

Keynote Speaker Biography



Janet L. Branchaw is an Assistant Professor of Kinesiology in the School of Education and the Faculty Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Science Education and Community Engagement (WISCIENCE) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW–Madison). She earned her B.S. in Zoology from Iowa State University and her Ph.D. in Physiology with a focus on cellular neurophysiology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. After completing postdoctoral training and a lectureship in undergraduate and medical physiology at the UW–Madison’s School of Medicine, she joined the University’s then Center for Biology Education, which she now directs as WISCIENCE. Her research as a faculty member in the Department of Kinesiology and her programming work at the Institute focus on the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative approaches to undergraduate science education, with special emphasis on undergraduate research, assessment of student learning, and broadening participation in science.

Dr. Branchaw led development of the original and second edition of the Entering Research curriculum for undergraduate and graduate research trainees, as well as development and validation of the Entering Research Learning Assessment (ERLA). She co-developed the second edition of the Entering Mentoring curriculum to train the research mentors of undergraduate students in STEM and the adapted curriculum to train the mentors of graduate student researchers in the biomedical sciences. She has developed and directed Research Experience for Undergraduate (REU) and Undergraduate Research and Mentoring (URM) programs funded by the National Science Foundation and served as the Chairperson of the Biology REU Leadership Council. She served on the National Academies Consensus Study Committee that generated the “Undergraduate Research Experiences for STEM Students: Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities” report (2017), and served as the Associate Director of the National Institutes of Health’s National Research Mentoring Network’s (NRMN) Mentorship Training Core. Dr. Branchaw currently oversees Mentee Training Initiatives at the UW–Madison’s Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER) and is leading UW–Madison’s Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence project to catalyze institutional change to support 2- to 4-year STEM transfer students.