WINGS
2021 Annual Report

The WINGS mission is to support women in the National Security Sciences Directorate (NSSD), Fusion and Fission Energy and Science Directorate (FFESD), and Isotope Science and Engineering Directorate (ISED) through a welcoming social network and mentoring. WINGS will work with management and promote policies that improve morale, recruitment, and retention of all employees at ORNL.

Officers
Rose Montgomery, President
Askin Guler-Yigitoglu, Vice President
Lindsey Aloisi, Treasurer
Dianne Bull-Ezell, Secretary
Ashley Shields, Outreach Committee Chair
Allison Greaney, Social Committee Chair
Rike Bostelmann, Communications Chair

Cabinet Members at Large
Arzu Alpan
Sandra Davern
Melanie Laverdiere
Katie Salvaggio
2021 Leadership Accomplishments

In 2021, to reach more members, WINGS greatly expanded its program with the following objectives:

- Facilitate discussion on ORNL’s policies regarding sick leave and paid family medical leave
- Facilitate discussion on gender bias and provide support for cultural change
- Expand outreach programs to include K through 12 and continue to support university women’s groups as requested
- Provide high quality professional development opportunities
- Support mentoring initiatives and opportunities

WINGS also worked to improve its organizational infrastructure. In 2021, WINGS:

- Collaborated/coordinated with other ORNL women’s and minority groups and the Diversity Council
- Increased WINGS membership (currently 144 members) and participation
- Expanded WINGS informational website and communication through ORNL Today
- Held informal quarterly activity summaries presented at the general meetings and distributed via emails to members
- Re-evaluated and reformulated WINGS’ new employee networking activity

Parental Leave Discussion

In February, WINGS member Cami Collins provided a white paper comparing current ORNL parental leave benefits as compared with other national laboratories. Of the 18 Department of Energy and National Nuclear Security Administration laboratories reviewed in the white paper, ORNL’s benefits for parental leave fall within the middle of the road with respect to other laboratories, offering 1 week of parental leave for all employees and an additional 6-8 weeks paid leave for mothers that are eligible for short term disability. Five of the labs provide no parental leave benefits, three labs are supported through state-offered benefits only, four labs offer combined lab/state benefits up to 8 weeks of paid parental leave (ORNL falls into this category), and 8 labs provide combined lab/state paid parental leave >8 weeks. WINGS requested that ORNL lab leadership direct a Benefits Evaluation analysis to assess the impact and feasibility of 12 weeks paid parental leave. The United Nations International Labor Standard is minimum 14 weeks paid leave for parents.

Tennessee's Maternity Leave Act requires employers having more than 100 employees to provide unpaid time off for pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing an infant, but new employees only become eligible for the job security offered by this act when they have worked for the company for at least
12 consecutive months. WINGS pointed out that this represents a gap for new employees hired in the recent ReImagining effort.

In March of 2021 and again in November of 2021, WINGS representatives met with ORNL Human Resources and Benefits representatives to discuss parental leave options and the potential to investigate expanded ORNL parental leave benefits. Although no commitments were offered to move forward with the proposed benefits evaluation, Marilyn Foxall, Jody Zahn, Scott McIntyre, and Deborah Bowling attended one or both meetings and ORNL’s senior management is aware of the interest from WINGS members on this topic. Laboratory Director Thomas Zacharia mentioned his support for allowing new parents to work from home for longer to support families during his Director’s Forum talk on March 9.

Gender Bias Discussion

In January, WINGS authored a white paper on gender bias titled, “Implicit and Explicit Gender Bias: Experiences at ORNL and a Call to Action.” The paper included background information on current gender diversity statistics at ORNL and a literature survey was completed and summarized within the paper describing generally the types of gender bias often encountered by women within the workplace and especially within STEMM careers. To elucidate the types of bias experienced, WINGS compiled more than 50 specific recent examples of bias experienced by women from across the laboratory and categorized them by type. Given the research discussed in the paper and the personal experiences of female staff that were documented, it is clear that many women at the laboratory struggle with the effects of gender bias on a continuing basis. To create an equal work environment for female staff and to promote the respectful treatment of female staff, WINGS recommended, based on the research literature cited, the following actions by ORNL, with potential supporting actions in each category:

- Acknowledge at all levels of management that biased behavior will not be tolerated.
- Establish a safe environment for reporting for staff experiencing bias.
- Establish annual compulsory training on gender bias for all employees, with more extensive annual training provided to all supervisors.
- Define specific opportunities to improve the workplace culture at ORNL, using the workplace factors discussed below
- Eliminate sources of gender bias in recruiting and hiring.

WINGS met with the senior leadership team in July for a discussion of the paper and offered its support in developing and executing the recommended actions. Due to the specific examples given in the white paper, it was decided that it should not be distributed widely.

A follow up meeting with senior leadership is planned after the ERG Townhall meetings and evaluation of the Climate and Culture survey performed by the laboratory.
Support for Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

The WINGS leadership team supported Directorate-level and Division-level meetings with “Diversity Moments” aimed at improving understanding of diversity and inclusion concepts, terminology, best practices, and ongoing initiatives. The slides are available in WINGS general TEAMS channel files section and are available for use by all.
Membership and Event Attendance Statistics

As of October 13, 2021, WINGS’ mailing list has 144 members and the Teams channel 185 members. 26% of WINGS’ members are from NSSD, 35% from FFESD, 15% from ISED, and 24% from other directorates. Table 1 presents WINGS 2021 events and member attendance.

Table 1. WINGS 2021 Events and Attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th># Attendees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Virtual Coffee Social and discussion on family leave benefits</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>General Meeting – Get to know your ALD: ISED, Balendra Sutharshan</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Virtual Social – Brainstorming for STEM outreach</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Lunch and Learn: Resiliency for Professional Women led by Jenni Bates</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>General Meeting – Deborah Bowling on Diversity and Inclusion initiatives</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td></td>
<td>First in-person off-site Social at OHB</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>WINGS Leadership Book club discussion</td>
<td>47 members</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Joint Social with WiPhY at 35 North</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Onsite coffee social in the Quad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Via Women’s Alliance Council, participation in ERG Townhall</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Septembe</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>Participated in NSSD training on Federal Capture and Proposals</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Lunch and Learn: Unconscious Bias in the Workplace led by Eric Benson</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WINGS Leadership Book club discussion</td>
<td>47 members</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Elections for FY22 Executive Cabinet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participated in Sandia National Laboratory’s pilot program DIVERSE-W</td>
<td>1 delegate</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>General Meeting – Thanks to our CY21 Executive Cabinet, Sponsors and Champions and member input to FY22 focus topics</td>
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</table>
WINGS members participate in the virtual Lunch and Learn led by ORNL’s Jenni Bates on the topic of Resiliency for Professional Women.
Communications Report

This year’s communication activities included maintenance of established tools for communication with all WINGS members and for communication within the Executive Committee:

- Maintained WINGS mailing list (wings@email.ornl.gov) for easy communication to all WINGS members. WINGS members can subscribe and unsubscribe on their own, or they can be added by the Communications Chair. Everyone on the mailing list can send emails to this list. An internal spreadsheet keeps an overview of the members with their affiliations to be able to report on representation of the individual directorates.

- Maintained WINGS Executive Cabinet mailing list (wings-exec@ornl.gov). This is a closed mailing list for only the Executive Cabinet. WINGS Executive Cabinet members were updated by the Communications Chair to always include the active Cabinet.

- Kept communicating from and answering emails to wings-board inbox (wings-board@ornl.gov). This is an email account from which the Executive Committee writes official emails to WINGS members or others, and it serves as general email address to contact the WINGS Executive Cabinet.

- Maintained WINGS public website (https://wings.pages.ornl.gov) to introduce WINGS to interested individuals and to provide WINGS members with news about upcoming events and other interesting materials and links.

- Maintained WINGS MS Teams channel (https://tinyurl.com/TeamWINGS) for easy interaction between WINGS members.

Experience in the best communication to WINGS members and to all staff in the three directorates was gained so that a solid process for communication of events was established. If possible, WINGS events open to all ORNL staff members is also communicated through ORNL Today.
Outreach Activities

This year, WINGS continued to reach out to new hires in our three directorates to invite them to join WINGS. WINGS held several meetings with ORNL Outreach Coordinator, Allison Melton, to discuss opportunities and promote ORNL Outreach efforts through the WINGS channels. This directly led to two WINGS members participating in GirlCon 2021, speaking on a panel on Tech+AI: Applying AI in Energy, Climate, and Nuclear Weapons. Locally, WINGS provide East Tennessee Freedom Schools with seven weeks of science activities for K-5th grade students. WINGS held a brainstorming session to come up with activities for the kids, then members led the preparation and execution of these activities every week while Freedom Schools was in session. Students made their own compass, built a solar oven, and ended the summer trying to “Stump a Scientist” at a virtual panel made up from scientists across ORNL.

ORNL scientists participate in the virtual “Stump a Scientist” panel with students from East Tennessee Freedom Schools.
Social Activities and Events

WINGS hosted a social happy hour at Orange Hat Brewery in July and co-hosted a joint happy hour with WiPhY at 35 North in August. Both of these events provided opportunities for the members to network with new hires, catch-up with old friends, and meet ORNL staff from other organizations around the lab.

WINGS added six books to its leadership library, for a total of 14 titles available through ORNL’s Research Library. The ability to check out the books electronically was also added this year. The WINGs book club has been very successful with 47 members participating in reading and discussing “Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can’t Stop Talking”, “Unapologetically Ambitious: Take Risks, Break Barriers, and Create Success on Your Own Terms”, “Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing & Succeeding Under Any Conditions”, and “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success”. This group meets every 6 weeks over Teams.

WINGS and WiPHy members networked at a joint happy hour social.
Budget and Spending

In FY21, WINGS received funding increments of $10,000 each from the Nuclear Energy and Fuel Cycle Division (Jeremy Busby), the Isotope Science and Engineering Directorate (Balendra Sutharshan), the National Security Sciences Directorate (Deb Frincke), and the Fusion and Fission Energy and Science Directorate (Kathy McCarthy). In addition, there was ~$2,500 of funds in carryover from the previous year. Funds are typically used to support the cost of meeting materials, program development materials, promotional items (e.g., lanyards, signage), outside speakers, library books, and to partially cover time charges for the Executive Cabinet – WINGS pledges to volunteer at least 1 hour for every hour charged and typically surpasses that pledge by a factor of 5. Due to the pandemic status which required a majority of the laboratory to work from home and restricted physical meetings to less than 50 participants, all charges for FY21 were time charges by the Executive Cabinet or for purchases to add to the WINGS library collection.

The activities that WINGS completed this year had favorable outcomes, and we forecast the continuation of supporting all ORNL staff in their orientation and development needs with continuous funding from supporting Associate Laboratory Directors in the upcoming year.