

EDUCATION EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

SPOTLIGHT on Karen Costa



It was 28 years ago that Karen Costa joined Lakehead University, and 17 years ago when she became Administrative Officer in the Faculty of Education. Over the years she became known as the “go-to-person” in the Faculty, given her vast institutional knowledge, her numerous connections, and her incredible ability to get things done – smoothly, professionally, and always with a smile. A good friend to many and a phenomenal colleague to all, “Care Karen” will be very missed upon her retirement in December 2018. Here, she shares some memories of her time at the University and her plans for retirement.

28 Years at LU: Working Across Many Departments

“I’m often teased by people asking me, ‘where haven’t you worked at Lakehead?’ From my starting position at the front lines of the Registrar’s Office, to University Scheduling, to the Engineering, Geology, and Physics Departments, and then to the Bora Laskin building and Faculty of Education, I’ve had an amazing career where I’ve worked with so many people, in so many environments. And I have appreciated every level, and every style of person.

Working alongside the chairs, the deans, the professors, and everyone else, I think one of the things I’ve had to offer is the fact that I know how to get things done. A lot of times I’ll ask, ‘What’s

the end result you want?’ Because I know so many of the players and how things work around here. When you’ve walked the walk for so many years, you know the beat! Helping to manage the flow of projects, trouble-shoot details, and make things easier for others has always been a fun challenge for me.”

Reflections on 17 Years in the Faculty of Education

“My favourite part of the job has been the people. Everyone has a special quality and offers something unique, and I try to tap into those things.

It has also been amazing to see the growth of the Faculty of Education over the years, and the new developments. Some of the work initiatives that have stood out for me include the Humanities 101 program, the growth of our Indigenous programs, and the many developments in the Professional Development department.

My job has never been boring! I often say I’m in a position where I dance to every different type of tune – from country to rock ‘n roll to keeping the beat of whatever the tune of the moment might be. My main role in the Faculty is administrative, financial and academic management, but the specifics of it have always been changing with the policies, strategic plans, and transitions in programs. There was never a lull! I try to give everything that shine, that polish, and minimize upheaval for others when we go through changes.”

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Nicknames and Personality Traits

"I have a few nicknames: Care Karen, KC (and the Sunshine Band), Ms. Thunder Bay, and Ms. Lakehead University. I'm known for caring, for helping out. Although I'm a rule girl and a policy girl, I'm also a firm believer in being soft on people. I have a sign on my door that reads "Hard on rules, soft on people." You have to respect the rules to get things done, but you can deliver those rules in a soft way.

Another one of my personality traits is that I've always been able to stretch a dollar – my brother jokes that I still have the first dollar I earned as a 15-year-old! I set and met my retirement goal, and I'm retiring because I can."

Every Day an Adventure: Travel, Family, and Sports

"I look at every day as an adventure, and I work at doing something fun every day. My latest travel was in Punta Cana with my husband Mario. We enjoy traveling and have plans for several destinations to come, including Italy and Cuba. Up next we are travelling to California, and then taking a road trip to British Columbia. I have more than 100 relatives back in BC, so it will be a combined sight-seeing trip and visit with family.

Family is my biggest source of pride. I am blessed with my grown children living in Thunder Bay (including two stepdaughters). Mario has over 70 family members, including 10 siblings in Thunder Bay, so we're always hosting barbecues and big potlucks. We enjoy time spent with family and friends every chance we get.

We're also big supporters of Thunder Bay sports team – the Thunderwolves, Border Cats, the Chill, etc. – and enjoy year-round activities ourselves, like bike riding, swimming, skating, you name it."



Preparing for Retirement

"I prepare for everything, so it's no surprise that I'm preparing for retirement. I have a reflective notebook, and lists of people to call, things to do. And I plan to continue doing a lot of personal reflection, because that's part of my approach to life: I 'look into the mirror' and work to improve myself.

I'm happy to be leaving here on a high note, when I'm keen and full of zest in life. But it's an emotional time as well, as the people here are my family, too. Retirement will be a big transition, and I know I'll have to pace myself, and not spread myself too thin. I'm trying to learn how to shift down into second gear ... I've been living life in fifth gear most of the time!

My hopes and dreams are simply to enjoy my future into my retirement, and to continue to be physically and mentally active, joyful, outgoing and helpful to others. I'm very appreciative of the years I've worked at Lakehead, and I will continue to value the friendships I have into my retirement, along with giving praise and respect to Lakehead University for being the best place to work in Thunder Bay."

New Appointments



Dr. Gary Pluim

**Assistant Professor, Limited Term Appointment,
Orillia campus (2018-2021)**

Dr. Gary Pluim is a familiar face in the Faculty of Education, having taught for the Faculty for the past several years; with his new appointment he will continue his contributions to the Faculty programs. Here, Gary shared a bit about his research interests, teaching highlights, and life outside of the University.

“My research examines the intersections, opportunities and tensions between critical global citizenship education and education that is place-based, reflexive, and intensely local. As a result, I draw on scholarly areas of critical pedagogy, transformative education, citizenship learning, and education for democracy. A highlight of my teaching career was a course I taught last spring called “Histories of Indigenous-Settler Relations in Huronia.” This was a two-week, intensive experience during which every day we canoed, biked, and hiked through our region to learn, experientially, histories of and relations between the Ouendat, Anishnaabe, French, British, and other groups that originated or settled here. Other courses I have enjoyed teaching at Lakehead include “Global Citizenship Education,” “Democracy in the Era of Trump,” and “Outdoor, Experiential and Ecological Education.”

I really enjoy teaching in the Faculty of Education because we have a dedicated group of instructors, and a program that provides a crucial foundation for future teachers with a good number of interesting electives. In the professional year students tend to come to us with solid disciplinary backgrounds, diverse work and life experiences, and a strong desire to teach. This often makes for fascinating discussions in classes where we attempt to unravel important issues related to education.

A ‘fun fact’ about me is that I lived and worked in East Africa, the Canadian Arctic, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific over a six-year period. I currently live in Simcoe County with my wife, daughter and twin boys, where we enjoy cross-country skiing in the winter and canoe tripping in the summer.”



Clifford Mushquash

**Administrative Assistant, Indigenous Language
Teacher’s Diploma Program, Thunder Bay campus**

Welcome Clifford Mushquash, who brings over 10 years’ experience to the position as an administrative professional with a background in health care, homelessness, community mental health and addictions. Clifford, a member of Pays Plat First Nation, is currently completing an Honours Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology at Lakehead University. Here he shares a bit about himself and his impressions of his new role.

“The Aboriginal Education Department finds itself in a really exciting time where several opportunities of exploration and development are presenting themselves. The chance to be part of Indigenous language revitalization that draws on grassroots community development skills is what attracted me to this position. I enjoy working in an environment focused on supporting Indigenous students: I can help support students, and I can be supported as a student as well. I feel my Sociology background also assists in providing me with a deeper understanding of the systems and institutions surrounding the clients I come into contact with.

My previous employment has been centered around issues of homelessness and northern health care in Sioux Lookout. I have also been a Rotarian since 2009, first with the Rotary Club of Sioux Lookout where I served two terms as Club President, and now with the Rotary Club of Thunder Bay Lakehead where I’m currently serving as the President Elect. I am also a figure skating judge and evaluator for Skate Canada. I’m currently on the Board of Directors for the John Howard Society of Thunder Bay and District, and recently became a certified facilitator for the KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

I am the youngest child of three in my family. A ‘fun fact’ about me is that, in front of a sold-out crowd at the MTS Centre in Winnipeg while opening for Cher, Cyndi Lauper told me she loved me. The date was June 20, 2014.”

Karl Subban Presented with Alumni Honour Award

**Retired educator, author,
and speaker returned to
Faculty of Education for
Homecoming Event**



It so happened that Thunder Bay was where my dream was born, where I discovered my passion. My association with hockey is important, but it's my career as an educator that defines who I am as a person."

This quote, from Karl Subban's latest book, *How We Did It: The Subban Plan for Success in Hockey, School and Life*, speaks to Karl's career as an educator and his dedication to helping young people realize their potential and be the best they can be. And it was at Lakehead University's Faculty of Education that he began this journey, to fulfill his dream to teach.

Basketball was the sport that originally drew Karl to the University in the early 1980s, but it was his work with children at weekend and summer basketball clinics that put him onto teaching.

"Through these clinics I discovered something about myself: I loved working with children, and it seemed they loved working with me. There was something there that was connecting us, and it was a lot of fun. And that's when my basketball dream transformed into the dream to be a teacher," he explains. "After my bachelor of arts degree I enrolled in teacher's college, and that's how it started."

Last September, Karl returned to Thunder Bay to receive a 2018 Alumni Award, presented at the University's annual Homecoming Event. This award recognizes alumnae who have demonstrated distinction and outstanding achievement in their field, and whose reputation and achievements bring honour to the University.

Karl also visited the Faculty of Education during his time in Thunder Bay, and shared some of his inspiring perspectives on leadership, teaching, parenting, and helping others develop their potential.

Embracing the Challenge – and Calling – of Teaching

Reflecting on his 30+ years as a teacher and school principal in Toronto, working in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Karl stresses that teaching cannot just be a job: it must be a passion and a calling. Working with students who struggle, academically and socially, made him aware of the need to be a strong role model, and to inspire every student to believe in themselves.

"You are their idol," he explains of a teacher's role. "Students look up to you. They may not do a good job listening to you, but they do a fantastic job imitating you."

Karl began his career as a teacher, then moved into the role of principal in a Toronto middle school that, as he put it, had "suffered too many losing seasons." He aimed to cultivate in students, through his own attitude and ethic, pride in their school and in themselves.

This involved giving the school a "total facelift" – a fresh sign welcoming students into the school, new bulletin boards recognizing the achievements of former students, plants in the classrooms, and practices like the "see it, clean it" policy around



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Revisiting his roots at the University, Karl spent time with the Lakehead 2018 Men's Basketball Team.

Faculty of Education Dean, Dr. John O'Meara with Karl Subban at the Homecoming event last September.

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graffiti in the school. It also involved creating and implementing programs like DEAR – a “Drop Everything and Read” daily program, and the “Drive for 60” – an intervention program to address the reality that more than 60% of the school's students were achieving at a level below the provincial benchmark, and to engage these students academically.

“I encouraged students to set a goal, and the Drive for 60 intervention supported the adage of ‘learn more to earn more.’ Students would not only earn financially, but they would also earn self-esteem, confidence and happiness.”

Karl adds that when he refers to teaching as a calling, he means it literally: “Can you hear the voices of our children calling us? They want us to be there with them, to help them. Do you remember the Whitney Houston song, The Greatest Love of All? I think of those lyrics as they apply to teaching: *I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way, show them all the beauty they possess inside, give them a sense of pride...*”

“I have often said that your greatest gift is your potential – and your greatest gift to the world is the *development* of that potential. Students need to believe they have potential, and then they have to work hard to develop it.”

How We Did It Documents His Journey

Karl's latest book is a national bestseller that outlines his personal story, beginning in his original home of Jamaica and exploring his achievements as a father, educator, and coach.

Described as “a must-read account of one of hockey's most fascinating families,” his book combines warm, personal stories of the lessons he has learned about goal-setting, perseverance, and parenthood. He and his wife, Maria, have raised five accomplished children: their daughters Nastassia (Taz) and Natasha (Tasha) are teachers with the Toronto District School Board, and their sons — P.K., Malcolm and Jordan — have all been drafted to the NHL.

Karl draws parallels between the role of an educator and the role of a parent. “We're the director,” he explains. “We clear the way, then get out of the way. You can't give your kids any better.”

Karl also shared that he is working on another book, which will focus on “leadership, people skills, and people sense.”

“The working title of my new book is *Leadership ROCKS*, with ROCKS being an acronym for Relationships, Outcomes, Coaching, Knowledge, and Service,” he explains.

Given his proven ability to lead others, Karl's writing is sure to inspire future others, including future educators, to set a goal to achieve their potential.

“Being the best teacher I could be was my goal. Always ask yourself: how can I be better?”



Karl visited with teacher candidates and Contract Lecturer Don Napierala (right) in the Faculty of Education Thunder Bay library.

Faculty of Education Alumni Profiles *What Are They Doing Now?*



Jennifer Adams

**Director of Education,
Ottawa-Carleton District
School Board (retired
December 2018)**

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 1984 (Thunder Bay campus)

"I've enjoyed many wonderful opportunities during my career in education. I began my career at Lakehead Public Schools, teaching core French and then French immersion. It was a fascinating time as French immersion was growing very quickly in the province and core French was expanding as well. When I moved into the curriculum department, Lakehead Public Schools was starting to look at school improvement planning. It was a great opportunity to focus on student achievement and ask:

what are the kinds of instructional practices that have the biggest impact on learning in K-12 classrooms?

My experience as an elementary school principal in two Thunder Bay schools (Black Bay Road School – now closed, then Ogden Public School) was humbling. Working with students and families, some experiencing high levels of poverty, and seeing how the teachers focused on student achievement as well as student wellness, was inspiring. I witnessed a focus the province later adopted, concerning the interplay between student achievement and well-being – a piece we still spend lots of time thinking about, 30 years later.

I worked for a fabulous director, Marilyn Gouthro, who had a big impact on how I would view my role as a leader in future years. When I became a superintendent, I had a two-year-old daughter at home. I will always remember Marilyn telling me that she was dedicated to ensuring I could feel like a good mom while also playing an important role in the school district. That is something that stayed with me. Educators, by their nature, are hardworking and dedicated to their students. As leaders, how do we help them feel like they can continue to be good parents, while playing really important roles in the education system?

Coming to Ottawa, I moved into a large system with 70,000 students from diverse backgrounds. I worried that I would lose the tight sense of community that I had experienced in Lakehead Public Schools but that was not the case. Despite the differences, I learned there were far more commonalities. At the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, I'm most proud of the development of our

OCDSB Exit Outcomes: 10 characteristics and skills that we expect all students to be developing by the time they graduate from our district (i.e., being goal-oriented, resilient, globally aware, collaborative, innovative/creative, critical thinkers, academically diverse, digitally fluent, effective communicators, and ethical decision-makers). It's our vision for student learning. We believe these characteristics and skills will stand the test of time.

As I leave my role as Director of Education, I hope that our students, parents and staff are aware of the important role that public education plays in our country. The fact that 95% of Ontario school children attend publicly funded schools is very significant from an equity standpoint. School districts in Ontario have made incredible progress in improving outcomes for all students, including English language learners, students with special needs, and Indigenous students. When I speak internationally, I am constantly struck by how public education in Ontario is considered to be one of the bright lights of education systems worldwide. I am confident that our educators will ensure that this continues into the future because our students deserve our best."



Dr. William T. Smale

**Associate Professor, School of Education and
Professional Learning, Trent University**

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education Program, 1989; Master of Education Program, 1992 (Thunder Bay campus)

"My time at Lakehead University was a very positive experience. Many professors continue to stand out in my memory from my time as an undergraduate and graduate student, including Drs. Tony Bauer, Mary Clare Courtland, Juanita Epp, Moira McPherson, George Ozburn, Art Ponder, and Medhat Rahim. Today, as an Associate Professor at Trent

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University, I carry with me several of the approaches to teaching I experienced first-hand at Lakehead.

I came to Thunder Bay to complete my first degree in Physical Education, and it was then that I realized I was interested in teaching. I went on to complete my Bachelor of Education with Phys Ed and Geography as my intermediate-senior teachable subjects. I had a great practicum experience and, after graduating, moved to Iroquois Falls and taught young offenders for a year. I then returned to Lakehead University to complete my Master of Education degree in Educational Administration, before going back to my home town of Peterborough, Ontario for several more years of teaching.

My PhD degree was completed at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, and my previous work with young offenders informed my research focus (my PhD dissertation was entitled *Understanding the Issue of Dropouts: A Young Offender Perspective*). As a result of my doctoral research, I received the 2002 Canadian Policy Research Graduate Award. This award was created in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to celebrate researchers who contributed to public policy development. After teaching as a sessional instructor for a couple of years in Alberta, a job came up at Trent University. I was fortunate to join the faculty of the university in my home town, just as the Bachelor of Education program was about to start.

Throughout my career, a major focus of my teaching and research has been in the area of educational law, ethics, and professionalism. I enjoy working with students to understand issues surrounding teacher responsibilities in areas like social media, freedom of expression, search and seizure, negligence, and professional misconduct. I've also recently published an edited book in the field, entitled *Perspectives on Canadian Educational Law and Policy* (Word & Deed Publishing, 2018). The book is divided into three sections addressing topics related to K-12 education, fundamental freedoms and Charter rights, and contemporary legal issues surrounding higher education.

Teaching is a labour of love for me, and some of my career highlights have come from the teaching awards that I have won, including the Students' Union Award for Leadership in Undergraduate Teaching (SALUTE). The SALUTE teaching award is considered to be one of the most prestigious undergraduate teaching awards at the University of Alberta and is open to all faculty. To me this is not just a job; it's a passion, and I encourage my students to follow their passions as well. As Mark Twain noted, 'Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.'



Anna Lisa Martin

Instructional Strategist, Parlay Ideas

Long Term Occasional Teacher, Grades 4-5, York Region District School Board

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program, 2015 (Orillia campus)

"I'm thrilled to be working in a new role as Instructional Strategist with an edtech startup called **Parlay Ideas**. Parlay Ideas is a discussion tool used in classrooms to create meaningful, measurable and inclusive discussions. I'm helping teachers all over the world incorporate Parlay into their classrooms to foster high-level discussions.

I was drawn to this role because throughout my educational experiences, both as a student and a teacher, discussions have been one of my favourite activities. They can be insightful, engaging and educational. In the increasingly complex and contentious climate of our society, I believe discussions are the way that students of today will become the informed, engaged and empathetic problem-solvers of tomorrow. I hope that with Parlay, we can deliver to the need for these important discussions in our classrooms by teaching students how to talk about their ideas effectively.

For the past year and a half, I have also been working as a Long Term Occasional Teacher in the YRDSB, teaching Grades 4 and 5. Teaching continues to be a learning experience for me, especially as I moved from previously teaching Kindergarten classes, but I am thoroughly enjoying the challenge.

One of the most memorable experiences I took from Lakehead was my participation in the China practicum in 2015, after which I worked for two years at Maple Leaf Foreign Nationals School in Dalian, China, teaching Kindergarten. Working in China was an incredible experience of personal and professional growth. Often, I am at a loss for words when describing the experience, because it took me further beyond my comfort zone than I had ever imagined possible! Moving from the tight-knit community at Lakehead Orillia to a city of millions in China was quite a jump. While I immediately missed the friendships I had made in university (and the experience of attending university in general), I came to really appreciate that it is those growth experiences that push your thinking beyond the ordinary."

PhD Students: Awards and Accomplishments

Improving Palliative Care in First Nations Communities: Holly Prince Wins Award



PhD student Holly Prince is working to improve end-of-life care in First Nations communities.

As a Project Manager at the Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health at Lakehead University, Holly was awarded the first-ever “Innovator of the Year Award” at the 22nd International Congress on Palliative Care 2018 in Montreal, Quebec. Through a peer review process, six finalists were chosen from 51 nominees from 16 countries to compete.

This award recognizes individuals who have introduced change that contributes to the improvement

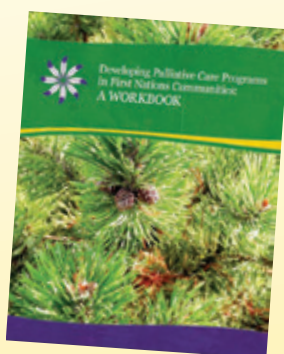
of hospice and palliative care in their community, country or beyond.

Holly, an Anishinabek woman from the Red Rock Indian Band, was selected to present “Developing Palliative Care for First Nations Communities: A Workbook.” The workbook is an educational document accompanied by 83 administrative and program development tools and resources.

“The workbook was developed by First Nations communities, for First Nations communities and outlines a process of developing community based palliative care programs in First Nations communities,” Holly explains.

This work is part of a five-year Aboriginal Health Intervention grant: “Improving End-of-Life Care in First Nations Communities: Generating a Theory of Change to Guide Program and Policy Development” that was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2010-2015). Holly was a Co-Investigator on this award-winning grant.

The workbook and associated tools and resources are available for free on the Improving End-of-Life for First Nations website: <http://eolfn.lakeheadu.ca/>.



Tamara Bernard Develops “Building our Bundles” Indigenous-Informed Learning Materials

PhD student Tamara Bernard, who is from Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay First Nation) and is a researcher at Ontario Native Women’s Association, has developed an education research project that allows learners to explore the lives of Anishinaabe ikwe (Ojibwe women) from the 1930s-2017.

“The purpose of the *Building Our Bundles* project is to create Indigenous-informed learning material for educators and students with a focus on Robinson Superior region,” she explains. “The overarching theme is re-stor(y)ing Indigenous womanhood by reclaiming our stories by honouring self-determined representations.”

Anishinaabe women from the region shared stories with Tamara over meals, phone conversations, sharing circles, ceremony, and letter writing. Their stories were then made available in four mediums: hardcopy children’s storybooks with Anishinaabe ikwe artistry, e-books, a digital storytelling series, and an interactive learning website. The materials make curricular connections to Grade 4-8 Science, Technology, Geography, Languages, Social Studies, and Arts and History.

“The project is an opportunity to expand on the wisdom of Indigenous grandmothers and women, and to disrupt and dismantle the racism and stereotypes placed on them within educational contexts, conversations, and pedagogies,” Tamara says.

The project was funded by the Ministry of Education through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action 62 and 63. It launched in November at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, where communities, educational institutions, and leaders were invited to meet the women and grandmothers of *Building our Bundles*.





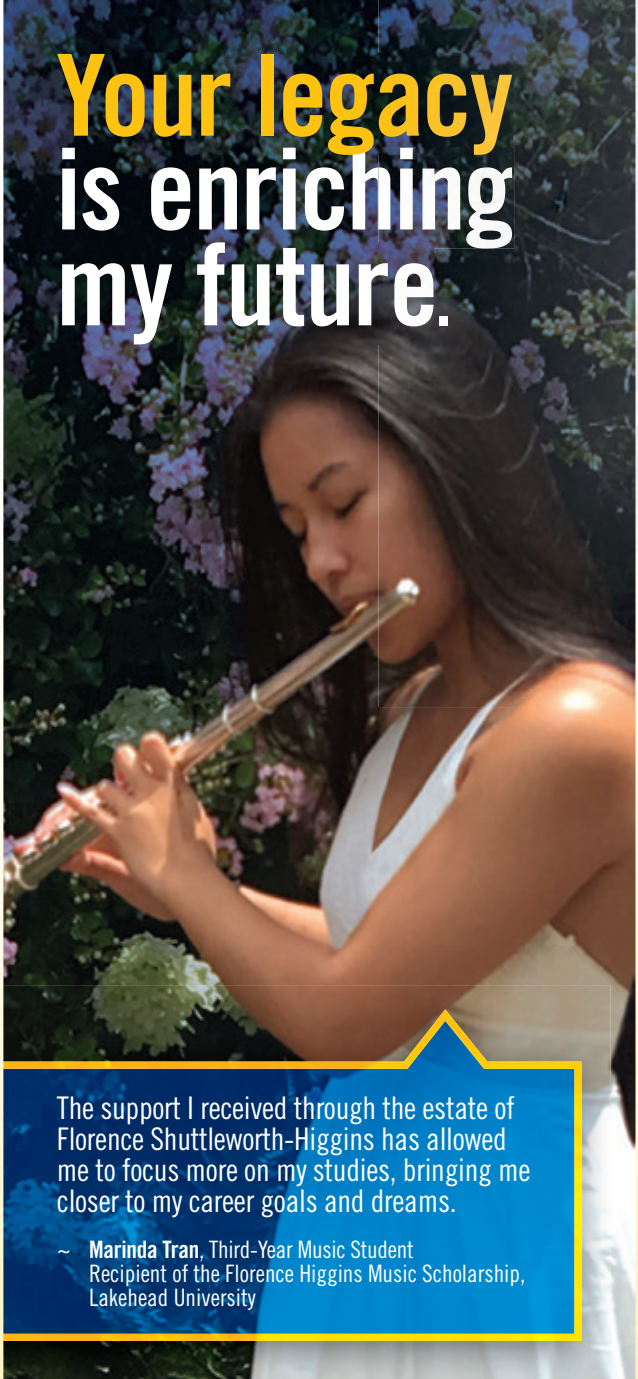
Dr. Pauline Sameshima and Co-Authors Publish *Parallaxic Praxis: Multimodal Interdisciplinary Pedagogical Research Design*

A new book published by Dr. Pauline Sameshima (Lakehead University Professor and Canada Research Chair in Arts Integrated Studies), co-authored by Dr. Patricia Maarhuis (Washington State University) and Dr. Sean Wiebe (University of Prince Edward Island), introduces the research model framework of “Parallaxic Praxis,” which draws on multi-perspective analyses, multi-model investigations, informal and directed dialogic conversations, and innovative knowledge creation.

Parallaxic Praxis: Multimodal Interdisciplinary Pedagogical Research Design (Vernon Press, 2019) outlines the extensive research possibilities of the framework for interdisciplinary partnerships, cross-sector collaborations, and scholars undertaking research projects in social justice, community engagement, teacher education, Indigenous research, and health and wellness.

The Parallaxic Praxis collaborative research model has been used in projects ranging from HIV research, interpersonal violence, mental health care, dementia studies, technology and inclusive education, knowledge generation, literacy, and more.

She explains that the framework relies on “difference, dialogue, and creativity,” and “draws on post-qualitative, new materiality, multiliteracies, and combinatorial, even juxtaposing theoretical frames” to mobilize knowledge to broad audiences. The methodology leverages the researchers’ personal strengths and the collective expertise of the team, including the participants and community when possible.



Your legacy is enriching my future.

The support I received through the estate of Florence Shuttleworth-Higgins has allowed me to focus more on my studies, bringing me closer to my career goals and dreams.

~ **Marinda Tran**, Third-Year Music Student
Recipient of the Florence Higgins Music Scholarship, Lakehead University



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Faculty of Education Graduates in Haida Gwaii



Ian Keir (BEd, 2007)

Haida Gwaii. In the language of the Haida, the grouping of islands off the northern coast of British Columbia – rich in old-grown rainforests, sandy white beaches, and ancient totem poles – means the “Islands of the People,” reflecting the traditional and unceded lands of the Haida nation. With a current population under 5,000, Haida Gwaii is also the land of sockeye salmon, killer whales, black bears, eagles, and deer, alongside a vibrant culture of food, arts, dance, music, carving, sea kayaking, surfing, and other old (and new) traditions.

This rich culture and natural beauty has drawn a number of Faculty of Education graduates to Haida Gwaii in recent years.

Among the six public schools in the region, five Lakehead graduates (Ian Keir, Russ Fleming, Ren D’Esterre, Jessica Marra, and James Warner) are working as educators, and another graduate, Ceitlynn Epnors, runs interpretive educational programming.

Ian Keir (BEd, 2007), Principal of Gudangaay Tlaats’gaa Naay Secondary School, says that Lakehead graduates make up a large part of this tiny district’s teaching staff.

“I think part of the reason Lakehead graduates gravitate to Haida Gwaii is because they’re comfortable with the idea of working in an Indigenous education context. I know that I personally credit a couple of Indigenous education courses I took at the University, and Dr. Seth Agbo’s “Teaching in an Isolated Community” course, for making me comfortable here, working in a school where the majority of our students are Haida kids,” he explains.

Ian was inspired to begin his career in Haida Gwaii after viewing pictures from a Lakehead Outdoor Recreation kayaking trip. Seeing breathtaking images of the archipelago and its whales and natural hot springs piqued his sense of adventure, so he and his partner made the journey west in a jam-packed Honda Civic. Upon arriving, he felt prepared to teach in the system, but had much to learn about Haida culture.

“As a teacher you want to master your content, but enacting place-based education in a place where you’ve never lived before requires being open and humble,” he explains. “I had much to learn. I needed to let the community teach me, the land teach me, and my students teach me as well.”

At the time of his arrival, he could not foresee that he would remain in Haida Gwaii for over a decade, but he is now in his 11th year living in the village of Masset, raising a family with his partner. Their son is in the public school system and is learning to speak the Haida language.

Other Lakehead graduates have also been in Haida Gwaii for over a decade. Ceitlynn Epnors and Russ Fleming (BEd, 2002) ventured to the islands in 2002, after completing Lakehead’s OE3 (Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education) program. The opportunity to secure their first teaching job in an experiential, independent elementary school, rooted in a deep respect for the planet and Haida culture, was too good to pass up.

Russ explains that “taking Dr. Puk’s OE3 program taught me about embracing the unknown, about life being a journey, and encouraged me to not be too scared to walk the road less travelled. These values led us here.”

Today, Russ and Ceitlynn are raising their children in Haida Gwaii and continuing to work in educational contexts: Russ teaches senior science, math, and humanities courses for Grades 9-12 at GidGalang Kuuyas Naay Secondary School, while Ceitlynn works in the field of interpretation and education for Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. She also teaches dance in the community.

“We were drawn here because we were looking for something off the beaten path,” Ceitlynn explains. “Previously I had worked in outdoor centres and the National Park system, and I absolutely loved the OE3 program and its connections to people, places, and community.”

Russ adds that life in Haida Gwaii is deeply relationship-based.

“There’s a real sense of community here, and watching the students grow up year after year is rewarding. My students and their families are also my neighbours, my friends, and my acquaintances around town. We depend on each other as islanders, which is meaningful and authentic.”

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Russ Fleming and Ceitlynn Epnors (BEd, 2002)

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Educational Programming Focuses on Land, Food and Culture

Land-based teaching is a key focus of the Haida educational system. A strong desire to preserve the culture, by teaching it to the next generation, sees students drawing on the rich resources of the land and learning traditional skills from community members like weaving, carving, wood-bending, and food preservation techniques.

Ren D'Esterre (BEd, 2018), who began teaching at Gudangaay Tlaats'gaa Naay Secondary School last fall, runs a foods program for Grades 8-12 students in which they cook and feed the entire school of approximately 95 students. She explains that the idea of sitting down and sharing food is central in Haida culture, and deeply connected to the land.

"We have numerous opportunities to include local foods in our daily menus: lots of salmon, halibut, and meats are donated from local farms. There are also lots of berries to harvest, and we have our own gardening class where we grow vegetables," she explains. "We also have days where we take groups of students to dig for clams and hunt for deer."

For Ren, along with Jessica Marra and her partner James Warner (two other Lakehead graduates who began their teaching careers in Haida Gwaii last fall) integrating into the islands' tight-knit community will take time and patience.

"The biggest highlight of teaching here – which is also probably the most challenging element – is that everybody knows everyone," Jessica explains. "You can go to any store in town and chances are there will be a student of yours, or a co-worker there. It's a very

"I encourage Lakehead graduates to consider Haida Gwaii if they are looking for an adventure and to gain teaching experience in a beautiful, and different setting. Come and explore one of the far corners of Canada – there is so much to learn, see and do here, including canoe trips, camping trips, sea kayaking, hiking, and winter surfing. But be careful. A lot of people move to Haida Gwaii for a year or a season, and end up staying a lifetime."

Ian Keir, BEd, 2007

close community, so I suspect the longer I am here, the more relationships I will be able to build."

Working as a supply teacher among a few schools, Jessica finds that small class sizes means she is able to get to know students individually and as families, as many students are related to each other.

Ian Keir adds that small classes sizes are just one of many draws of teaching in Haida Gwaii, and he encourages Lakehead graduates to consider teaching in the beautiful archipelago that has so much to offer.

Ren D'Esterre (BEd, 2018)



Dr. Jan Oakley Receives Contribution to Teaching Award

Dr. Jan Oakley (Contract Lecturer in the Bachelor of Education program, Master of Education program, and Women's Studies department) has received a Contribution to Teaching award for the 2017-2018 academic year. The Committee noted that Dr. Oakley provides a safe and active learning environment, and stimulates discussion that encourages deep reflection and growth in the areas of social justice and feminist pedagogy.

"This award is very meaningful to me, especially knowing the nomination came from my students," she says. "Teaching about social justice issues for the past decade has been a huge privilege, and I am continually seeking to refine my approaches and try out new ways to develop my toolkit as a facilitator. It's an honour to learn with and from my students, and to build relationships with them so we can meaningfully consider how we can make shifts toward an inclusive and equitable society."



Dr. Sonia Mastrangelo and Dr. Connie Russell Partners in Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care

Faculty of Education Professors Dr. Sonia Mastrangelo and Dr. Connie Russell are part of the newly created Provincial Centre of Excellence for Early Years and Child Care, led by Western University and the Ontario Reggio Association.

A three-year, \$2.25 million initiative funded by the Ministry of Education, the Centre is tasked with advancing early childhood pedagogies in Ontario and will promote calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and embrace the values of Ontario's pedagogical framework *How Does Learning Happen*, including the view of children as protagonists in their own lifeworlds with participatory rights and responsibilities.



Dr. Meredith Lovell-Johnston and Dr. Sonia Mastrangelo Win SSHRC Partnership Engage Grant

Congratulations to Dr. Meredith Lovell-Johnston and Dr. Sonia Mastrangelo, who were successful with their SSHRC Partnership Engage Grant, entitled "Enhancing Instruction in Literacy, Inquiry Based Kindergarten Classrooms."

As part of their research, they will observe and analyze child-led learning opportunities focused on inquiry and literacy in Simcoe County District School Board Kindergarten classrooms, and facilitate professional development focus group discussions with Kindergarten educators.

Their interest in Kindergarten pedagogy and practice will also help to strengthen the placement experiences of teacher candidates in the Bachelor of Education program by identifying needs expressed by Kindergarten educators – many of whom host teacher candidates in their school board.

