



# EDUCATION EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

## What's the Deal with Bullying? Dr. Gerald Walton Breaks Down a Persistent Social Problem

In November, Dr. Gerald Walton (Professor, Education) delivered a talk to the university community as part of the **President's Public Lecture Series**, titled "What's the deal with bullying? Stories from a target, scholar, and educator."

In his one-hour presentation—[available online](#)—he drew on decades of research and analysis, as well as lived experiences of bullying. He noted that while conversations about ending bullying are widespread—in schools, workplaces, and policy discussions—lasting change remains elusive. This reality, he explains, has led him to the difficult conclusion that bullying isn't going away. But rather than imagining it as a problem that can be solved, he stresses that we must confront it for what it reveals about society, culture, and power.

### A Societal Problem, Not Just a School Problem

Part of the needed shift in thinking about bullying involves recognizing it as a societal and political issue, rather than one that is school-based. While schools are often tasked with addressing bullying, the problem is a global phenomenon shaped by entrenched power relations.

Drawing on foundational research that defines bullying as behaviour that is repeated, intended to harm, and rooted in power imbalances, Gerald urged audiences to move beyond an over-simplified view of bullying as involving a trio of "bully," "victim," and "bystander." Instead, he encouraged deeper attention to the motivations, contexts, and support structures that shape bullying dynamics.

### Bullying Effects, Motivations and Rewards

Experiences of being bullied are linked to anxiety, loneliness, social alienation, depression, eating disorders, diminished self-esteem, and long-term psychological harm. What is less commonly understood, Gerald noted, are the motivations that drive bullying behaviour.

He challenged the familiar notion that bullies act out of low self-esteem. In many cases, he argued, feelings of arrogance and a sense of superiority offer a more accurate explanation. Research shows that bullying often brings social

rewards, including increased status and popularity among peers—especially in environments where dominance and toughness are valued.

Neuroscience adds another layer: the act of bullying is known to trigger a neurological rush, releasing endorphins and dopamine. These responses can reinforce the behaviour, making it feel rewarding. Taken together, these motivations position bullying as an exercise in power and a source of self-interested, entitled pleasure.

### Hope and Pathways Forward

Although bullying will not disappear, Gerald emphasized the importance of holding realistic hope—not as a distant promise, but as meaningful actions we can take now. He outlined some pathways:

- Create inclusive school cultures where students' diverse identities and experiences are welcomed. Children who experience bullying must be heard and reminded that bullying does not define them.
- Move away from simplistic labels and views of bullying; instead, focus on its motivations, impacts, and effective support structures.
- Develop a national framework, supported by adequate funding, to strengthen programs, including teacher education programs, to address bullying in up-to-date ways.
- Regulate social media platforms that profit from harmful online dynamics and provide a platform for bullying that extends into students' everyday moments beyond schools.

Gerald stressed that we are not powerless in the face of ongoing bullying. As he put it, "It's not about dreaming, it's about doing. It's about the struggle."

*Dr. Gerald Walton is a sociologist whose teaching, scholarship, and activism examine how privilege operates and how it can be leveraged to advance equity. He is known for his work and publications on gender, sexuality, and social justice.*

# Faculty Awards

## Dr. Hanna Wickstrom Awarded SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship

Congratulations to Dr. Hanna Wickstrom (Adjunct Faculty, Orillia), recipient of a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship for her project *Explicitly (un)systematic: How are teachers successfully integrating guided play with direct instruction to support academic learning in Ontario's kindergarten program?*

Supervised by Dr. Meridith Lovell-Johnston, Hanna's postdoctoral study examines how kindergarten educators balance play-based learning with direct instruction to support early literacy and numeracy. The project runs from May 2025 to April 2028, with a one-year maternity leave as she and her husband welcome their second child.

Hanna is conducting classroom-based research with kindergarten educators across Simcoe County, documenting how exemplary teachers integrate guided play with structured teaching in developmentally appropriate ways. Her work responds to two key developments shaping early childhood education: the *Right to Read Report*, which emphasizes explicit, systematic instruction in foundational reading skills, and Ontario's new kindergarten curriculum, which has a renewed focus on early literacy and math while maintaining play-based learning.

"Outcomes of this research will identify practical strategies teachers can use to help children build strong foundations in kindergarten by optimizing a middle ground that leverages the benefits of both guided play and direct instruction," Hanna explains.



Through observations, interviews, and collaborative reflection, she is exploring how play and explicit instruction can coexist to support academic learning while fostering children's joy, agency, and curiosity. Ultimately, she notes, finding this "middle ground" will help children build strong academic foundations while remaining confident, curious learners.

In October 2025, Hanna delivered a Lunch and Learn talk about kindergarten education, play-based learning, and her postdoc project. A recording of this talk is available [here](#).



## Brian Weishar Receives Contribution to Teaching Award

Brian Weishar, Contract Lecturer and Faculty Advisor at the Orillia campus, has been awarded a Contribution to Teaching Award for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Senate Teaching and Learning Committee commended Brian for his commitment to fostering a collaborative and student-centered learning environment. His emphasis on meaningful social interaction among students, along with his practice of actively seeking students' feedback, reflects a thoughtful and responsive approach to teaching. The Committee also highlighted Brian's dedication to regular communication—through D2L check-ins, direct conversations, and

instructional videos outlining teaching plans and offering advice—as further evidence of his proactive commitment to helping students succeed. His consistently high teaching scores further underscore this commitment.

"I certainly try to provide teacher candidates with learning experiences I think will be relevant to their own practice. It was very sweet of students to take the time to nominate me. It is such a gift to have the chance to work with teacher candidates—I learn a great deal from them."



## Mohit Dudeja Receives Teaching Innovation Award

Mohit Dudeja, PhD student and Contract Lecturer (Thunder Bay campus), has been honoured with a Teaching Innovation Award for the 2024-2025 academic year. The Senate Teaching and Learning Committee recognized Mohit's creative development and delivery of the graduate-level Activism in Education course, which blended theory with immersive, hands-on learning.

The course stood out for its dynamic mix of arts-based activities, outdoor experiential learning, multimedia, and imaginative exercises designed to create transformative learning experiences. A highlight noted by the

committee was Mohit's theatrical approach—most notably an in-class **play** on activism—which allowed the Master of Education students, many of whom are international students, to actively explore pressing issues in the Canadian context including gender equality, racism, and discrimination.

The award speaks to both the impact of the course and Mohit's dedication to innovative, student-centered teaching.

## Award-Winning Graduate Students

Congratulations to the following Master's and PhD students who have won SSHRC and OGS graduate scholarships for the 2025-2026 academic year.

### Canada Graduate Research Scholarship - Master's Program

**Kyra Min Poole**, MEd student, Education for Change program with specialization in Social Justice Studies

**Portfolio title and description:** *Giggles Echo in the Void* is an interdisciplinary portfolio project grounded in the exploration of critical comedic pedagogies in the age of neo-colonial climate catastrophe. This project seeks to investigate stand-up comedy as a dialogical reflection of hegemonic ways of being, knowing, learning, and revolutionizing.

**Rayanna (Ray) Santiago**, MEd student, Education for Change program with specialization in Environmental and Sustainability Education

**Research title:** *Educating for All: Developing an Ecofeminist Ethic of Care through Place-Based Pedagogies in Post-Secondary Education*



## Ontario Graduate Scholarship Winners

**Samantha Browne**, PhD student

**Research title and description:** *The Use of Semantic Cueing in Reading Comprehension*. This study examines how semantic cueing supports children's understanding of illustrations and aids their ability to use those cues to construct a coherent narrative.

**Will Burton**, PhD candidate and Lecturer, University of Winnipeg Faculty of Education

**Dissertation title:** *Reconstruction Site: Excavating and Elevating Place-Based Education in Metro-Winnipeg Teacher Practice*

**Jennifer Chesnut**, PhD student and Environmental Educator

**Research title:** *Exploring Pedagogical Strategies for Climate Anxiety Coping with Post-Secondary Educators*

**Jamie D.**, PhD candidate

**Research description:** This research explores the effects of neoliberalism on PhD students in Canadian universities.

**Marleine Gélinau**, PhD student

**Research title:** *Dropping Like Flies: The Impacts of Insect-Focused Education on Diversity in Entomology*

**Michael Lyngstad**, PhD Candidate; Contract Lecturer

**Research title and description:** *Vitality-Centred Education for Adulthood: Exploring Alumni Perspectives of the Influences of Springhouse School Experiences on Subjective Adulthood*. This research explores how alternative education experiences influence graduates' persistent, non-mainstream ideas about adulthood.

**Madison Phillips**, MEd student, Education for Change program with dual specialization in Social Justice Education and Environmental and Sustainability Education

**Research title:** *Environmental Education in Healthy Active Living Education Courses: A Justice-Oriented Resource for Ontario Secondary Educators*



# Congratulations to the Recipients of the RITE (Research in Teacher Education) Award

The annual RITE (Research in Teacher Education) awards support research projects relating to teacher education. This year, five applications were supported through the award, which is open to Faculty of Education graduate and undergraduate students, Contract Lecturers, and faculty alike.

The proposals were judged on their strength, their potential for seeding further research, and their likelihood of illuminating interesting questions in teacher education. Here are some details on this year's winning research projects.



## “From Pinned Insects to Insect Pins”

**Researcher: Marleine Gélneau (PhD Student and Project Lead); Dr. Connie Russell (PI/PhD supervisor).**

“My dissertation research seeks to understand how educators in schools, universities, and informal settings can integrate insect-focused learning into their environments to inspire diverse future entomologists and support insect conservation. In my RITE-funded study, I will invite BEd students to participate in an arts-based activity that offers an ethical alternative to traditional insect collecting. Using Ontario insect field guides, participants will choose a local species, observe its colours and patterns, and recreate these through

drawing on a prepared sheet. They will label their chosen insect and assemble their illustration into a button or “pin.” Participants can then group their pins by taxonomic category, creating a collective display that mirrors the learning processes involved in pinned insect collections—without causing harm to living insects.

This activity encourages thoughtful, ecologically grounded engagement with insects while avoiding the ethical tensions associated with killing specimens. It also models how educators can incorporate creative, conservation-minded approaches into their teaching.”



## “Artificial Intelligence and Education: The Status of Artificial Intelligence in Education in Ontario Schools - Part Two”

**Researchers: Darren Todd (Contract Lecturer and Project Lead, pictured left); Nicholas West (Phd student and Co-Investigator); and Dr. Meridith Lovell-Johnston (PI).**

“Over the past three years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has had a significant impact on education. In 2023, our research team (Dr. Meridith Lovell-Johnston, Darren Todd, and Nicholas West) conducted a province-wide survey of Ontario school boards to explore teachers’ knowledge and use of AI, as well as the level of support they felt they received from their boards. The findings showed that Kindergarten and Primary

teachers had very low rates of AI use, and that AI use increased as student age and grade level increased. At the time, few school boards across Canada had policies addressing the safe use of AI in classrooms, and teachers were seeking guidance and training. The team presented these findings at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education conference in June 2025.

These results now serve as a baseline for ongoing research. We are currently collecting data from a follow-up survey to track changes in AI use, support, and understanding among Ontario elementary teachers.”

## “Professional Noticing in Writing Instruction: Exploring How Teacher Candidates Analyze Children’s Writing in Year 1 Language Arts Classes”

**Co-Researchers:** Rosemary Renton (Contract Lecturer) and Deborah McCallum (Contract Lecturer); Dr. Meridith Lovell-Johnston (PI).

“Our study explores how teacher candidates collaboratively make sense of student writing by engaging with instructors, peers, and authentic writing samples. We are exploring whether a structured, participatory routine supports deeper and more purposeful analysis of student writing. By examining teacher candidates’ reflections, discussions, and reasoning processes, we seek to understand what they notice, how they interpret what they see, and how their thinking evolves over time.

This project responds to an enduring problem in teacher education: while candidates learn about developmental writing stages and literacy theory, they rarely have sustained opportunities to analyze authentic student work in ways that connect theory to practice. Using qualitative thematic analysis of three open-ended surveys (to be administered in September, January,



Deborah McCallum (left) and Rosemary Renton (right)

and March), we will track shifts in candidates’ noticing, reasoning, and confidence. Ultimately, the research aims to strengthen pedagogical judgment and assessment literacy of teacher candidates.”



## “Decolonizing Elementary Science: A Narrative Inquiry into the Incorporation of Indigenous Perspectives in Teacher Education”

**Researcher:** Donna M. E. Stewart (Contract Lecturer, PhD Student and Project Lead); Dr. Joan Chambers (PI)

“Non-Indigenous educators often want to build and address Indigenous perspectives into their teaching but may feel uncertain about how to do so appropriately. As a non-Indigenous PhD student, I have been welcomed into a community of scholars that encourages culturally relevant pedagogical practices.

My research aims to assess the status of incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into elementary science methods course instructors’ pedagogy. Through a series of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, I seek to deepen

understanding of how Indigenous perspectives are presently being incorporated.

Participants will include course instructors for EDUC 4033: Curriculum and Instruction in Science and Technology at the Primary/Junior level, across both campuses. Data from interviews and observations will be organized into themes that illuminate shared understandings and challenges. A narrative inquiry approach will guide interpretation of participants’ experiences. The study aims to contribute to ongoing conversations about decolonizing elementary science education and supporting meaningful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in teacher preparation.”





## “Seeds of Learning: Exploring the Potential Impacts of Community-Based Science Projects for Elementary Teacher Candidates”

**Researcher: Dr. Joan Chambers (Project Lead and PI) and Donna M.E. Stewart (PhD Student and Co-Investigator)**

“This pilot study investigates how participation in a community-based environmental stewardship project can support elementary

teacher candidates’ learning and emerging professional identity in science education. In partnership with the Lakehead Regional Conservation Authority (LRCA), an organization involved in native plant restoration, teacher candidates engage in an authentic science inquiry project. Working with seeds sustainably harvested from local native plants, they test seed viability, analyze and report findings to the LRCA, and reflect on the value of the experience.

Using a qualitative case study design, data will be gathered over one semester from participating students through a qualitative survey, reflective journals, and focus groups, and through interviews with LRCA partners. Thematic analysis will identify patterns related to teacher identity development, evolving understandings of science, and the role of community-connected learning in enriching science education. Insights from this pilot study will inform a larger grant proposal focused on community-engaged approaches to science teacher education, highlighting effective strategies for partnerships that promote eco-literacy and inquiry-based learning.”



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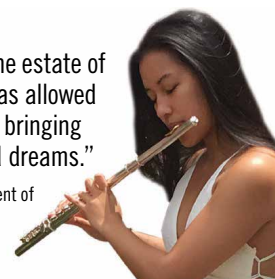
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“The support I received through the estate of Florence Shuttleworth-Higgins has allowed me to focus more on my studies, bringing me closer to my career goals and dreams.”

MARINDA TRAN, Bachelor of Arts, Recipient of the Florence Higgins Music Scholarship



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# Faculty News



Left: Dr. Melissa Twance speaks at the opening reception for *Aanikoobidoon II: Stringing Together Past, Present, and Future*.  
Right: Community members working together at *Aanikoobijiganag: Thunder Bay Beading Symposium*.

Photos © Patrick Chondon @chondonphotography. Courtesy of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

## Dr. Melissa Twance Co-Organizes *Aanikoobijiganag* Beading Symposium

For Dr. Melissa Twance, Canada Research Chair in Land Pedagogies and Indigenous Futurities, co-organizing the second annual *Aanikoobijiganag: Thunder Bay Art Gallery Beading Symposium* was an opportunity to showcase how beadwork, community, and education are deeply interconnected.

As a scholar and beadwork artist from Netmizaagamig Nishinaabeg (Pic Mobert First Nation), Melissa's work brings together land-based learning, Indigenous ways of knowing, and contemporary creative expression—an approach she describes as grounded in relationships.

"I think about education as something that doesn't just happen in schools," she says. "It's in the ways we learn from the land, from each other, and through our creative practices. These are ways of being and knowing that our communities have carried for generations."

### Beading as Collective Practice

Last October, these interconnections came to life through *Aanikoobijiganag: Thunder Bay Beading Symposium*, a four-day symposium in Thunder Bay that Melissa co-organized with local artists Jean Marshall and Leanna Marshall, and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

The symposium welcomed 50+ beaders, artists, curators, and educators from across Turtle Island, celebrating beadwork

as an artistic practice and a vital form of community-building. Workshops, artist talks, keynote sessions, and beading circles created spaces where participants nurtured their skills, shared stories, and connected with one another.

Along with co-organizing the symposium, Melissa also curated *Aanikoobidoon II: Stringing Together Past, Present, and Future*, an art exhibition featuring the work of 15 Anishinaabe and Métis artists. The theme of the exhibition was "Plants as Relatives."

"As Indigenous people, our creative practices are rooted in land," Melissa explains. "Plants feed us, heal us, and inspire us. They are living beings we have relationships with. Part of the exhibition asked: What does it mean to be Indigenous now and in the future, and how do our connections with the land and the beings around us guide that future?"

Beadwork is also a central piece of Melissa's research work. Her recently completed doctoral dissertation, *Futurities in Anishinaabe Arts Practices: Beading as Decolonial Praxis*, is testament to this, exploring how Indigenous creative practices can inform educational systems grounded in relationship, reciprocity, and care.

"Our art is not separate from how we live and learn," she says. "It connects us to culture and history, and its knowledge-making. Every piece of beadwork we create is a conversation with our ancestors and our descendants."





Dr. Connie Russell

## Dr. Connie Russell's Special Issue on Annette Gough's Scholarly Contributions Released

Dr. Connie Russell (Professor, Faculty of Education) recently edited a Special Issue of the top-ranked journal, *Environmental Education Research*. It focuses on Professor Emeritus Annette Gough's career retrospective book, *Gender and Environmental Education: Feminist and Other(ed) Perspectives. The Selected Works of Annette Gough* (Routledge).

Over the past 35 years, Dr. Gough, a Professor Emeritus (RMIT University, Australia), has made significant contributions to environmental education. This Special Issue was an opportunity to assess, applaud, and augment her body of work. The issue consists of an

editorial, eight response papers by an international group of highly respected scholars, and two papers by Dr. Gough—one a summary of her book and the other her reflection on the responses. The issue highlights topics, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches that have been, and in some cases continue to be, marginalized in environmental education scholarship and identifies future research directions and strategies for countering erasures, revealing silences, and broadening horizons in the field.

The full issue is available [here](#).



Jean Engholm

## Honouring the Legacy of Jean Engholm: A Dedicated Supporter of Indigenous Education

It is with sadness that we share the passing of Jean Engholm in September 2025, at the age of 93.

The Faculty extends its sincere gratitude for Jean's enduring commitment to the Faculty and its mission. Jean's generous support and belief in the transformative power of education have left a lasting legacy at Lakehead—particularly in her support of Keewatinase Indigenous Education and advancing Indigenous education.

Through her contributions, Jean helped strengthen Keewatinase's capacity to carry forward its commitments to revitalizing Indigenous programming and responding meaningfully to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Her support reflected a deep respect for inclusive, community-based learning and a commitment to reconciliation. The Faculty is deeply grateful for her vision and generosity.

As noted in her [obituary](#), Jean's connection to Lakehead University extended beyond philanthropy. A lifelong learner, she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Lakehead in 1984, pursuing higher education later in life as part of her enduring intellectual curiosity.

Jean was born near Manchester, England, in 1932. She trained as a nurse at age 17 and later served as Nursing Sister in charge of Student Health Services at Makerere University College in Uganda. Though she did not practise nursing in Ontario, her career spanned a remarkable range of roles—from bookkeeper and research assistant to conference coordinator and volunteer.

Her volunteerism was inspiring. From assisting with evacuated children during WWII as a Red Cross Cadet, to supporting Save the Children in Uganda and Canada, and advocating for individuals with developmental challenges through Community Living Thunder Bay, Jean dedicated her life to helping others. In her later years, as she faced the challenge of vision loss and became deeply involved with the CNIB, continuing her lifelong example of community engagement.

The Faculty of Education remembers Jean Engholm with deep appreciation for her generosity, her spirit of service, and her lasting impact on education and reconciliation.





## Julie Bremner Joins the One Ocean Expedition as Student Researcher

Last August, Lakehead PhD student Julie Bremner embarked on a rare opportunity: three weeks aboard the Statsraad Lehmkuhl, a Norwegian tall ship (pictured right) at the centre of the One Ocean Expedition. With more than 140 crew members including graduate students, researchers, and Arctic leaders, the voyage focused on ocean sustainability and interdisciplinary learning on a 100-year-old vessel retrofitted with modern scientific equipment.

The ship departed Greenland with permits to sail through the Northwest Passage, but Arctic ice forced a change in plans. Icebergs were clogging the channel and the risk of hull damage made the passage unsafe, so the vessel was redirected south to St. John's, Newfoundland.

Despite the shortened route, the journey proved intense and transformative. Sailing the century-old ship was both exhilarating and demanding, Julie explains.

"The ship has five masts and a huge array of sails, and no mechanical winches. Everything is raised by human power. We were divided into watch groups of about 25 people, and spent eight hours a day on watch, hauling ropes, raising sails, and manning posts."

While powered primarily by wind, the ship continuously collected environmental data, monitoring temperature, salinity, microplastics, and marine life to inspire action for a sustainable ocean.

### Exploring the Arctic Through a Decolonizing Lens

For Julie, whose background spans outdoor education, wilderness leadership, and experiential learning, the voyage aligned with questions she has been exploring over the past decade.

"In 2016, some friends and I paddled the western section of the Northwest Passage," she recalls. "In



preparing for this trip, I came to realize the lore of the Arctic is steeped in colonialism and the experiences of white men. This pushed me to interrogate the colonial foundations of outdoor education and northern expedition culture."

Her academic and professional path—including a master's degree in Global Leadership—strengthened her decolonizing lens and now converges in her PhD research, where she is examining how settlers in outdoor education understand colonialism and integrate decolonial perspectives into their practice.

"In Arctic research, settlers cannot treat the North as a place to extract from, whether that's knowledge, data, or experience," she says. "Research must be guided by the priorities of the people living in the North."

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Left Photo: An iceberg in North Baffin Bay  
Right: Crew unfurling the sails

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### Integrating Indigenous Knowledge at Sea

The voyage brought graduate students from diverse disciplines together for place-based study, with daily classes on topics such as the law of the seas, sea-ice mapping, Arctic ecology, and climate futures. Indigenous knowledge holders played a central role, often opening or closing sessions.

“A Sámi Elder and a young Inuk woman from Greenland often framed the lectures,” Julie says. “They pushed back on colonial assumptions embedded in the scientific material. Their voices became a through-line of the journey.”

She recalls one moment during a lecture on invertebrates and taxonomy: “Someone questioned taxonomy as a colonial

practice. The speaker hadn’t considered that before, and the conversation that followed was a great example of learning shaped by Indigenous perspectives.”

Throughout the voyage, Julie reflected on her research and the meaningful role settlers can play in supporting Indigenous-led work. Now back home in Nelson, BC, she carries new insights and clarity. The One Ocean Expedition, she says, offered a vivid reminder of the responsibility settler researchers carry in the Arctic, where climate, culture, and Indigenous knowledge are deeply intertwined.

### Keith Ailey Named OAEA Post-Secondary Art Educator of the Year

Congratulations to Keith Ailey (Contract Lecturer, Thunder Bay), who has been named Post-Secondary Art Educator of the Year by the Ontario Art Education Association (OAEA).

Keith—an instructor of I/S and P/J Curriculum & Instruction in Visual Arts and a long-time Thunder Bay high school art teacher—will be formally celebrated at an online awards event in February 2026.

As noted by the OAEA adjudicators, “Keith exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding teacher who inspires and nurtures creativity, confidence, and excellence in his students. His distinguished career and exceptional contributions to art education at Lakehead Public Schools and his contributions at Lakehead University stand as an inspiring example celebrated by this award.”

This honour recognizes educators who demonstrate exceptional commitment to fostering creativity, critical thinking, and artistic skill in all learners.

Reflecting on the award, Keith shared: “I strongly believe that being an educator is the greatest job in the world. I am honoured and humbled with this award, but more importantly I am inspired to continue improving and refining my work in education. I strive to continuously explore new methods of



instruction, assessment and classroom management, and I am always excited to share these with teacher candidates.”

Keith is widely recognized for creating engaging, inclusive, and empowering learning environments. Lakehead Teacher Candidate Gabrielle Rattray notes: “The dedication, effort, and passion he invests in his students is immediately apparent... Thanks to Keith, I now feel far more confident and prepared to step into a classroom of my own.”

# Alumni Profiles

## Parinaz Gharooni Beigi

### Early Childhood Educator

Graduate of the Master of Education program (2024)

“When I moved to Thunder Bay to begin my Master of Education, I had no idea what to expect. I was stepping into a completely new city and chapter of my life. Looking back now, choosing Lakehead was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. It opened doors for me, introduced me to incredible people, and gave me memories that I truly cherish.

After graduating in 2024, I began working as an Early Childhood Educator with the Thunder Bay Public School Board. Transitioning from graduate student to educator felt like a meaningful milestone—it was fulfilling to take everything I had learned and bring it into a classroom with young learners. By the end of the school year in June, I moved to Toronto and continued my journey as an Early Childhood Educator with the Toronto Public School Board. Each step has strengthened my passion for the field and reminded me why I chose education in the first place.

Starting my journey in Thunder Bay was both exciting and challenging, but it quickly became a place where I felt supported and encouraged. My time there wasn’t just about academic learning; it was a time of genuine personal growth. I discovered my strengths, explored my passions, and learned

how deeply I care about making a positive impact in education.

What surprised me most was how naturally I fell in love with early childhood education. Although my background in Iran and even my early graduate focus pointed toward different career paths, life seems to have a way of bringing you exactly where you’re meant to be. Working with young children brings joy, curiosity, and meaning into my days. I feel lucky to play even a small part in their journey.

My graduate experience also sparked a lasting passion for research and higher learning. I see a PhD in my future, as a way to continue contributing to the field and supporting the next generation of learners.

To anyone beginning or continuing their studies: embrace every moment. Connect with your professors, build relationships, explore new ideas, and don’t be afraid to take leaps—even into places or paths that feel unfamiliar at first. Sometimes, the unexpected path becomes the most meaningful one.”



## Paul DeVuono

### Principal, Notre Dame Catholic School, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

Graduate of the Bachelor of Education program (2006)

“Every single day in my role brings with it a vibrant experience. I find profound joy and satisfaction in the opportunity to learn

and collaborate alongside incredible teachers, dedicated educators, essential support staff, bright students, supportive families, and valuable community partners. While leading a school community inevitably presents its share of new challenges—whether they relate to curriculum, student needs, or daily operations—these obstacles are consistently met with remarkable ingenuity and innovation from our team. This shared commitment ensures that we continuously adapt and implement effective strategies to foster student success and achievement.

My years spent at Lakehead University, from 2001 to 2006, truly stand out as some of the best years of my life. That period was particularly dynamic for the university. It was an era marked by significant growth and development, including the grand opening of the ATAC building, the establishment of the Northern Ontario Medical School (NOSM), exciting

educational partnerships with the newly constructed Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, and a welcome surge in enrollment across both the concurrent education and teachers’ college programs within the Faculty of Education. These foundational experiences solidified my passion for this field.

To every aspiring and current teacher and educator currently studying in the halls of education, I want to offer my strongest endorsement for the path you have chosen! I can state without reservation: you will find no other vocation or career journey that offers such a powerful blend of fulfillment. This sector promises not only profound joy and lasting happiness derived from student breakthroughs but also the intellectual challenge necessary to constantly stretch your thinking.

The education sector is more than a career. It is a gateway that opens countless pathways and possibilities, not just within the classroom but extending into administration, policy, curriculum design, and beyond. Remember that Lakehead University is extremely well respected for the dedicated and outstanding professionals it forms and sends out into the world. Carry that legacy forward!

My family and I have made our home in the Saugeen Shores area of majestic Bruce County. I deeply value our proximity to the water; spending time on the beach along the shores of Lake Huron, enjoying a round of golfing, and taking vacations back to my hometown of Sault Ste. Marie are cherished pastimes. Northern Ontario continues to hold a unique place in my heart. Exploring the Lake Superior basin through fishing, hunting, and simply enjoying the rugged outdoors brings my family and me an unparalleled sense of serenity and peace.”



# New Faces in the Faculty

The Faculty warmly welcomes the following three individuals—each a proud Lakehead alumnus.

## Lydia McCormack

**Administrative Assistant to the Chair of Keewatinase - Indigenous Education (Thunder Bay campus)**

"I support the Keewatinase team by keeping the many moving pieces of our department organized and cared for. Together with my colleague Melissa Oskineegish, I handle scheduling, communication, task tracking, and student support to keep our operational, program, and project work flowing smoothly.

I love to help, and this role allows me to do so in many ways. It is a joy to contribute to such meaningful programming, and

I aim to make the day of anyone I assist lighter and brighter.

I graduated from Lakehead University in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Geography, where I focused on the cultural aspects of the field. Over the past six years, I worked in IT roles at Indigo Books & Music Inc. and Sheridan College in the GTA.

It's an honour to return to Lakehead and contribute my experience to the university that helped shape my journey."



## Susan Dohan

**Placement Officer, Undergraduate Studies in Education (Thunder Bay campus)**

"My role includes extensive outreach to provincial school boards across Ontario to carefully match and place each Teacher Candidate for their practicums. I work closely with Practicum Experience Coordinators Glenn Cunningham (Primary/Junior) and Mike Filipetti (Intermediate/Senior). Together, we placed nearly 400 students on their placements in Fall 2025!

As Placement Officer, I also collaborate with the Placement Team at our Orillia campus and had the pleasure of visiting them—and the campus—in September. In addition, I also work closely with the Scheduling and

Administration Assistant Amanda Kloepper in Thunder Bay.

I started this position in September and have enjoyed meeting Teacher Candidates and assigning them to placements, which is a significant part of their professional development as teachers. As a former teacher and graduate of this program, I find it a rewarding employment opportunity and appreciate that no two days are ever the same.

Outside of work, my family enjoys recreating across the seasons with hiking at Sibley Provincial Park or downhill skiing at Loch Lomond."

## Heather Moynihan

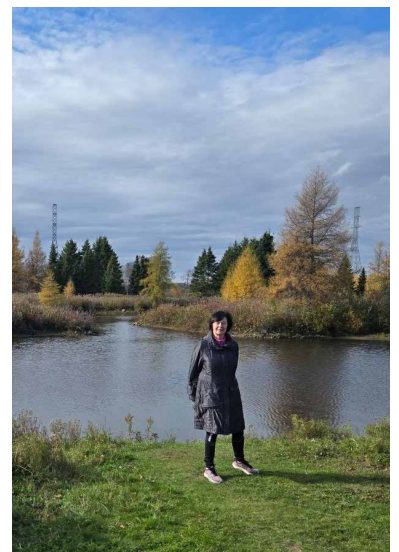
**Undergraduate Programs Administrator, Undergraduate Studies in Education (Thunder Bay campus)**

"As the Undergraduate Programs Administrator, I support student advising and success, the administration of undergraduate programs, and reporting to the Ontario College of Teachers. I'm also involved in program promotion and public relations. I look forward to meeting our BEd Concurrent and Consecutive students and helping them thrive throughout their studies.

I am a proud Lakehead alumnus. After completing degrees in Physics, I earned my BEd in Intermediate/Senior Physics and Mathematics—training that served me well through many years of post-

secondary teaching. I previously taught university Physics and Engineering Physics in the University Studies Department at Keyano College in Alberta. Upon returning to Lakehead, I joined the Faculty of Engineering as an Instructor and Acting Coordinator with the Native Access Program for Engineering (NAPE), later moving into the roles of Administrative Officer and Academic Manager. Throughout these positions, I've continued to enjoy teaching Physics and Engineering courses each year.

Outside of work, I enjoy kayaking, cross-country skiing, and teaching Physics as a hobby."



## Faculty of Education Committee Updates

In 2022, the Faculty of Education established three committees: the Contract Lecturer Advisory Committee, the Environmental and Sustainability Committee, and the EDID Committee. That same year, the *Flourishing as a Faculty* document was published, outlining core values of the Faculty including sustainability, human dignity, and the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and empowerment.

Guided by these values, the Faculty is committed to fostering flourishing within the community and in our relationships with the wider world. The committees help advance this vision; brief updates follow.



### Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID) Committee

**Chair: Dr. Wayne Melville (Dean, Faculty of Education)**

Over the past year, the EDID Committee has continued its work on developing a policy document that affirms the Faculty as a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful community. The first draft of this policy was shared with a range of external reviewers, including equity officers in school boards in the areas that we serve, professional bodies, and across the university.

The feedback was largely positive but also constructive—reviewers noted that some statements appeared performative and lacked the intention to make a quantifiable difference in people's lives. We are grateful to the reviewers for their thoughtful insights. In response, and under the leadership of Acting Dean Tanya Kaefer, the Committee revised the document to include measurable outcomes and to clearly articulate both short- and long-term objectives.

This phase is complete, and the second draft has been circulated for further review. After receiving feedback, the Committee will finalize the policy and present it to Faculty Council for ratification—after which the important work of implementation will begin.

### Contract Lecturer Advisory Committee

**Chair: Brett Tomlinson (Contract Lecturer, Orillia)**

The Contract Lecturer Advisory Committee aims to strengthen the participation of contract lecturers in the governance of the faculty, respond to concerns of contract lecturers, and strengthen communications between contract lecturers and faculty administration.

Over the past two years, the committee has been engaged with a survey that explored the experiences of contract lecturers working in the Faculty of Education across both campuses. The survey revealed several areas that contract lecturers identified as positives as well as some challenges (see our [September 2025 newsletter](#), page 3). The survey results were shared with the Dean of Education and all faculty. The committee is currently working with administration to develop an action plan to address challenges raised in the survey.

Contract lecturers are invited to contact the committee at any time with questions or concerns. The committee also invites contract lecturers working in the Faculty to explore the “[Contract Lecturer Info Central \(CLIC\)](#)” resource, a one-stop shop of online information for contract lecturers that includes relevant policies, processes, forms, handbooks, templates, bylaws, Academic and Strategic Plans, calendars, and more.

### Environmental and Sustainability Committee

**Chair: Dr. Ellen Field (Associate Professor, Orillia)**

Last fall, the Environmental and Sustainability Committee released the *Environmental Flourishing and Climate Action Plan: In the Faculty and Beyond*, which was developed in response to urgent calls for action amid accelerating climate change and related global challenges. Since the Plan's publication, the committee has mapped out priority actions for the year ahead:

- updating the Contract Lecturer Info Central (CLIC) document to include guidance on planning environmentally responsible field trips;
- hosting an Environmental Education *Lunch & Learn* session in March focused on effective teaching strategies;
- developing an Environmental Education research hub for the Faculty of Education website;
- contributing to the ongoing BEd program review; and,
- strengthening partnerships with community organizations and identifying environmentally focused associate teachers

The committee—a dedicated group of 10 members—continues to work enthusiastically on advancing environmental flourishing within and beyond the Faculty.