

Keynote Speakers

We are excited to announce our keynote speakers for The Quest: Indigenous Education and Equity.

Check back as we continue to update our keynote speaker lineup.

- Gabrielle Scrimshaw
Indigenous Leadership & Education Expert



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Gabrielle Scrimshaw is an inspiring and engaging speaker, who regularly presents and provides input to large North American corporations, professional associations, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations.

Born and raised in Northern Saskatchewan, Gabrielle is a proud member of the Hatchet Lake First Nation. She has studied international business and policy in Australasia, Asia, the

Americas and Europe. In addition, Gabrielle became the youngest Associate accepted into one of Canada's most competitive post-graduate finance programs.

That same year Gabrielle co-founded the Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada. The organization is of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area and offers services and programming to First Nations, Métis and Inuit professionals.

Gabrielle is the first First Nations representative to be selected for the honour in Canada's history. Gabrielle is passionate about diversity, leadership and innovation. As the first in her family to pursue post-secondary education and travel the globe, she is a believer in what hard work and a positive attitude can accomplish.

- Renu Mandhane
Chief Commissioner, Ontario Human Rights Commission



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Renu Mandhane was appointed Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in October 2015. She is the former Executive Director of the award-winning International Human Rights Program at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law. She has an LL.M in international human rights law from New York University. Renu began her practice focused on criminal law, and in that capacity she represented many survivors of

sexual violence and prisoners. Renu has appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada and the United Nations. Most recently, Renu was recognized by Canadian Lawyer magazine as one of Canada's most influential lawyers for her advocacy related to solitary confinement.

- Maurice Switzer



Maurice Switzer

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Maurice Switzer, *Bnesi*, is a citizen of the Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation. A lifelong journalist, he has been a daily newspaper publisher, communications director for Indigenous political organizations, and an adjunct university professor. He lives in North Bay where he serves on the board of the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, the Nipissing University Council on Education, and as principal of a public education practice with a focus on the Treaty relationship. He

was a Commissioner at Ontario Human Rights Commission from 2016 to 2018 and is currently a member of the OHRC's Community Advisory Group.

- Dr. Robin DiAngelo

Affiliate Associate Professor of Education at the University of Washington



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Dr. DiAngelo is Affiliate Associate Professor of Education at the University of Washington. Her area of research is in Whiteness Studies and Critical Discourse Analysis. She is a two-time winner of the Student's Choice Award for Educator of the Year at the University of Washington's School of Social Work.

She has numerous publications and books. Her book *Is Everybody Really Equal?: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Critical Social Justice Education*, (co-written with Özlem Sensoy) received both the *American Educational Studies Association Critics Choice Book Award (2012)* and the *Society of Professors of Education Book Award (2018)*. In 2011 she coined the term *White Fragility* in an academic article which has influenced the international dialogue on race.

Her book, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People To Talk About Racism* was released in June of 2018 and debuted on the New York Times Bestseller List. In addition to her academic work, Dr. DiAngelo has been a consultant and trainer for over 20 years on issues of racial and social justice.

- Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair
Professor in Native Studies, University of Manitoba



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Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair is Anishinaabe (St. Peter's/Little Peguis) and an Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba. He is an award-winning writer, editor and activist who was named one of *Monocle Magazine's* "Canada's Top 20 Most Influential People" and he won the 2018 Canadian columnist of the year at the National Newspaper Awards for his bi-weekly columns in *The Winnipeg Free Press*. He has written

national curriculums for Indspire and the Assembly of First Nations and is a former secondary school teacher who has trained educators and students across Canada.

- Jesse Wente

Broadcaster, Advocate & Pop Culture Philosopher



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Well known as a film critic and broadcaster in Toronto and across Canada, Jesse Wente was the first nationally syndicated Indigenous columnist for the CBC, covering film and pop culture for 20 local CBC Radio programs. He has also been a regular guest on CBC Newsworld's News Morning and Weekend Edition, as well as Q.

Jesse is Ojibwe, and his family comes from Chicago and the

Serpent River First Nation in Ontario. He is an advocate for Aboriginal Arts, most notably on screen. He draws attention to the imagery used by Hollywood in portrayals of indigenous peoples and stresses the need for a culture to have influence on their own depiction. His pieces on The Revenant, Beyonce and sports mascots were among the most shared on CBC.ca

In 2017 Jesse was appointed to the Canada Council for the Arts.

- Andrew Kushnir
Playwright/Director/Actor



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Andrew Kushnir is a playwright, director and actor who lives in Toronto. Since 2012, he has been artistic director of Project: Humanity, a company specializing in documentary theatre and other socially-engaged arts practices. Andrew's produced plays include *The Middle Place* (Toronto Theatre Critic's Award, Best Production), *Small Axe*, *Wormwood*, *The Gay Heritage Project* (co-created with Paul Dunn and Damien Atkins)

and *Freedom Singer* (co-created with Khari Wendell McClelland). His most recent work *Towards Youth: A Play On Radical Hope* premiered in February 2019 in a co-production between Project: Humanity and Crow's Theatre. Andrew is a 4-time Dora Award nominee, and one time recipient. He is a graduate of the University of Alberta (Alumni Horizon Award), a Loran Scholar, and a current member of the Michael Langham Workshop for Classical Direction at the Stratford Festival. In 2019, he became the inaugural recipient of the REACH Residency prize, awarded by the Shevchenko Foundation.

- Pamala Agawa

Anishinaabe-kwe from Batchewana First Nation



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I am a mother, a daughter, an auntie, a niece, a cousin, a granddaughter and a sister. I am a coach and a lifelong learner who seizes every opportunity possible to grow as a person. Currently, my interests are focused in decolonizing instructional practice to create amazing spaces for learning for all (especially Indigenous youth). I know this is a journey and have to acknowledge that this is rooted within the

colonial/ western structure we have all adopted as a system in public education. I believe with intentional practice, learning and facilitation we can support leaders to shift their pedagogical practice to better serve our students. I love working alongside and in service of our youth and I am committed to being a strong advocate and accomplice for them.