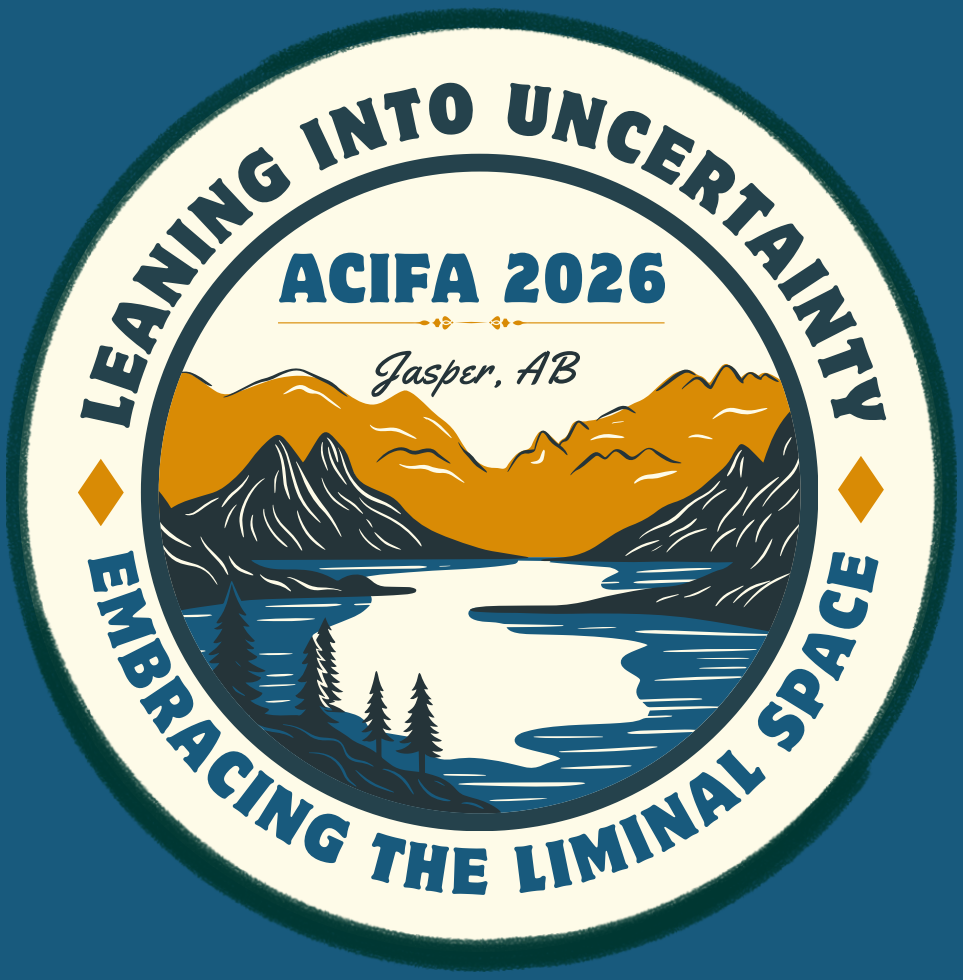
2026 ACIFA CONFERENCE



May 3 - 5, 2026

Jasper Park Lodge
Jasper, Alberta

Download the app and join the event.

Pheedloop Go app allows you to:

- view the event agenda and plan your personal schedule.
- access presentation documents shared by presenters.
- find who else is attending this event and reach out to them.
- receive updates such as last-minute session changes from the organizer.

Here is the QR Code to sign up!!

Please use the email you registered with, if you need to change it please contact ACIFA at admin@acifa.ca or visit the registration desk.

If you're having trouble, search "Pheedloop Go!" in the App Store or Google Play.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

President's Message



SHAUNA MACDONALD

It's a pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 ACIFA Conference at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. Bringing our member associations together in this remarkable setting offers a valuable opportunity to connect, share insights, and strengthen our collective voice in support of academic staff across Alberta. I'm grateful for your engagement and commitment, and I look forward to the important conversations ahead.

SUNDAY, MAY 3

4:30PM - 8:30PM — ***BEAUVERT BALLROOM***

REGISTRATION

7:00PM - 10:00PM — ***BEAUVERT BALLROOM***

WELCOME RECEPTION

MONDAY, MAY 4

7:00AM - 8:00PM — ***MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM B***

REGISTRATION DESK

7:15AM - 8:45AM — ***BEAUVERT BALLROOM***

BREAKFAST BUFFET

8:00AM - 8:15AM — ***BEAUVERT BALLROOM***

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

MONDAY, MAY 4

8:15AM - 9:30AM

BEAUVERT BALLROOM

MARK GROVES - KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Congruent Leadership: Guiding Others Through Uncertain Times by Leading Yourself First

We are living in a moment of profound transition. Institutions are shifting, expectations are rising, and the leaders in higher education are being asked to guide people through environments that feel increasingly uncertain and complex. In times like these, leadership is no longer primarily by authority or expertise. It is defined by internal coherence.

This keynote explores the idea that the most powerful form of leadership begins with stewardship of the self. Drawing from neuroscience, relational dynamics, and the anthropology of liminal spaces, this talk reframes leadership as the capacity to remain grounded, aligned, and regulated while guiding others through change.

Across cultures, moments of transition have always required guides...elders who could hold and stay embodied through uncertainty. Their authority came not from position, but from congruence: a deep alignment between their values, their actions, and their nervous system. In the modern classroom the same principle applies.

Participants will explore the core disciplines of congruent leadership: cultivating self-regulation, protecting attention and boundaries, aligning behavior with values, and intentionally shaping the relational environments in which others learn, work, and grow.

Rather than asking leaders to give more of themselves, this keynote offers a different invitation: to invest in the conditions that sustain their own clarity, presence, and life force. Because in liminal times, the leaders who can guide others most effectively are those who have learned how to guide themselves first.



MONDAY, MAY 4

9:45AM - 10:15AM

Generative AI in the Classroom: Where to Start, What Changes, and What I'm Learning Along the Way

TEKARRA

Connie Lyon (Lethbridge Polytechnic)

Experiences from 200+ students using an AI speech coach reveal benefits for confidence, feedback, and learning, offering faculty practical lessons for implementing generative AI in classrooms.

Metissage: A Teaching Tool

PYRAMID A

Raymond Savage (Red Deer Polytechnic)

Métissage is a creative method used for engaging people in research, learning, teaching, and community or organizational development

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Working Toward Reconciliation and Sustainability: Implementing a Healing Forest on Campus

PYRAMID BC

Sonia Perna (SAFA)

In this session, I'll discuss the implementation of a healing forest on campus to work toward reconciliation, allow for increased wellness, and provide outdoor learning.

Beyond "Be Skeptical": Metacognitive Checkpoints for Critical Thinking in Fluent Information Environments

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A

Soohyn Ahn (SAIT)

A metacognitive approach to critical thinking that addresses the gap between perceived credibility and actual argumentative strength by developing checkpoints for calibrated confidence under uncertainty.

Teaching in the In-Between: Supporting Educators in the Liminal Space of International Program Delivery

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM C

Chinwe Ogolo, Kirsten Blodgett, Lisa Gingras and Nadia Abougoush (Portage College)

Highlights the experiences of educators teaching an in-person international ELCC cohort and how they navigate liminal spaces in evolving post-secondary learning environments.

MONDAY, MAY 4

10:00AM - 8:00PM

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM B

Silent Auction
belairdirect

10:15AM - 10:30AM

Break

Mary Schaffer Ballroom B - Upper Level
Signal Room - Lower Level

10:40AM - 11:40AM

Reclaiming Learning Spaces: Land-Based Education at Red Deer Polytechnic

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM C

Tyra Hercina and Lloyd Desjarlais (Red Deer Polytechnic)

Highlights the experiences of educators teaching an in-person international ELCC cohort and how they navigate liminal spaces in evolving post-secondary learning environments.

10:40AM - 12:10PM

Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality - are there practical applications?

TEKARRA

Kris Hodgson-Bright (Lethbridge Polytechnic)

Kris Hodgson-Bright will share how he's used Virtual Reality public speaking software and AI bots to integrate into the Multimedia Production & the Digital Communications and Media programs.

Behind the Bars: Innovating Learning and Leadership In and Beyond Corrections

PYRAMID A

Ashley Tisdale and Nicole Kameka (NorQuest College)

Discover strategies to transform uncertainty into growth, empowering educators and transitional learners to adapt, lead, and thrive in education through resilience, innovation, and purposeful change.

MONDAY, MAY 4

10:40AM – 12:10PM

From Autopilot to Awareness: Developing Adaptive Mindsets Through Unconscious Bias Interruption

PYRAMID BC

Patricia Koyic (SAIT)

This interactive workshop explores how unconscious bias operates as our brain's "autopilot system" and why developing awareness of these mental shortcuts is essential for adaptive leadership.

Teaching and Leading from Within: Navigating Change and Uncertainty with Courage

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A

Paula Cornell (NorQuest College)

In times of change and uncertainty, old maps fail. This session explores wayfinding practices using stories and reflection to navigate uncertainty with presence and courage.

12:20PM – 1:30PM

Lunch Buffet and Awards Presentation

BEAUVERT BALLROOM

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AWARD WINNERS

Innovation Teaching Award

The Innovation in Teaching Award is to recognize and encourage the use of innovative and creative teaching methods and design.



CHANTELLE FITTON



MARIE LAENEN



RAIHAU IZONYBORE

Lethbridge Polytechnic

DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTOR AWARD

The Distinguished Instructor Award aims to recognize teachers who exhibit commitment to teaching, to learners, and learning through a variety of measures.



Red Deer Polytechnic

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MONDAY, MAY 4

1:30PM - 2:30PM

Uncertainty by Design: Leveraging the "Unknown" to Build Courage and Capacity for Change

TEKARRA

Jacquie Ganton (NAIT)

Uncertainty can feel like a barrier to learning, but what if it's the path to transformation? Discover strategies to help students turn discomfort into growth

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Full STEAM Ahead: Designing Integrated Learning to Engage and Empower Students

PYRAMID A

Brent Galloway (Red Deer Polytechnic)

How can we get out of our "content" boxes of expertise and work collaboratively to design learning that is more integrated and authentic for our students?

Learning in the Age of the Polycrisis: Thriving Through Uncertainty

PYRAMID BC

Kristine Monteiro (NAIT)

Thriving in the Age of the Polycrisis: Insights from Futures Thinking to Enhance Student Confidence, Adaptability and Purpose during Global Uncertainty

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Immersive Interest: Finding Balance and Purpose in the In-Between Spaces of Learning and Leading

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A

Robin Landals - Hill (Makami College)

Educators and adult learners navigate transformation by embracing immersive interest—using curiosity, deep focus, and self-directed exploration to find grounding, renewal, and purpose while identities and structures shift.

MONDAY, MAY 4

1:30PM - 2:30PM

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM C

Alberta's Future? Post-Secondary is the Answer

Brad Lafortune (PUblic Interest Alberta)

Alberta and Canada are facing threats to our future security and prosperity. While commodity prices and geopolitical conflict is largely outside our control, one thing that we can do is invest in rebuilding the most-advanced post-secondary system in the history of our province. Now is not the time to defund, privatize and control post-secondary education. Now is the time to invest in a strong, innovative, and public system for our future.

This session will review the recent decade of austerity within Alberta's post-secondary system, propose recommendations to rebuild it, and talk about why the current attacks on post-secondary within Alberta and across North America risk doing generational harm to Alberta and Canada.

2:30PM -2:45PM

Break

Mary Schaffer Ballroom B - Upper Level
Signal Room - Lower Level

2:45PM - 3:45PM

TEKARRA

Reimagining Curriculum Through the Lenses of Anti-Racism, Decolonization, Kinship, and Access

Leah Townsend (NorQuest College)

Learn ways to apply four holistic lenses alongside research-based best practices in curriculum development.

MONDAY, MAY 4

2:45PM - 3:45PM

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" Developing a shared understanding of curriculum.

PYRAMID A

James Beres

This session examines how faculty members think about 'curriculum'. Participants will explore how different ways of understanding the curriculum affect curriculum-related discussions within their programs.

Distinguished Instructor Award - Collective Care and Creative Risk

PYRAMID BC

Marnie Blair (FARDP)

This presentation explores how studio classrooms become spaces of collective care where students take creative risks, experiment, and develop confidence through collaborative making.

Go Somewhere with Generative AI: A Hands-On Workshop Using Metaphors and Values to Rethink Teaching in Uncertain Times

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A

Jeff Kuntz, Caylerr Kreller and Brooklin Schneider (NorQuest College)

Educators and adult learners navigate transformation by embracing immersive interest—using curiosity, deep focus, and self-directed exploration to find grounding, renewal, and purpose while identities and structures shift.

MONDAY, MAY 4

2:45PM - 3:45PM

Strengthening Bargaining Through Member Engagement

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM C

Shauna MacDonald (NAIT/ACIFA)

In the last round of bargaining, the NAIT Academic Staff Association (NASA) made a deliberate shift toward a more open, organized, and member-driven approach. Earlier in the process, NASA implemented major changes including open and large bargaining committees, strengthened communications, and bylaw reforms designed to increase transparency and engagement. These changes laid the groundwork for a new kind of bargaining culture, one where members were informed, involved, and prepared to act collectively.

This session will briefly revisit those structural changes before focusing on what came next: the organizing that led to a successful strike vote. Through coordinated communications, clear messaging about the issues, and strong member engagement, NASA built the unity required to secure a strong strike mandate.

The presentation will also examine how the employer's offer evolved before and after the strike vote, illustrating how member mobilization and credible strike readiness shifted the dynamics at the table. Participants will gain insight into the strategic decisions, organizing tactics, and communication approaches that helped translate member engagement into bargaining power.

This session will be useful for academic staff associations (or members) interested in strengthening member participation, building strike readiness, and understanding how internal organizing can directly influence bargaining outcomes.

MONDAY, MAY 4

4:00PM – 5:00PM

Labour Rights, Worker Advocacy, and the Current Landscape for Alberta's Post-secondary Workers

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM C

Kim Siever (The Alberta Worker)

Kim Siever is a labour journalist with The Alberta Worker, an independent, startup media outlet that focuses on labour and politics. He also uses his platform to advocate for the working class. (Session Capacity - 70)

6:00PM – 8:00PM

Dinner Buffet

BEAUVERT BALLROOM



8:00PM – 10:00PM

Entertainment Night

BEAUVERT BALLROOM

TUESDAY, MAY 5

7:00AM - 8:00PM *MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM B*

REGISTRATION DESK

7:15AM - 8:45AM *BEAUVERT BALLROOM*

BREAKFAST BUFFET

8:00AM - 9:50 AM *BEAUVERT BALLROOM*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10:00AM - 5:00PM *MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM B*

CONFERENCE EXHIBIT

10:00AM - 2:45PM *MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM B*

SILENT AUCTION

Auction winners will be announced by 5:00pm, items must be picked up by 8:00pm at registration desk.

10:00AM - 11:30AM

TEKARRA

From Barriers to Belonging: Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Learners

Aidan Wyatt (SAIT)

Attendees will learn about barriers to inclusion and specific strategies for supporting gender diverse learners in order to create safe and affirming classroom environments.

TUESDAY, MAY 5

10:00AM - 11:30AM

The MasterMind Method: A Gamified Approach to Reimagining Critical Thinking and Content Retention

PYRAMID A

Jennifer Hainsworth (Olds College)

Learn how unconventional activities can build critical thinking, improve retention, and help students transfer skills across contexts using the MasterMind Method - A gamified, interactive framework.

7Cs for Building Creative Confidence in the Anthropocene

PYRAMID BC

Deborah Forbes (Medicine Hat College)

Used in circular concert, 7Cs bridge gaps in methodologies for building creative confidence to navigate change, break dependence on existing human methodologies for human-defined problems.

Myopic Inevitability: Challenging Capitalist Narratives about GenAI and the Value of Labour

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A

Anna Borynec (NorQuest College)

This talk challenges common narratives about GenAI and the ongoing capitalist quest to improve worker efficiency and productivity, likening it to the "business-ification" of PSE.

Holding Space for Emergence: Learning to Navigate Uncertainty Through Peacemaking Circle Practice

MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM C

Mandy Halabie and Trina Homeniuk (NorQuest College)

Experience Indigenous Peacemaking Circles—a process-focused practice building capacity to navigate uncertainty through authentic connection, collective wisdom, and relationships of mutual support and accountability.

TUESDAY, MAY 5

11:30AM - 11:45AM
Break

Mary Schaffer Ballroom B - Upper Level
Signal Room - Lower Level

11:45AM - 12:15PM

Unleashing Potential: Nurturing Growth through Alumni Networks ***PYRAMID A***

Lorelei Boschman (Medicine Hat College)

This presentation shares the development, administration, and findings of a comprehensive alumni survey, revealing graduates' insights that strengthen career preparation, program relevance, and student success.

Oral Examination in Math ***PYRAMID BC***

Yevgen Kanevskiy (SAIT)

Advantages and disadvantages of oral examinations based on personal experience.

Math Anxiety and How to Support Students Facing that Challenge ***MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A***

Anna Beukes (NAIT)

Math anxiety exists in the space between exposure to math concepts and mastering it. This session explores techniques to lower emotional discomfort and increase success.

12:20PM - 1:30PM

Lunch Buffet ***BEAUVERT BALLROOM***

TUESDAY, MAY 5

1:30PM - 2:30PM

Innovation in Teaching Award: Four Corners: A Story of Mental Health and Community Nursing

TEKARRA

Chantelle Fitton, Marie Laenen and Raihau Izonyobre (Red Deer Polytechnic)

Step inside a four-part client journey where mental health, community care, and cultural safety intersect in meaningful and unexpected ways. Nursing faculty Chantelle Fitton and Marie Laenen, together with colleague Raihau Izonyobore, showcase an innovative hi-fidelity simulation project that uses adult and child simulated patients to bring complex, real-world scenarios to life.

Through powerful video clips and shared discussion, we tour you through an immersive simulation that cultivates empathy, cultural humility, and critical thinking, while deepening awareness of the cultural and structural forces that shape health outcomes. Follow our client Xavier Quentin and his family across diverse community settings—from homecare to sexual health to outreach to corrections—and experience how reflective, justice-oriented debriefing can expand clinical reasoning and transform how students understand and engage with the communities they serve.

The Academic Program Chair: Serving and Surviving When Everyone S(h)its on You

PYRAMID A

Dana Wight (NorQuest College)

This presentation shares the development, administration, and findings of a comprehensive alumni survey, revealing graduates' insights that strengthen career preparation, program relevance, and student success.

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education in the Liminal Space: Reimagining Learning, Leadership, and Belonging

PYRAMID BC

Shawna Francis (Inclusion Alberta)

Explore how inclusive post-secondary education offers a lens for reimagining learning and belonging, inviting faculty to contribute to meaningful inclusion.

TUESDAY, MAY 5

1:30PM – 2:30PM

Through the Eyes of Faculty: A Photovoice Study on Mid-Career Faculty Burnout — ***MARY SCHAFFER BALLROOM A***

Leane Vig (Red Deer Polytechnic)

This session portrays the lived experiences of mid-career faculty (MCF) burnout and well-being. Faculty-generated photographs and narratives humanize these experiences and advocate for institutional change.

2:30PM - 2:45PM

Break

Mary Schaffer Ballroom B - Upper Level
Signal Room - Lower Level

2:45PM
SILENT AUCTION CLOSES

2:45PM - 3:45PM

Navigating the Liminal Space Mimetically: A Social Model for Learning — ***TEKARRA***

Raymond Klassen (NorQuest)

What if learning was primarily mimetic? What if imitation and relational recognition were the building blocks of true learning? How would that affect assessment and instruction?

Journeying Toward Transformation: An Indigenous Perspective in Education — ***PYRAMID A***

Talitha Klym (Red Deer Polytechnic)

An Indigenous educator reflects on their journey of indigenization and decolonization, offering insights to help attendees envision a new path in education.

TUESDAY, MAY 5

2:45PM - 3:45PM

Navigating the Faculty Role on the Board of Governors ***PYRAMID BC***

Bill Petrosenko and Dustin Quirk (Red Deer Polytechnic)

This discussion session will explore current issues and the role and challenges of being the academic member on your institution's Board of Governors.

6:00PM - 8:00PM

Dinner Buffet ***BEAUVERT BALLROOM***

8:00PM - 10:00PM

BEAUVERT BALLROOM

Join the 2027 ACIFA Conference Planning Committee

Medicine Hat College FACULTY ASSOCIATION

A pirate scavenger hunt will take you on a fun journey filled with mystery and teamwork. All you need is your crew and your best pirate spirit!



Register your crew at the registration desk by Monday, May 4th at 6:00pm.
Sailing solo? No problem — we'll match you with a crew.

SPONSORS

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Leave your mark.

SILENT AUCTION

Opens on Monday, May 4 at 10:00 a.m.
Closes on Tuesday, May 5 at 2:45 p.m.

Check out the selection of auction items in Mary Schaffer Ballroom B.
All proceeds support the ACIFA Awards.



Thank you to our Faculty Associations the Edmonton Oilers Group and JW Marriott for their donations.

Thank you for joining us in Jasper for the 2026 ACIFA Conference.

Watch your email for the 2026 feedback survey.

Your feedback helps shape future conferences.

WORD SEARCH

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KEYNOTE
AWARDS
REGISTRATION
MAY
LIMINAL
NWPASA
AUCTION
ACTIVITIES
COLLEAGUES
UNCERTAINTY
FAIRMONT
DEVELOPMENT
SPACE
RECEPTION
JASPER
FACULTY
ACIFA
ADVOCACY

Win a prize!

Return your lanyard to the registration desk,
Tuesday Evening by 8:00pm.

Remember to leave name badge inside
so we know your name!

Winner will be announced
Tuesday Evening!

NOTES

2027 ACIFA CONFERENCE



May 9 - 11, 2027

Fairmont Banff Springs

Banff, Alberta