

Citation for Dr. Rebecca Coulter

Read by Dr. Helene Cummins

Dr. Rebecca Coulter's life has been so closely tied to so many important initiatives for academic women that it is hard to think of anyone more deserving of recognition by the OCUFA Status of Women Committee.

The astounding volume of her work — and the enormous impact her work has had on the lives of literally innumerable women in academe — makes our committee very, very proud to confer this, our first Status of Women Committee Award of Distinction, on Dr. Coulter.

In the words of one testimonial, "her breadth of knowledge of the issues, her insightful analysis on the problems to be solved, her superior ability to develop strategies for addressing those problems, and her willingness to roll up her sleeves and begin the work of doing so is a model for all of us as we pursue equity and social justice."

Her contribution to academic women's lives has been at all levels. At the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Coulter was instrumental in revitalizing the Western Caucus on Women's Issue She has served on and chaired the OCUFA

Status of Women Committee. At the national level, she has served on the CAUT's Status of Women Committee.

She has also been a member of the National Action Committee of the Status of Women.

She is one of those rare individuals who recognizes not only the gendered politics of education but also what can be done about it, both at individual level and systemically.

In her faculty union work, Dr Coulter has been continuously engaged in policy development for university women: speaking out, mobilizing support, and writing union policy such vital issues for women academics as childcare, sexual harassment, and educational equity.

Dr. Coulter has also been a powerful advocate for women in her roles as teacher and scholar. While appointed at Athabasca University, she founded and was the first coordinator of that university's women's studies degree program. Later, at the University of Western Ontario, where she is currently appointed, Dr. Coulter made sure that Western's Faculty of Education was an early leader in addressing gender equity in education, while founding the Teaching and Research Unit on Women and Education at Western.

A recognized expert in the education field, Dr. Coulter has published and presented widely on feminist pedagogy, gender relations in education, the history of women and education, and the impact of economic and educational restructuring on women working in the educational sector.

Her community work has a breathtaking scope, from producing a series for public television about women in Canada, to being known as the “grand matriarch” of the “Miss G Project, which seeks to include women’s studies in Ontario high school curriculum; from her work with aboriginal communities in Canada to her work with members of the international community.

One testimonial writer told us that Dr. Coulter’s “phenomenal work epitomizes for me the very best of effective feminist thought in praxis. And she does this work with remarkable generosity because she fundamentally believes in social justice and working for change for academic women. She has a tireless passion for action in implementing those strategies.”

As one of Dr. Coulter’s supporters wrote, her work has been characterized by generosity, integrity, and a willingness to go the extra mile. Dr. Coulter lives her feminism, another wrote, and is ever-vigilant on behalf of women, saying that,

“She is the drip, drip, drip of feminist critique that wears away the patriarchal policy stone.”

I am sure everyone here will join with us on the Status of Women Committee in warmly congratulating Rebecca Coulter for her outstanding contribution to the improvement of the lives and working conditions of academic women, indeed of all women. We are proud to honour her with this first OCUFA Status of Women Award of Distinction.