



2024-2025 OCUFA Academic Librarianship Award

Citation for Gisella Scalese

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**OCUFA TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS
COMMITTEE**

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It is with great pleasure that the OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee presents the 2024-2025 OCUFA Academic Librarianship award to Gisella Scalese. Gisella is the Education Librarian and Liaison Librarian for Gender and Women's Studies at Lakehead University Thunder Bay located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850.

Gisella's library career began at Lakehead University in 1990 and her dedication to service and the student learning journey has changed the face of the library. As noted by Lakehead Students' Union President, "Gisella has played an integral role in fostering inclusivity and supporting students at Lakehead University, particularly international, Indigenous and marginalized students." Gisella evolved the library into an inclusive and welcoming space by hosting social and learning events. In collaboration with the Education Student Teachers' Association, she brought students together through drag story time, dog therapy, rock painting, crafts, Lunar New year celebration, study sessions, and movie nights. Students commented on these activities: Gisella "hosts events so that all students feel welcome and seen"; "Gisella puts on amazing events that bond our school community."

Colleague, Chris Tomasini writes that in 2023-24 Gisella taught 46 classes in support of ongoing student research development. The words supportive, caring, welcoming, and kind appear across Gisella's nomination and reflect her approach to teaching and service. She further demonstrated leadership in developing online learning tools, which have proven to be invaluable to graduate students attending partner institutions. Student feedback is very positive: Gisella is "more than a librarian, being an amazing human being and present for all what I have needed for my research and my pathway as a scholar." A graduate stated that "Gisella brought my attention to modern research technologies that have helped tremendously with my grad school research. [She] did this in a way that made me feel heard, empowered, and supported."

In serving northern Indigenous communities, Gisella expanded Indigenous collections focused on Children's/Young Adult Literature, and Indigenous Peoples and Languages. Students reflected on these collections: "Gisella has curated an incredible collection of books on a variety of topics. These topics ensure that all students see themselves in the

collection.” Professor Walton, Faculty of Education, comments that Gisella's work with the *Pride & Gender Equity Centre* reflects her support of diversity and inclusion. This commitment is reflected in the library’s extensive Pride collections featuring picture books, young adult fiction, non-fiction, and teacher resources on gender expression, Two-Spirit identity, diverse family structures, along with 30 other curriculum guides and numerous social justice-oriented reading lists.

Under her leadership, the Anishinaabemowik – Indigenous Languages Program Historical Documents Digital Archive was created to preserve materials for anyone teaching Ojibway, OjiCree, and Métis languages across Canada. Tyler Armstrong, Program Coordinator, Anishinaabemowik – Indigenous Language Programs, noted that “Gisella frequently reached out to me for guidance and advice on how to make sure that the work was being done in a respectful manner and congruent with local Indigenous protocol.” This initiative contributed to Truth and Reconciliation goals and also honored those graduating from the program.

Acting Dean, Tanya Kaefer, Faculty of Education, captures Gisella’s many contributions: “She’s shown incredible leadership in her efforts to help students not just with their traditional Library needs, but in finding creative ways to have the library meet the students in their context – whether that be including social elements in workshops, or finding ways to share library resources for students on the opposite end of the province.” For these reasons the Teaching and Academic Librarianship Award Committee is pleased to present the 2024-2025 OCUFA Academic Librarianship Award to Gisella Scalese.