



Science | Science
Atlantic | Atlantique

Annual Report

2024-2025

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Our Guiding Principles

Mission

To grow and connect the post-secondary science communities in Atlantic Canada.

Vision

Science Atlantic is a committed, member-driven organization that builds collaboration and partnerships to strengthen post-secondary science communities across the Atlantic region.

Values

Inclusiveness
Leadership
Responsiveness
Community
Sustainability

Executive Director's Message

In 2024–2025, Science Atlantic focused on strengthening the foundations that support our student conferences, our member relationships, and the wider Atlantic post-secondary STEM community. That work was guided by a simple goal: to keep building on what has always made Science Atlantic valuable: connection and collaboration.



One of the most significant achievements this year was the development of a conference-related Memorandum of Understanding with our Member Institutions. The MOU puts long-standing practice into writing, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and gives our student conferences stronger support for the future. To date, 12 MOUs have been signed by presidents, vice-presidents, and provosts - an extraordinary accomplishment!

As well, still fresh from our 60th anniversary in 2022, we considered how our multi-generational organization can stay connected with former students and faculty members who continue to care about student science in the region. Preliminary research is underway to assess the feasibility of an associate membership model for individuals and organizations that want to have a role in the Science Atlantic community.

As well, conversations about the organization's financial sustainability led to the formation of the Board Fundraising Committee. Supported by co-op students from Saint Mary's and St. Francis Xavier University, the committee has spent its first year identifying sponsorship opportunities and potential sponsors.

Above all, Science Atlantic is a member-driven organization. None of this work happens without students, conference organizers, volunteers, faculty representatives, deans, and other institutional leaders who give their time and expertise. Thank you for helping move this work forward and for continuing to support Science Atlantic!

I invite you to explore this report to learn more about these and other activities over the past year.

Lois Whitehead
Executive Director

Conferences and Awards

Student conferences are at the centre of what Science Atlantic does. They give student researchers an opportunity to present their work, meet peers and faculty from other institutions, and take part in a broader scientific community that can be difficult to access in a geographically dispersed region.

The 2024–2025 conference season was a strong one for Science Atlantic. Overall attendee satisfaction rates increased, and the organization saw growth in both attendance and the number of student presenters.

Science Atlantic extends sincere thanks to the faculty, staff, students, and volunteers who organized this year's conferences. Their hard work gave student researchers valuable opportunities to develop presentation skills, share their research, and connect with others in their fields.

2024-2025 Conferences

Science Atlantic Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science Conference (MSCS)

Acadia University

Organizers: Iain Beaton and Nathan Grieve

Atlantic Universities Geoscience Conference (AUGC)

Dalhousie University

Organizers: Alyssa Jones and Lexie Arnott

Atlantic Undergraduate Physics and Astronomy Conference (AUPAC)

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Organizer: Misha Evstigneev

Joint Biology and Applied Aquatic Sciences Conferences (BAAS)

Acadia University

Organizers: Russell Easy, Trevor Avery, and April Sharpe

Science Atlantic Environment Conference (SAEC)

Mount Allison University

Organizers: Joshua Kurek and Chris Kelly

Science Atlantic Nutrition and Foods Conference (SANFC)

Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus

and Mount Saint Vincent University

Organizers: Vasantha Rupasinghe, Shannan Grant, and Irene Ogada

Science Atlantic Psychology Conference

St. Thomas University

Organizers: Sandra Thomson and Sarah Vannier

Science Atlantic Chemistry Conference (ChemCon)

University of Prince Edward Island

Organizers: Tyler Taylor and Julia Larkin

Conferences and Awards

Student Awards

This year, 109 awards to top student presenters. These awards recognize excellence in science communication and outstanding contributions across a range of fields.

In addition to Undergraduate Research Awards and Science Communication Awards, students also received team awards, discipline-specific sponsored awards, travel grants, and publication opportunities. To learn more about the outstanding recipients of these awards, please review the [2024-2025 Student Awards Yearbook](#).

Science Atlantic is grateful to the many organizations whose sponsorship makes this recognition possible.



The Strategic Plan in Action

Science Atlantic's 2023–2028 Strategic Plan identifies two broad priorities: strengthening organizational capacity and connecting our communities. This year's work reflected both priorities, as we focused on sustainability, governance, member support, and opportunities for connection across disciplines and institutions.

Priority 1: Capacity Building

Strengthening Science Atlantic's organizational foundation remains essential to supporting our programs, services, and partnerships over the long term. During 2024–2025, this work included efforts related to funding, leadership support, governance, and internal systems.

Strengthening Partnerships: Conference Memorandum of Understanding

For more than 60 years, faculty and students at Member Institutions have hosted annual academic student conferences. In 2024–2025, these important events were strengthened through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by senior leaders at 12 Member Institutions.

The MOU clarifies the respective roles of host institutions, Deans and faculty representatives, conference organizers, and Science Atlantic in conference planning, finances, communications, and operational support. By putting established practice in writing, the MOU creates clearer expectations for everyone and provides a stronger foundation for quality conference delivery across the region.

Increasing Stable Funding

Science Atlantic continued to focus on long-term financial sustainability during the year. With support from the newly established Fundraising Committee, student employees developed a fundraising plan and sponsorship package to support outreach to organizations whose priorities align with our mission.

The Strategic Plan in Action

Priority 1: Capacity Building

Supporting Sustainable Leadership

This year, Science Atlantic continued work to support sustainable leadership at both the Board and Member Institution levels.

We focused on supporting Institutional Representatives (IRs), the senior leaders representing our 18 Member Institutions. Usually the Dean of Science or equivalent, the IRs are responsible for guiding Science Atlantic's direction and supporting their faculty and students participation in Science Atlantic. We centralized information for IRs in an online information hub, and updated roles and responsibilities through feedback to better reflect current expectations. We also launched the Deans' Community of Practice and developed a buddy system to connect new deans with those who are more established in their roles.

At the Board level, the Board Development Committee updated the Charter and created a Board Director Agreement to strengthen the Board's ability to oversee the organization in today's environment.

Bolstering Policies and Processes

To prepare for an associate membership category as discussed at the November 2024 Annual Leadership Meetings, the Governance and Policy Committee worked with a law student to determine the required steps for updating its Articles of Incorporation and by-laws and draft the required changes. A Notice of Motion for these amendments will be circulated prior to the November 2025 Annual Leadership Meetings.

On the operations side, staff have begun creating standard operating procedures to document internal processes and reduce the loss of institutional knowledge that can occur in a student-supported staffing model. A staff knowledge base has been established as a central repository for internal documentation.

The Strategic Plan in Action

Priority 2: Connecting our Communities

The second major priority in Science Atlantic's strategic plan focuses on facilitating connections across the post-secondary science communities in Atlantic Canada. During 2024–2025, this included work related to inclusion, membership, member engagement, and knowledge-sharing.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Also at the November 2024 Leadership Meetings, the NSERC Chairs for Inclusion in Science and Engineering spoke to Deans and Institutional Representatives about ways to advance inclusion in STEM tenure and promotion. Following that event, the Chairs also facilitated a Science Atlantic Sessions for All event for faculty on the same topic. At the Annual Members Meeting, attendees also heard from Girls STEM Up about its work to support girls pursuing STEM and to strengthen respect for women in STEM fields.

Discussion also began regarding revitalizing the Queer Atlantic STEM Colloquium (QAtCanSTEM) following the hiatus caused by the pandemic. Memorial University has volunteered to host the event in 2026-2027.

Membership Development

This past year, we discussed and refined our value proposition for Member Institutions. The result was a Member Benefits brief for Institutional Representatives to share with their senior leadership.

As previously mentioned, exploration of a second tier of membership is underway. For over 60 years, Science Atlantic's membership model has been institution-centred. Over the years, interest in membership has been expressed by individuals and non-academic institutions. The work of the Governance and Policy Committee this year to assess the feasibility of an associate membership program reflects our intentional effort to build new pathways for engagement and to diversify revenue.

The Strategic Plan in Action

Priority 2: Connecting our Communities

Member Engagement and Communications

Member engagement remained a key focus throughout the year. Summer staff developed a social media strategy to communicate more effectively with members and stakeholders, while also planning to revitalize the Hall of Fame and Service Pin programs to better recognize member contributions.

Science Atlantic also continued using its newsletter, The Science Atlantic Minute, to share conference details and celebrate student award winners, as well as promote events and opportunities coordinated by our members.

Speaker Tours

In partnership with other organizations, several Science Atlantic Divisions coordinate talks at Member Institutions each academic year. A benefit of the speaker tour program is the opportunity it provides for early-career researchers to build their profiles and share their work by speaking at schools across the region.

Highlights included the Atlantic Geoscience Society Speaker Tour and the Science Atlantic/CIC Maritime Chemistry Speaker Tour. Featured speakers included Celeste Cunningham, Michael Parsons, Marissa Clapson, and Huck Grover.



Financial Highlights

Financial Review

Please review [Grant Thornton's 2024–2025 financial review](#) for information.

Your Gift Matters

Donations to Science Atlantic help strengthen the post-secondary STEM community in Atlantic Canada by supporting student conferences and related opportunities. These experiences allow student researchers in a geographically dispersed region to connect with one another, share their work, and grow as emerging professionals.

“I had not been to a science conference before this year's Science Atlantic conference at Acadia. I had a great time meeting other undergraduate students and learning about other science in a non-classroom setting. I really see the value in this kind of event and appreciate the time and effort that went into organizing it.”

— Simon Lay, Biology Conference award recipient

Your generosity helps make experiences like this possible. Please consider making a [one time donation](#) or becoming a [monthly donor](#).

[Donate](#)

Governance and People

Member Institutions

Acadia University
Cape Breton University
Crandall University
Dalhousie University
Dalhousie University, Faculty of Agriculture
Memorial University
Grenfell Campus, Memorial University
Mount Allison University
Mount Saint Vincent University

Nova Scotia Community College
Université Sainte Anne
Saint Mary's University
St. Francis Xavier University
St. Thomas University
Université de Moncton
University of New Brunswick
University of New Brunswick, Saint John
University of Prince Edward Island

Board of Directors

Dale Keefe (Acting Chair Elect)
Charles Macdonald (Past Chair)
Steven Smith (Treasurer)
Alain Joseph (Institutional Representative)
Céline Surette (Institutional Representative)
Jennifer Tomes (Institutional Representative)
Deanne van Rooyen (Division Committee Representative)
Darien DeWolf (Division Committee Representative)

Angela Birt (Division Committee Representative)
Isaac Cook (Community Representative)
Nicholas Nickerson (Community Representative)
Svetlana Barkanova (Community Representative)
Carter Edward Clifton (Student Representative)

Staff and Employee Contributions

Science Atlantic is committed to providing opportunities for emerging professionals. With support from employment grants and partner organizations, Science Atlantic hires students, young professionals, and newcomers to Canada, helping them gain hands-on experience and develop skills for the future.

These team members contribute significantly to the organization's operations and special projects. Please help us thank the 2024–2025 team.

- Maria Mannette
- Mikayla Hanlon
- Day Mackay
- Jessica Trigo da Paz
- Jayme Sabarots
- Isabelle Ferdais
- Sabrina Sgambati
- Zarish Jawad
- Abigail Keeping

Stay Connected

One of Science Atlantic's goals this year was to reconnect with members and alumni. Follow Science Atlantic on social media and subscribe to the newsletter to stay informed about programs, events, and opportunities across the region.



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[X](#)



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