

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC AWARDS, 2012

(EDMONTON) – The Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), the provincial organization representing academic staff associations at the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary, and Athabasca University, is pleased to announce the recipients of the CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards for 2012.

Dr. Trudy Govier, Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge, is the recipient of the 2012 *CAFA Distinguished Academic Award*.

Dr. Gregory J. McDermid, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Calgary, has been chosen to receive this year's *CAFA Distinguished Academic Early Career Award*.

The *CAFA Distinguished Academic Award* recognizes academic staff members who through their research and/or other scholarly, creative or professional activities have made an outstanding contribution to the wider community beyond the university.

The *CAFA Distinguished Academic Early Career Award* recognizes academic staff members who, at an early stage of their careers, through their research and/or other scholarly, creative or professional activities have made an outstanding contribution to the wider community beyond the university.

“Through the annual CAFA Awards, the academic staff associations of the four research-intensive universities in Alberta celebrate exceptional contributions made by our members, through their research, scholarly and creative activities, to the community beyond the academy,” noted Dr. Robert Sutherland, the President of CAFA. “This year CAFA is proud to highlight the achievements of Dr. Trudy Govier of the University of Lethbridge, and Dr. Greg McDermid of the University of Calgary, whose outstanding research, in their respective fields, is having a remarkable impact on the wider community.”

The 2012 CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards will be presented at a banquet at the Shaw Conference Centre, Edmonton, on Thursday, September 27, 2012. For further information on this year's CAFA Award recipients, please see the attached backgrounders.

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BACKGROUND
CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC AWARD, 2012
DR. TRUDY GOVIER

Dr. Trudy Govier, a Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge, is the recipient of the **CAFA Distinguished Academic Award** for 2012. The Award recognizes the outstanding contributions Dr. Govier, in the course of a long and distinguished career, has made to the wider community beyond the academy, through her pioneering scholarly work in the field of argument theory and informal logic, and her active engagement with difficult questions arising from concepts such as trust, forgiveness, and reconciliation, in relation to social and ethical problems in the 'real world'.

Trudy Govier's career as a philosopher did not follow a conventional path. After earning a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Waterloo (1971), she taught for a decade (1971- 82) in the Philosophy Department at Trent University, and published a number of academic papers in leading journals. However, in 1982, she gave up her full-time academic position, to raise a family, and became an independent scholar (in her daughter's words, a 'freelance philosopher') and community activist. What is remarkable is that, as an independent scholar outside the academy, Dr. Govier nevertheless continued to publish a series of influential books and articles, notably in the field of argument theory and informal logic, in which she has been an acknowledged leader.

Dr. Govier's textbook, *A Practical Study of Argument*, originally published in 1985, and now in its seventh edition (Wadsworth, 2010), has come to be regarded a classic text in the field, and continues to be widely used in undergraduate courses in universities in North America and abroad. The focus on arguments expressed in natural language, whether in everyday situations, in science, or in other disciplines, is central to Dr. Govier's work and relates closely to her engagement in the wider community beyond the university. In particular, she has long been concerned to advance understanding and use of 'conductive argument', which is described as 'a way of balancing competing considerations and coming to a reasonable decision', in order to resolve conflict.

It is her commitment to applying her scholarly research to the social, political and ethical issues of the day that sets Dr. Govier's work apart. Her colleagues have noted 'the remarkable degree to which her scholarship has been connected to her community involvement, connections that have moved in both directions, from community to scholarship and then from scholarship back to community'. Her philosophical perspective on concepts like trust, reconciliation and forgiveness has garnered national and international attention, and resulted in invitations to take part in important conferences and collaborations on a broad range of topics, from war and peace to justice and security. In the late 1990s, for example, Dr. Govier provided advice and assistance on the *Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa, and later worked together with a South African scholar, Wilhelm Verwoerd, to explore themes of apology, forgiveness, responsibility and reconciliation.

Dr. Govier is the author of a dozen books and a great number of articles, both academic and non-academic, on a wide range of topics including, among others, 'tolerance, presupposition, nuclear deterrence, common sense philosophy, Goddess religions, and slippery slope arguments'! Her most recent book is entitled *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Acknowledgement, Reconciliation, and the Politics of Sustainable Peace* (Humanity Books, 2006).

Although she has taught at various universities in Canada and abroad in the course of her career, it was not until 2005 that Trudy Govier again took up a tenured academic position, as Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Lethbridge. She was promoted to full Professor in 2008. While she is scheduled to retire from the U of L in December of this year, Dr. Govier is working on a new book, to be completed by the fall of 2013, which will take up various ethical issues surrounding the concept of the 'victim'. The choice of controversial and highly charged subject matter is characteristic.

In the words of one of Trudy Govier's colleagues: 'I believe there are very few figures in the Canadian academic world who can be said to have had such a significant impact on so many different areas of research, study and debate.'

BACKGROUNDER
CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC EARLY CAREER AWARD, 2012
DR. GREGORY J. McDERMID

Dr. Greg McDermid, an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Calgary, has been chosen to receive the 2012 **CAFA Distinguished Academic Early Career Award**. The Award recognizes Dr. McDermid's outstanding contribution to the wider community beyond the academy through his groundbreaking research focusing on the application of remote sensing, GIS (geographic information systems), and other geospatial tools in the fields of wildlife ecology and environmental management.

Greg received his Ph.D. (Environmental Studies) from the University of Waterloo, with a doctoral dissertation entitled *Remote Sensing for Large-area, Multi-jurisdictional Habitat Mapping*. Since his appointment to the Department of Geography at the University of Calgary in 2005, he has been a leader in research into the application and development of geospatial technologies, and has undertaken a broad range of interdisciplinary research collaborations in such areas as wildlife ecology, biodiversity assessment, ecological monitoring, plant-phenology monitoring, and vegetation mapping.

Dr. McDermid's research program, funded by NSERC and Alberta Innovates Technology Futures, among others, is remarkable in its scope, and has involved more than 50 grad students, undergrad research assistants, post-docs, and visiting scientists over the past seven years. Greg is Co-Director, with Dr. Geoff Hay, of the U of C's Foothills Facility for Remote Sensing and GIScience, whose mission is to develop innovative solutions to pressing environment challenges, while training a new generation of geospatial scientists. Under the aegis of the Foothills Facility, Dr. McDermid and members of his Remote Sensing Group, for example, are working with the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) to develop methods and protocols for deriving much-needed information on habitats and the human footprint from remote sensing imagery, in support of Alberta's biodiversity monitoring obligations.

Another Alberta-based research project, to which Dr. McDermid and members of his team are long-term contributors, is the Foothills Research Institute Grizzly Bear Research Program, an interdisciplinary initiative whose list of collaborators includes the Universities of Calgary, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Waterloo. The aim of the program is to provide scientific knowledge and planning tools for land and resource managers to ensure the long-term conservation of grizzly bears in the province, and its impact has already been significant. Research on grizzly bear populations and habitat mapping played a key role in the designation of Alberta grizzly bears as 'threatened' in June 2010, the development and adoption of the province's Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan, and the designation of grizzly bear recovery areas along the foothills.

Dr. McDermid's other research activities include a project to map the distribution of endangered whitebark and limber pine in western Alberta, in order to clarify their role in Alberta's high-elevation ecosystems and predict the species' response to insects, disease and climate change; and an initiative involving the development of a landscape analysis and monitoring program for the Crown Managers Partnership, an international collaboration of managers and researchers focussed on the Crown of the Continent ecosystem in Montana, B.C., and Alberta.

In March 2011, Greg was one of five academic experts invited by the federal government to take part in a workshop designed to establish a remote sensing-based program for terrestrial monitoring in Alberta's oil sands region. This workshop has helped to lay the foundation for operational policies and research priorities over the next decade, and Dr. McDermid has been involved with a number of follow-up activities. He is in the midst of launching new multi-university project with the Energy Resources Conservation Board and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development designed to spearhead the transfer of remote-sensing technology to government regulators.

Dr. McDermid's publication record is extensive, running to no fewer than 92 scholarly journal articles, conference papers, and technical publications, as author or co-author, since he took up his appointment at the U of C. Greg McDermid was promoted to Associate Professor in 2011, and in recognition of his research achievements, was honoured with the 2011 University of Calgary Faculty of Arts Distinguished Research Award.