

Fostering an inclusive mindset and infusing a welcoming and supportive atmosphere into the Faculty of Science: sharing different perspectives and experiences in science at uOttawa from academics to research and outreach

Speakers:

Connor Bourgonje, PhD Candidate in Chemistry – A scientist's role in reconciliation

Sue McKee, Let's Talk Science Director – Sharing first-hand outreach experiences and opportunities in diverse communities

Uche Nworah & Agape Williams, Black STEM Students Association – Black STEM Student Association: Empowering Excellence and Fostering Inclusivity in STEM at uOttawa

Moderator: Jaclyn Brusso, Vice Dean of Faculty Affairs & Inclusive Excellence

Bios:

Connor Bourgonje is a 5th year PhD student in the Scaiano Lab. His research focuses on designing light activated nanomaterials for applications in catalysis, medicine, and water treatment. As a proud member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Connor has a deep interest in identifying and addressing the barriers that limit Indigenous participation in STEM. Connor is a founding member of the uOttawa Alliance Supporting Indigenous Science Students (uOASISS), serving as a mentor for Indigenous science students, and acting in an advisory role to help drive Indigenous initiatives in the Faculty of Science

Sue McKee has an MSc in Biology and is the Director of the Let's Talk Science program at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. She has been a volunteer with Let's Talk Science for 25 years, doing hands-on STEM activities with children and youth in schools and community organizations. She ran the national Let's Talk Science outreach program for 6 years after which she returned to do research as a Research Associate for 7 years, studying how well the Species at Risk Act (a law to protect endangered species) protects Canadian species at risk. She became the Program Manager for the Let's Talk Science program at uOttawa in 2014 and in 2018 became the Director of the program at both uOttawa and CarletonU. The program has grown immensely under her direction in the areas of supporting youth from diverse backgrounds especially Indigenous youth, Black youth, and youth in low socio-economic areas. The uOttawa site is one of over 55 Let's Talk Science sites across Canada. Volunteers (university undergraduate and graduate students) go into classrooms and community organizations bringing fun, hands-on, minds-on workshops for children and youth.

Agape Williams is entering her 4th year in Biomedical Sciences with a Neuroscience focus at the University of Ottawa. She loves to volunteer in many diverse opportunities, and this summer, has been occupied as a research student, studying the locomotion of blue-spotted salamanders.

Agape is one of the co-founders of the Black STEM Student Association at uOttawa (BSSA), a newly founded club dedicated to supporting and empowering Black students in STEM, a vision that aligns deeply with her values.

Uche Nworah is a 4th year student in the Biochemistry program. She spent most of her summer taking courses, working, improving her French skills, playing tennis, and doing some admin tasks for the BSSA. Uche is also a co-founder/co-president of the new club at uOttawa, BSSA.