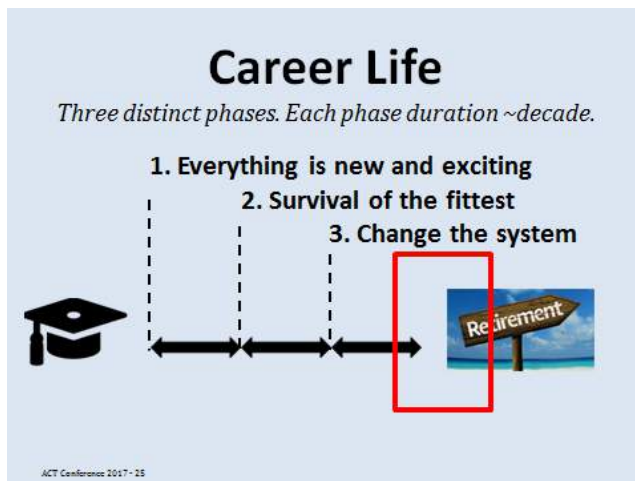
Not all leadership opportunities are created equal. Women get fewer of the high visibility, mission-critical roles and international experiences – the so-called “hot jobs” – that are key to getting ahead at global companies. According to research by Catalyst, the leading global non-profit organization accelerating progress for women through workplace inclusion, unequal access to those roles may be an underlying cause of the persistent gender gap at senior levels. In STEM industries, talent must be retained due to a leaky pipeline.

- *Engage Men:* Catalyst research demonstrates that the more men know about gender inequalities, the more likely they are to act as advocates and lead efforts to close the gender gap. Studies also show that men benefit from a more balanced workplace but they are too often left out of the conversation. In fact, men are a largely untapped, yet critical resource in building diversity and inclusion efforts aimed to create inclusive workplaces.
- *Create Inclusive Cultures:* Leading Catalyst research has found that inclusive leaders are the missing link needed to foster dynamic and innovative workplaces in which women, men and all diverse groups can thrive.



## Finishing the Marathon with Your Soul Intact

Gloria Montano, Director, WinSETT, offered a simple framework (see below) for looking at your career life. She identified three distinct stages and assigned a duration of about 10 years to each stage. The duration may be different for each person. The important aspect is that you assign a time value to each stage. She suggested this as a way to divide the marathon of your career into manageable chunks so that you can pace yourself in a more sustainable way and avoid burnout. She highlighted the gap of several years (red box below) during which plans for



action could be made.

## PARALLEL SESSION REPORTS

Parallel sessions were hosted twice during the conference, one on each of the two days. Each session was planned by volunteers from that sector. They included a variety of topics and processes to best meet the needs of each stream. There were panels, guest speakers and facilitated conversations. Poster reports from each of the sessions were brought back to the plenary to be shared with other participants. The highlights and actions/strategies from each of the sessions are provided below.



## Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace

### Highlights:

- Focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace not just because it is the “right thing to do” but because it good for business – Use the business case
- Female role models are a big part of the solution as they can lead by example and challenge unconscious bias
- Mandatory unconscious bias training
- Dialogue up and down
- Progress is a direction, not a speed
- It makes sense to hire from the whole pool
- Accessibility, language (inclusive)
- In overcoming the “glass border”, one possible option is to not “brace yourself” and go at it “full force”, not expecting to be hit.



### Action Ideas/Strategies:

- Change the conversation & challenge unconscious bias in a positive way as it happens regardless of the environment
- It is important in an academic setting to create inclusive culture (female faculty and address implicit bias) to encourage young women to stay after their first year.
- Employee Resource Groups
- Flexibility and technology to allow flexibility
- Part of the fabric/culture
- Engage men
- Engage leaders
- Sponsorship of diverse people – not just mentorship

## Unconscious Bias: A Barrier to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace

### Highlights:

- Women - challenge gender based comments at work without provoking defensiveness.
- Implicit bias is founded on core gender identity (it starts young)

- Videos shared on unconscious bias:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFW2cfzevio&t=6s>
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq\\_xYSOZrgU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq_xYSOZrgU)

### **Action Ideas/Strategies:**

- Make emotional/cultural intelligence a Core Competency in all organizational procedures.
- Require mandatory unconscious bias training
- Women - respond to biased comments citing relevant evidence (e.g. current statistics) in a calm and neutral tone/approach. Validate the person's question or position when appropriate.

### **WOMEN IN TRADES**

### **Key Ingredients and Promising Practices in Atlantic Canada**

#### **Highlights:**

- Wrap around support
  - Continues after program
  - Network
  - Support system
  - Systems navigation – skills and career development
- Staff – consistency leads to increase in outcomes. Alumni stay connected when the same people are involved
- 3 year/5 year funding helps to attract good staff. One year funding is not feasible.
- Engagement of all key partners – municipal/provincial governments. Establishing partnerships takes time. Some partners helped to attract other partners. Groups can be blended to create partnerships.
- Money is available to employers – salary subsidies, infrastructure (e.g. women's washrooms)
- Finding the right participants – multi-stakeholder group, community partnerships help to refer participants; mobility and flexibility to relocate.
- Support participants – provide boots, emergency funding (e.g. car repairs, gas)



**Strategies:**

- Get the right participants qualified – those willing to get skills
- “Keeping it real”
- Changing systemic issues – suggestions:
  - Gender studies in trades training – instructors too
  - Curriculum
  - Female representatives on apprenticeship board
  - Support for employers – funding

**Supporting the retention and promotion of women in trades: What helped?**

- Self-exploration to help deal with personal past issues
- Sharing experiences to help others
- A workplace champion
- Programs like Trade Horizons and Women Unlimited
- Ability to express your feelings in a safe environment
- Structured environment
- Having support of other women to make you feel you aren’t alone
- Financial support
- Childcare support
- Resource spaces
- Constant support with zero judgment
- Ongoing support including after the programs
- Incentives
- Learning how to properly deal with workplace bullying/harassment in a healthy way
- Support for mental illness
- Supportive management

Women who did not have programs available noted that support would have helped. Support identified included support groups, financial support, mentors and other women with whom to share experiences.

**WOMEN IN ACADEMIA****Strategies to Support the Hiring of Female Faculty****Highlights:**

- Challenges and opportunities of Collective Agreements – vague criteria
- Policies (e.g. CRC, equity training quality) is not put into practice.
- Where are the Deans in this discussion? We should specifically invite them.



### Action Ideas/Strategies:

- Targeted academic hiring – not being afraid of a failed search – trust the Administrators
- Oversight on hiring committees by either well trained faculty on equity or by having an equity officer
- Scheduling class times the same as day care times – family friendly policy around this
- Whole hiring process should be formalized including ‘informal’ dinners
- Deans:
  - Accountability of number of hires/promotions to be done regularly
  - MPCHP reviews equity analysis as a resource to ensure change at universities
  - Workshops for women in SETT are very valuable
  - Within Departments, create checklists of how to interpret the Collective Agreement and have someone from outside your Department check that this list is followed during hiring/promotion.



### Questions you are afraid to ask your supervisor *(Note questions are clustered and highlights of responses are included)*

- Time questions: What to do when – supervisor makes demands on time including during leave/vacation; supervisor gives time wasting tasks; asking for time off.
  - Talk to HR , Graduate Studies, International Students Office and check policies. Depending upon how you are being paid, different policies may apply. When you clarify your situation, negotiations/conversations with your supervisor are part of the process.
  - Define in advance how much time you have for professional responsibilities. Voice concerns re productivity. Try to arrange for someone else to be able to fill in for you.
  - Be as generous with your time to yourself as you are to others.
  - While the conversations may be hard you need to have them.
- When to have a family?
  - There is no right time. You will figure it out. Pick your partner wisely!
- What to do when inappropriate statements are made in class/bad experiences at conferences or research trips?

- Find an ally – e.g. look for “safe spaces” as at UNB where trained people are easily identified through stickers on office doors; talk to Dean; talk to older student.
- Check out “culture of respect committee” or similar one at your institution
- What about rates of pay and how do scholarships affect rates of pay?
  - Check out policies at your institution. No one should get less than the minimum.
- Questions about getting timely feedback on academic progress? Graduating?
  - Get concrete milestones from your advisor, use your committee
  - Get reading time scheduled and follow-up
  - Watch out for supervisor who never wants you to leave
- How can skills be applied in industry? How is professional development supported?
  - Field specific – see your professional society, graduate studies, ask your advisor
  - Your employer will support professional development
- How do I find a mentor?
  - There are programs at universities. You can talk to someone and ask. Find ally and sponsor too.
- What kinds of conversations are acceptable? How do we connect as people and professionals?
  - Supervisors are people too. You can learn what interests them and share about who you are – see what common interests emerge.
  - Supervisors avoid prying questions as they can be inappropriate.
- How do I deal with disrespectful comments? Comments that make me feel stupid?
  - These may be microaggressions and need to be addressed.
  - Ask for comments on your work in writing.
  - Talk to someone else in your group. Talk to your committee or grad studies.

## WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

### A Panel Conversation with Women in Tech Industries

#### Highlights:

- If you can't see it you can't be it
- Coach – Mentor – Support
- Tech jobs are cool

#### Action Ideas/Strategies:

- Be bold, be confident, be authentic
- Sell yourself
- Define your own work-life balance – integrate versus separate



- Networking matters
- Coach – Mentor – Sponsor. Find them!!

### **Actions Moving Forward: A round table discussion**

<b>Participants discussed how do we....</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Takeaways</b>
Encourage women to join tech industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate process (logic) into learning early on – not just math; show connection with arts, science, english.</li> <li>• Implement programs/intramurals for education – make it fun!</li> <li>• Educate guidance counsellors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness</li> <li>• Remove stigma</li> </ul>
Improve working environments?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words matter</li> <li>• Coach – mentor - sponsor</li> </ul>
Support women experiencing unfair treatment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WinSETT Leadership training</li> <li>• Employee diversity and inclusion training and awareness and action oriented</li> <li>• Offering a place where small organizations can get access to effective/supportive policies &amp; procedures</li> <li>• Providing information for women on understanding and addressing salary differentials</li> <li>• Provide avenues for sponsors, mentors and coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Action oriented awareness</li> <li>• Supporting policies &amp; procedures</li> </ul>
Find ways for women to become leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership development programs</li> <li>• move away from focus on gender</li> <li>• concrete advice – language, word choice; how to sound and act more like a leader</li> <li>• encourage finding a sponsor, mentor, coach and be them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and change perceptions</li> <li>• Gender neutral leadership</li> </ul>
Make connections for mentors and mentees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship at the university level</li> <li>• Seek formal approval to foster mentor/mentee relationship at work</li> <li>• At work, match people who want to be mentored with someone what wants to mentor</li> <li>• Start mentorship at a younger age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start mentorship at younger age</li> </ul>

## WHAT NEXT? GOING OUT TO ACT!

The final afternoon of the conference, participants were invited into a conversation café designed to engage participants in thinking about actions that are common across SETT. Several topics were identified out of the Parallel Session reports. Others were added by participants. The topics included:

- How do I speak up? Personal courage, strategies
- Personal career decisions – applying what I have learned
- Bad Ass Disrupters & we're celebrating it!
- Intersectionality in SETT – gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status
- Family support – daycare, policies, programs
- Support for women in workplaces
- Mentoring
- Leadership – engaging senior management
- Leadership champions – their role?
- Support for women by sector organizations/women's organizations
- Workplace strategies with peers and colleagues
- Engagement of men
- Workplace hiring strategies & practices
- Workplace strategies for retention
- Systemic change strategies – boards, policies, etc.



Participants were invited to choose the conversation topic that interested them and to participate in two rounds of conversation. They were invited to look for possibilities for personal action as they took part in this conversation café. Out of the two day conference, what stood out for them? What action did they want to take as they go back to their organizations or academic institutions?



What were they inspired to do as a result of their conversations?

Many topics were discussed throughout the sessions. All were important and contributed to the emergence of the final list of actions. And in any community there is only so much energy. When an individual commits to an action that they are passionate about, then there is the most likelihood of follow-up



action. The following are the themes around which individual actions were named:

- ✓ Speak up for myself and other women – make my wants and opinions heard; speak up when uncomfortable; have difficult conversations; challenge unconscious bias; speak out for disadvantaged groups; raise my voice in political arena.
- ✓ I will be a disruptor!
- ✓ Take actions to promote my career; find mentor or sponsor; take leadership programs; plan.
- ✓ Build and Use Networks
- ✓ Work with Associations /Boards to support women in SETT – bring issues to light and advocate for change
- ✓ Be a mentor or sponsor for women in SETT – encourage women and men re women in SETT



- ✓ Take action in my workplace or institution: share what I've learned at the conference; talk to leaders about unconscious bias; challenge senior management to include diversity and inclusion as a priority; more inclusive language in applications and hiring; create safe spaces; start or participate in a women in SETT workplace group
- ✓ Engage men – bring men to next conference

## CLOSING CIRCLE AND EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

The conference chairperson, Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal, formally closed the conference with expressions of appreciation to the participants, speakers, the organizing committee, and facilitators. She expressed much appreciation to all sponsors and in particular major sponsors NSERC and CCWESTT who made this event possible. She offered special thanks to Sally Marchand, Program Coordinator Women in Science and Engineering, Atlantic Region (WISEatlantic) for taking care of registration and all logistics for the conference and the two student volunteers, Karley Brooking and Nadira Al-Nashleh, who worked with her. She also thanked Donna Clark for her amazing work in the design and facilitation of the conference with the organizing committee.

The participants gathered in a circle for the formal closing. The facilitator passed the microphone around the circle and invited anyone who wished to share closing reflections on the Atlantic ConnecTions conference. Comments indicated that the participants very much appreciated the conference and were leaving with hope.



An evaluation was completed on line after the conference. The following themes from the evaluation reflect the sentiments expressed in the closing circle.

- Great job! Event overall was empowering, detailed, well-planned, positive spirit of celebrating each other and what we do.
- The focus on conversation leading to action items.
- New learning....how much work left to do, unconscious bias
- We share common challenges as women in SETT.

- Networking – Met so many new people.
- Learned new ideas, strategies and practices to support women in SETT.
- There are resources to tap into in Atlantic Canada for women in SETT
- That I can be a leader in this. I can make a difference.
- I will be strong, take care of myself, and stand up for myself.
- Unconscious bias and mentoring/sponsorship stood out as important areas for action.
- We need to engage more men

Many participants expressed a desire to stay connected. A private LinkedIn group was created for this purpose by WISEatlantic.

The “wordle” word cloud below was created from the words on the evaluation that described the experiences of participants. The larger words indicate that those were used more frequently. Responses to the evaluation survey were received from 46 participants.





There were several key messages from the participants who completed the evaluation.

- 98% indicated that the conference either met (50%) or exceeded (48%) their expectations.
- 75% of the respondents had never been to a CCWESTT conference.
- SETT parallel stream sessions were very well received with average response of 4.5 out of 5 point scale. The following themes were evident in the feedback
  - It was important to get together by stream as it allowed each group to focus on the different realities in each stream. Some noted that this was the best part of the conference. The facilitators of all the sessions were appreciated.
  - Many would have liked to attend more than one of the streams so the follow-up summaries and posters were appreciated.
  - SETT is very diverse and some professionals did not necessarily fit the streams. For example women in science (but not academia) or technology (but not IT).
  - Some themes are common to all streams so there is an opportunity for sessions across sectors.
- Students (22% of respondents) were very appreciative of the experience. They cited the following benefits from attending:
  - Network and understand career options
  - Advice from women who have been in the profession
  - Learning from women who are happy living examples of strong and beautiful women who have combined career and family.
  - Helped see how to thrive in Canada when you come from another country
- The speakers were rated at 4.5 on a 5 point scale. They spoke to issues of concern to participants. The balance of speakers and facilitated conversations was a very positive feature of the conference.
- 100 % would be interested in attending another Atlantic Connections conference.

As participants reflected on their learning many themes stood out:

- The numbers of women in SETT are still low despite significant work
- Concrete ideas and practices to support women in SETT

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*I was surprised at...*

*"...the similarities between the struggles women and minority groups face in SETT."*

*"...at how easy it becomes to talk about these struggles and challenges when given the right environment and circumstances."*

*"I felt I was part of something – a really strong and welcoming community."*

*"I learned to look for allies, sponsors and be a disruptor!"*

---



- Women need to support each other – we have similar issues - connecting with other women is renewing
- Inclusive leadership and what companies can do to support diversity/equity
- Importance of equity training for hiring committees
- Unconscious bias – understanding and strategies for addressing it
- That there is more to diversity than gender – as women we have multiple social identities – race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, etc.
- Career strategies including the importance of sponsors not just mentors
- Importance of self-care
- Importance of allies and the need to engage men in the conversation

---

*I was surprised to discover that I had unconscious bias...learned how to address unconscious bias*

*“...I can ask for help”*

*I am in charge of my own career path”*

*It made me believe that I can succeed in Canada and it's not a dream anymore, it is a fact. “*

---

Clearly the highly participative and welcoming nature of the conference is a major factor in its success. The Steering Committee had decided to use an innovative combination of participative plenary sessions, parallel stream sessions for SETT sectors and guest speakers. This has been well received by participants. They commented on the ease of conversation when an inclusive and open environment is created for conversations. The use of the graphic boards for collecting and displaying the group questions and group wisdom was also noted by many respondents. This conference included more diverse women, mostly in the academic stream and for the first time military participants were obvious in the group. Both the venue and diversity of the catering menu also worked well.

Suggestions for future conferences included one day of parallel streams and a second day that is more focused on common themes across sectors. Comments about those missing or in low numbers from the conference are worthy of note: men, government organizations, tradeswomen.

This conference created an opportunity for both collaborative and strategic conversations, while also supporting individual women dealing with work-life balance and other challenges. Women were leaving recognizing the importance of working together and with more knowledge of the resources available to support them in their careers. Significantly, many participants were leaving with confidence, hope in the possibilities for real change and more courage to stand up for themselves and other women.

## CONCLUSION

The Atlantic ConnecTions Conference is responding to a need for women in SETT in Atlantic Canada to connect and support each other in making change happen. Participants left with new ideas, strategies and networks to help advance and retain women in their organizations or academic institutions. There were lessons learned for the next conference too. Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal intends to host another Atlantic Connections Conference in 2019, which will build upon the successes of the first two gatherings. Volunteers for the next conference have already begun to step forward! The organizing committee hopes this report serves as a reminder of what is possible when we work together. We once again thank all sponsors and supporters of the conference, and of course thank the attendees who contributed to its success. Now it is up to each of us to do what we committed to do, for ourselves and with each other...ACT!



## APPENDIX ONE: PROGRAM 2017 ACT CONFERENCE



**May 3 & 4, 2017**

**Mount Saint Vincent University  
Halifax, NS**



## Welcome to ACT 2017!

Dear Attendee,

*On behalf of the local organizing committee, I am delighted to welcome you to the 2017 Atlantic ConnecTions Conference. This is the second ACT conference, the first took place in Sackville, NB in June of 2015.*

*The Atlantic ConnecTions conference takes place on the off-year of the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT) Conference. The ACT Conference provides an opportunity for women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology (SETT), and their male colleagues, in Atlantic Canada to share their experiences of studying and working in male-dominated fields, to network with others, and to develop action items with the goal of advancing women in SETT. We aim to **Act, Celebrate, Collaborate, and Transform!***

*This years conference theme is “Supporting the Career Progression and Retention of Women in SETT”. We encourage you to take advantage of networking opportunities provided to build your network and to find mentors and sponsors to support your career.*

*I would sincerely like to thank our generous sponsors as well as the local organizing committee who have made this years Atlantic ConnecTions Conference possible.*

Sincerely,



Dr. Tamara Franz-Odendaal  
Professor of Biology, Mount Saint Vincent University, and NSERC  
Chair for Women in Science and Engineering - Atlantic Region

## ACT Organizing Committee 2017

Nan Armour, CCWESTT

Donna Clark, Courage Group International

Amy Hsiao, University of PEI, Faculty of Engineering

Tina Kelly, NSCC, Academic Chair Trades & Tech AC

Bonnie MacKay, Dalhousie University, Faculty of Computer Science

Stephanie MacQuarrie, Cape Breton University, Faculty of Science

Eva Martinez, Bluedrop Performance Learning, Senior Director

Gina O'Rourke- MacKay, NB Mentor Apprentice Program, Chief Mentoring Officer

Hélène Savoie, NB Mentor Apprentice Program, Mentorship Coordinator

## Lead Conference Organizer



**Tamara Franz-Odendaal**, *Professor of Biology, Mount Saint Vincent University, and NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering - Atlantic Region*

Dr Franz-Odendaal holds a PhD from the University of Cape Town (South Africa) and completed her post-doctoral studies at Dalhousie University. She joined the Mount in 2006 as a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) University Faculty award recipient (2006-2011) and has since launched an active productive research program in the field of skeletal biology.

In 2011, Dr. Franz-Odendaal became the NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering for the Atlantic Region (WISEatlantic). She is one of only five chair holders across Canada that are working to increase the participation of women in science and engineering, and to provide role models for women considering careers in these fields. The aim of the WISEatlantic program is to provide girls in junior and senior high school with access to role models active in the sciences and engineering fields through mentorships, webinars, Girls Get WISE Science events and camps. Through WISEatlantic, she also supports women in STEM through professional development opportunities such as the Step-Up Academic Advancement Workshops, and hosting WinSETT workshops. Dr. Franz-Odendaal helped organize the 2012 CCWESTT Conference and she is currently a board member of CCWESTT and Science Atlantic. Her network has reached over 13,000 students, teachers, academics, professionals etc. In 2015, she received the Mount's Research Excellence Award for her outstanding contributions to the research community and research climate at the Mount.

## About WISEatlantic

The major goals of the NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (Atlantic) are to:

- Encourage young girls to consider careers in STEM by providing opportunities for them to meet female mentors, and to participate in engaging hands-on STEM activities;
- Increase professional development support and networking opportunities for women in STEM fields in order to increase the career progression and retention of women in STEM careers; and
- Explore factors that hinder young women from pursuing STEM careers.

This Chair program aims to provide junior and senior high school girls in Atlantic Canada with access to female role models active in science and engineering fields through mentorship, one-day science events, and science summer camps. By focusing on fun and engaging hands-on science activities during Girls Get WISE in Science events, the chairholder hopes to ignite a passion for science, technology, engineering and the skilled trades. The chairholder also established and will continue to host the biennial Atlantic ConnecTions Conference which provides an opportunity for women in Science, Engineering, Trades, and Technology (SETT) from Atlantic Canada to share their experiences of studying and working in male-dominated fields, to network with others, and to develop action plans with the goal of advancing the career progression and retention of women in SETT. Find out more at [www.WISEatlantic.ca](http://www.WISEatlantic.ca)

## Keynote Speakers



**Vandana Juneja**, *Senior Director, Catalyst*

As Senior Director with Catalyst, Vandana leads the relationships with Catalyst's supporting companies in Canada. A trusted advisor, she coaches and counsels Canadian companies with respect to their strategies to advance women into leadership and create inclusive work environments where women, men, and all diverse groups can thrive. Internally, Vandana has delivered Catalyst presentations, facilitated roundtables, workshops, and focus groups, and moderated panels in various locations including Canada, the U.S., and Australia.

Prior to joining Catalyst, Ms. Juneja practiced immigration law, following which she worked as a manager in the Global Diversity and Inclusion groups of two Canadian banks, where she focused on women's initiatives and advising Employee Resource Groups. In pursuing her passion for empowering women, she has also worked as a Research Associate for the Pay Equity Task Force in Ottawa (Status of Women Canada), and travelled to Vietnam with an NGO in partnership with the University of Toronto to evaluate and report back on a micro-finance project designed to help women living in poverty to understand and enter the mainstream banking system.

Ms. Juneja has earned a B.Comm. from McMaster University, an MBA from the University of Windsor, and an LL.B. from the University of Ottawa.



**Gloria Montano**, *Director, WinSETT*

has over 35 years of experience related to engineering in the private sector, non-profit sector and post-secondary education administration. Her experience includes a long history of volunteer work with organizations dedicated to diversifying participation in engineering in the US and Canada.

Gloria began her career as an engineer in the Silicon Valley, and for 20+ years she advanced through positions in design, customer support, technical sales and marketing support, project and program management at high tech companies in the Silicon Valley. She left the for-profit sector to join the non-profit sector as the director of an innovative program that leveraged design-based experiential learning at 11 US universities to bring tangible benefit to those underserved by technology, especially women. That experience compelled Gloria to leave the high-tech sector and earn a Master of Education degree and then work in administrative roles in the faculty of engineering at a Canadian university.

Currently, Gloria serves on the Board of the Canadian Centre for Women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology, and is the creator of CareerLinks: Smart Choices for Women. She is also a past president of WISE NL and a National Past President of the Society of Women Engineers in the US. Gloria continues to seek to broaden discussion on the role women play in the identification, development and distribution of technology-based solutions.



## Conference Facilitator



**Donna Clark**, *Leadership Partner, Courage Group International*

Donna is committed to developing the capacity of individuals to lead with courage and compassion and create life nurturing, high performing organizations. Donna brings a combination of executive experience and 20 years of private practice in coaching, leadership, organizational development, and conflict transformation. She supports clients in discerning and creating the future they desire for their lives and their organizations and developing their leadership and strategic actions to get there. Donna has degrees in science, education and business, is certified from the Newfield Network Coach Training Program, an ACC level coach with the International Coach Federation, and is a Registered Practitioner in Alternative Dispute Resolution. She is currently a PhD

student in Organizational Development and Change at Fielding Graduate University with a concentration in Inclusive Leadership for Social Justice. Clients say Donna works with enthusiasm, high energy, an engaging and innovative style, and authentic presence in her facilitation.

Donna is the Maritimes facilitator for the WinSETT Centre Women in SETT Leadership Program. Since 1991 Donna has work significantly on workplace culture change and leadership to increase the participation of women in SETT through the Hypatia Association. She played a key role in planning and facilitating the 2012 CCWESTT conference and policy forum in Halifax, NS, the 2015 Atlantic ConnecTions Conference, and the WISEatlantic 2014 and 2017 Step-Up Academic Advancement workshops for female faculty in Atlantic Canada.

## Writing Compelling Commentary Workshop Facilitator



**Shari Graydon**, *Founder & Catalyst, Informed Opinions*

Shari has spent more than 25 years shamelessly exploiting media to draw attention to issues she knows and cares about. Now she motivates and trains others to do the same, and delivers highly-rated conference keynotes and practical workshops across the country. The founder and catalyst of Informed Opinions, she is an award-winning author and women's advocate. Since 2010, she has helped amplify the voices of more than 1200 women across Canada, supporting them in sharing their insights and analysis with a broader public. A

former newspaper columnist, TV producer and commentator for CBC radio and TV, she also served as press secretary to a provincial premier, and as president of Media Action. Shari is a proud alumna of the University of British Columbia (Theatre) and Simon Fraser University (Communications), where she also taught. She has published two best-selling media literacy books for youth, received the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons' Case, and been named one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women. Royalties from her edited collection, *I Feel Great About My Hands – And Other Unexpected Joys of Aging*, benefit Informed Opinions. Her newest book, *OMG! What if I really AM the best person?* offers purse-size inspiration for knowledgeable women whose voices deserve to be amplified.

## Program at a Glance

Tuesday - May 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
8:30-10:00am	<b>Conference Registration</b> Margaret Norrie McCain Centre Foyer	
9:00-10:00am	<b>Writing Compelling Commentary</b> <i>Shari Graydon (Informed Opinions)</i> McCain Centre, room 106	
10:00-11:00am		
11:00-12:00pm		WinSETT Special Topics Workshop: <b>Networking &amp; Professional Presence</b> <i>Donna Clark (facilitator)</i> McCain Centre, room 105
12:00-2:00pm	<i>LUNCH (on your own)</i>	
2:00-4:00pm	WinSETT Special Topics Workshop: <b>Microaggressions in the Workplace</b> <i>Donna Clark (facilitator)</i> McCain Centre, room 105	
5:30-7:00pm	<b>Reception</b> Margaret Norrie McCain Centre Foyer	

Wednesday – May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
8:30-10:00am	<b>Conference Registration</b> Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
9:00-10:00am	<b>Welcome:</b> Recap of ACT 2015, NSERC, CCWESTT
10:00-12:00pm	<b>What's Been Happening?</b> Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room <i>COFFEE BREAK during session</i>
12:00-1:00pm	<i>LUNCH</i> - Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
1:00-2:30pm	<b>Parallel Session 1</b>
2:30-3:00pm	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i> - Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
3:00pm-4:30pm	<b>Keynote Speaker:</b> <i>Vandana Juneja, Senior Director, Catalyst</i> Advancing Women in Science & Engineering: Engaging Men and Building Inclusive Leaders

Thursday – May 4 <sup>th</sup>	
9:00-9:15am	<b>Welcome Back</b> Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
9:15-10:30am	<b>Parallel Session 2</b>
10:30-11:00am	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i> - Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
11:00-12:00pm	<b>Report Back from Parallel Sessions</b> <i>Donna Clark (facilitator)</i> Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
12:00-1:30pm	<i>LUNCH</i> - Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room <b>Keynote Speaker:</b> <i>Gloria Montano, Director, WinSETT</i> Finishing the Marathon With Your Soul Intact
1:30-3:30pm	<b>Conversation Café</b> <i>Donna Clark (facilitator)</i> <i>Coffee break during session</i> Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room
3:30-4:00pm	<b>What Next?</b> <i>Donna Clark (facilitator)</i> Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room



Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017



Margaret Norrie McCain Centre

8:30-10:00am

**Conference Registration**

McCain Centre - 1st floor foyer

9:00-12:00pm

**Writing Compelling Commentary Workshop**

McCain Centre - room 106

*Facilitated by Shari Graydon - Informed Opinions*

10:00am

BREAK

Outside room 106

10:00-12:00pm

**Networking & Professional Presence - A WinSETT Centre Workshop**

McCain Centre - room 105

*Facilitated by Donna Clark*

12:00pm

LUNCH

*(On your own, see pg. 10 for suggestions)*

2:00-4:00pm

**Microaggressions in the SETT Workplace - A WinSETT Centre Workshop**

McCain Centre - room 105

*Facilitated by Donna Clark*

5:30-7:00pm

**Reception**

McCain Centre - 1st floor Foyer

*Cash Bar*

Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room

8:30-10:00am **Conference Registration**

9:00-10:00am **Welcome**

*Tamara Franz-Odendaal - Recap of ACT 2015*

*Nan Armour - CCWESTT Strategic Plan*

*Natalie Weiskopf - NSERC, Gender Summit 2017*

10:00-12:00pm **What's Been Happening?**

*Facilitated by Donna Clark*

*Updates from: Engineers Canada, NB Mentor Apprentice Program, Dalhousie University- Computer Science, Women in Aerospace Canada - NS Chapter, Women Unlimited, WISEatlantic*

COFFEE BREAK during session

12:00-1:00pm LUNCH

1:00-2:30pm **Parallel Session 1**

Women in Engineering	Women in Trades	Women in Academia	Women in Technology
McCain Centre Room 302	Rosaria 309 Boardroom	McCain Centre Room 301	Rosaria 401 Don McNeil Room
<i>Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace</i>	<i>Women in Trades: Promising Practices in Atlantic Canada</i>	<i>Strategies to Support the Hiring of Female Faculty</i>	<i>A Panel Conversation with Women in Tech Industries</i>

Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room

2:30-3:00pm COFFEE BREAK

3:00-4:30pm **Keynote Speaker**

*Vandana Juneja, Senior Director, Catalyst*

*Advancing Women in Science and Engineering: Engaging Men and Building Inclusive Leaders*

Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017



Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room

8:30-10:00am **Conference Registration**

9:00-9:15am **Welcome Back**

9:15-10:30am **Parallel Session 2**

Women in Engineering	Women in Trades	Women in Academia	Women in Technology
McCain Centre Room 302	Rosaria 309 Boardroom	McCain Centre Room 301	Rosaria 401 Don McNeil Room
<i>Unconscious Bias - A Barrier to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace</i>	<i>Supporting the Retention and Promotion of Women in Trades</i>	<i>Questions You Are Afraid to Ask Your Supervisor</i>	<i>Actions Moving Forward: A Round Table Discussion</i>

Rosaria Student Centre Multipurpose room

10:30-11:00am COFFEE BREAK

11:00-12:00pm **Report Back from Parallel Sessions**  
*Facilitated by Donna Clark*

12:00-1:30pm LUNCH  
**Keynote Speaker**  
*Gloria Montano, Director, WINSETT*  
Finishing the Marathon With Your Soul Intact

1:30-3:30pm **Conversation Café**  
*Facilitated by Donna Clark*  
COFFEE BREAK at 2:30pm

3:30-4:00pm **What Next?**  
*Facilitated by Donna Clark*

## Logistics

### Parking

Conference participants should park in the lower parking lots next to the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre and the E. Margaret Fulton Communication Centre and Library (numbers 1 and 4 respectively on the campus map which can be found on page 14). If you cannot find space in these lots, you may park elsewhere on campus but please see the conference registration desk for a parking pass.

### Food & Beverage

Conference registration includes two lunches and four coffee breaks, as well as reception snacks. Please note that the reception on May 2<sup>nd</sup> will have a cash bar.

Please note that breakfast is not included, if you are staying on campus, the Seton Café located in the Seton Academic Centre opens at 7:30am and has a small Tim Hortons and breakfast items at the The Grille.

Other places to eat within walking distance of the Mount:

- Tim Hortons, Bedford Highway
- Jims, Bedford Highway
- The Orient, Bedford Highway
- China Town (short taxi ride)

Places to eat Clayton Park (Short taxi ride):

- The Lower Deck Clayton Park
- The Redwood Grill
- Subway
- McDonalds

Places to eat Bayers Lake (Short taxi ride):

- La Cucina
- Montana's
- Jack Astors
- Ela! Greek Taverna

### Washrooms

Please note that there is a gender neutral washroom located on the first floor of the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre.

### Evaluations

Following the conference you will be e-mailed a link to an online evaluation. You will also be able to access the evaluation from the homepage of the conference website, [www.AtlanticConnections.ca](http://www.AtlanticConnections.ca)

Thank You!

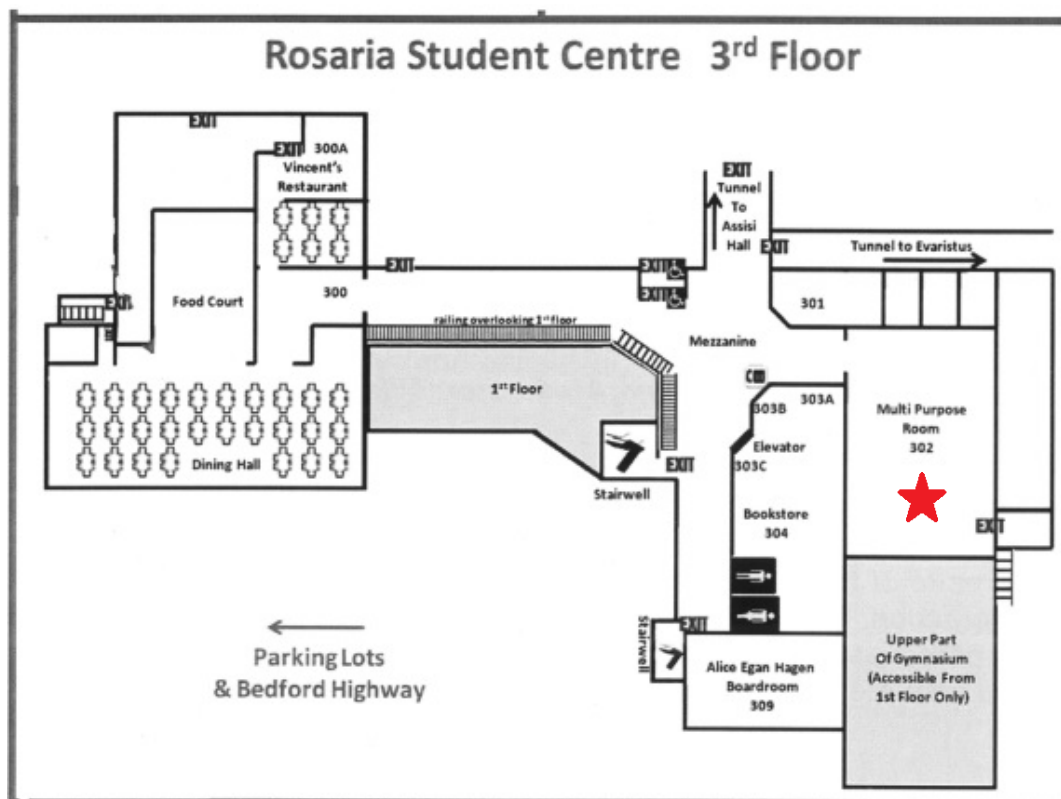
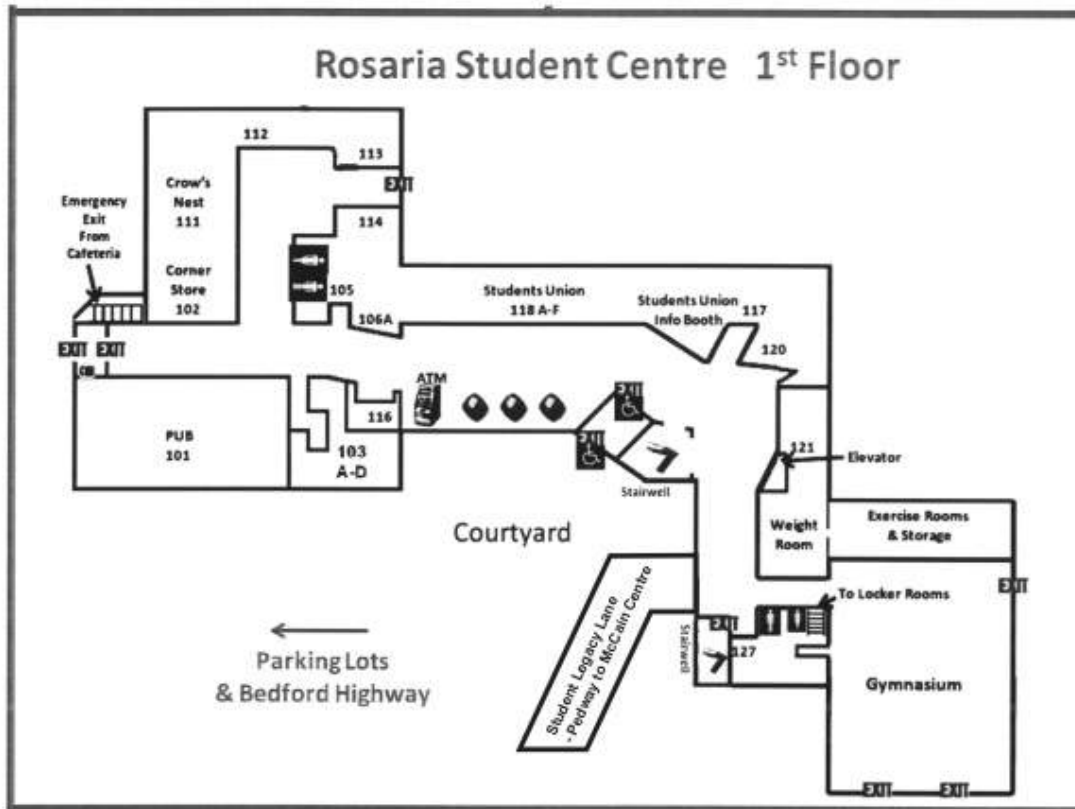
Gold Sponsors:



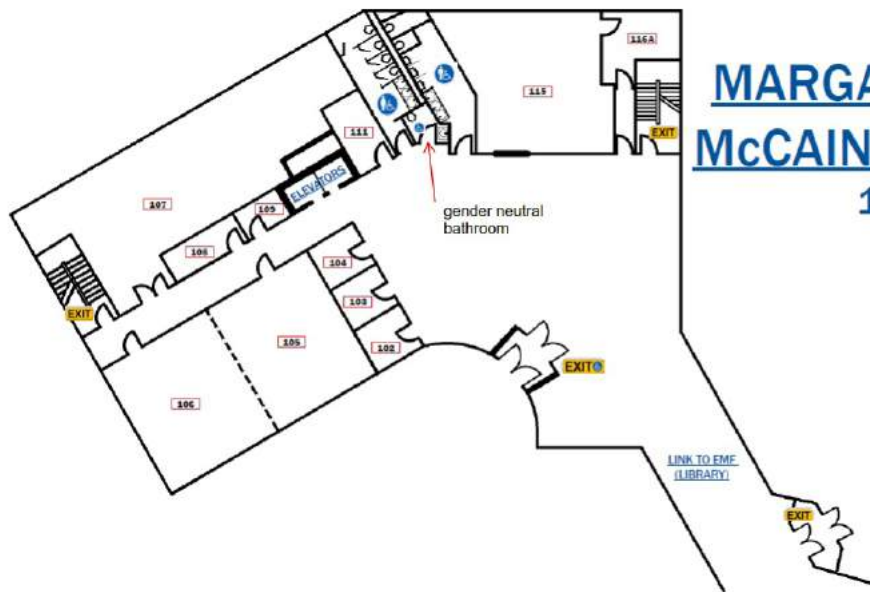
Silver Sponsors:



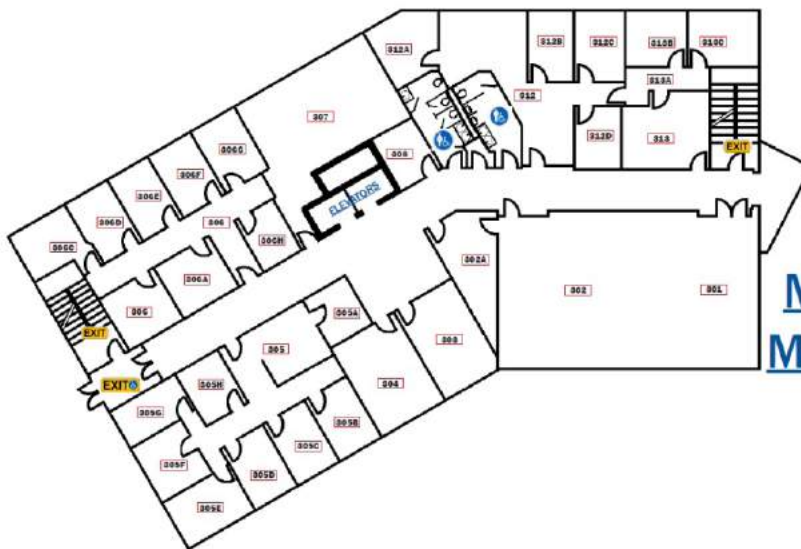
## Map of Rosaria Student Centre



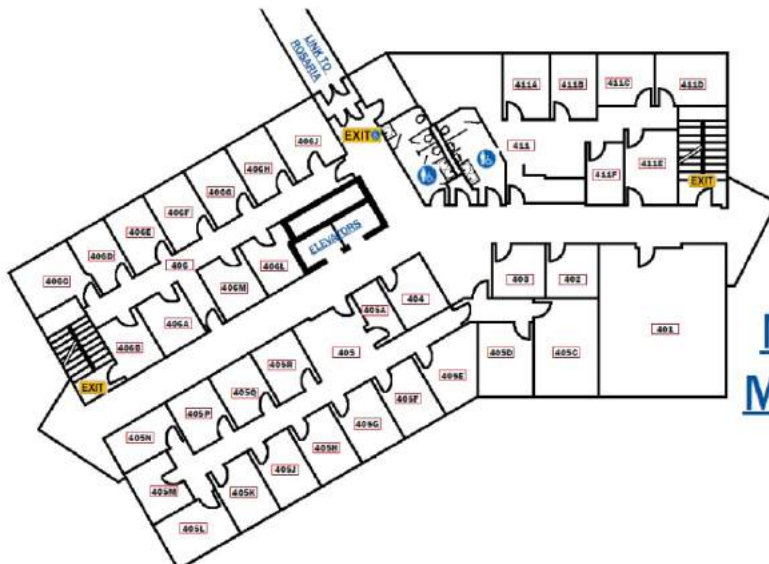
## Map of Margaret Norrie McCain Centre



**MARGARET NORRIE  
McCAIN CENTRE (MC)**  
1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR



**MARGARET NORRIE  
McCAIN CENTRE (MC)**  
3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR

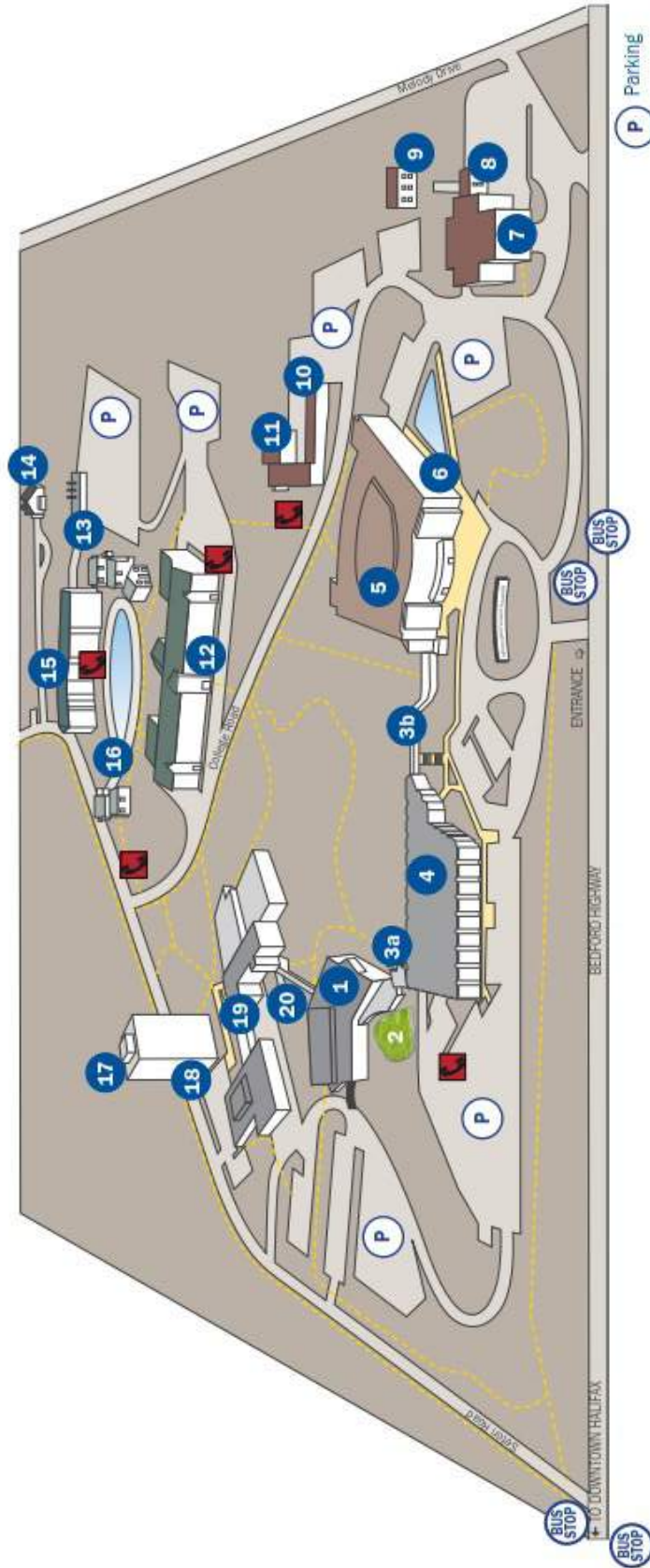


**MARGARET NORRIE  
McCAIN CENTRE (MC)**  
4<sup>th</sup> FLOOR



# CAMPUS MAP

166 Bedford Highway  
Halifax, NS B3M 2J6  
Canada | msvu.ca  
Phone: 902.457.6788



- 1 Margaret Norrie McCain Centre for Teaching, Learning and Research
- 2 Riva Spatz Women's Wall of Honour
- 3a RBC West Link
- 3b RBC North Link
- 4 E. Margaret Fulton Communications Centre (including Library)
- 5 Seton Academic Centre (including Seton Café)

- 6 MSVU Art Gallery
- 7 Research/FoodARC
- 8 Advancement House
- 9 Aboriginal Student Centre
- 10 Seton Annex
- 11 Child Study Centre
- 12 Evaristus Hall
- 13 Art Landry Building (Central Heating Plant)
- 14 The Meadows

- 15 Westwood (residence)
- 16 The Birches (residence)
- 17 Assisi Hall (residence)
- 18 Assisi (including Campus Security, Health Services and LifeMark)
- 19 Rosaria Student Centre (including Dining Hall, Vinnie's Pub, Mount Fitness Centre)
- 20 Student Legacy Lane (pedway)





See You At...



**Gender Summit 11 North America**

Montreal

November 6-8, 2017

<http://gender-summit.com/gs11-about>



**CCWESTT Conference 2018**

University of Alberta

Proposed dates - 31 May to 2 June

[www.CCWESTT.org](http://www.CCWESTT.org)

## Notes



## Notes

