

Catherine Drea named recipient of OCASA Doug Light Lifetime Achievement Award



Catherine Drea, who in 16 years in Ontario colleges has left an indelible trail of achievement at five colleges and two universities, has been named recipient of the 2017 OCASA Doug Light Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Award, honouring contribution to colleges over the lifetime of a career in Ontario colleges, will be presented at the OCASA Leaders and Innovators Conference on June 26 at Kingbridge Conference Centre in King City, Ontario.

Her nominators from Georgian College stressed her leadership record: “Catherine has extensive experience leading large academic and student services portfolios; has championed numerous new programs, strategic enrolment management projects, partnerships and pathways; and contributed significantly to student retention and engagement.”

The OCASA Doug Light Lifetime Achievement Award pays tribute to an administrator within the Ontario college system who has significantly influenced college education throughout her/his career, demonstrating leadership, contribution to others and outstanding performance.

In colleges, Catherine has been a professor, program coordinator, director, dean and vice-president, and served on a numerous college and provincial committees. She has also been active throughout her career as non-profit board member and community volunteer with a variety of organizations, including the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, and the Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery in Oshawa.

Catherine has also authored several articles on topics such as the co-curricular record, access to college in the 21st century, student attrition and retention, and the consequences of Ontario government policies on students and institutions. At Georgian College, Catherine saw international enrolment double from 600 in 2013 to 1,200 in 2016. At Mohawk, she was a college co-lead for a multi-institution research project with Seneca College and Confederation College funded by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation that focused on student retention. The findings from this study have influenced retention projects in the province.

As project manager at UOIT, she held a key role in the launch of the first new university in 40 years in Ontario. At the University of Toronto, she developed a co-curricular record which was a major implementation due to the decentralized structure of the university – and then brought that experience to help establish the college’s new co-curricular record – which is setting our students apart with employers.



Catherine worked with the Georgian College Students' Association to secure a \$7.2 million contribution over 10 years to the college's Power of Education -- the largest campaign contribution in Georgian's history. "Catherine's contribution to the GCSA has been unparalleled," says student council president Avery Konda.

She has served as a member of the Colleges Ontario Flexible Delivery Task Force; an editorial board member of the College Quarterly Journal; and a thesis committee member for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She has taught at Central Michigan University since 2004.

Throughout her career, Catherine has liaised with local municipalities including City of Barrie, City of Hamilton, City of Oshawa and Region of Durham on community outreach issues including student off-campus housing and the Town and Gown committee.

The award is named after Doug Light, who served as president of both Centennial College and George Brown College at different times in his own 26-year career. The award was re-named in 2013 as the OCASA Doug Light Lifetime Achievement Award.

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OCASA membership is open to administrators within Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts & Technology/Institutes of Technology & Advanced Learning and other publicly funded colleges/institutions in Canada.

OCASA is committed to connecting, supporting and advancing management and leadership in Ontario colleges and supports its members in their professional goals through professional development, networking, mentoring and representation. OCASA works collaboratively and cooperatively with college partners while also upholding the highest standard of professional conduct, acting with excellence and integrity.

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