A new year, a first newsletter!

The Women in Science and Engineering student organization at UF - WiSE – has been making great strides in the past two years to create a thriving network of women at UF and host activities that foster personal and professional successes. We take this opportunity in our very first newsletter to reflect on our progress and to highlight what is in store for the upcoming year!

Student Government. We secured annual funding from UF Student Government to help put on our successful activities. This year, WiSE has joined financially with the UF student group, the Women’s Student Association, which will broaden our outreach to undergraduate students in science and engineering.

Careers and beyond. Out of member interest, our major events in 2013-2014 were focused on developing skills to be successful in the job interview and negotiation process (page 4). We received valuable advice from women in academia and industry during a women’s panel, and put some of this advice into practice in a hands-on workshop with the help of Liz Kazungu from the Career Resource Center.

WiSE blog. During practice of our “elevator pitches” at our career workshop, members recognized the importance of messaging, which for us meant clearly describing yourself, your research, and your goals, while making it relevant to people of different disciplines. With that in mind, our WiSE blog was born! This year WiSE will have monthly posts from our members to highlight their background and research. We will also include posts on our monthly WiSE Up discussions (page 7).

New leadership. Our 2014-2015 theme is:

Building Strong Networks for Successful Science & Engineering Careers

We are excited to see the momentum of WiSE increasing with a set of new motivated officers taking over in this fall (page 9).

Call for 2014-2015 Liaisons!

WiSE has grown as a grassroots organization through spreading the word about our meetings and events. To reach more people, we rely on the leadership of WiSE Department Liaisons who can help send WiSE announcements to their department. We are recruiting new liaisons for the upcoming year (page 10).
Who and what is WiSE?

WiSE stands for Women in Science and Engineering. We are an officially registered UF student group that receives annual funding from Student Government. As such, our membership is primarily UF undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of STEM majors (science, technology, engineering, and math).

PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION

The purpose of WiSE at UF is to bring together students, post docs, faculty and staff in STEM fields. The activities we plan are aimed at professional and academic development as well as providing support to the women in these fields. We welcome all genders to our meetings and events. Our activities fall into 5 broad categories.

DISCUSSIONS AND NETWORKING

One of our primary areas of focus on is engaging in dialogue with others about issues for women in STEM fields and with that, increasing our personal and professional network. We do this by organizing 2 monthly events: a general body meeting held on campus, and an informal current event discussion (page 3) held in downtown Gainesville.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Most of our events focus on developing professional skills for success in graduate school and beyond. Each year we host 2 events in the style of a panel and a workshop. Topics for these events are decided by members at the beginning of each semester. See page 4 for more information about our most recent events.

OUTREACH AND MENTORSHIP

We recognize the need to engage with girls and women at all stages of their education and career. We have regular involvement with the following groups/programs:

- Alachua County Science Fair judging
- Cade Museum events (page 7)
- University Minority Mentorship Program
- WiSE Girlz Spring Camp (page 5)

WiSE LEADERSHIP

WiSE is completely run by UF students and post-docs, along with the help of our faculty advisor (page 8). Each year the WiSE officer list grows as more students take the lead in helping guide and run our organization (page 9). Last year we recruited Department Liaisons (page 10), who helped build stronger connections between WiSE and other UF departments.

GAINESVILLE CONNECTIONS

To extend our activities to the greater Gainesville community, we also interact with other local organizations. Our primary involvement has been with:

- AWIS – North Central Florida Chapter of the Association for Women in Science
- eWiTS – a 10-week entrepreneurship workshop held by the UF Innovation Hub
WiSE Up!

One of our most successful additions to our WiSE activities has been the monthly WiSE Up! discussion. After testing out various times and locations for these discussions, we found we got highest attendance and the most lively discussions at an informal setting during after-work hours.

The purpose of these discussions is to (1) stay informed of new research and/or current events relating to women in STEM fields, (2) discuss challenges our members face and how to overcome them, and (3) provide a casual activity to attract more people and build our network.

Each discussion is organized by a WiSE member who helps pick the topic, finds relevant articles, and guides the discussion. This year, we will also be posting a summary of the topic and our discussion on the WiSE blog, which extends the dialogue to others who cannot attend the discussion in person.

Last year’s topics:

- Feminist advertising – what is the real purpose and what is the effect?
- Harassment in the workplace
- Best practices for negotiating a job
- Where are the men in WiSE discussions?
- Feminism and the idea of the female superhero

What’s in store for this year? YOU DECIDE! We select topics at the beginning of each semester at the general body meeting. Join our meetings to give your ideas and hear what others have to say.

All WiSE Up! discussions are held at The Midnight, with snacks provided by Student Government funding.

**HAVE AN IDEA? LET US KNOW!**

Come to our monthly general body meetings or email UF.WiSE@gmail.com

Our first WiSE Up! discussion will be on the topic of mentorship – What is a good mentor? How to decide on a mentor? How can you build a successful relationship with a mentor? Visit our website or Facebook page for details.
Women’s Career Panel and Workshop

Following successful panels of “Successful Women in Science – Do we have to act like men to be successful?” in 2012, WiSE tackled the topic of how to be successful in the job negotiation and interview process. We followed up the panel held in the spring semester with a hands-on workshop, designed to put advice into practice.

PANEL
The idea for the panel was to invite a handful of women in academic and non-academic positions and ask them to give us a key piece of advice to successfully navigating the job interview and negotiation process. By inviting a diversity of panel speakers, attendees were able to get specific advice for their field, but also detect some common trends.

Following general Q&A, the panelists were available for small group discussions, where members could interact more personally to discuss specific questions.

We thank our panelists
- Teri Balser, Ph.D., Dean, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences
- Carolyn Hall, PhD. Associate Biosafety Officer, UF Dept of Environmental Health and Safety
- Doria Gordon, Ph.D., Director of Conservation Science for the Nature Conservancy
- Tamara Mandell, M.Ed., Assistant Director for Education and Training Programs, UF Center of Excellence for Regenerative Health Biotechnology
- Marta Wayne, Ph.D., Professor of Biology, University of Florida

WORKSHOP
Feedback from the panel revealed a need to put the advise we received into practice. Working with the Liz Kazungu from the Career Resource Center, we hosted a workshop to practice our 30 second elevator pitches and answers to interview questions which were provided by our panelists. Here’s what some members learned from the workshop:

- When you have to actually say your elevator speech or answer questions, you realize how difficult it is - so start practicing early
- Eye contact! And emphasize what you are good at and why it makes you a good job candidate!
- When asked about your strengths and weaknesses, respond with 3 strengths and how you’ve demonstrated that for a job, and 1 “area of growth.”
WiSE Girlz Spring Camp

Studies show that as girls transfer from middle to high school, they can perceive science as ‘uncool’ and subsequently lose interest in scientific careers before reaching college. WiSE external vice-president Dr. Charlotte Germain-Aubrey proposed a WiSE Girlz Spring Science Camp to contradict this notion. The camp is aiming at girls from public schools (or other non-fee schools) who are interested in STEM disciplines but would not otherwise have the opportunity to come to campus and meet scientists, hear about their research and do hands-on experiments. She sent a call for help organizing different days in different departments and the response by faculty, staff and students across campus was amazing!

And so, sponsored in part by iDigBio and run March 24-28, 2014 through the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH), the camp welcomed 7 girls and was an explosion of fun activities and discoveries. Monday was engineering day and the girls made slingshots and got a tour of campus, Tuesday was computer science day and they got to make their own video game, Wednesday was chemistry and they got to make some chemical magic, Thursday was astronomy day and the girls built their own telescopes, and then made some volcanic explosions in a short geology workshop. Friday finally was biology day and they went collecting plants in the Ordway-Swisher biological. The girls then have to present what they learned about the STEM disciplines and the career possibilities to their class and school, and become advocates of women in sciences and engineering.

The camp was a success and WiSE has decided to make it an annual event!!! We are hoping some of the same volunteers will work with us again, and even more will expand the scope of the camp!

WiSE thanks the support of these wonderful organizations for helping make the camp a success!

It’s good to be a GATOR! Charlotte, the 6 participants, and Sarah show their Gator pride on a campus tour.

Hands-on learning. Computer science is more than sitting inside on a computer.

Florida’s Natural History. A tour through museum collections with Rob.

Women in space. Science and technology put into practice with the inflatable planetarium.
Mentoring incoming UF undergraduate students

We are happy to announce our partnership with the University Minority Mentor Program (UMMP) on campus for the second year!

This partnership allows for WiSE members to mentor an incoming undergraduate student interested in science or engineering disciplines. The mentoring involves meeting the mentee once a month and being a point of contact for the mentee as they learn to navigate the campus and academic resources. WiSE also coordinates various activities for all mentors and mentees, providing opportunities for mentees to meet fellow students interested in science and engineering.

The first partnership with WiSE for the 2013-2014 school year allowed over 30 WiSE members to be matched with a mentee, with nearly 60 additional mentees wanting to be matched with a WiSE mentor. This year the numbers have grown, with over 100 incoming students specifically requesting to be matched with a WiSE mentor. We are excited about the growth of this program!

Cade Museum

WiSE was invited to participate in a hands-on science day at the Cade Museum for girl scouts from Alachua County. We brought little demonstrations from our respective fields, including having fun with wacky materials (material science), making clouds in a bottle (meteorology), building geometric paper tricks (mathematics), discovering tissue samples with a microscope (biology), and testing human performance (neuroscience). Daisies, Brownies, & Juniors participated in this event by visiting our booth and other lab tables around the museum.

Through this event, we were not only able to encourage creative thinking in the next generation of women in science, but we also spent valuable time with each other learning about the diverse fields of study within our WiSE membership. We hope to be invited back to participate in this Cade Museum event in upcoming years!
Faculty advisor, Dr. Emily Sessa!

Emily Sessa joined the Biology Department at UF as an Assistant Professor in August of 2013. She is originally from New York and comes to UF by way of Cornell University (BA, 2005), the University of Wisconsin–Madison (PhD, 2012), and the University of Arizona (postdoc, 2012-2013). Her research focuses on plant evolution and diversity, and she is particularly interested in how hybridization and genome merger (polyploidy) influence patterns of relationships, biogeographic distributions, genome evolution, and physiological ecology. Dr. Sessa has always been interested in science, and can’t remember a time when she wasn’t fascinated by plants. Issues surrounding women in science and society have also long been important to her, and she is thrilled to be WiSE’s new faculty advisor.

"Women face a unique set of challenges in academic and professional settings, but more women than ever are joining and thriving in the STEM fields. WiSE gives us opportunities to address the challenges, celebrate our successes, and continue to change the status quo for ourselves and the women who will follow us."

WiSE is blogging!

WiSE is fully embracing social media by joining the Facebook, Twitter, and blog world. Our new blog is designed to provide an outlet for our members to practice communicating their research to a general audience. This semester our blog will feature monthly articles written by our members, which highlight their research. Prior to posting, these articles will be peer-reviewed by a group of WiSE members and run through a “readability test” to evaluate the complexity of the writing.

The blog will also include posts of relevant articles and discussion questions that coincide with our monthly WiSE Up discussion. This provided members with a forum to continue the discussion online.

FIND US ONLINE!

Follow us on Twitter @wiseatUF
Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/UFWiSE
Follow our new blog http://wise.group.ufl.edu/
WiSE 2014-2015 officers

We welcome a new group of officers for the 2014-2015 school year! Officers are elected each spring semester and serve for one year. Each year the number of officers grows, as does our membership and activities. As a grass-roots organization, officers are WiSE members who now play a crucial role in determining the direction of our group. We also thank all the work of previous officers!

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>President</td>
<td>Stephanie Zick, PhD student, Geography</td>
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<td>Vice President of Events</td>
<td>Savanna Barry, PhD student, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences</td>
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<td>Vice President of Outreach</td>
<td>Charlotte Germain-Aubrey, Poct-doc, Museum of Natural History</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Hannah Pohlman, Senior, Engineering and Mathematics</td>
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<td>Communications Secretary</td>
<td>Michelle Nolan, PhD student, Chemistry</td>
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<td>Meeting Secretary</td>
<td>Tania Quesada, Poct-doc, Forest Resources and Conservation</td>
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<td>Webmaster</td>
<td>Sarah Graves, PhD student, Forest Resources and Conservation</td>
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"[Leadership is] Ordinary people doing ordinary things to impact people in EXTRAORDINARY ways."  
– Jane Muir, Director of the UF Innovation Hub, at a WiSE Women’s History Month event

Outgoing officers:
Sarah Graves (president)
Anya Brown (VP of events)
Irina Velsko (treasurer)
Caroline Dunn (secretary)
Shelly Johnson (officer at large)
Why are YOU a part of WiSE?

We polled our members to find you exactly why they are part of WiSE and why it is a valuable organization.

“WiSE is the best platform for me to do the professional things that are important to me outside of academia: talking about careers, raising awareness about women in sciences and engineering and organizing outreach event.”

“WiSE offers me a safe place to talk about anything, good or bad, related to being a woman in the life sciences.”

“I am a part of WiSE at UF because the focus of the group is one that is empowering and meaningful to me!”

“During the time I've been a member it has helped me have a broader perspective on possibilities and opportunities in the different professional fields.”
Recruiting Department Liaisons!

WiSE has been active on the UF campus for over 4 years. To serve as a professional and social network at UF, and to develop projects to directly benefit our members, we need to represent ALL women from ALL STEM departments. We are recruiting our second group of Department Liaisons. Liaisons require less commitment than officers, but are still a crucial piece of building a strong WiSE group at UF.

**What is a Department Liaison?**
For a minimum of 1 semester, the WiSE department liaison will have the responsibilities of:
1. Attending 1 WiSE general body meeting/month &
2. Disseminating monthly WiSE announcements to your department.

**What are the benefits of being a Liaison?**
- Play an active role in WiSE
- Be a leader for your department
- Add leadership and involvement experiences to your résumé or CV

We are continuously recruiting new liaisons from all departments. Please contact us if you are interested in being an active part of WiSE!

Want MORE information about WiSE?

For the most recent information, including links to other pages, visit our website:

http://wise.group.ufl.edu/

1. **Become a member**
   Fill out our Google form at this link. You can also register through the UF Gator Connect page with this link.

2. **Come to meeting or discussion**
   Monthly general body meetings are held on Fridays at noon in Carr 222. Monthly WISE Up! happy hour discussions are held Wednesday at 5:30pm in a restaurant, usually the Midnight Bar in downtown Gainesville.

3. **Find us online**
   Visit our website: [http://wise.group.ufl.edu/](http://wise.group.ufl.edu/)
   Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UFWiSE](http://www.facebook.com/UFWiSE)
   Twitter: [https://twitter.com/WiSEatUF](https://twitter.com/WiSEatUF)

4. **Send us a message**
   Email: [UF.WISE@gmail.com](mailto:UF.WISE@gmail.com)
Interested in becoming a Department Liaison?

WiSE has been active on the UF campus for over 4 years. We are recruiting representatives from all campus departments to increase awareness of our activities and events. To fulfill our goal of being a professional and social network for WiSE at UF, and to develop projects to directly benefit our members, we need to represent ALL women from ALL STEM departments. That means you!

What does WiSE do for you?
- Group networking activities
- Science-specific career development events
- Mentoring opportunities
- Discussions of topics concerning women in STEM fields

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- Add leadership and involvement experiences to your résumé or CV!

If you are interested in becoming a WiSE department liaison, please cut off and detach this page with your responses to the requested information below, or email your responses to UF.WiSE@gmail.com. If more than 1 person from your department is interested, we will select based on previous involvement and availability. Please respond by October 15th.

1. Name: ______________________________________________
2. Department: __________________________________________
3. Have you participated in any WiSE meetings or events (please specify)?
   _______________________________________________________
4. Can you attend general body meetings from 12:35-1:30pm on (circle/list all that apply):
   October 31   November 21   December 13 (this is a Saturday!)