



Cambridge AWiSE - How are we doing?

Survey 2007-2008 Results

A HUGE thank you to everyone who completed our 'How are we doing?' survey. The responses are really useful and will be used to ensure that we offer networking events and information that are really useful to you. After a completely random draw (Jenny Brookman had no idea what she was being asked to do!!), Teresa Barros won a year's subscription to New Scientist. Congratulations to her and we hope it's a good read! Thanks also to steering group member Athena Wu and Alison George at New Scientist for arranging such a great prize.

What we need to do!

1. **We need to make it clearer what we do and how networking and mentoring helps women in SET.**
2. **We should show even more examples of how membership has helped specific women.**
3. **We will continue to run a variety of events, these will include interactive training events, specific networking events and we will arrange more talks from women as role models in both industry and academia.**
4. **We need better publicity and more advertising to raise the profile of Cambridge AWiSE.**
5. **We should encourage members to publicise Cambridge AWiSE at their places of work.**
6. **We will offer taster sessions and run 'bring a friend' events with reduced registration fees.**

This survey ran from July until mid September 2008. It was sent to all those subscribed to the Cambridge AWiSE email list (ucam-awise@lists.cam.ac.uk). 56 people started the survey, 60% were members already and 80% of respondents thought our membership fees were appropriate. Most people found out about our meetings through our email list, website and personal recommendations. The majority of respondents are happy with meetings spread through the year and, as a result, we will continue to arrange meetings approximately monthly, trying to avoid school holidays.

Most people have attended both evening and lunchtime events. There were both positive and negative comments for both times of day. However, several people commented that the Science Park was too far for a lunchtime event if you don't work nearby and requests for lunchtime venue in the centre of town or near the Addenbrookes site. The general consensus is that we should continue to operate a differential pricing policy for members and non-members and that £4-5 is OK for the member registration fee and we should charge £8-10 for non-members.

Women join Cambridge AWiSE for a variety of reasons. These include:

Support for the organisation

I felt it was good to offer support to female engineers who are often working in a largely male environment. I've been involved with it since Joan Mason set it up many years ago. My motivation was to provide a support network for Women in SET, having suffered various problems during my own career. To support an organisation I feel represents my interests.

Support for me

I think the support and advice of fellow women is extremely important in making choices in scientific careers. I wanted contacts to talk to get some support from other women returners. I also wanted to see how networking worked. Website was excellent - wanted to find a way to meet other women in science, as I was new to Cambridge and was unsure of my next career move.

Information + Networking

I wanted to meet other women scientists and share solutions to common problems
I want to meet more women in science and engineering and to talk about the problems that they face.

Mentoring

I came to AWiSE through my need to get a mentor.

We asked how we could encourage women to join or renew their membership, suggestions included:

Lower registration fees

Charge less for membership, and cover costs by charging for individual events. That way people can come to those talks that are relevant to them. Or, keep membership fees the same but increase the discount at meetings for members, so you it takes fewer meetings attended to offset the cost of membership.

Better Publicity

Have members/others bring flyers, etc, to workplaces, post flyers around Cambridge, have "invite a friend" nights where members get in at a discount if they bring a new person.

Encourage current members to publicise AWiSE. Diversify the lunchtime event location - although the Science Park location is great it means that it's hard to access from south Cambridge. Maybe having more venues could mean a better turn out.

Meetings

Keep reminding women about the appalling employment and wage statistics. In a good working environment it is sometimes hard to remember that we are being discriminated against. It can be very subtle. More talks by women on topics of scientific interest would encourage a wider audience, who would come for the topic.

This will encourage and propagate the perception of women working as scientists.

Some more interactive events like: * This week's 'Elevator Pitch' * Selling techniques * Mind-mapping.

Make benefits of membership clearer

Joining should offer some reward not available to non-members. I think the price differential between the cost of events to members and non-members is the main reason to join right now. If events were over-subscribed, I suppose places could be offered to members first.

We also asked which meetings people found useful and what they would like to see in the future:

People appreciate the mix of events we hold and like the time included to network - comments such as more of the same! Career and personal development themes were highlighted and people would like more opportunities to network and learn about networking skills and mentoring.

I'd like to hear more from ordinary women who are successful rather than personal success stories, which often are based on luck. Also events seem to focus on women outside academia, and I am quite happy inside academia, so would like to hear more from women "like me".

I found the "financial planning for meandering careers' very helpful. I think that different career paths are one of the challenges which women can help each other with.

Insight into business topics from a female perspective.

I find personal success stories most motivating. Workshops on career development (e.g. "So you want to be an academic?") are also very useful. While we focus a lot on alternative career routes, we must not forget about women who made it through traditional routes. In my experience, success through traditional routes are almost never highlighted in these meetings- neither do we get to hear about them anywhere else.

Any meeting type which provides an opportunity to hear from confident, inspirational women from whom I can gain insight, motivation, self-awareness, etc. The value often comes from the speaker/attendees rather than one specific format.

Don't drop any, though I do find "alternative career route" means how to get out of the university - but in fact discussion of alternative career routes within industry is most valuable, industrial scientists have kids and hit ceilings too.

Networking, and the 'So you want to be an academic' meetings have been my favourite.

More coverage of engineering type stories - seems to be more focus on biological sciences.

I like the broad range you currently strive for, some networking, some informational about topics that relate to all of us, some technical about fields, etc.

I think the 'training' and informative style of events have been excellent, even if an hour is not long, I felt they were good quality and made you think. Of these I liked Anne St Ives finance event, Suzanne's 'achieving' and Jenny's recent 'brain training'.