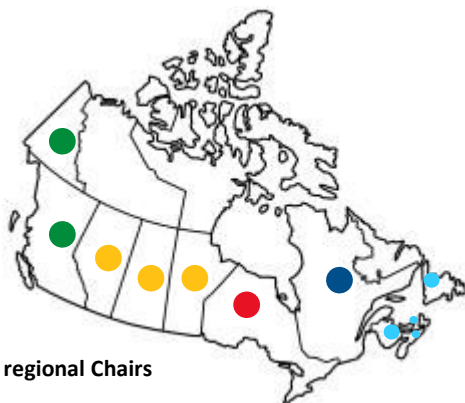


Evaluation of the Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering (CWSE) program



The program's primary purpose is to allow the selected chairholders to engage in activities that promote the participation of women in science and engineering.



Five regional Chairs

- Raise the level of participation and retention of women in science and engineering as students and professionals;
- Provide female role models who are accomplished, successful and recognized researchers in science and engineering;
- Build a communication and networking strategy to ensure a regional and national impact on opportunities in science and engineering

Questions:

Relevance

- Women in STEM: where are we in 2020?
- Why is it important to attract and retain women?
- Why is there a role in 2020 for the federal government in this field?

Effectiveness

- What are the most common challenges addressed by the chairholders?
- What strategies have been implemented to address these challenges?
- What changes resulted from the implementation of the chairholders' strategies and action plans?

Gender equality in Canada

To pursue its EDI goals, NSERC has also recognized the need to implement programs or initiatives that proactively address longstanding barriers limiting the ability of some individuals to pursue research opportunities, with a particular focus on four designated groups: women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. CWSE is one such program, aiming to enhance the participation of women in science and engineering, including women from underrepresented groups.

Who has received support from CWSE?

Evaluation findings indicate that chairholders have tended to engage girls in grades K to 12, university students, and academics. There have been fewer activities targeting women who are acting as science and engineering professionals in the industry

How to improve the program

Addressing some concerns relating to the current process used to review applications for individual Chair and the National Network, including more information about the CWSE selection committee, and ensuring that the feedback provided is clearer and more realistic considering the parameters of the program..

How to improve the program

- Providing additional guidelines on how each Chair can target subareas of the objectives identified by the program and on implementing intersectionality to the development and implementation of the Chair's strategies and action plans.
- Facilitating the transition between regional Chairs and facilitate the sustainability of the initiatives undertaken in a region.

Recommendation 1: Maintain the CWSE program. The evaluation confirms that the CWSE program occupies an important niche within the wide eco-system of programs and initiatives that promote the engagement of women in science and engineering. The chairholders who are supported by the program undertake a set of activities tailored to their specific areas of scientific research and their regional and institutional environments. The program also serves to communicate NSERC's vision and commitment related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the fields of natural sciences and engineering

Recommendation 3: NSERC should review the process related to the transition between chairholders in each region to include sufficient overlap for knowledge sharing and continuity.

Recommendation 2 : In collaboration with the current Chairholders and other relevant stakeholders, NSERC should review the current set of program objectives to ensure that they more closely reflect the range of activities undertaken by the chairholders and the contribution that the program can be reasonably expected to achieve.