

2025 EDI&I Coalition Year in Review Report

Faculty of Education, Wilfrid Laurier University



EDI&I COALITION
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND INDIGENIZATION
WLU Faculty of Education

Waterloo and Brantford Campuses: Laurier's Waterloo and Brantford campuses are located on the shared traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabe (Anish-nah-bay) and Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-no-show-nee) peoples. This land is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe peoples and symbolizes the agreement to share, protect our resources and not to engage in conflict. From the Haldimand Proclamation of Oct. 25, 1784, this territory is described as: "six miles deep from each side of the river (Grand River) beginning at Lake Erie and extending in the proportion to the Head of said river, which them and their posterity are to enjoy forever." The proclamation was signed by the British with their allies, the Six Nations, after the American Revolution. Despite being the largest reserve demographically in Canada, those nations now reside on less than five per cent of this original territory.

Milton Campus: Laurier's Milton campus is located on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, and part of the Nanfan Treaty of 1701 between the British Crown and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We continue to work with our Indigenous partners and colleagues to ensure that we are appropriately acknowledging those lands and their stewardship.



Based on the Haudenosaunee creation story, the logo reminds us of how the first seeds of life on Earth were planted on the back of a turtle. The inner segments of the dome represent the Anishnaabe (Ojibway) Seven Grandfather Teachings: love, respect, wisdom, bravery, truth, honesty, and humility. The golden rays of the sun symbolize enlightenment, learning, and new beginnings. The Métis beaded purple flower represents the gifts of plant life from the Skyworld, which encourage and sustain life. The entire design rests on the waters of life.

Mission Statement for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization Coalition (EDI&I): Disrupt, question, advocate, and create change through dialogue, collaborations, partnerships, events, and resources to advance the work of equity diversity, inclusion, and indigenization as a collective coalition within the Faculty of Education and in the larger community.

Instagram Account: [@LaurierEdu_EDII](https://www.instagram.com/@LaurierEdu_EDII)

EDII Email: ediilaurier@gmail.com or ediilaurier@wlu.ca

Check out what we've done in previous years:

- [2024 Year in Review Report](#)
- [2023 Year in Review Report](#)
- [2022 Year in Review Report](#)

Resource Bank Webpage:

<https://www.wlu.ca/Academics/faculties/faculty-of-education/assets/resources/edi-resources-for-educators.html>

EDI, Indigenization and decolonization are part of core values as a learning institution. To help further the knowledge and skills of our community of educators, the EDI&I Coalition has curated a collection of English and French digital resources for educator self-growth and for teaching in K-12 classrooms. This catalogue is not exhaustive and updated over time. Below are the themes which the resources are grouped in for various ages and grades.



Message from the Co-Chairs of the EDI&I Coalition

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I) Coalition of Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Education continued to build momentum in 2025, deepening its commitment to disrupting systemic inequities and fostering cultures of belonging across multiple campuses and communities. Guided by dialogue, relational accountability, reciprocity, and collective care, the Coalition's work reflected expansion and intentionality in how we engage equity, justice, and Indigenization in action.

Our Brave Conversations Series grew in reach and impact featuring scholars, practitioners, and community leaders whose work addressed culturally responsive pedagogies, Indigenous and disability justice, artificial intelligence, equity, and trauma-informed approaches to navigating complex global and local realities. These conversations extended beyond single events through podcasts and accessible recordings, strengthening our commitment to sustained learning, critical reflection, and knowledge mobilization.

A cornerstone of our outreach remained the Increasing Teacher Diversity initiative which expanded across both the Brantford and Waterloo campuses. You can access and read news coverage about past events via the links below:

- [Classrooms are 'increasingly diverse' — Educators in Brantford are working to make sure teachers are, too](#) - Hamilton Spectator, April 28, 2025
- [Laurier Brantford event aims to increase diversity among teachers](#) - Brantford Expositor, April 24, 2025
- [Students want more diversity in Waterloo Region schools but 'it's not happening fast enough'](#) - The Record, November 21, 2024
- [The second annual Increasing Teacher Diversity event held on the Waterloo campus](#) - The Cord, November 16, 2023
- ['Be the teacher I wish I had': These aspiring Ontario teachers hope to diversify the field](#) - CBC News, October 19, 2022

For the 2025 teacher diversity events, equity-denied secondary students engaged in full-day immersive experiences that centered representation, storytelling, mentorship, and information about pathways into the teaching profession. Through human libraries, panels, hands-on activities, and relationship-building with educators and community partners, secondary students were invited to envision themselves as future teachers and leaders who bring their full identities into educational spaces.

Furthermore, STEMovation continued to flourish as a signature equity-driven initiative, reaching thousands of children and families through inclusive, hands-on STEM programming at schools. The Coalition also advanced critical systems-level work through the FSL Challenge Fund, supporting pathways into French as a Second Language teaching by removing financial and structural barriers. Through conversational language learning supports and targeted outreach, the initiative further supported the qualification of many new FSL teachers while nurturing a growing pipeline of future educators.

Across all initiatives, the EDI&I Coalition remains committed to advancing experiential learning, equity-driven research, and authentic community engagement. None of this work would be possible without the collective leadership of faculty, staff, teacher candidates, community partners, and students who continue to show up with courage, care, empathy, and compassion.

With love, respect, and gratitude.

Dr. Ardavan Eizadirad (he/him) and Dr. Jennifer Straub (she/her)
Co-Chairs of the EDI&I Coalition

January 2025- Brave Conversations Series

Andrea Haefele- Health and Physical Education Curriculum Consultant (she/her), OPHEA (<https://ophea.net/>) on Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy in Health and Physical Education

Andrea is a teacher in the York Region District School Board currently seconded as a Health & Physical Education Curriculum Consultant at Ophea. She has been part of many regional and provincial initiatives that support the H&PE curriculum, including Healthy Schools and the Daily Physical Activity provincial policy. She is a strong advocate for people with disabilities and has spoken at professional learning networks such as the Hospital for SickKids, the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Jumpstart Charities, and Autism Ontario.



Since 1921, OPHEA has been working to support the health and learning of children and youth in school communities through quality programs and services, partnerships, and advocacy. OPHEA's mandate has focused on providing quality curriculum, classroom and school support for educators to increase their confidence in advancing health programming in multiple learning environments. In the workshop, participants learned about [Ophea's Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy in Health and Physical Education](#) resource developed for educators to facilitate creating an inclusive Health and Physical Education learning environment for students' personal, social, and academic development.

Link to podcast episode (39 minute):

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4Uad9Pmqff9G5WXvRyvXfR>

Other OPHEA resources and supports:

- [Stop, Start, Consider!: Student-Centred Practices in Health and Physical Education:](#)
Doing Gender-Inclusive Physical Education & Sport
Doing Disability-Centred Physical Education and Sport
- [Disability-Centred Movement: Supporting Inclusive Physical Education](#)
- [Disability-Centred Movement: Supporting Inclusive Physical Education e-Learning Module Disability-Centred Safety](#)

February Guest- Dr. Rheanna Robinson on Indigenous Critical Disability

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
EDUCATION PRESENTS

DR. RHEANNA ROBINSON

FEB. 19, 2025
4:30 PST/7:30 EST
On Zoom

STRANDS OF STORY: INDIGENEITY, DISABILITY, AND
THE MÉTIS SASH

Dr. Rheanna Robinson is a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation and an associate professor in the Department of First Nations Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia on the territory of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation in Prince George, BC. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1997, Dr. Robinson is committed to amplifying the representation of Indigenous Peoples living with diverse and interwoven identities through research and knowledge sharing. In this presentation, Dr. Robinson will use the Métis sash as a conceptual framework to draw on her lived experience to weave together an autobiographical account of her Indigenous and disability identities and why they have evolved to become an important representation of strength and survivance in and beyond the academy. Storytelling, as a representation of decolonization, remains integral to broadening the understanding of the unique experiences amongst Indigenous Peoples in Canada and around the world.

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March Speaker: Dr. Keri Ewart on The Role of Artificial intelligence (AI) in Advancing Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Teaching

This session explored the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in advancing culturally responsive and sustaining teaching. This session examined how generative AI can support inclusive practices that honour equity, diversity, and inclusion while promoting decolonization.

Participants explored the AI continuum from Macro-prompting and Micro-prompting to CRP-Micro-prompting and CRP-Contextualized Micro-prompting. Participants further discussed practical applications for lesson planning, assessment design, workshop development, and project proposals.

EDI & I PRESENTS

THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN ADVANCING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINING TEACHING



Keynote Speaker:
DR. KERI EWART
Assistant Professor
Wilfrid Laurier University

March 25th 2025
6:00 – 7:00 PM
JOIN US VIA ZOOM

THIS SESSION EXPLORES THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN ADVANCING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINING TEACHING. AS AI BECOMES AN INTEGRAL PART OF EDUCATION.

Link to PPT Slides: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1c1F9U4LjZgWf7bwzWV-SCOMFPbjua7rpn-CtPkEAmpQ/edit>

Brave Conversations Series Podcast Episode of the Recording (54 minutes):
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2hFrOwHoe0mChaXrCbFs1X>

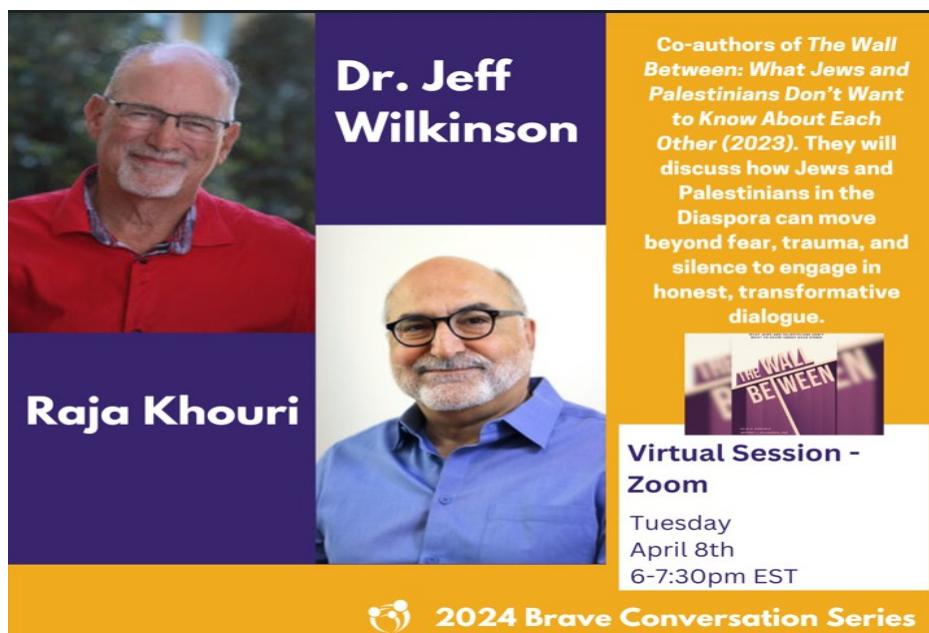
April Speaker: Dr. Jeff Wilkinson and Raja Khouri

<https://broadview.org/hamas-palestine-israel-book-raja-khouri-jeffrey-wilkinson/>

Raja and Jeffrey are co-authors of *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other* (2023). Since 2003, they have been crisscrossing the continent for talks, consultations, facilitations and workshops at universities, workplaces, school districts, places of worship, and community gatherings. Raja and Jeffrey were also featured in the Toronto International Festival of Authors and the Vancouver Writers Festival. *The Wall Between* offers tangible ways for Jews and Palestinians in the diaspora to speak and importantly listen differently to each other. It examines the histories and narratives that have shaped and divided, the battles for identity influenced by fear and trauma, and the psychological and social barriers that keep Jews and Palestinians closed off from each other's perspectives. It presents a guide for anyone who is open to new possibilities for the Israel-Palestine discourse in the West.

Jeffrey J. Wilkinson, PhD holds a master's and a doctorate in education focusing on trauma and memory. He has many years of experience working with diverse groups around social justice and human rights issues. Jeff employs his background in conflict mediation to support individuals and groups in working through identity-driven conflicts. His academic work has focused on supporting diaspora Jews and Palestinians in deepening their understanding of each other through a trauma-informed approach.

Raja G. Khouri is a recognized leader in social innovation, inter-cultural relations, human rights and inclusion. He is founder and CEO of Khouri Conversations, founding president of the Canadian Arab Institute, former senior fellow with the Wellesley Institute, and previously served for 10 years as commissioner with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Raja is Canada Committee member of Human Rights Watch and co-founder of the Canadian Arab/Jewish Leadership Dialogue Group



Co-authors of *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other* (2023). They will discuss how Jews and Palestinians in the Diaspora can move beyond fear, trauma, and silence to engage in honest, transformative dialogue.

Virtual Session - Zoom

Tuesday
April 8th
6-7:30pm EST

2024 Brave Conversation Series

Brave Conversations Series Podcast Episode of the Recording (89 minutes):

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1NFQ762XXEFh0UazwaQ6eF>



L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR
L'ÉDUCATION À LA JUSTICE SOCIALE
PRÉSENTE

DRE DIANE GÉRIN-LAJOIE

L'INCLUSION DANS LES ÉCOLES DE LA MINORITÉ FRANCOPHONE EN ONTARIO

Diane Gérin-Lajoie est professeure émérite au Département de Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (OISE) et au Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne (CREFO), à l'Université de Toronto. Elle est aussi responsable par intérim du pôle Études de la pluralité humaine à l'Université de l'Ontario français. Sociologue critique de l'éducation, elle est reconnue pour ses travaux sur les minorités de langue officielle au Canada et leurs écoles. Elle est aussi membre de la Société royale du Canada.



LE MERCREDI 9 AVRIL 2025
18 H 30 (HE)

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SUR ZOOM

Avec l'appui de

EDI&I Coalition
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & INDIGENIZATION
Faculty of Education



Inaugural Teacher Diversity Event in Brantford Hosted on April 23, 2025

Our classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. Therefore, in addition to preparing teachers to teach for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of diverse students, we also know the power of seeing yourself represented in your classroom curriculum: whether that's the resources and conversations a teacher brings forward or who the teacher is that might inspire students and help them to feel seen, respected, and valued.

The Brantford Increasing Teacher Diversity event aimed to contribute to diversifying the field of education, whether that be centering Indigenous voices, people of colour, differing abilities, or those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+. The Waterloo campus hosted this event in the past few years. This was Brantford's first-time hosting given the growth in our Bachelor of Education program in Brantford since 2022 now with over 300 teacher candidates.



Opening remarks were provided by the following people:

- Dr. Pam Malins – Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education
- Dr. Darren Thomas – Associate Professor, Associate Vice President Indigenous Initiatives
- Dr. Maria Cantalini-Williams – Dean, Faculty of Education
- Dr. JoAnna Roberto – Director of Education, Grand Erie District School Board
- Mike MacDonald – Director of Education, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board

Below are news articles covering the event:

- [Classrooms are ‘increasingly diverse’ — Educators in Brantford are working to make sure teachers are, too](#) - Hamilton Spectator, April 28, 2025
- [Laurier Brantford event aims to increase diversity among teachers](#) - Brantford Expositor, April 24, 2025



2025 Brave Conversation Series



NEW PODCAST



Amanda
Williams-Yeagers



Min
Kim



Bettina
Kapps

Listen now
on Spotify!



Follow us on Spotify: Brave Conversation Series

Listen to the first episode of Season 2 Brave Conversation Series with Amanda Williams-Yeagers, Min Kim, and Bettina Kapps as they introduce us to the PSST Community (<https://www.psstcommunity.com/>). The PSST Community is a collaborative platform co-created with Laurier teacher candidate over the past three years as a hub for self-directed professional development, community connection, and culturally responsive practice.

Brave Conversations Series Podcast Episode of the Recording (44 minutes):

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/68UlePVLZau9EOkLphcOmB>

The BRAVE and Constructive Conversations series
presents

Slaying the Dragon of Fear:

**How to Have Academic Discussions on Contentious/Polarizing Topics
Through the Spectrum Game**



All faculty, staff, and students from all institutions as well as community members are welcome to this *interactive and participatory workshop*!

The **Spectrum Game** is a structured discussion activity designed to encourage participants to reflect on their views, listen to different perspectives, and engage in constructive dialogue without fear of judgment.

What happens as part of engaging in the spectrum game? A divisive or thought-provoking statement is presented. Then, participants physically or symbolically place themselves along a "spectrum" ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, or positions in between. Each person ~~has the opportunity~~ to explain why they chose their position. The facilitator guides respectful dialogue, prompting participants to consider alternative viewpoints, and move along the spectrum if their thinking evolves during the conversation. Click the link to this [video](#) to see how dialogue is facilitated through the spectrum game.

Spectrum Game topics discussed for this session:

- "Self-censorship is a problem in the classroom."
- "Promoting belonging is more important than promoting excellence."
- "University policies (e.g. hiring or admissions) should prioritize merit over equity."

Suggest your own topic! (send suggestions to sfreich@outlook.com)

Followed by a social to chill and debrief over food and drinks

No registration required. Attendance is free.

Spread the word and bring a friend who disagrees with you!

Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 7 to 8:30 pm EST

**Senate and Board Room
Wilfrid Laurier University**

For more information contact:

Dr. Eizadirad (aeizadirad@wlu.ca) and/or Dr. Horsman (ghorsman@wlu.ca)

Annual Teacher Diversity Event Hosted on the Waterloo Campus on November 18, 2025

On Tuesday, November 18, 2025, Wilfrid Laurier University's Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Indigenization (EDI&I) Coalition hosted the 4th annual Increasing Teacher Diversity event. Approximately 70 secondary students from Grades 9 to 12 from numerous equity-denied groups attended from Waterloo District School Board (WDSB) and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) schools. The event was part of the Faculty of Education's ongoing commitment, along with the EDI&I Coalition, to encourage youth to imagine themselves in future teaching roles. The goal was to inspire students to envision that higher education is an achievable pathway for them and learn about supports available. We wanted every student to leave feeling confident that they can pursue any area of study that they are interested in and to see themselves in post-secondary education, particularly in the teaching profession. Presenters talked about why Canada needs more teacher diversity, especially educators who reflect the communities they serve.

Overall, the event aimed to connect students with diverse educators and role models, help them explore pathways to teacher education, highlight various supports available to them, and provide opportunities for participants to network and make new friends along the way. Students arrived at 9 am for a full day on campus. Throughout the morning and afternoon, they were introduced to the requirements for becoming a teacher in Ontario and what a future in education could look like. Students then had the opportunity to visit the different booths set up around the room, where they could network, ask questions, and get a better understanding of what each team or group represents. Hands-on simulations, STEM-based activities, and creative challenges helped students see the different opportunities connected to education. The morning panel of speakers featured an undergraduate student and two teacher candidates who shared their personal experiences, challenges they have faced, and successes throughout their educational journeys. Students were encouraged to ask questions to help them better understand how the panelists' identities and lived experiences shape their views and why diverse perspectives are so valuable in the classroom. Overall, students were able to connect with caring adults, teacher candidates, and undergraduate students at Laurier by having meaningful conversations throughout the course of the day. To add to the engagement, the event also included a photo station and a 360° video booth which provided an opportunity for students to capture memories and share their excitement.



In the afternoon, students in small groups took part in a campus tour led by Waterloo ambassadors who introduced them to different spaces across the campus. They had the opportunity to see firsthand what university life looks and feels like. One of the highlights of the day was the Human Library in the afternoon where students rotated through stations and had conversations with minoritized educators, leaders, and role models who shared their journeys, challenges, and advice. The event was a day of motivation, storytelling, learning, and relationship-building to facilitate belonging in higher-education and within the teacher profession. Students heard stories rooted in equity, identity, and lived experience as they met teachers, students, mentors, and leaders who are passionate about uplifting diverse voices in the classroom. Thanks to all the volunteers, sponsors, and partners who made the event possible.





STEMovation Website: <https://www.stemovation.org/>

The STEMovation mission is to create access to high-quality STEM programming for children and their families from groups who are under-represented in STEM education and sectors. The aim is to help children see a place for themselves in STEM now and in the future. All projects are facilitated by Laurier 'STEMovators' who are students representing the diversity of our community with more than half of the team coming from under-represented groups themselves. In 2025, the initiative built deeper relationships with 15 elementary and 4 high schools in two school boards, five community/municipality organizations, and the Faculties of Education and Science within Wilfrid Laurier University. Overall, the initiative supported over 120 Laurier Bachelor of Education teacher candidates in developing inclusive and equitable STEM instructional practices and reached 7,000+ participants (children and family members) through engaging in hands-on experiences. As this iteration of the project concluded in 2025, STEMovation leaves behind a strong foundation of resources, school-board collaboration, and equity-focused STEM educators.

FSL Challenge Fund: Increasing the Number and Proficiency of FSL Teachers in Ontario
FSL Challenge Fund Website: <https://fslteachers.ca/>

Laurier's FSL Challenge Fund's goal is to address the labour market needs related to the shortage of French language educators across Ontario school boards. The initiative focuses on advancing the following outcomes: building an awareness of FSL teaching pathways; removing barriers to FSL teacher education programs; improving flexibility of FSL teacher education programs; and ensuring supportive FSL teaching environments. The multitude of events held (e.g., Teacher Diversity Event, Teacher Appreciation Events in Waterloo and in Brantford, Open Houses etc.) raised awareness of the need for FSL teachers. For the Teacher Diversity Event in particular, students at secondary levels were encouraged to consider a career in teaching French. Students already fluent in French met with Dr. Jennifer Straub who is the project lead to discuss the benefits of teaching in French as a future career. Overall, the FSL Challenge Fund has proved to be successful in several areas. It has increased the number of future teachers, teacher candidates, and OCT qualified teachers actively taking French language lessons to improve their overall language proficiency. For more information about Laurier's FSL Challenge Fund, please contact fslteachers@wlu.ca

The EDI&I Coalition is grateful to the leadership of Dr. Ardavan Eizadirad and Dr. Jennifer Straub as co-chairs of the EDI&I Coalition with assistance and support of the following teacher candidates: Amanda Gil-Santana, Brittany Walsh, Brookelyn Johnston, Chloe Fitzgerald, Danya Massadeh, Ella Noor, Emily Campbell, Lauren Hales, Mackenzie Tiffin, Rachel Smith, Serena Aprile, Sunni Carson, Taylor Good, and Tazeen Husain.