The Inaugural – Anti-Ableism and Disability Justice Symposium

Hosted by the Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities (OEIC) &
The Office of the Provost

Program

Tuesday, November 10, 2026

KPU Surrey, Conference Centre, Cedar Building

9:00am to 4:00pm

Emcees: Katelyn Watson & Anju Miller

9:00am - Doors Open - Networking and Refreshments

9:30am - Opening by Elder-in-Residence Lekeyten

9:50am - Welcome and opening remarks, by President, Dr. Diane Purvey

10:00am - Remarks by Vice President Equity and Inclusive Communities, Dr. Asma Sayed

10:10am - Welcome and remarks, Chief Accessibility Officer, Stephanie Cadieux

10:20am - Door Prizes and Health Break

10:30am - Introduction of Keynote Speaker

10:35am - Keynote by Dr. Laverne Jacobs followed by Q & A

11:45am - Lunch Break

12:15pm - Students Poster Presentations

1:00pm **-** *Example of Disability Justice in Higher Education* by Dr. Fiona Whittington-Walsh

1:20pm - Introduction of Panel

1:25pm - Panel Presentation

2:30pm - Health Break

2:45pm - Theatre Performance by students and faculty from the Social Justice Theatre group

3:20pm - Closing Remarks

Keynote Speaker:



Dr. Laverne Jacobs is a professor and legal scholar at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law where she holds the Research Chair in Disability Equality & Administrative Justice. Dr. Jacobs teaches, researches and writes in the areas of disability rights law, administrative law, human rights law, and administrative justice. Her work sits at the intersection of disability equality law and administrative law and justice. Her scholarship is characterized by an interest in the everyday work of the administrative justice system and in the lived experiences of the people who use it, particularly persons with disabilities. As a legal scholar and author, she has published and presented extensively in her fields, both in Canada and internationally. Dr. Jacobs is the recipient of a number of awards including the Canadian Bar Association Touchstone Award (2021), the Canadian Association of Law Teachers (CALT) Academic Excellence Award (2022) and the Hummingbird Award from the Disabled Women's Network of Canada (DaWN), 2022.

Dr. Jacobs founded and directs The Law, Disability & Social Change Project, a research and public policy centre at Windsor Law that works to foster and develop inclusive communities. She is also Co-Director of the Disability Rights Working Group at Berkeley Law's Center for Comparative Equality & Anti-Discrimination Law. Throughout her career, she has held public appointments on boards, committees and tribunals, including serving on the Board of Directors of the Income Security Advocacy Centre and of the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice.

Dr. Jacobs is the first Canadian to be elected to serve on the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by countries that have ratified it. Dr. Jacobs United Nations CRPD Committee, and her election is historic for that reason.

Panel Presentation:

A panel presentation will be moderated by **Dr. Fiona Whittington-Walsh** and include the following community partners:

Dr. Michael Bach, New Society Institute: For over 35 years, Michael Bach has undertaken research and development in Canada and internationally on ways to advance the full inclusion and human rights of persons with disabilities. His research and publications cover disability theory, policy and practice in a range of areas including education, employment, and funding and delivery of community-based services. Michael's particular area of expertise is in the legal capacity of people with intellectual disabilities.

Dr. Rheanna Robinson, UNBC, is an Indigenous scholar and a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1997, Rheanna has lived with an evolving lens of MS-related disease and disability for almost 30 years. Indigenous Disability Studies has become a primary focus of her work. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in History and First Nations Studies at UNBC in 2001, a Master of Arts degree in First Nations Studies at UNBC in 2007, and completed her PhD in Educational Studies at UBC in 2016. Critical Indigenous Disability Studies and disability-related advocacy and awareness are a primary focus of her life's work. Dr. Robinson's research interests include Indigenous Disability Studies, Indigenous Education, Indigenous Theory, Methods, and Indigenous-led Community-based Research.

Dr. Erika Cedillo joined Inclusion BC in the summer of 2018 as a Community Inclusion Advocate and was appointed Director of Public Policy and Programs in May 2020. She began her advocacy work by supporting families in her community, developing a collaborative, solutions-focused approach that continues to shape her leadership at Inclusion BC. Erika is committed to advancing inclusion and believes meaningful change comes through partnership, persistence, and a focus on practical solutions. Even in the face of complex challenges, she remains hopeful and intentionally seeks opportunities to create positive, lasting change. Erika holds a Ph.D. in Law from the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia, a Master's Degree in Administration, Finance

and Corporate Law from Universidad Humanitas in Mexico, and a Law Degree from Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico.

Michael McLellan, Self-Advocate Leadership Network (SALN), is a self-advocate leader in BC and co-creator of the Self Advocate Leadership Network. He has been on numerous provincial and national committees including the Provincial Advisory Committee for the Accessible BC Act, Inclusion BC Board of Directors, and Inclusion Canada. Currently, Michael is a student at KPU, where he is hoping to get his degree in Policy Studies.