



InstMC Women's Network Meeting

MINUTES of the meeting held via MS Teams on **Tuesday 24th October 2023**

Attendees:

- Caroline Trabasas (CT)
- Chinonso Onwuegbucha (CO)
- Claire Jones (CJ)
- Jane Seery (JS)
- Jo Kirkbride (JK)
- Lindsay Scott (LS)
- Sheila Smith (SS)
- Steff Smith (StS)

Apologies:

- Turan Das

Meeting Outcomes:

- Decisions are recorded in Table 1.
- Actions are recorded in Table 2.

1. Welcome and Introductions

JS and CT welcome members to the Women's Network and invited them to share their aspirations for the Network.

CJ is an application consultant for Flow at Endress + Hauser and drawing from experiences with the Women's Integrated Network (WIN) highlighted its significant impact in fostering professional connections and industry networking over the past couple of years. CJ is keen to contribute and actively participate in the InstMC Women's Network.

SS, the President of the Institute and also Head of Department of Applied Science at Glasgow Caledonian University has expressed strong commitment to the establishment of a Women's Network within the Institute. SS offers support in facilitating the Network, providing different roles and is open to mentoring opportunities to members of the Network should they wish.

StS, the Chief Executive of the Institute is keen to support the Network and has come along to hear the perspectives and views of members. StS would like to increase the number of women joining the Institute generally but also ensure women at the Institute are represented at SIGs, Local Sections, Committees, Council and Board levels.

CO, a recent graduate from GCU's MSc in Applied Data Science in Engineering expressed excitement to be a part of this community, connecting with women from diverse backgrounds and fostering collaboration. CO would be keen to take up mentoring if available to develop leadership skills and to share challenges with other women in industry.

LS is a control, and systems engineer at Process Safety Solutions and has several years of involvement in the North of Scotland Local Section. LS expressed the importance of the Women's Network in attracting more women to the industry and serving as role models, especially in sectors like oil and gas where there is a notable shortage of system and instrument engineers.

JK, a product manager for ABB for around 28 years and has been among a small number of women in industry. JK shared that the Women's Network would be great for networking beyond ABB and is keen to sustain the momentum of networking between women and promoting women in engineering and STEM in general.

2. Survey Feedback

JS presented a few PowerPoint slides that detailed some of the reasons why members might want to join a Women's Network, for example, professional development, networking, sharing knowledge and support, mentorship, advocacy and empowerment, career opportunities and access to resources, building on personal growth, collaboration and innovation and community engagement. CT and JS noted that these reasons are not exclusive to women but particularly beneficial in addressing challenges women may face in engineering.

Interestingly, the survey feedback regarding the topics and activities that members would like to see included in a women's network was similar to the above. The top six areas of interest identified were mentoring, career development, leadership skills, technical knowledge, networking, and empowerment.

3. Aims and Goals

Following the survey feedback the group discussed and shared their motivations for joining the Network and what they would like to achieve.

CJ shared that motivation for joining the network is rooted in personal growth and community engagement. There is value in the opportunity to network, especially when interactions with other women can be infrequent, and appreciate the chance to align with other women who are making a positive impact in their respective fields. WIN has also been involved in various community engagement initiatives with local schools and universities aimed at promoting women in engineering. There is still a gender imbalance so there significant room for improvement in early education.

SS agreed that universities encounter an underrepresentation of women in engineering courses. SS noted that universities are actively engaged in outreach efforts with schools, aiming to generate interest among women and other underrepresented groups in

pursuing higher education. In the future, the Network could engage in outreach initiatives aimed at schools and draw on the inspiration from industry to highlight potential pathways into the engineering world.

StS highlighted the importance of understanding the barriers that may deter women from joining the Institute. StS emphasized the need to identify and address these barriers, with a specific focus on supporting women in assuming positions on the Council and the Board. CJ suggested that conducting a survey could be an effective method for gathering insights from female members regarding the challenges they face. In the case of WIN, the responses indicated a lack of visible role models in leadership positions and confidence and assertiveness to take that step forward.

CT suggested to enhance the visibility of women members within the Institute it might be good to have a summary on the website to showcase their career journeys. This could raise awareness about women in the Institute and attract and connect women in different ways, particularly valuable for recent graduates seeking inspiration from the non-linear career paths of other women, demonstrating the diverse routes into engineering. SS emphasised the profiles are regularly updated every few months to ensure its exciting for readers. CJ has volunteered to provide a short career profile.

ACTION 1: JS and CT to create a template of questions for career journey profiles for the website. JS to follow up with CJ for content.

SS also pointed out that the Institute has a greater number of female members than those present at the meeting. SS suggested that the Network could organise a panel discussion featuring women members in senior positions nearing the end of their careers. This event would provide an opportunity for members to ask questions and gain valuable insights into the journeys and experiences that led these women to their current positions.

JK who is based in West Cumbria shared that university graduates have a heavy reliance on Sellafield and suggested that the Institute could offer free membership to schools that are teaching engineering courses (lower than a degree). Energy Coast UTC is a great example of this that have almost 50% of girls are in engineering, 80% are moving into apprenticeships and 20% going on to further education. StS has agreed to change the student membership to include non-degree courses, apprenticeships and all other possible routes in instrumentation and control, including technical training and placements.

JK highlighted the importance of engaging apprentices with Local Sections as they actively promote InstMC at nearby educational institutions through various talks. SS also added that it is beneficial to retain apprenticeships as student members and foster their growth through the Institute.

ACTION 2: StS to tweak the student membership application to include students who are “undertaking a course of learning at any level in instrumentation and control”.



4. Commitment and Involvement

CT prompted the group to consider the frequency of Network meetings. It was agreed that holding bi-monthly meetings during the Network's initial stages would help build momentum, and as it becomes more established, the meetings could transition to a quarterly schedule.

CJ shared that WIN was initiated by a small core group of individuals, which has since expanded to include approximately 10 members. CJ also highlighted that three men have joined WIN, and their active participation and perspective have been welcomed. The recount of WIN's journey was quite reassuring for the group as the Women's Network will have a similar journey with a modest number. It became evident that forming a dedicated core group is essential for brainstorming innovative ideas and initiating projects to drive the Network forward.

CT encouraged the group to consider the essential roles necessary for forming the core group and initiating the Network. CT shared that four roles would be vital to establish the core group are a Chair or Interim Chair, Vice Chair, Secretariat, and Marketing/Promotion. CT explained that the Network would adopt an informal Special Interest Group (SIG) model with some fundamental terms of reference (ToRs) in place but no formalities like an AGM.

ACTION 3: WiMAC members to confirm any role they would like to take on within the network. Click the following link:
<https://instmc.typeform.com/to/DOR41jhM>

CJ has volunteered to take the Interim Chair role to kickstart the Network and will also create a welcome post that will cover information about the Network.

ACTION 4: CJ to create a welcome post introducing the Network.

CT shared that if members were interested in committing to other roles, they would get in touch via email at member.communication@instmc.org.

The group also discussed and agreed to have one in-person meeting a year like a site-type visit, if possible so it remains relevant to industry and encourages members to come along. CJ has offered to host the first in-person meeting at E+H in Spring 2024.

5. Marketing

JS asked the group about how best to information share about the Network. CJ suggested implementing email bulletins for the core group to stay informed, especially in cases where they might have missed meetings. JS also proposed the idea of a LinkedIn group for sharing information among members, with the consensus that access would be restricted to InstMC members until the Network became more established and posts could be shared in the public domain.



ACTION 5: All WiMAC members to join the WiMAC LinkedIn Group. Click the following link: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12920283/>

JS informed the group that both CT and JS have held several discussions regarding the name of the Women's Network and introduced two potential names for consideration. WEMAC – Women Engineers in Measurement, Automation & Control or WiMAC – Women in Measurement, Automation and Control.

It was agreed that the Network would be called WiMAC – Women in Measurement, Automation and Control as the word “engineer” could be seen to be a barrier and would want the Network to encompass women at all levels within the engineering field.

6. A.O.B

LS inquired about the inclusivity of the Network, questioning whether it's exclusively for women and if men can participate in supporting the cause of women in engineering. StS clarified that the Network is an open and inclusive group, welcoming allyship from all. This would be addressed in the welcome post prepared by CJ.

JS and CT thanked everyone for their ideas and discussions. The next meeting will be online in January 2024.

ACTION 6: JS and CT to issue an invite for next online meeting.

The meeting ended at 16:56.



Table 1: Decisions taken at the meeting (24/10/2023).

| No. | Agreed decisions log | Date: |
|------------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Meetings are to run bi-monthly and at least one in-person meeting a year. | 24/10/23 |
| 2 | Set up a restricted LinkedIn Group | 24/10/23 |
| 3 | Claire Jones (CJ) as Interim Chair | 24/10/23 |
| 4 | CJ offered to host the first in-person meeting in Spring 2024 at E+H. | 24/10/23 |
| 5 | WiMAC – Women in Measurement, Automation and Control is the official name of the InstMC Women’s Network. | 24/10/23 |



Table 2: Actions noted at the meeting (24/10/2023).

| Action # | Action item | Action Against | Status | Notes |
|----------|---|----------------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | JS and CT to set template questions for career journey profiles on the website. JS to follow up with CJ for content. | JS/CT/CJ | Completed | |
| 2 | StS to tweak the student membership application | StS | Completed | |
| 3 | WiMAC members to confirm any role they would like to take on within the network. Click the following link: https://instmc.typeform.com/to/D0R41jhM | ALL | Completed | |
| 4 | CJ to create a welcome post introducing WiMAC. | CJ | Completed | |
| 5 | All WiMAC members to join the WiMAC LinkedIn Group. Click the following link: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12920283/ | ALL | Completed | |
| 6 | JS and CT to issue an invite for the next online meeting | JS/CT | Completed | |

END.