



GIRLS AND STEAM

Presented by STEMCELL Technologies

Mentor Café

Use this document to get to know our mentors before you meet them at the Mentor Café.

Read through the bios and our sample questions to help you formulate your own questions for the mentors.

February 3rd, 2026



Don't know what to ask? Don't worry! Here are some questions to get you started

1. What inspired you to choose your career in STEAM?
2. What did you want to be when you were our age?
3. What's the coolest or most exciting part of your job?
4. What subjects did you enjoy most in school?
5. What skills do you use the most in your job today?
6. What does a typical day look like for you?
7. Do you work with a team or mostly on your own?
8. What's the biggest challenge you've faced in your career?
9. How do you stay confident in a field where there might be more men than women?
10. What do you wish someone had told you when you were in middle school?
11. What's something you're excited about in the future of your field?
12. If we wanted to follow in your footsteps, what's one thing we could start doing right now?

Science Communication



Sarah McLeod

she/her

I work as a program head and teacher in a joint UBC and BCIT biotechnology program. I teach students how to work in real science labs, learning about microbes, cells, and the immune system, and I mentor them through two years of hands-on lab training at BCIT. I also run programs for high school students so they can experience what it's like to be a scientist in a lab. I love helping people learn through experiments and supporting the next generation of scientists and biotechnology innovators.

**Program Head and
Instructor,
Biotechnology**

BCIT 

**PhD Microbiology
and Immunology**



**Scientific Marketing
Specialist**

 STEMCELL Technologies

**PhD Medical Biophysics,
BSc Health Sciences**

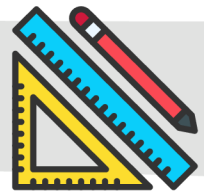


she/her

Natasha Knier

I work as a Scientific Marketing Specialist, which means I get to combine science, creativity, and communication every day. I learn how scientists use lab tools to study cells and gain information that helps them understand diseases more, and then I turn that complex science into videos, stories, webpages, social media posts, and presentations that are easy and fun to understand. My job shows that you don't have to choose between being "good at science" or being creative; you can be both!

Engineering 1




Laura Seaman

she/her

I get to work with engineers across multiple disciplines (structural, electrical, etc) to problem solve solutions and designs that will help protect the environment.

**Wastewater
Process Engineer**

Jacobs 

**MASc
Environmental
Engineering**



**Fractional Product &
Technology Officer**

 Links

PhD Engineering

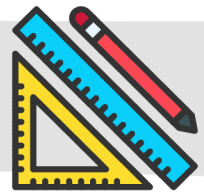


she/her

Shirin Karimifar

I help companies use technology to make new or better products and improve how they work. I plan projects, find the right people and resources, and make everything work together. I've done this for small and big companies, some starting from scratch and others with millions of customers.

Engineering 2



Alyssa Hermann she/her

I'm a Civil Engineer, and I design things like roads, sewers, and water systems that make city life work. I help plan new buildings and neighborhoods, and I volunteer to support young engineers and women in engineering.


Civil Engineer

Binnie 

MEng Civil
Engineering



Engineering Team
Lead

 BC Hydro

BASc Engineering
Physics,
MAsc Mechanical
Engineering

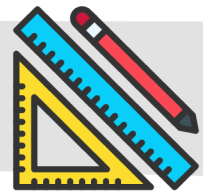


she/her

Kristen Dostie

I manage a team of engineers who design and take care of high-voltage power lines that bring electricity to communities. My specialty is the wires, connectors, and insulators that keep everyone safe. As a team leader, I focus on making sure my team has what they need to do their work.


Engineering 3



Daniela Guerrero she/her

I'm an industrial refrigeration engineer. I design huge cooling systems that keep things cold, like thousands of tubs of ice cream before they reach your freezer, as well as food factories and vaccine plants. I help save energy and use safe refrigerants to protect the planet. My job mixes science, problem-solving, and making choices that really matter.

Industrial Refrigeration Engineer

LAPORTE Engineering 

BS Mechanical Engineering, General Stream



Principal Mechanical Engineer

 Cytiva

they/them

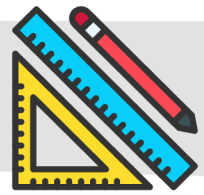
Katie Hay

I'm a design engineer in biotechnology. I help create new products by listening to customers, making and testing prototypes, and making sure they're safe before launch. I also improve how we design products, finding ways to work faster and better without losing quality. It might sound boring, but improving a process can be really rewarding

BSc Mechanical Engineering, Biomedical Specialization
MEng (Thesis) Mechanical Engineering




Engineering 4



Karine Lim-Kong she/her

I'm a professional engineer with 20 years of experience around the world in mining and oil and gas, including two years working in South America. I manage the design of a gold process plant. I work with different engineering teams to plan and build projects from start to finish, including studying ideas, designing, constructing, and getting everything up and running

Project Manager

Hatch 

BASc Mechanical Engineering



Project Manager in Refrigeration Team

 Laporte Engineering

**BASc Electrical Engineering;
Microsystems and Nanotechnology**

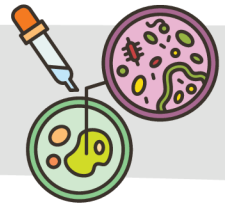


she/her

Katherine Li

I help keep projects on track and make sure everyone is working together. I turn customer ideas into real designs, including refrigeration systems, and do calculations and equipment selection. I also help my team improve by creating tools and capturing lessons learned, while following engineering standards. In short, I keep projects cool—literally and figuratively.

Biotechnology 1



Anjali Siega

she/her

I am a graduate student at Simon Fraser University studying one of the most aggressive types of breast cancer. I work in a lab where I run experiments to understand how a protein called DJ-1 affects cancer cells and why it can make them more dangerous. Learning how this protein works could help scientists develop better treatments in the future. Alongside lab work, I take classes to learn more about how cancer behaves in the body. While the work can be challenging, I love learning new things and meeting inspiring scientists and doctors who motivate me every day.

**BSc in Health Sciences,
pursuing an MSc in
Health Sciences.**

Simon Fraser University 

**Senior Research
Associate**

 STEMCELL Technologies

she/her

Daniella Bavaro

I am a Senior Research Associate who grows special human cells in a lab to help scientists study diseases and develop new medical treatments. I work on ways to safely freeze and store these cells so they stay healthy and work properly when they are used later. This early research helps support future treatments that could one day help patients.

**BSc Health Sciences,
Life Sciences
Concentration**



Biotechnology 1



Riya Sharma

she/her

I manage a small R&D team that performs experiments in the lab to develop products for liver cell research. I supervise day-to-day experimental work and data analysis, manage projects for the team and ensure they are completed on time, and plan for future projects by reviewing new developments in my field.

**Senior Scientist and
Group Lead, Research
& Development**

STEMCELL Technologies 

BSc Biotechnology



Biotechnology 2




Angela Wan

she/her

I care for patients with blood illnesses, including bleeding disorders, blood clots, and blood cancers like leukemia and lymphoma. My job involves diagnosing patients by listening to their symptoms, reviewing lab tests, and examining blood cells under a microscope. I also use advanced treatments such as CAR-T cell therapy, which trains a patient's own immune cells to fight cancer, and bone marrow transplants. Alongside patient care, I take part in research to help improve treatments for people with blood disorders.

**Physician -
Hematology**

BC Cancer 

**BA Natural Science
MPhil Genetics**



**Postdoctoral Fellow
in Cancer Genomics**

 BC Cancer/UBC

**PhD Molecular
Medicine**



she/her

Michelle Ng


I study the DNA inside cancer cells and how it is folded and organized in 3D space. I also look at what happens when viruses insert their DNA into human cells and how this can change the way our genes work.

Biotechnology 3




Cass Chowdhury she/her


Forensic science means using science to solve mysteries, like figuring out what happened at a crime scene, understanding accidents, or checking whether a signature or artwork is real. My area of work is forensic anthropology, where scientists study human bones to learn things like age, height, and other clues that help identify a person. Forensic science can also use DNA, fingerprints, chemistry, and even light to answer important questions. No matter what kind of science you enjoy, there's a way it can be used in forensic investigations!

MA Student, Lab Co-Supervisor and Outreach Coordinator for the SFU Centre for Forensic Research 

PhD Forensic Anthropology 

Assistant Instructor, Environmental Public Health Program 

BCIT

Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (C) Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) 

she/her

Jasmina Egeler

I work in environmental public health, which means helping keep communities safe and healthy. I previously worked as a Public Health Inspector, where I inspected restaurants, swimming pools, and personal service places, and helped investigate the spread of diseases. I now work at BCIT as an Assistant Instructor in the Environmental Public Health program, where I support students and faculty in this two-year program. My job is all about protecting public health and helping train the next generation of health professionals.

Biotechnology 4



Baishakhi Datta

she/her

I studied biology and microbiology in the UK and Germany. I've worked in science writing, project management, and teaching students how to do hands-on projects. Now I manage science projects with companies, using my science and communication skills. I love helping young people explore careers and learn the skills they need to succeed.

**Sr. Associate,
Alliance
Management**

Acuitas Therapeutics



**PhD Microbiology,
PMP**



PhD Candidate



BC Cancer Research Centre
UBC

**PhD Candidate in
Biomedical Engineering**

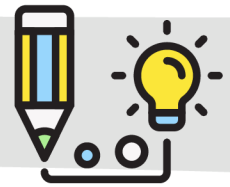


she/her

Laura Gonzalez

I am a biomedical engineering researcher with a background in biotechnology engineering, and I am currently completing my PhD. My research focuses on how blood and immune cells develop and change as we age, which can help scientists better understand diseases like leukemia. I also study how the immune system rebuilds itself after medical treatments. I love sharing science with others and take part in outreach programs where I teach about stem cells and biology. In the future, I hope to help advance research in aging and stem cell science.


Technology 1



Diana Judith Nunez Rodriguez she/her

Have you ever watched the behind-the-scenes of an animated movie and wondered how they go from that grey look to the colourful final look you see on your screen? My job consists of placing some lights on the scene and putting everyone else's work together to get to that cool look that everyone gets to see from the theatre screen. From design elements to VFX (special effects), my job is to make it all come together.

Lead Lighting and Compositing Artist

Mainframe Studios 

**BA in Communication Sciences
Diploma in VFX for TV and Film** 

Software Developer

 SAP

she/her

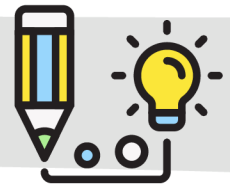
Vanessa Chow

I work at a software company on the iOS app team, making apps for iPhones and iPads. We create charts and graphs, and are upgrading our charting system. I also help write automated tests that check the app works correctly without having to test everything by hand, which saves time and keeps the app high-quality.

BSc Biology and Computer Science



Technology 2



Georgina Havelka she/her

I'm a Development Director at Electronic Arts (EA), helping teams do their best work by managing projects, budgets, and teamwork. I started as a game programmer, worked on basketball games, spent two years at a studio in Austria, and tried other game and movie projects. Now I help make tools that let artists create better game art, and I've learned that STEAM careers are rarely straight paths, and curiosity and teamwork are just as important as technical skills.


Senior
Development
Director

Electronic Arts 

BSc Computer
Science



Data Engineer

 Epic Games

she/her

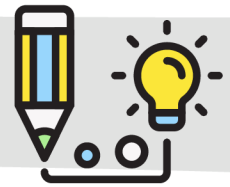
Yasmin Halwani

I design and build tools that help Fortnite creators see how players interact with their games. This helps creators understand what's working, what isn't, and how to make their Fortnite experiences better!

Master of Applied
Science, Electrical and
Computer Engineering



Technology 3




Eimear Crotty

she/her

I work on building technology and tools that animators and other artists use when making animated films. I also work with artists to solve technical issues that come up, so that they can continue to work.


Technical Director

Walt Disney
Animation Studios 

BSc Computer Science
MSc Computer
Animation and Visual
Effects



**Director of
Technology**

 Walt Disney
Animation Studios

MSc in Engineering,
Computer Graphics and
Game Technology



she/her

Megan Moore

I head the technology department at Disney Animation in Vancouver. My team builds and maintains the tools that artists use to create films, from drawing and modeling to animation and special effects. We work closely with artists to understand how they work, figure out what new features would help them, and design tools and workflows that let them create anything they can imagine.

Technology 4




Leanne Roed

she/her

I'm a game designer with a background in fine art. I studied game design at Vancouver Film School and have worked at many studios. I co-founded Séance Collective and now work as the interactive director on a funded prototype. I love using games and technology to create art and things that have cultural value.

Interactive Director

Séance Collective 

BA in Game Design



Environmental 1




Grace Leffall

she/her

I am an educator with the Vancouver School District and have been a member of the Moses Filter team for several years. I have supported multiple community-based events, working closely with students, families, and educators to foster engagement and empowerment through STEAM. I've also assisted with table activations during the Earth Matters Exhibition at Science World so we may have already met! As well as this, I am a Food Allergy Advocate who brings lived experience and care to the spaces I support. As a devoted mother and educator, I am deeply committed to advocating for girls in STEAM.

Moses Filter Advocate

Moses Filter Drain Team Inc. 

Sociology Degree



Curriculum Developer

 UBC Geering Up

BSc Natural Resource Conservation - with a specialization in science and management)



they/she/he

Sofia DiGiacomo

I write camp programs for UBC's Geering Up, a STEM and engineering program. I mainly create activities for general science and environmental camps, plus some biology and chemistry. After I finish my degree, I can earn certifications to work in the field as a biologist, forester, or arborist, doing research with governments, companies, and conservation groups.

Environmental 2



Kasia Gabinska


she/her

I have a background in Nature Interpretation and worked as a park interpreter for Metro Vancouver Regional Parks, leading fun and educational nature walks. I love helping people explore and learn about the outdoors while discovering how plants, animals, and ecosystems all work together. I also work at BC Hydro in contracts, helping make sure outside companies get paid so projects run smoothly.

**Service Contract
Administrator**

BC Hydro - Project Delivery 

**Environmental
Engineering in
Training**

 Thurber Engineering

**BASc in
Environmental
Engineering**



she/her **Mackenzie Common**

I work in environmental consulting and travel to sites all over BC. I help check soil, water, and air to see if a site is contaminated and figure out the next steps. I love problem-solving to discover a site's history, understand the geology, and help turn unused land into places where people can live, work, and play.

Environmental 3



Stephanie Yan

she/her

I'm a third-year Chemical and Biological Engineering student at UBC, passionate about engineering and helping the environment. I work at Metro Vancouver on the Coquitlam Lake Water Supply Program as a Project Research Assistant and recently helped power a rural school in Guatemala through a Humanitarian Engineering project with Change for Children.

Project Research Assistant

Metro Vancouver



BASc Chemical and Biological Engineering

2028

