



OCUFA

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des associations des professeurs des universités de l'Ontario

2021-2022 OCUFA Status of Women and Equity Award

Citation for Karen Poole



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Read by

Lydia Kapiriri, OCUFA Status of Women and Equity Award Committee Member

The OCUFA Status of Women and Equity Award celebrates the outstanding contributions of OCUFA members whose work has advanced the interests of professors, contract faculty, academic librarians, and academic staff who are Indigenous, women, racialized, LGBTQ2S+, living with disabilities and/or belong to other historically marginalized groups.

In recognition of Karen Poole's commitment to the Lakehead University Faculty Association (particularly to advance equity goals), to the OCUFA Status of Women and Equity Committee, and to advocating for and raising awareness of the Indigenous Nursing Entry Program, OCUFA is pleased to bestow this award on Karen Poole. Lakehead University campuses are on the traditional land of the Fort William First Nation and the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg.

Karen built her career prioritizing collaboration and communication with all interested stakeholders. This has served her well as she has spearheaded curriculum changes in nursing and beyond—the most recent of these curriculum changes was to incorporate equity, diversity, inclusivity, and Indigeneity as relational practices at the foundation of all Lakehead nursing classes.

Karen consistently supported Indigenous students and advocated for ways to maintain access for Indigenous students when the Harper federal government eliminated the funding for the Indigenous Nursing Entry Program. She argued that the University must continue the program on a cost-recovery basis, regardless of the federal program, in order to encourage the education of future Indigenous nurses. Additionally, Karen worked on a collaboration with Seven Generations Educational Institute to offer students the opportunity to earn a Lakehead BScN while staying in their home communities of Kenora, Dryden, Sioux Lookout, and Fort Frances.



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A letter from one of Karen Poole's previous students highlighted the impact of her personal investment in students. The student outlined that as a single mother, the extra attention and guidance during her studies was transformative and relayed the impact of maintaining a connection beyond her time as a student. Later in her career, she noted in conversation with Karen, that she had an interest in pursuing a position as a nursing professor. The words sparked immediate support and resulted in reference letters and eventually a paid position following her schooling. This reference indicated that she was not alone in receiving this level of personalized support that went beyond the classroom; undoubtedly, this commitment was transformative to people's individual lives and to the greater community.

Karen's leadership on equity initiatives has been particularly important for Lakehead University and the faculty association. Notably, she organized consultation sessions to gather feedback from various stakeholders around issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus. Those sessions informed the work of the University President's Taskforce on Developing and Implementing the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan. Among the outcomes of this work was to revise the Faculty Equity Policy (last updated in 1991) and to develop the Lakehead University Sexual Violence Policy. Additionally, she was a collective bargaining leader at LUFA, and worked to revise the Faculty Employment Equity Policy as a proposal. Karen was also involved with the Joint Consultation Committee-Diverse Scholarship that has been focused on expanding and recognizing diverse forms of scholarship when addressing Promotion, Tenure, and Renewal.

Karen has been recognized with a number of teaching awards, particularly around her innovations. She was a steady and engaged member of OCUFA's Status of Women and Equity Committee since its inception and provided valuable advice and support to equity officers on the committee. Her commitment to equity included ample service commitments at Lakehead and OCUFA, her academic research, and her supervision of graduate students. It is



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a pleasure to recognize her efforts with an OCUFA Status of Women and Equity Award.



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