

WIST

2025

WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Thriving in STEM: From Wellness to Leadership

Held on October 18, 2025

Message from the President - Shanna Lavalle

The Association for Women in Science San Diego (AWIS-SD) hosted its 17th Women in Science and Technology (WIST 2025) conference on October 18, 2025 at Aquillius. AWIS-SD founded WIST in 1993 to support the professional development of women in STEM throughout San Diego and the surrounding region.



Traditionally held every two years, the conference has become a cornerstone of AWIS-SD programming. WIST 2025 marked the return of the first in-person WIST since the pandemic. With over 100 participants, the day was filled with inspiring talks and meaningful connections among students, academics, and professionals across diverse STEM fields.

The passion and energy of our speakers, attendees, and volunteers reflected a shared commitment to the advancement of women in science. A very big THANK YOU to all our AWIS volunteers, sponsors, and partners who made this event possible.

WIST 2025 Welcome

Meena Narayanan, WIST 2025 Co-Chair (representing AWIS-SD WIST 2025 Committee)



It's with a sense of a deserved pride that I welcomed everyone to the WIST 2025 conference. This year, WIST aimed to (i) strike a balance between professional development and personal empowerment, (ii) foster collaboration and growth opportunities to build meaningful relationships and increase visibility and recognition of all STEM professionals, and (iii) promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in the scientific community.



I buoyed up everyone to get ready for the big day and take advantage of the forum that brought together students, professionals, and enthusiasts alongside a curated assembly of genuine thought leaders, speakers, presenters, participants, committee members, and volunteers.

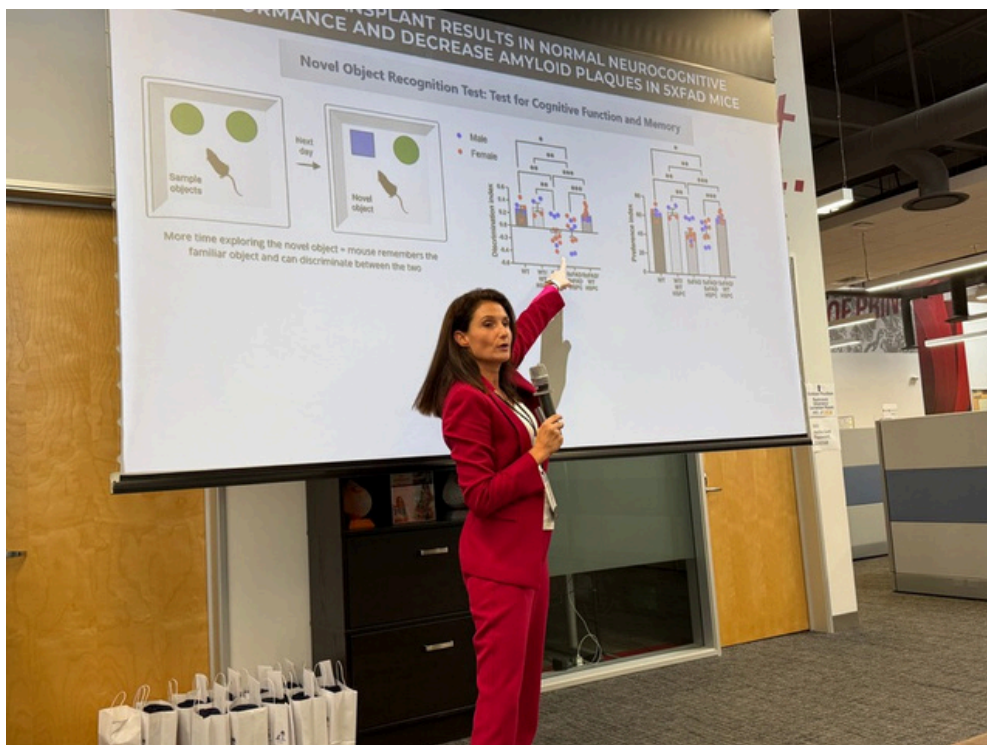
WIST 2025 is not just about attendance, but about active participation, intellectual engagement, challenging and dissecting ideas to elevate the discussions beyond the conventional.



I concluded by thanking all the sponsors, partners, allies, speakers, panelists, attendees, volunteers; additionally, the male speakers' presence and voices, which are some of the crucial elements to the conference and underscores the importance of being powerful allies in steering towards an equitable future, which is our shared responsibility.

Keynote Talk

Dr. Stephanie Cherqui's Journey Transforming Gene Therapy through Perseverance and Innovation



Writer and Chair: Betty Cabrera; Speaker: Stephanie Cherqui

Dr. Stephanie Cherqui opened her talk with a personal promise made to the parent of a child suffering from a rare, multisystemic disease. Determined to deliver a cure, she devoted her graduate work and early career to developing an optimal gene-modification strategy - autologous transplantation of ex vivo edited hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs). Despite warnings from trusted mentors that her “all-or-nothing” approach was too risky, she persisted.

Along the way she uncovered an unexpected property of the differentiated macrophages derived from those engineered HSCs: they migrate into tissues and transfer therapeutic organelles to diseased cells via tunnelling nanotubes—cellular “highways” that enable organelle exchange. Translating this discovery to the clinic, Dr. Cherqui led a physician-initiated trial that treated six patients, demonstrating feasibility and safety.

Building on that success, she is now adapting the platform to other rare disorders and even Alzheimer’s disease, exploiting the engineered HSC-derived cells’ ability to modulate inflammation, oxidative stress, and mitochondrial dysfunction across organ systems.

Today, as Director of the Gene Therapy Initiative at UC San Diego, Dr. Cherqui not only advances patient-focused therapies but along with other accomplished experts also mentors scientists to make their own translational leaps - embodying the power of perseverance, innovation, and collaborative empowerment.

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Beyond the Bench: Transferable Science Skills in the Service and Commercial Sectors

Writer: Stephanie Cortez; Chair: Christina Niemeyer; Speakers: Donna Perdue and Marianna Zipeto

For scientists thinking of pivoting out of the lab environment, identifying transferable scientific skills is an important career planning step. In this session, Donna Perdue (Ph.D., J.D., founder of Perdue IP Law) and Marianna Zipeto (Ph.D., Executive Vice President of Commercial at Champions Oncology) shared the scientific skills they rely on to succeed in their respective disciplines.

Dr. Purdue began the session by describing the professional services sector, which provides clients with specialized knowledge and support focused on law, finance, and technology. As a patent attorney, Dr. Purdue relies on her analytical skills and precise communication to effectively communicate with clients. She defines precise communication as “Translating with added strategic value” such that clients can understand a need or problem that is not in their area of expertise. Dr. Perdue concluded by emphasizing that having scientific expertise means you have practical problem solving skills that can directly support work in professional services.



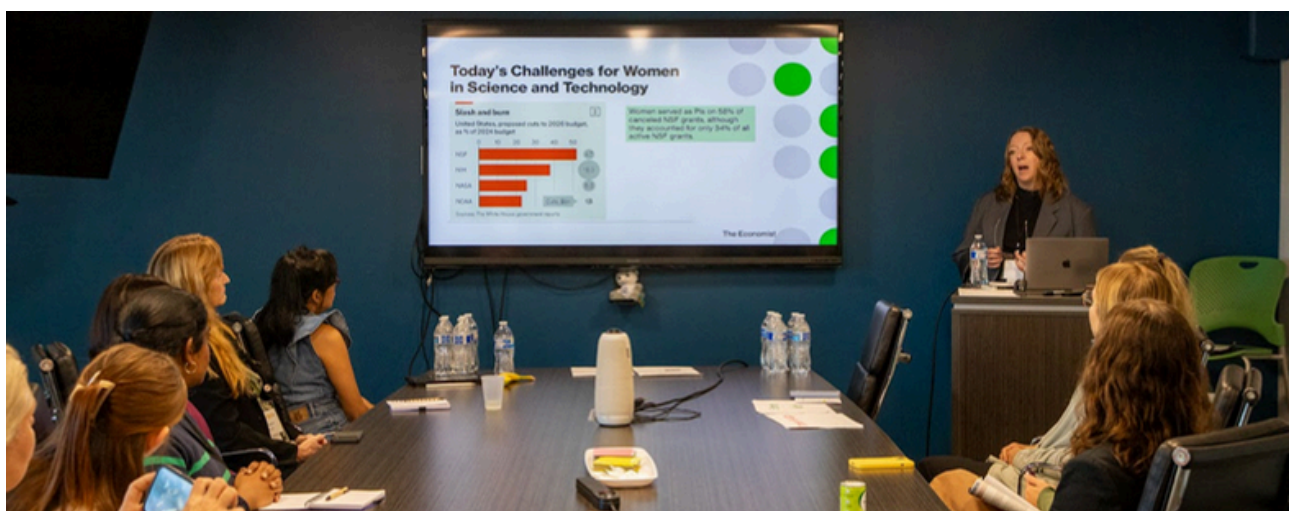
Next, Dr. Zipeto highlighted the similarities between science and its commercial counterpart. Many scientific skills have direct commercial applications: Hypothesis design is carried out through client proposals, experimental planning is conducted through R&D investments, and data interpretation is done through client reporting. Like Dr. Purdue mentioned, Dr. Zipeto reiterated that scientific skills, such as analysis, communication, and problem solving, can thrive in careers beyond the lab. In conclusion, Dr. Zipeto described the importance of resilience during a career pivot, stating that "Science trains you for ambiguity and persevering through failure...Business just gives you a new context to use these skills."

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Self-Compassion in Action

Writer and chair: Federica Klaus; Speaker: Lisa Eyler

The "Self-Compassion in Action" workshop led by Prof. Lisa Eyler (Professor of Psychiatry, UC San Diego) was a very engaging and insightful experience that combined evidence-based science with practical tools for cultivating self-compassion.



The 28 attendees of the workshop explored the foundational role of self-compassion in fostering resilience, preventing burnout, and sustaining empathy in both personal and professional contexts.

We began by examining the research and psychological principles behind self-compassion, including its ties to mindfulness. The session highlighted how self-compassion is an active and learnable skill that supports emotional well-being and professional sustainability.

A key part of the session was the experiential exercise, which allowed participants to personally engage with self-compassion practices in a meaningful way. The lively discussion that followed offered actionable strategies for applying these practices to real-life challenges, emphasizing that caring for ourselves enhances our capacity to care for others.

Overall, the session was a powerful reminder that self-compassion is not a luxury—it's essential.

Empowering Research Through Cloud and Supercomputing: Insights from Shava Smallen



Writer and Chair: Angela Macia; Speaker: Shava Smallen

Shava Smallen, Cloud Software Development Lead at the San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC) at UC San Diego and Principal Investigator of the NSF-funded CloudBank 2 project, gave a fascinating look at how advanced computing is driving research across disciplines. She showcased SDSC's supercomputers and highlighted their growing role in supporting AI-driven projects.

Shava also introduced CloudBank 2, a flexible, multi-cloud platform that makes it easier for researchers and educators to access commercial cloud resources. She emphasized the importance of designing tools that simplify complex computing environments, enabling scientists and students to focus on discovery rather than infrastructure.

The talk concluded with insights into the Women in HPC Affiliate at SDSC, which nurtures mentorship and diversity in high-performance computing.

During the Q&A, an audience member asked how non-computational researchers can learn supercomputing basics. Shava recommended Open OnDemand, the SDSC Summer Institute, and SDSC's recorded webinars, including the COMPLECS OnDemand series, as excellent starting points

Shava Smallen showed how cloud, supercomputing and mentorship are driving innovation and inclusive science.

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Industry Insights: The Surprise Elements in Biotech

Writer: Anya Mall; Chair Meena Narayanan; Panelists: Amanda M. Conerty, Savita Nair, Kenny Smart, and Geoffrey Stephens

Cell and Gene Therapy's 'staying power' in biomedical research has strengthened over time. However, translating this scientific promise into a widely accessible commercial product requires overcoming challenges in manufacturing, supply chain logistics, complex reimbursement models and commercialization.



This dynamic and interactive panel discussion, led by Meena Narayanan brought together 4 experts from across the CGT-landscape spanning process development (Amanda Conerty, Artiva Biotherapeutics), automation (Geoffrey Stephens, AiCella), analytics (Savita Nair, Sangamo Therapeutics) and commercialization (Kenny Smart, 4BaseBio) to provide industry insights and discussed some of 'the surprise elements', the experts faced in their careers and how they navigated it - which was a guide for the younger generation to not only enter the biotech but also to sustain and weather the storm!

Amanda opened the conversation by emphasizing that budgets and landscapes in Cell and Gene Therapy are constantly shifting.

She encouraged attendees to rely on their teams, remain adaptable, and remember that “no one is smarter than you; you just have a different set of skills.” Building on the CGT trend, Geoffrey highlighted the importance of AI/automation in scaling-up the manufacturing process and advancing cell and gene therapies. He also reflected on career growth, noting that professionals, especially women, recognize their value and avoid underselling themselves in self-evaluations. Dr. Nair then highlighted the human side of scientific progress, explaining that while science drives discovery, it is people who move it forward. She underscored the importance of self-awareness, mentorship, and staying attuned to industry trends. Kenny, who is one of the powerful allies of women, discussed bridging the gap between scientific and public understanding, reinforcing communication and community as cornerstones of innovation.



The session then pivoted and moved well beyond the biotech careers to CGT - science to address the critical, real-world challenges impacting the entire pharma value chain, an ecosystem of interconnected activities guiding a drug from concept to market.

Along the way, the panelists discussed the soup-to-nuts involved in Cell and Gene Therapy trends, the current challenges, and diving into a vibrant, interconnected, collaborative effort to overcome the challenges. True innovation is a social endeavor, not an isolated one.

Together, the panelists illustrated that success in biotech, including CGT depends not only on the science and technology but also includes the human elements like adaptability, resilience, mentorship, and people-centered leadership. These qualities enable professionals to adapt, grow, and thrive in an ever-evolving field. The session ended with a lively 20-minute Q&A from the audience about industry trends, team building and management for a healthy, inclusive workforce development and a strong scientific community.

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Concept to Clinic: Careers in Medical Devices

Writer: Stephanie Cortez; Chair: Rosa Fontana; Speakers: Dee Duangdao and Jo Ann Jackson

The Medical Device industry offers a wide range of career paths that encompass a variety of skillsets. This session was structured as a question-and-answer forum that provided the audience with insight into the skills and mindset needed to succeed in medical devices.



The discussion began with a brief introduction from each guest. First, Dee Duangdao (Ph.D., Account Executive at Roche) shared how she gained a passion for teaching and learning through her roles in Tech Support and Field Applications. Next, Jo Ann Jackson (Sr. Scientist, QuidelOrtho) shared how she built upon her manufacturing background with courses on Biotech Instrumentation from San Diego City College. Through upskilling, Jackson was able to work a variety of R&D roles within biotech.

The session chair, Rosa Fontana, then asked each guest what technical and soft skills are necessary to be successful in the medical device industry. Dr. Duangdao underscored curiosity and networking, stating that professionals should "Ask questions and [not] make assumptions". For building a network, she suggests identifying team members that make valuable contributions to leadership decisions and approaching those team members for networking. Through a robust network, professionals can both rely on a base of support when searching for new roles and learn more about different paths in the industry by asking detailed questions.

Jackson then shared the importance of integrating seamlessly into a team by being adaptable, reliable, and having a good attitude toward problem-solving. She highlighted the positive impact of upskilling in her career path and the importance of finding a good mentor. Mentorship ultimately offers professionals guidance and an opportunity to elevate their existing skills.

Dress Bold, Be Bold and Step Into Visible Leadership

Writer and Chair: Tiffany Naing; Speaker: Pamela Gardner

The session "Dress Bold, Be Bold, and Step into Visible Leadership" opened with a grounding exercise led by Pamala Gardner, CEO of Biotech Vendor Services (BVS), where she emphasized the importance of managing creativity and stress in the scientific

community before sharing her personal journey toward authenticity and confidence.



Pamela shared how, as a child, being bullied led her to conform to others' expectations to fit in and dim her light. This experience carried into her professional life, where she adopted the typical black suits and formal demeanor of the corporate world. In 2015, however, a random encounter changed her perspective when a stranger encouraged her to try brighter and bolder color outfits to wear. The moment she put on a hot pink suit, she decided to take a risk, dress boldly, and fully embrace her authentic self. This mindset shift not only helped her business flourish but also inspired her to found the Art of Women Thriving in STEM movement, which has empowered thousands of women to reclaim their confidence and step into visible leadership.

Pamela encouraged participants to embrace their individuality, speak with their authentic voices, and connect deeply with themselves and their surroundings. She outlined three key mindset shifts to reach one's full potential:

1. Be free to be you: stop shrinking yourself and allow your confidence to shine.
2. Stop the spinning plates: manage stress effectively to gain clarity, time, and joy in both work and personal life.
3. Be happy now: stop seeking external validation and find fulfillment in your current achievements.

The session included interactive reflections where attendees examined how dimming their own light has affected their careers. Common themes included burnout, limited visibility, and challenges in being taken seriously in difficult or unsupportive work environments. The group also discussed the balance between expressing bold authenticity and honoring personal style, recognizing that confidence can be conveyed through both vibrant and minimalist expressions that aren't following stereotypes expected from others.

Pamela also known as "bad-ass butterfly" concluded by reminding everyone that leadership is not a performance, it's presence. By dressing bold and being bold, we ignite authenticity and visibility from within, fostering personal growth and empowering others to do the same.

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Biotech Lunch and Learn - 'The Fortune Cookies'

Writer: Meena Narayanan; Chair: Elvia S. Zapata; Speaker: Laura Fuchs

A delicious networking lunch was catered by Chef Perla of Elevation Eating. AWIS-SD was happy to partner with a local, woman-owned small business.



There was a concurrent Biotech Lunch and Learn given by Laura Fuchs (Director, QA - Genentech), who gave some valuable "Food for Thought" about the choices with integrity that are needed for both professional career paths and personal life.

Our speaker of this session is a leader who isn't just managing the future-She is building it. She saw potential when there were challenges; a tireless advocate for teamwork, building a culture of engagement and a true believer in the power of people. The chair, Elvia, introduced our speaker for an interactive, interesting session.



The key takeaways of the Lunch and Learn session were :

Appetizer (the fundamental experiences)

- (i) Education
- (ii) Experience
- (iii) Exposure

Main dish: "You Stew" featuring principles and integrity

- (i) Go to bed with a clear conscience
- (ii) Own your mistakes and preserve the trust of others
- (iii) Non-negotiables vs. compromise

Dessert: "Fortune Cookies"

- (i) Make intelligent decisions and respond with accuracy
- (ii) Drive the road ahead and not the car
- (iii) Strive to know; not to show.

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2025 AWIS-SD and UCSD Extended Studies Scholarships

Writer: Federica Klaus; Chair: Angela Snyder

The WIST 2025 scholarship award ceremony celebrated a remarkable group of women advancing STEM in a wide range of disciplines and educational stages. The ceremony reflected both individual achievement and the collective spirit of support and mentorship in the STEM community.

The AWIS-AD Scholarship Program encourages and rewards outstanding students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at San Diego colleges and universities. Now in its 25th year, the program annually supports community college, undergraduate, and graduate students in San Diego County pursuing degrees in STEM fields where women are underrepresented. Scholarship funds help support their research projects and/or assist with additional educational expenses.

This year's AWIS-SD scholarship awards were sponsored by Hologic and Vertex and were awarded to seven recipients: Jessica Mora (MiraCosta College), Anastasia Egoudine (UC San Diego), Mingi Kim (Scripps Research), Annapurna Vadaparty (UC San Diego), Abril Hernandez (University of San Diego), Ramya Chandrasekaran (San Diego State University), Andrea Rodriguez-Marín Freudmann (UC San Diego).

Additionally, the ceremony acknowledged the four runners-up, including: Oceana Yu, Morgan Farrell, Supisara Suphakijanan, and Nancy Leon-Rivera—each with impressive research, leadership, and advocacy roles in STEM.



Also recognized were the two recipients of the UC San Diego Extended Studies scholarships: Elizaveta ("Ellie") Kuznetsova and Lisa Janssen—both professionals with strong records in linguistics/education and molecular biology, respectively, and committed to advancing access and inclusion in STEM. The scholarships sponsored by UCSD Extension will enable these two members to take courses to help advance their professional goals.

The recipients' diverse fields of expertise—from electrical engineering, mechanical & biomedical engineering, neuroscience, computing education, sustainability, water management, to oceanography and linguistics—highlight the broad spectrum of STEM fields where women are making a significant impact. The scholarship not only supports them financially but also celebrates their achievements and encourages continued engagement and leadership. The award ceremony served as a reminder of the broader mission of the organization: elevating women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by recognizing talent, fostering networks, and empowering emerging leaders.

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Careers in R&D: From the Lab to Leadership

Writer and Chair: Megan Keene; Speakers: Courtney Benson and Cande Rogert

During the Careers in R&D: From the Lab to Leadership session, Dr. Courtney Benson (R&D Director, BlueNalu) and Dr. Cande Rogert (VP Global Head of Advanced Sciences, Illumina) shared their journeys from graduate research to industry leadership.



Both speakers demonstrated that scientific careers are rarely linear. Dr. Benson moved from microbial diversity to endocrinology and neuroscience before joining BlueNalu, where her team develops sustainable seafood alternatives. Dr. Rogert now leads a large multidisciplinary group at Illumina where she dives into a variety of fields. They emphasized that it's never too late to pivot or broaden your expertise.

A recurring theme was resilience and community. Dr. Rogert described completing her PhD in a new country with a different language, limited resources, and a baby on the way. Support from her network kept her going—a reminder that perseverance and connection matter as much as technical skill.

She also debunked the myth that only prestigious universities open doors: coming from a small Argentinian school to a global company, she proved that experience, adaptability, and attitude carry more weight than institutional prestige. Both speakers highlighted the power of effective communication—presenting your work clearly not only advances your research, allowing for detailed feedback, but also engages collaborators, potential employers, bosses, clients, and more.

Finally, they stressed the value of good leadership and supportive workplaces. The audience even pitched in, agreeing that a good boss is worth following from company to company or position to position. The time leading up to Dr Rogert's maternity leave was scary due to the fact that if she did a good job preparing her team she'd be temporarily making her role obsolete. She credited Illumina's handling of her maternity leave and her own proactive approach in making her role essential after returning—a testament to trust and mutual respect in career growth.

Behind the Scenes: Thriving Through Transitions in STEM

Writer: Stephanie Cortez; Chair: Sarah Narehood; Speakers: Sabrina Johnson and Dequina Nicholas

Career transitions present both challenges and opportunities for professionals pivoting between roles. This session's guests, Sabrina Johnson (Founder, President, and CEO of Daré Bioscience), and Dequina Nicholas (PhD., Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at UC Irvine) provided valuable advice for managing these transitions and creating success from hardship.

Sabrina Johnson shared a quick introduction of her newly founded company, Daré Bioscience, which focuses on closing the gap between research and real solutions in women's health. She described having worked a variety of different jobs in healthcare and biotech before dedicating herself to founding a company. Dr. Dequina Nicholas introduced herself as "extremely intentional and goal driven", with her knowing very early that she wanted to work in academia and structuring her career path to pursue that goal.



Session chair Sarah Narehood asked both guests what skills and mindset they share despite having very different paths. Dr. Nicholas responded with "having a passion for agency and impact", stating that she wants to have a lasting and meaningful impact with her work. Johnson agreed, stating that she strives to be her authentic self in her work.

Next, the guests were asked if they struggled with the jump from science to business. Johnson shared that being truly passionate and committed can make the jump easier, though leaving anything is hard. Dr. Nicholas followed up stating that while she personally does not want to run a company, she recognizes that business is important to understand for making a larger impact with your research.

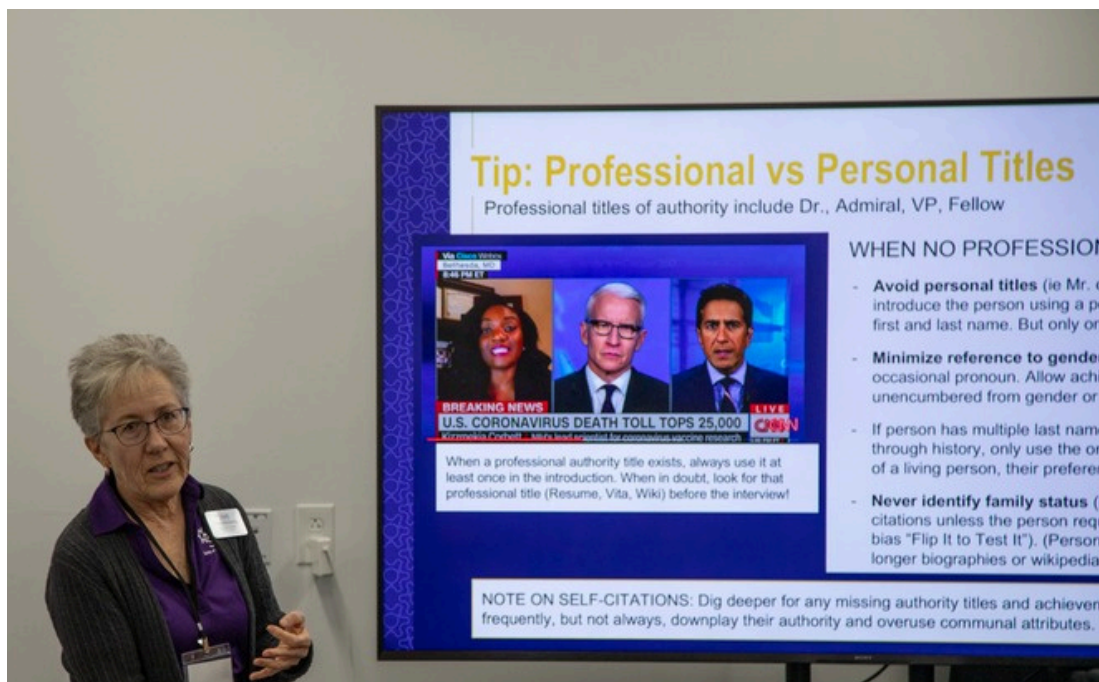
Finally, each guest was asked about how they leveraged their support networks to persevere through obstacles on their journey. Dr. Nicholas emphasized the importance of knowing when to leave an environment that does not support you, and turning to your support network to guide you through academic or workplace challenges. Johnson agreed, stating that she was fortunate to be surrounded by people who championed her work, but recognized that you cannot make everyone happy, so it's important to have confidence that the right people will see your worth.

Out of Focus: A Primer of Evaluation & Citation Authors to Revealing Women's Achievements

Writer and Chair: Christa Park; Speaker: Debra Kimberling

The session "Out of Focus: A Primer of Evaluation & Citation Authors to Revealing Women's Achievements" featured Debra Kimberling, an accomplished aerospace engineer, Fellow of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and President of the San Diego County Engineering Council. With over 35 years of involvement in the San Diego STEM community, Debra has dedicated her career to advancing the visibility and recognition of women in engineering.

In her presentation, Debra shared insights from her research on linguistic gender bias in media and its influence on how women's achievements are represented or often marginalized. Drawing from her leadership of the SWE Legends Project, which aims to create Wikipedia profiles of pioneering SWE members, and from her recently published book, she shed light on how subtle differences in language can perpetuate gender stereotypes.



Her analysis highlighted recurring media patterns that portray men as independent and authoritative, while often depicting women as dependent or less competent. Debra emphasized the importance of awareness and intentional language in reshaping how we acknowledge women's contributions in STEM and beyond.

The discussion was both eye-opening and inspiring, encouraging attendees to reflect on how they communicate about themselves and others. Debra's passion and commitment to equity in representation serve as a powerful reminder of the ongoing need to bring women's achievements into sharper focus.

Decoding Leadership - An Authentic Playbook

Writer: Meena Narayanan; Chair: Elvia S. Zapata; Speaker:
Mohammad El-Kalay

It was with a sense of a distinct pride and honor, we welcomed a leader who has consistently redefined what is possible through honesty, leadership courage, kindness and transformative action. Our speaker Mohammad is not just a title-holder, but a true architect of change, known throughout the industry for his ability to navigate complex challenges and inspire global teams to achieve collective greatness. What truly sets him apart is his unwavering dedication to a core philosophy that he lives by: "A sign of a good leader is not how many followers you have, but how many leaders you create - Mahatma Gandhi."

Mohammad is a top-notch leader in Cell and Gene Therapy, whose commitment to organizational alignment having a unified goal with enhanced clarity is a top priority. He strongly believes in 'Servant Leadership - to be in the service of those you lead'. His vision and leadership approach in fostering the growth and well-being of every individual - has left an indelible mark on me and many more who had an opportunity to work with him. We opened the session by a brief introduction to our leader Mohammad by the chair, Elvia.



Mohammad gave an insightful presentation about the 'The Roots of Leadership' with the following key takeaways:

- (i) To understand one's capabilities and limitations, as the younger generation transitions to leadership roles.
 - (ii) Look for opportunities for your team to grow.
 - (iii) 'Do the right thing all the time; Leaders should never compromise on ethical or regulatory compliance of an organization'.
 - (iv) Build a long lasting relationship based on trust and respect.
 - (v) Humility is the trait that distinguishes arrogance from confidence
- MEK

The session was very engaging and ended with a lively discussion and Q&A from the audience for about 30 minutes.

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Strengthening Connections Through Culturally Informed Communication

Writer: Eulalia Coutinho; Chair: Parul Sahu; Speaker: Mehran Sorourian

Mehran Sorourian (Founder, Youth Speakers Lab) opened the session by sharing her journey from learning English to earning her degrees, studying cross-cultural communication, and launching her podcast, highlighting how connecting with people from diverse backgrounds strengthens influence and impact.

She emphasized the power of human networks, guiding participants through an exercise to map their relationships, assess network strength, and identify key connections to nurture. Mehran then introduced the 7 Elements of Communication and explained how culture functions as our "brain software," shaping how we communicate and interpret messages.

The session focused on three major cultural aspects: High vs. Low Power Distance, Collectivism vs. Individualism, and High vs. Low Context communication. Through practical examples, she demonstrated how each aspect influences workplace behavior, such as attitudes toward hierarchy, group harmony versus individual voice, and implicit versus direct communication styles.



Participants engaged in small-group discussions to examine how these cultural differences affect decision-making, collaboration, and conflict avoidance in their own work environments. Mehran tied these insights back to the network-mapping activity, encouraging participants to consider cultural factors that shape relationships and identify steps to build more meaningful connections.

Overall, the session highlighted that culturally aware communication and intentional networking are essential for influence, leadership, and long-term success.

How We Found Our Way to Sales & Customer Support

Writer: Yixing Du; Chair: Angela Snyder; Speakers: Elena Rubio de la Torre and Rita Issa

In this engaging session, Dr. Elena Rubio de la Torre (Founder and Principal Consultant, bioCustomer Support Solutions) and Dr. Rita Issa (Global Sales Director, NanoCollect Biomedical) shared their personal journeys from scientific research to leadership roles in customer support and global sales. Both speakers highlighted how scientific training—rooted in curiosity, analytical thinking, and problem solving—translates naturally into customer-facing careers.



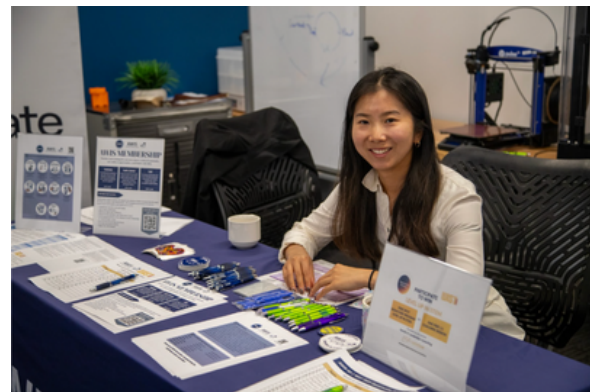
Dr. Rubio de la Torre described her transition from a neuroscience researcher to a Customer support leader, emphasizing the importance of empathy, communication, and operational strategy in building effective support teams. Her path illustrated how scientists can apply technical expertise and process design skills to enhance customer success.

Dr. Issa recounted her evolution from Biomedical Engineering Scientist to Global Sales Director, demonstrating how persistence, relationship-building, and strategic leadership underpin success in commercial roles. She offered practical insights into managing long sales cycles, mentoring diverse teams, and aligning business growth with customer value.

Their stories provided an empowering roadmap for scientists seeking impactful, people-centered careers beyond the bench. In response to one of the many insightful audience questions—"Do you need to recharge?"—both speakers offered a vivid reminder that regardless of whether you identify as an extrovert or introvert, balance is achievable. Their reflections underscored that success in customer-facing roles comes from aligning one's personality, passion, and purpose—finding a rhythm that sustains both professional excellence and personal well-being.

WIST 2025 Closing

We ended WIST 2025 with a networking reception. It was a great way for attendees, speakers, and exhibitors to connect over drinks and appetizers.



Thank you to everyone who made WIST 2025 a success! From our inspiring speakers and engaged attendees, to the volunteers and sponsors who made it all possible. Together, we're building a stronger community that empowers women in science and technology to lead, innovate, and thrive.

Lori Yang, WIST 2025 Co-Chair



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Acknowledgments

WIST 2025 Committee:

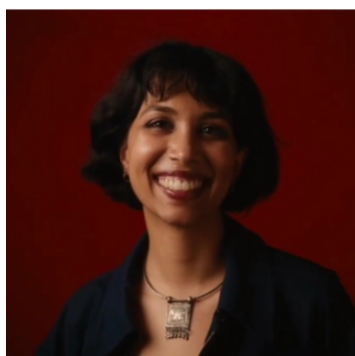
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