

Living, Learning & Growing Together: Engineering Your World

Mrs. Ana M Dison, University of Texas at Austin

Ana Dison is the Director for Student Programs in Women in STEM (WiSTEM), a new initiative serving all women in STEM at UT. The focus of WiSTEM is to educate and expose students to transdisciplinary, holistic experiences that increase the sense of belonging, STEM identity, and STEM self-efficacy. In addition to the K-12 outreach activities and programs, WiSTEM will provide undergraduates with professional development opportunities including mentoring, leadership, and community-building programs. Ana will assist with all aspects of WiSTEM, with a focus on the programs for current students as well as oversee business operations.

Ana earned her bachelor's degree from The University of Texas at Austin in 1992 in Kinesiology and a master's degree in College Student Services Administration from Oregon State University in 1994. After working for two years at the University of Maryland in Recreation Services, Ana returned to the University in 1996 and was Assistant Director in the Division of Recreational Sports, coordinating Membership Services and Satellite Facilities as well as overseeing a very large part-time student staff. After joining the Cockrell School in 2000, Ana served as an Academic Advising Coordinator in the Engineering Student Services office, advising thousands of students and coordinating a wide variety of student programs. Additionally, she served as the degree evaluator for the Cockrell School for four years. In 2006, Ana moved to the Women in Engineering Program and served as Assistant Director for nearly 16 years, coordinating all retention and student success initiatives for WEP.

Ana has served on numerous committees across campus including three years in the inaugural group of the UT Staff Council. Ana co-chaired the Provost's Council on Student Advocacy for three years and has served two terms as President of the Academic Counselors Association. In 2016, she led the effort to create a partnership with the College of Natural Sciences to develop and deliver bias and inclusion workshops and training across the colleges for students, staff, and faculty. She continues to be active in service to the UT community working with peer and professional mentoring programs. She presents to numerous groups on a variety of leadership, inclusion, and career-focused topics.

A member of the Women in Engineering ProActive Network (WEPAN) since 2006, Ana completed a three-year appointment to the WEPAN Board of Directors as Communications Director. Ana received the Eyes of Texas Award in 2011, the University's Outstanding Staff Award in 2012, and the Cockrell School of Engineering Staff Excellence Award. After serving 20 years as a high school volleyball official in the central Texas area, Ana retired from the Texas Association of Sports Officials in 2011. Since 2003, Ana has been designing and creating custom jewelry and loves to golf in her spare time.





The University of Texas at Austin Women in STEM

Living, Learning & Growing Together

ANA DISON



The University of Texas of Austin

- Tier 1 Research Institution
- Established in 1883 with nearly 500K alumni
- 52K students (~40K undergraduates)
- 18 colleges/schools
- Leading research university in Texas
- Top 10 Nationally Ranked
- Flagship university in an urban setting
- Seal of Excelencia and consideration as Hispanic Serving Institution



What is WiSTEM?

Women in STEM (WiSTEM) is a university-wide outreach, recruiting and retention program for pre-college and undergraduate students in STEM fields who identify as women.

A unit within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), WiSTEM positions the university as a national leader in women-focused STEM initiatives.



WiSTEM formally WEP

- In November 2021, WiSTEM was created at the university level
- WiSTEM grew out of the Women in Engineering Program (WEP)
- Several programs moved with WiSTEM from WEP
- Focus is to provide university wide programs for all STEM



Precollege Outreach and Education Programs

Girl Day at UT Austin and high school summer camps are designed to increase awareness and interest in STEM fields, strengthen STEM identity and increase self-efficacy for pre-college students.

WiSTEM also serves as the administrative home for the Texas Girls Collaborative Project (TXGCP), connecting nonprofits, K-12 schools, higher education institutions, companies, organizations and individuals across the state of Texas committed to informing and motivating girls to pursue careers in STEM.





Undergraduate Programs

Focus on strengthening STEM identity, creating a sense of belonging and increasing self-efficacy for all undergraduate women in STEM.

WiSTEM creates opportunities for mentoring, cross-discipline collaboration, community building, advancing leadership, living-learning communities, career exploration, professional and leadership development and role model engagement programs.

AGENDA

- · OVERWEWHSTORY
- PARTNERSHIPS
- STAFFING
- RECRUITMENT, ETC.
- · PROGRAM/SEMINAR
- · BEST PRACTICES/RESOURCES
- · LESSONS LEARNED
- · DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW/HISTORY



Overview/History

- Recruit, support and retain a diverse population of students in STEM
- Link students to resources & opportunities
- Develop relationships among students with similar interests while building a community
- •Make friends, form study groups, engage in social programming, receive academic support



Overview/History

- Over 20 year history of offering a learning community in WEP
- More formal and more emphasis in the last 5 years
- Housing contract required
- Incoming, first-year students only

PARTNERSHIPS



University Housing & Dining

- Long term partnership with University Housing & Dining (UHD)
- UHD provides 2 Resident Assistants for the floor
- Typically, the RA's are former LLC participants
- ■76 beds/spots for 1st year women (double occupancy) = 1 entire floor
- Community style bathrooms = lower cost to student (vs. private baths)
- Near engineering complex







- Developing new partnerships with College of Natural Sciences and Jackson School of Geology to expand the LLC offerings
- •McDonald Observatory (far west Texas)
- Recreational Sports (specifically Outdoor Programs) to develop LLC trip to incorporate outdoor experience in partnership with the McDonald Observatory
- Target majors: geology, astronomy, aerospace and other interested STEM students

STAFFING



Staffing

- Iive in Resident Assistants (paid and supervised by UHD)
- 8 Peer Coaches (working 5 hours/week)
- 1 Graduate Assistant (working 20 hours/week)
- Collective weekly meetings with staff to review programs, class content and discuss any issues
- Spring recruitment to replace Peer Coaches and for UHD to hire RA's

BUDGET



Budget

Item	Amount
Peer Coach Wages	\$14000
Graduate Assistant	\$16000
Books/T-shirts/Supplies	\$2000
Food/Events	\$2000
TOTAL	\$34000

Program Fee Projections	Amount
76 @ \$100	\$7600
76 @ \$200	\$15200
76 @ \$300	\$22800
76 @ \$400	\$30400

RECRUITMENT APPLICATION SELECTION



Recruitment

- Restrictive admissions practices at UT
- Limited to recruiting admitted women = January-April before May 1 Deposit Deadline
- Emails, targeted newsletters, student written postcards, student phone calls, info sessions, campus visits
- YouTube channel playlist



Application

- Online via Qualtrics
- Short answer or video uploads to 'essay' type questions
 - 1)Tell us why you feel you are a good candidate for membership into the LLC
 - 2)Talk about your commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and what you can bring to the community
 - 3)Describe your current academic interests and how you plan to explore those interests at the university next year



Selection

- Application review & selection happens after the enrollment deposit deadline (May 2-15)
- Inform students before New Student Orientation (June July)
- Internal Housing deadlines for room assignments (sometime in July)
- Roommate selections (must live with another LLC student on the floor)
- Online acceptance deadline
- Waiting list



PROGRAM & SEMINAR



Academic Aspects

- Required 1 hour seminar course
- Fall & Spring enrollment required
- Attendance based
- 4 sections/semester offered
- Must remain a degree seeking student



Fall Seminar Content

- Canvas is our LMS assignments, communications, learning modules, articles
- Use *How To College* as our textbook
 - Focus on transition to college during fall semester with a mixture of hands on projects
 - Reflective writing
 - Resume & professional email assignments
 - Transition from High School group project



Spring Seminar Content

- Goal setting and review of fall lessons learned to start
- Semester long group project on Engineering Grand Challenges or UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Teams of 3-4 students
- Teamwork module and teamwork/communication project agreement form
- Short intro or mini check in presentation mid semester
- Final presentation can be poster, video or presentation



Social Aspects

- Weekly social programming with Peer Coaches
- Field trips, game nights, crafts, study groups
- Office hours and light tutoring
- Group study, support and networking



BEST PRACTICES



Best Practices

- Rely on your Housing/Res Life professionals to manage their stuff
- Canvas/LMS can be your friend
- A Welcome event works to get the whole group together
- Walk Your Classes breaks the ice for nervous first years
- ■8 Peer Coaches is enough and not too much for 76 students
- Use student staff to hire replacement Peer Coaches
- Students are wonderful at recruiting YouTube playlist



YouTube

UTWEP – LLC Playlist

LESSONS LEARNED



Lessons Learned

- Video essay submissions are faster and way more fun
- No matter what you do, students will drop out/change plans
- Accept all students to your waiting list
- Year long programs are tricky students change plans mid-year
- Dedicated scholarships work to recruit into the community
- Parents love the idea of the LLC
- Think about how you will deal with students that struggle with socializing
- More than 4 students on a project team is too many
- ■End the seminar by the first week of April they are done!



DISCUSSION



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