

## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC AWARDS, 2018

(EDMONTON) – The Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), the provincial organization representing academic staff associations at the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary, and Athabasca University, is pleased to announce the recipients of the CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards for 2018.

The CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards recognize academic staff members at Alberta's four research universities, who through their research and/or other scholarly, creative or professional activities have made an outstanding contribution to the wider community beyond the university.

The recipient of the **2018 CAFA Distinguished Academic Award** is **Dr. André Grace**, Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Canada Research Chair in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies at the University of Alberta, in recognition of his influential work linking research to advocacy and outreach on behalf of sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth.

**Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt**, Associate Professor in the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, has been chosen to receive the **2018 CAFA Distinguished Academic Early Career Award** in recognition of her leadership in developing community-based teaching and learning strategies designed to further meaningful reconciliation between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.

“Through the annual CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards the academic staff associations of Alberta's four research-intensive universities celebrate the significant contributions made by their members, through research, scholarly, and creative activities, to the community beyond the academy,” notes Dr. Mary-Ellen Tyler, President of CAFA. “On behalf of CAFA, I extend hearty congratulations to Dr. André Grace and Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt, the thoroughly deserving recipients of our 2018 awards.”

The 2018 CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards will be presented at a banquet at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, on **Thursday, September 13, 2018**.

**For further information on the work of this year's Award recipients, please see the attached backgrounders.**

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**BACKGROUND**  
**CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC AWARD 2018**  
**DR. ANDRÉ GRACE**

Dr. André Grace, Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Canada Research Chair in Sexual and Gender Minority Studies (Tier 1) at the University of Alberta, has been chosen to receive the **2018 CAFA Distinguished Academic Award**. The award recognizes Dr. Grace's outstanding contributions to the wider community beyond the academy through his influential work linking research to advocacy and outreach on behalf of sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth.

Dr. Grace has established a well-deserved reputation both for the quality of his scholarship, as evidenced by an extensive list of publications, research grants and awards, and for his public role as a tireless proponent of research-based policy-making and proactive intervention to address the challenges facing SGM (or LGBTQ+) youth in education, social services, and healthcare.

In the course of his academic career, Dr. Grace has broken new ground by opening spaces for innovative, interdisciplinary research exploring sexual orientation and gender identities in relation to the individual development, socialization, safety, health and wellbeing of SGM youth. A keynote of Dr. Grace's research is its focus on the personal assets, strengths and competencies (rather than deficiencies) of young SGM individuals that can help them to 'grow into resilience' in the face of adversity and trauma – and the ways in which this growth is complicated by the intersection of sexuality and gender identities with other cultural and social factors, including race, class, and poverty.

Dr. Grace is committed to the translation of his research findings directly into practice (which then feeds back into further research). In 2004, he co-founded Camp fYrefly, an annual summer leadership camp offering research-based programming for SGM youth, which now operates in three Canadian provinces. In 2008, he founded the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS) at the University of Alberta, to create an interdisciplinary 'hub' integrating multi-faceted scholarly research with advocacy and policy development, as well as outreach and intervention on behalf of SGM youth in the community.

In 2014, Dr. Grace initiated the Comprehensive Health Education Workers (CHEW) Project, a research-informed advocacy and action initiative designed to address the gaps caused by the failure of the mainstream education, healthcare and policing services to recognize the risks facing SGM youth living with adversity and trauma induced by homophobia, transphobia, estrangement from family, homelessness, street involvement and sex work. Employing the innovative *C3* model developed by Dr. Grace for *comprehensive* health education and outreach, *community* support services, and *compassionate* policing, the CHEW Project assists vulnerable SGM youth to access healthcare, education, and social services, and provides them with transformative opportunities to develop self-confidence, social competence, and problem-solving abilities, with the assistance of both technology and the arts.

With funding from the Ministry of Children's Services, the CHEW Project annually serves more than 2,000 vulnerable SGM youth face-to-face, and reaches as many as 30,000 through its interactive website and social media platforms. At the same time, the Project has led to the creation of a strong network of frontline nurses, social workers, counselors and police officers – caring professionals who are able to provide SGM youth with health education and outreach, crisis intervention, mentoring, resources and social education.

As a colleague writes, the CHEW Project is only the latest example of Dr. André Grace's 'inventive intervention and outreach work linking research to advocacy and strategic action'. Throughout his career, Dr. Grace has been committed to 'ardently creating synchronicity among research, policy and practice in ways that have significantly benefited the large and multivariate population of SGM youth in Edmonton and beyond.'

**BACKGROUNDER - DR. YVONNE POITRAS PRATT**  
**CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC EARLY CAREER AWARD, 2018**

Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt, Associate Professor and Director, Indigenous Education, in the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, has been chosen to receive the **2018 CAFA Distinguished Academic Early Career Award**, which recognizes her outstanding contributions to the wider community beyond the academy through her leadership in developing community-based teaching and learning strategies designed to further meaningful reconciliation between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Dr. Poitras Pratt is a Métis scholar with family roots in the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement in northeastern Alberta. Still at an early stage in her academic career, she obtained her Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Calgary in 2011, and took up her tenure-track appointment as Assistant Professor in the Werklund School of Education in 2013. Prior to joining the U of C, she served as Associate Director, Métis Education, at the Rupertsland Institute, Métis Centre of Excellence.

Since joining the U of C, Dr. Poitras Pratt has initiated a number of collaborative research and community-engaged projects at the Werklund School of Education. For example, she co-developed a community service-learning program in First Nations schools near Calgary, which allowed pre-service teachers to gain first-hand experience with Indigenous teachers and students. Research into the transformative thinking arising from this program led Dr. Poitras Pratt and her team to formulate the concept of 'reconciliatory pedagogy' which has been shared as the groundwork for changes to Canadian teacher training programs. An interdisciplinary graduate certificate program, *Indigenous Education: A Call to Action*, developed by Dr. Poitras Pratt in 2016 in collaboration with colleagues at Werklund intentionally involves Elders and Knowledge-Keepers in Indigenous communities as an ongoing presence in this program which engages students in the design and delivery of service-learning projects, based on reconciliatory pedagogy.

Dr. Poitras Pratt also has taken the lead on a major collaborative research project on the transformation of teaching practice through 'difficult learning.' This project, focused on the learning experiences of students in Werklund's mandatory course on Indigenous Education, identifies the pedagogical approaches 'that inspire pre-service teachers to engage in meaningful learning and professional practice in relation to Indigenous communities.' This ground-breaking research has served not only to inform curricular development and teaching practices across the U of C, in line with the university's Indigenousization vision, but also to provide educators across the country with a clearer understanding of the 'difficult learning and teaching' involved in reconciliation.

In 2016, Dr. Poitras Pratt and her colleague, Dr. Patricia Danyluk, were the recipients of a highly competitive U of C Teaching Scholars Grant for an action-oriented research project exploring 'a multi-faceted approach to building stronger connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, schools, and communities in providing service-learning opportunities in Aboriginal communities. Again, this work has significant implications for teacher education and Indigenous education initiatives across Canada

Through her influential community-based research program, then, Dr. Poitras Pratt, already at this early stage of her career, is making an impact beyond the university. As a colleague writes, she 'willingly and enthusiastically leads the very difficult work involved with reconciliation, making it safe for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike to consider what meaningful reconciliation looks like'.

In 2018, Dr. Poitras Pratt was awarded tenure and promotion to Director, Indigenous Education, in the Werklund School of Education.