

S-IMEW 2019



SMASHED IT!

Top geoscience students from across Canada were given the educational opportunity of a lifetime this past May when they participated in PDAC's annual two-week Student-Industry Mineral Exploration Workshop (S-IMEW) in Sudbury.

The program, now in its 13th year, is widely respected throughout the industry for its unique ability to take students from the classroom and into a world-renowned geological region of northern Ontario. S-IMEW provides students with access to exploration, drill and underground mine sites, as well as geophysical surveys, a smelter, presentations by industry leaders, and professional networking opportunities.

For the sector, S-IMEW plays an even greater role. As a skills shortage threatens to hit mineral exploration and mining over the next decade, programs such as S-IMEW provide an avenue to showcase the exciting careers available for geoscience students. Many S-IMEW alumni have gone on to successful careers in Canada and around the world, with some coming full circle as volunteers to share their experiences with those coming up behind them.

All expenses for the workshop are covered thanks to the ongoing generosity of the sponsors, volunteers and PDAC.

BEN EATON

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA



Q

Why did you choose to study geology?

The combination of multidisciplinary science, real-world applicability, and the sense of adventure and excitement testing your hypothesis in the mountains. The range of magnitudes, timelines and disciplines that are relevant in geology has continuously captured my interest and fueled my desire to study geoscience. Finally, I may be biased, but I have found the fellow students, professors, and industry mentors to be a hilarious, knowledgeable, supportive and outstanding community.

Q

How would you describe S-IMEW to someone who isn't part of the minerals and mining industry?

S-IMEW brings together 26 aspiring geologists to learn field skills, understand economics and social responsibility related to a career in Canada's exploration industry. The workshop provides an opportunity for geoscience students across Canada to form connections with other students and industry mentors, share their respective expertise and knowledge with each other, and learn relevant applicable skills from industry experts.

Q

What was your favourite moment?

Exploration Mapping Day. We had been mapping a mineralized vein that required much bush-whacking and I got to experience my first Ontario swamp—a large two-foot-deep bog covered in a lovely foot of soft slush that came up to the mid-thigh. Once we all had fallen through twice we just went straight through it, and after an hour with half-frozen feet we broke out of the bush and came to our lunch spot, a beautiful old marble quarry in the sun to dry out our boots and practice our rock hammering skills.

Q

What was your favourite day?

I was fortunate enough to have my birthday during S-IMEW on the field trip to Val-d'Or and Noranda. It was a perfect day road tripping with new friends, stopping at various outcrops to learn about the regional geology and mining history, dinner with mentors and industry professionals, and my fellow attendees and I decided to take it one step further to round out the birthday at a microbrewery in Val-d'Or. Shout out to Krishana and Ian Trinder for the road trip's entertainment!

Q

What advice do you have for future students considering a degree in geology?

Attend as many conferences and networking opportunities as possible (have business cards/LinkedIn), and join a co-op and try to gain any relevant work or volunteer experience before you graduate. In terms of classes, use your electives for a minor that you enjoy and complements geoscience such as GIS, business, or computer science, and to work hard in mineralogy and petrography classes as they are the foundation to everything else in geoscience.

Q

What was the most valuable takeaway from S-IMEW?

Learning about the diversity of careers related to exploration and mining in Canada, and briefly getting to experience aspects of the careers through hands-on exercises, field trips and site visits. The workshop reinforced aspects of exploration I have been previously interested in and introduced new areas of interest I will pursue in the future.

Q

What effects do you think S-IMEW will have on your career?

The network of fellow attendees (now friends), mentors, and industry connections will be vital to finding new opportunities and support moving throughout my career. Additionally, the industry-applicable skills and knowledge gained throughout the workshop will provide a relevant and transferable foundation for future work in exploration and geology.

S-IMEW had a greater focus on community relations and environmental practices than the classroom as well.

Q

Was there a speaker who inspired you? If so, why?

Alan Coutts from Noront Resources at Dynamic Earth Welcome Reception was inspiring due both to his presentation and the audience of student attendees, organizers from Toronto, and industry professionals from Sudbury. Alan conveyed a palpable sense of excitement towards exploration that persisted throughout his years of experience, and an authentic commitment to social responsibility bringing the benefits of exploration in Canada to northern communities.

Q

How was your first experience going into an underground mine?

It made me far more willing to look at opportunities to work underground than I had been previously, and I was amazed at all the logistics and coordination a mine required. The two-plus-metre thick mineralized vein with massive bornite at Coleman mine was an added bonus.

Q

What did S-IMEW teach you that the classroom didn't?

The most appreciable difference between S-IMEW and university is the classroom is taught by professors teaching with a research focus, whereas the workshop is intensive and taught by industry experts about the relevant topics in exploration, economics, geophysics and social responsibility. S-IMEW had a greater focus on community relations and environmental practices than the classroom as well.

Q

Had you heard of S-IMEW prior to being nominated to it?

I had not heard of S-IMEW before the call for nominations at my university was announced. I will be encouraging other students to apply for the nomination for the years to come as the workshop has been one of my favourite and most beneficial experiences throughout my studies in geology. **c**

STEPHANIE WALMSLEY

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY



Q

Why did you choose to study geology?

I did not choose geology right out of high school. I first completed a business degree. After working for a few years, I decided to go back to school. I knew I wanted to do something in the science field, and I was fascinated by Earth history, earthquakes and mountains so I chose geology.

Q

How would you describe S-IMEW to someone who isn't part of the minerals and mining industry?

S-IMEW is a two-week gathering of high-achieving, upper-year geology students from universities around Canada. Over the course of the workshop, students are exposed to a wide variety of mineral exploration topics, learning in the classroom and through field trips. Industry professionals volunteer their time to teach and mentor students in their field of expertise. Students walk away from the S-IMEW experience with a broadened understanding of the Canadian mineral exploration industries ins and outs and perhaps a clearer plan for their future career.

Q

What was your favourite moment?

I enjoyed collecting some really interesting rocks on the underground mine tour.

Q
A

What was your favourite day?

I enjoyed the Glencore day, visiting the exploration drill rig and learning about grade estimation.

Q
A

What advice do you have for future students considering a degree in geology?

If you enjoy being outdoors, exploring and dealing with unexpected challenges, geology could be a great career choice. Geology offers variety in your day-to-day life and requires constant learning. It also allows you to combine another interest you may have into a career as a geochemist, geophysicist or an economic geologist, to name a few.

Q
A

What was the most valuable takeaway from S-IMEW?

One of the most common themes from speakers was the need to be flexible and take opportunities when they arise.

Q
A

What effects do you think S-IMEW will have on your career?

I believe S-IMEW will provide opportunities throughout my career, because of the relationships formed with industry professionals and S-IMEW alumni.



Q
A

How was your first experience going into an underground mine?

I have had the chance to go underground in my summer work, so it wasn't my first time. However, it was my first time in Canada and in a Ni-Cu mine, so it was very interesting to see the differences in the mine design, safety and geology.

Q
A

What did S-IMEW teach you that the classroom didn't?

S-IMEW opened my eyes to the wide range of career options in mineral exploration. I also learned a lot about how the industry operates, the role of juniors vs. majors, and the economics behind mineral exploration.

Q
A

Had you heard of S-IMEW prior to being nominated to it?

Yes, I was good friends with the previous Queen's S-IMEW attendee. My university also advertises the workshop in an email to all students and faculty, so I was aware of it in first year. **C**



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