

# 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATION ETHICS

February 18 - 20, 2026

This event aims to challenge, clarify and expand our ethical capacities as communicators.

## Join us as we explore the following themes:

- **Ethical crisis communication under stress:** How do communicators make ethical decisions during crises shaped by speed, emotion, and AI?
- **Trust, journalism, and audience labour:** How is credibility negotiated when algorithms shape news visibility and audiences verify information themselves?
- **AI and communicative responsibility:** What ethical responsibilities arise when AI assists message creation, teaching, and institutional communication?
- **Communication, justice, and repair:** How do communication practices shape public understanding of reparations, equity, and collective responsibility?
- **Leadership communication in sports controversy:** How should leaders communicate accountability, reform, and values amid institutional failure and scrutiny?
- **Professional communication in post-truth contexts:** How can communicators act ethically amid misinformation, instability, and rapid technological change?
- **Indigenous and place-based communication:** What can relational, land-based approaches teach communicators about ethics, accountability, and care?

FREE 3-DAY  
VIRTUAL EVENT



## 2026 CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATION ETHICS

Welcome to the Sixth Annual School of Communication Conference on Communication Ethics!

Thank you for being a part of this year's event! Over the past five years, our conference has successfully gathered diverse voices from academia, professional practice, and the arts to explore the essence of ethical communication and the importance of practicing it in a professional context. The growing audience each year highlights the significance of this topic.

This year is set to be just as engaging, informative, and inspiring. A heartfelt thank you to the organizers, volunteers, and speakers for your dedication, time, and valuable insights. To our audience, we appreciate your enthusiasm and commitment to ethical communication. Enjoy the discussions!



**Dr. Chaseten Remillard**  
Conference Lead/Chair,  
Program head of the Master of Arts  
in Professional Communication,  
Associate Professor

### Our Programs:

At RRU, our communication programs are specifically designed to help you influence positive outcomes in your organization and the world.

- [Master of Arts in Intercultural and International Communication](#)
- [Master of Arts in Professional Communication](#)
- [Graduate Certificate in Professional Communication Management](#)
- [Graduate Certificate in Strategic Global Communication](#)
- [Bachelor of Arts in Professional Communication](#)



This educational investment in myself has already paid dividends.

**Jane Zatylny**

Graduate Certificate in Professional Communication Management



**8:45 AM** **Conference Welcome** Chaseten Remillard

**9:00 AM** **Ethical Crisis Communication Under Stress - and in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)** Timothy Coombs and Benjamin Morgan

**10:00 AM** **Trust Isn't Inherited Anymore: What Gen Z is Teaching us About Media Ethics** Iman Kassam

**11:00 AM** **Reparations in Canada: A Necessary Conversation for Collective Justice and Prosperity** Dominique Jacobs

**12:00 PM** **Sport, Leadership, and Social Change**  
Jennifer Walinga, Danielle Dubé and Danielle Cyr

**1:00 PM** **Ethical Challenges in Professional Communication**  
Susan Gee, Corinne Thiessen, Rebecca Bultsma and Geo Takach

**2:00 PM** **A Blackfoot Winter Count: Implications of Indigenous Place-Based Learning for PR/Communication Education**  
Timothy (Tim) Kenny

**3:00 PM** **School of Communication and Culture Associate Faculty Awards**

**9:00 AM** **The Value of a Degree or Certificate in Professional Communication**  
Emara Angus, Sharad Khare, Michelle West, Megan Reimer and David Black

**10:00 AM** **What Artificial Intelligence (AI) Won't Replace; The Power of Connection** Barb Collombin and Pete Bombaci

**11:00 AM** **Ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning**  
Donna-Marie (dm) Hamilton

**12:00 PM** **For the Land | For the Future** Erynne Gilpin

**1:00 PM** **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethical Communication Practices in Post-Secondary Education: Developing Professional Guidelines**  
Peter Ryan, Lauren Dwyer, Rey Rosales, Archie McLean and Alex Sevigny

**3:00 PM** **'This is not Normal': Communication Ethics and Alberta Separatism**  
Duane Bratt and Geo Takach

**1:00 PM** **Second Gathering on Professional Communication in Indigenous Contexts: Reimagining Communication and Technology Education from an Indigenous Perspective**  
Bobbie Racette

## **Ethical Crisis Communications Under Stress – and in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Timothy Coombs and Benjamin Morgan

Crisis communication has always tested ethical boundaries—but today’s crises unfold faster, louder, and under unprecedented cognitive, emotional, and technological pressure. From public health emergencies and climate disasters to corporate failures, political upheaval, and online misinformation cascades, communicators are now expected to respond in real time while navigating shrinking trust, polarized audiences, and algorithmically-amplified scrutiny. This panel explores the ethical dimensions of crisis communication when decision-makers are operating under extreme stress and when artificial intelligence increasingly shapes how messages are created, distributed, interpreted, and remembered.

**9:00 AM Pacific Time | 12:00 PM Eastern Time**

## **Trust Isn’t Inherited Anymore: What Gen Z is Teaching us About Media Ethics**

Iman Kassam

This research asks what ethical journalism looks like when trust is no longer institutional, algorithms shape visibility, and audiences are doing verification work themselves. Drawing on three years of qualitative research, including real-time social media content-elicitation interviews with Gen Z Canadians, this presentation examines how young people assess credibility, negotiate skepticism, and navigate news within platform-shaped media environments. Framed through a communications ethics lens, the presentation invites reflection on transparency, accountability, audience labour, and the moral responsibilities of journalists and media organizations operating within algorithmically-mediated systems. It asks: What ethical obligations do journalists have when audiences assume bias is inevitable? Is objectivity still an ethical standard if it no longer functions as a trust signal? Who bears the burden of verification - journalists, platforms, or audiences? And is news avoidance a moral failure, or an act of self-preservation in an overwhelming information environment?

**10:00 AM Pacific Time | 1:00 PM Eastern Time**

## **Reparations in Canada: A Necessary Conversation for Collective Justice and Prosperity**

Dominique Jacobs

This presentation explores the topic of reparations in Canada, addressing why it is often ignored, why it is necessary, and how it benefits all of society—not just the Black community. It will also reference the United Nation’s International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) and its extension to highlight why this discussion is important today.

**11:00 AM Pacific Time | 2:00 PM Eastern Time**

## Sport, Leadership, and Social Change

Jennifer Walinga, Danielle Dubé and Danielle Cyr

The Hockey Canada Sexual Assault Trial verdict, the Future of Sport in Canada Commission Report, and the Canadian Sport Policy were all released within a few weeks of one another (July 24, Aug 9, Aug 28). At the same time, Safe Sport oversight was transferred from the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) to the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) and True Sport was paused. This constellation of developments and decision within the Canadian sport landscape illustrates the array of social, judicial, and political mechanisms for addressing corruption in and of sport and poses an intriguing set of competing and contradictory values and assertions. In this Dr. Jennifer Walinga is joined by experts in sport governance, leadership, advocacy, reporting, and policy making to discuss how Canada is navigating the road to true sport.

**12:00 PM Pacific Time | 3:00 PM Eastern Time**

## Ethical Challenges in Professional Communication

Susan Gee, Corinne Thiessen, Rebecca Bultsma, and Geo Takach

This panel features three experts highlighting ethical challenges arising in the practice of professional communication today. Drawing on their diverse experiences, they will cover contexts for such challenges such as rampant and constantly changing communication technologies, the 'post-truth' environment, geopolitical aggression and uncertainty, social and economic instability, and looming environmental disasters. But as daunting as all this may seem, our deep-rooted need for human connection can point the way to ethical practices to address the challenges of practising professional communication in a milieu that also offers abundant opportunities. A special focus will be on issues facing emerging and junior communicators.

**1:00 PM Pacific Time | 4:00 PM Eastern Time**

## A Blackfoot Winter Count: Implications of Indigenous Place-Based Learning for PR/Communication Education

Timothy (Tim) Kenny

Rooted in Blackfoot paradigms, this research presentation is a journey through Blackfoot and Indigenous methods, including story work, while exploring the implications towards decolonial public relations and communication scholarship—and ultimately practice.

**2:00 PM Pacific Time | 5:00 PM Eastern Time**

## School of Communication and Culture Outstanding Associate Faculty Awards

Award for Teaching Excellence - BAPC Program - Yasser Abdelrahim

Award for Teaching Excellence - MAPC Program - Joe Couto

New Associate Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence - BAPC Program - Wayne Clark

New Associate Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence - BAPC Program - Jody Bauche

**3:00 PM Pacific Time | 6:00 PM Eastern Time**

## The Value of a Degree or Certificate in Professional Communication

Emara Angus, Sharad Khare, Michelle West, Megan Reimer, and David Black

What is a professional communication credential worth in today's evolving job market? Join Dr. David Black in conversation with alumni and current students from professional communication degree and certificate programs as they share candid perspectives on the real-world value of their credentials. Panellists will discuss how their education has shaped career pathways, strengthened employability, and supported professional growth across sectors such as public relations, marketing, digital media, public engagement, organizational communication, and documentary film. This session offers valuable guidance for anyone considering further study in professional communication or seeking to better understand the contemporary market for communication professionals.

**9:00 AM Pacific Time | 12:00 PM Eastern Time**

## What Artificial Intelligence (AI) Won't Replace; The Power of Connection

Barb Collombin and Pete Bombaci

As AI becomes more embedded in our lives, the skills that will matter most are deeply human: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. None of these can thrive without our ability to genuinely connect with one another. Paradoxically, while we are more digitally connected than ever, many people feel increasingly isolated. Across generations and workplaces, our capacity to understand each other is eroding, and loneliness has emerged as a quiet but widespread epidemic. This session explores the power of human connection through the story of GenWell Canada. Founder Pete Bombaci will share the inspiration behind the movement and the research highlighting the impact of social isolation across Canada and globally. In conversation with Barb Collombin, they will discuss how intentional connection can improve wellbeing, strengthen communities, and help us navigate an AI-driven future without losing what makes us human.

**10:00 AM Pacific Time | 1:00 PM Eastern Time**

## Ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning

Donna-Marie (dm) Hamilton

This presentation examines what it means to use generative AI ethically in teaching and learning. It explores the interconnected challenges educators face as they journey to integrate AI tools responsibly while protecting data privacy, mitigating algorithmic bias, and fostering critical AI literacy. The session also considers the environmental and labour costs embedded in AI infrastructure and aims to position educators as active agents in demonstrating responsible AI practices. Frameworks such as the University of Saskatchewan's AI Literacy Framework, and UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence will inform this discussion.

**11:00 AM Pacific Time | 2:00 PM Eastern Time**

## For the Land | For the Future

Dr. Erynne Gilpin

This presentation explores how decolonial research methods intersect with multimodal storytelling practices in film-based scholarship. Drawing on relational ethics, Dr. Erynne Gilpin examines how film production can function as a form of knowledge mobilization that supports community accountability, cultural protocol, and local governance. Through practice-based examples, the talk highlights film not only as a research output, but as an ongoing relational process embedded in care, reciprocity, and collective futures.

**12:00 PM Pacific Time | 3:00 PM Eastern Time**

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethical Communication Practices in Post-Secondary Education: Developing Professional Guidelines

Peter Ryan, Lauren Dwyer, Rey Rosales, Archie McLean and Alex Sevigny

This will be the third year in a row for this panel with a few new faces added to it. The panel is back by popular demand after some record attendance the last two years, with over 408 views online of last year's recording to date, and over 300 views from the first year. This year's panel focuses on three new questions to understand institutional and Communication Studies changes concerning AI ethics and practices: (1) What has your post-secondary institution done in the past year to provide AI guidance and support to faculty, staff and students for classroom uses? (2) Are there general communicator best practices that can inform Communication Studies as a discipline from our connected professional associations (e.g., CAJ, CWA Canada, CPRS, IABC, etc.)? (3) What practices do you see falling away by the affordances of AI incorporated into platforms? For instance, do you find students using Perplexity AI over that of Google Scholar? We will also include one question from the previous years' panels to continue the annual reflection process from a professional practice perspective: (4) What new ethical issues have you identified for AI practices in the past year (e.g., the AI bubble, Grok images, misinformation, environmental impacts, etc.)? Those questions will help this roundtable share AI ethics cases and resources for guiding educators, professionals, and students on the pitfalls of AI hallucinations, deep fakes, disinformation, misinformation and plagiarism. This panel continues the cross-country perspective on ethical AI uses in Communication Studies education and professional practice broadly, including a focus on when ethical communicators should advise educators and students NOT to use AI.

**1:00 PM Pacific Time | 4:00 PM Eastern Time**

## **‘This is not Normal’: Communication Ethics and Alberta Separatism**

Duane Bratt and Geo Takach

This panel explores the ethics of public communication surrounding the historically entrenched and recently resurgent question of separatism in Alberta. Through a conversation between an eminent expert panellist and an interviewer who has also worked extensively on Wild Rose Country, this session considers how narratives of separatism are constructed, amplified and contested across contemporary political discourse, journalism and digital platforms. We focus on ethical responsibilities of communicators in a highly polarized milieu, asking how we can inform rather than inflame, and how ethical frameworks can guide engagement with emotionally charged claims amidst ongoing regional, economic and environmental tensions in Canada today.

**3:00 PM Pacific Time | 6:00 PM Eastern Time**

## **Second Gathering on Professional Communication in Indigenous Contexts: Reimagining Communication and Technology Education from an Indigenous Perspective**

Bobbie Racette

Please join us for the Second Gathering on Professional Communication in Indigenous Contexts, dedicated to pedagogy and curriculum design in communication studies.

This session will focus on how post-secondary communication programs can meaningfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems, truth-telling practices, and ethical approaches to technology and communication into curriculum design. Grounded in Indigenous perspectives, the afternoon conversation will explore curriculum changes that might better focus on relationality, collective responsibility, storytelling, and community accountability as core communication competencies. Indigenous truth-telling, understood not as individual opinion but as shared, relational knowledge validated through community and Elders, offers an important counterpoint to post-truth digital environments shaped by algorithms that amplify division and misinformation. Participants will examine how Indigenous pedagogies can inform communication education that prioritizes ethical engagement, democratic participation, and social responsibility.

**1:00 PM Pacific Time | 4:00 PM Eastern Time**



## Dr. W. Timothy Coombs

Dr. W. Timothy Coombs, PhD Purdue University, USA, is an advisor for the Centre for Crisis and Risk Communications. His primary area of research and consulting is crisis communication. His works include the award-winning book *Ongoing Crisis Communication*, coediting the *Handbook of Crisis Communication*, and co-writing *Strategic Sport Communication: Traditional and Transmedia Strategies for a Global Sport Market*. His crisis communication research has won multiple awards from professional organizations including the 2002 recipient of Jackson, Jackson & Wagner Behavioral Science Prize from the Public Relations Society of America and the 2013 Pathfinder Award from the Institute of Public Relations. He is a Fellow in the International Communication Association.



## Benjamin Morgan

Benjamin Morgan is one of Canada's leading crisis and risk communication practitioners. Benjamin served the City of Calgary as the Supervisor of Crisis Communications where he was accountable for the City's communication efforts during Canada's costliest natural disaster and largest peace-time evacuation event (at the time), the 2013 Southern Alberta Floods. The City's 2014 Snowtember and 2015 underground downtown vault fire events quickly followed. As a volunteer member of Canada Task Force 2, Benjamin was deployed to Fort McMurray to support local communications during the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfires. He supported the District of Lillooet during the 2021 forest fire season and the City of Merritt as they recovered from the devastating impacts of the 2021 BC atmospheric river flooding event. In addition to his role with Sandhurst Consulting, Benjamin is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Risk Communication. The Center is based in New York City and was founded by one of the world-leading crisis and risk communication professionals, Dr. Vincent Covello. Benjamin has worked with organizations across multiple sectors including energy, government, post-secondary, financial, emergency services, First Nations, health, mining, utility, and construction. He has presented at conferences and conducted workshops around the world including several regional districts in the province of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, State of Connecticut, State of Florida, United Nations, Pan American Health Organization, World Bank, and Saudi Arabia.



## Iman Kassam

Iman Kassam is a journalist, professor, and researcher whose work blends frontline reporting with critical media scholarship. Working in newsrooms across the country, Iman's storytelling is shaped by years spent documenting land rights, governance, climate, and the lived realities of communities too often sidelined by legacy media. Iman teaches emerging journalists and media makers, grounding production skills in conversations about ethics, representation, and the future of news. Their academic research focuses on Generation Z's trust in media, the credibility crisis facing Canadian journalism, and the growing threat of online harassment against journalists and scholars. Iman's work pushes for a more transparent, accountable, and community-rooted media landscape, and empowers young people to take up space as critical thinkers, storytellers, and agents of change.



### **Dominique Jacobs**

Dominique Jacobs (she/her) is the Executive Director of the Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition, leading community-based responses to discrimination and advancing human rights across Vancouver Island and B.C. She holds a Professional Communications degree from Royal Roads University and has over 20 years' experience as a communications professional, focused on anti-racism, equity, social and climate justice. During her studies, Dominique planned and executed Royal Roads University's first Black History Month celebration in February 2018. Born in South Africa, her family fled apartheid-era persecution and migrated to Canada, grounding her work in lived experience of displacement and systemic injustice. Through her consulting and community work, she has developed and led communications strategies, strengthened non-profit brand voices, and facilitated engagements whose findings contributed to B.C.'s anti-racism legislation. Her commitment to anti-racism and Black History education also inspired her 2022 candidacy for School Board Trustee, where she championed inclusive, equity-focused learning environments.



### **Dr. Jennifer Walinga**

An educator for 30 years, and former member of Canada's Commonwealth, World and Olympic gold medal rowing teams (1983 to 1992), Dr. Jennifer Walinga draws on her personal, professional, and educational experiences when facilitating problem solving and leadership processes in organizations. Walinga blends organizational, educational, and sport theories in designing communication, change and performance interventions in organizations. She is an award-winning researcher focusing all of her projects on the central theme of optimal human performance. Her research interests include organizational communication, team dynamics, creative insight, social innovation, workplace health, sport education and high performance. Walinga is currently working on culture building projects in the spheres of sport, women in leadership, and workplace health. She is a mother of three and an active member of the athletic and educational communities in Victoria. After retiring from elite sport, Walinga taught English for several years in the Toronto area. Walinga began teaching with Royal Roads in 2001 with the Centre for Applied Leadership and Management and Schools of Leadership and Business. She has been faculty in the School of Communication and Culture since 2008. She is also principal of the consulting firm, Integrated Focus, which offers training programs for individuals, teams, departments and organizations.



### **Danielle Dubé**

Danielle Dubé is a Registered Clinical Counsellor, active firefighter, and founder of Danielle Dubé Counselling in Ladner, BC. Her unique approach is forged at the intersection of high-pressure environments: as a former Team Canada ice hockey player, an elite varsity athlete, and a frontline first responder. Danielle specializes in fostering psychological safety and resilience within athletic communities, with a particular focus on supporting varsity athletes as they navigate the complexities of identity and sustainable performance. By bridging her operational leadership in the fire service with her clinical expertise, she advocates for cultures where psychological safety is a foundational performance strategy, ensuring that for athletes and first responders alike, excellence never comes at the cost of well-being.



## Danielle Cyr

Danielle Cyr was named head coach of the Acadia Axewomen soccer program in 2025, bringing a decade of coaching experience and a proven track record of success. Prior to joining Acadia, Cyr spent 10 seasons as head coach at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), where they transformed the Mystics into a perennial contender in the Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association (ACAA). Under their leadership, the team earned three ACAA championships (2024, 2022, and 2018) and two undefeated conference seasons (2024 and 2022). Cyr was twice named ACAA Coach of the Year (2024, 2021) and compiled a remarkable 59-13-24 regular-season record. Beyond their success at the collegiate level, Cyr has played a significant role in soccer development across Canada. They have coached provincial and regional development teams with Soccer Nova Scotia and the Canada Soccer Regional EXCEL program and served as Director of Soccer for Team Mi'kmaq Nova Scotia at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games.

Cyr is also a respected educator, researcher, and consultant specializing in strategic public relations, diversity management, and leadership development. They teach at MSVU and contribute to national coaching initiatives through U SPORTS and the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA). Their research on leadership, team culture, and gender equity in sport has been internationally recognized, earning awards such as the SSDRC Safe Sport Research Grant and the International Award for Excellence from the International Journal of Sport and Society. With a coaching philosophy rooted in equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and reconciliation, Cyr is committed to fostering an environment where student-athletes can thrive both on and off the field. Their leadership at Acadia marks an exciting new chapter for the Axewomen soccer program.



## Susan Gee

Susan Gee is a senior communications, marketing and advancement professional with extensive experience in building and leading teams to deliver multi-layered strategic agendas. She has held Director of Communication positions in several ministries of the BC Government, worked as a senior consultant for a reputation management firm and as a Director of Development for a local non-profit. She serves as the Vice President, External Relations for Royal Roads University where she is responsible for delivering strategic communications, events and marketing, as well as student recruitment, advancement, and alumni relations.



## Corinne Thiessen

Corinne Thiessen brings nearly 15 years of strategic communications experience in the energy and finance sectors, specializing in investment and sustainability storytelling. She currently leads a team responsible for global communications at British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI), one of Canada's largest institutional investors with \$300 billion in assets under management, focused on building brand and guarding reputation. Since 2021, Corinne has served as Associate Faculty for Royal Roads University's School of Communication and Culture, facilitating learning at both undergraduate and master's levels. She holds an MBA from the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Communications in Public Relations from Mount Royal University.



## Rebecca Bultsma

Rebecca Bultsma (BAPC, APR) works with communications and PR professionals across North America on AI ethics, literacy, and crisis response. A Royal Roads alumna and former senior Communications Director, she helps organizations understand AI in their contexts, navigate deepfakes, synthetic media, and the collapse of traditional verification. Currently finishing her MSc in Data & Artificial Intelligence Ethics at Edinburgh, she researches leadership under epistemic uncertainty.



## Dr. Geo Takach

Dr. Geo Takach is a Professor of Communication and Culture at RRU (also teaching in the School of Environment and Sustainability and the School of Business) and a veteran media producer whose work has been published in speeches, print, film, radio, television, video, and online. His work focuses on dialoguing environmental, arts-based and Indigenous approaches to improve relations with the Earth and Her First Peoples. Recent projects include the feature-length documentary film, “Shih (Interconnectedness)” (2026) and the book, “Environmental Communication and Conciliation: Exploring Arts-Based and Indigenous Approaches” (Bloomsbury, Feb. 2026).



## Timothy (Tim) Kenny

Timothy (Tim) Kenny, Senior Comms Advisor, Parks Canada, is a mixed-race, non-status Indigiqueer man from Edmonton's community housing projects, with maternal roots in the Jean Baptiste Gambler #183 First Nation of Calling Lake, Alberta. He holds a Bachelor of Communication in Public Relations with a Minor in Indigenous Studies from Mount Royal University and a Master of Education in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Calgary, focusing on Blackfoot Ways of Knowing and Being. Tim's career spans notable roles, including leading PR and communications for the launch of REDx Talks, Canada's first international Indigenous speakers series, and supporting PR efforts for Calgary's JUNOfest Indigenous Showcase. Now a Senior Communication Advisor with Parks Canada, he is dedicated to advancing Indigenous issues, especially at the intersections of gender, race, art, and identity.



## Emara Angus

Emara Angus is a digital communications officer at Royal Roads University (RRU), where she has worked in marketing, recruitment and communications since 2018. She is an alumna of RRU's Graduate Certificate in Professional Communication Management and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Camosun College. Emara is passionate about digital storytelling, community building, and fostering a sense of belonging online and in person.



## Sharad Kharé

Sharad Kharé is an award-winning global storyteller, documentarian, and the founder of Human Biography, a creative studio dedicated to capturing the life stories, leadership journeys, and legacies of influential individuals and families around the world. His work sits at the intersection of documentary filmmaking, deep conversation, and legacy preservation. Over the past decade, Sharad has interviewed and directed dialogues with some of the world's most respected cultural, philanthropic, and business icons, including Oprah Winfrey, the Dalai Lama, Meryl Streep, Chip Wilson, Indra Nooyi, and Katy Perry. In 2019, he was awarded the Disruptor Fellowship at the United Nations Headquarters for his innovative contributions to media and storytelling. Known for his calm presence and ability to create trust, Sharad specializes in unscripted, intimate interviews that reveal humanity beneath achievement—stories meant not for the moment, but for generations.



## Michelle West

Michelle West is the Senior Director, Membership, Marketing & Communications at ACEC-Ontario. With more than 20 years of progressive leadership experience in the non-profit and B2B sectors, Michelle is a senior marketing and engagement professional known for building strong membership communities and fostering meaningful volunteer participation. In her current role, Michelle leads a cross-functional team responsible for advancing member engagement through strategic communications, marketing, events, education platforms, and volunteer programs. She oversees initiatives that connect and empower members across the province through active chapters, professional networks, development events, and accessible learning platforms, all aligned with the organization's mission and brand.



## Megan Reimer

Megan Reimer (she/her) holds a bachelor's degree in Professional Communication Studies from Athabasca University, an Editing Certificate from Simon Fraser University, a Master of Arts in Professional Communication (MAPC) from Royal Roads University, and is a Prosci-certified Change Management Practitioner. In 2021, Megan completed her MAPC thesis on mental health conditions and their impacts on inter- and intra-personal communication, shared understanding, and meaning making, which she passed with distinction and for which she received a Governor General's Gold Medal nomination for outstanding thesis. With over a decade of experience in corporate change management and communications, as the founder and principal consultant of PearlsandPoets Change Empowerment Consulting, Megan's work focuses on the intersection of empathy, heart, communication, and strategy, to empower conscious, heart-led leaders to activate sustainable, meaningful, and thriving change and communication within their teams.



## David Black

David Black is an associate professor in the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads, and has taught theory, politics, global issues, history and technology as these relate to communication and media there since 2003. Before that, he taught for 12 years in the Department of Communication Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. His Ph.D. is in Social and Political Thought (York, 1999), where he specialized in theory.



## Barb Collombin

Barb Collombin holds an undergraduate degree in English literature from Western University and a Master of Arts in Professional Communication at Royal Roads University, where she has been Associate Faculty in the School of Communication and Culture and Professional and Continuing Studies since 2012. Her work focuses on organizational communication, creative problem solving, design thinking, workplace innovation, strategy, and culture. With 35 years of experience across organizations, business ownership, extensive travel, and community development, she is dedicated to building connections and fostering a sense of community in everything she does.



## Pete Bombaci

Pete Bombaci is a visionary business and social-change leader and the Founder & CEO of GenWell, Canada's Human Connection Movement, dedicated to empowering workplaces, schools, and communities through proactive face-to-face connection. He blends brand building, strategy, and 360° activation to foster deeper social health. A seasoned speaker, he's opened conferences across North America and Europe on building happier, healthier, more connected cultures.



## Donna-Marie (dm) Hamilton

Donna-Marie(dm) Hamilton is an Instructional Designer with the Centre for Teaching & Educational Technologies (CTET) at Royal Roads University. Her credentials include a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Sociology from York University, Teaching Adults Certification from Seneca College, Specialization in Teaching English as an Additional Language from OISE, a Master of Education Technology from the University of British Columbia and a Global Professional Masters of Law, in Innovation Law and Technology from the University of Toronto. Donna-Marie pays keen attention to the way AI integration is changing the educational landscape and the legal and ethical implications of using AI in teaching and learning.



## Dr. Erynne Gilpin

Dr. Erynne Gilpin is a Michif (Citizen of the MMF), Filipina and Celtic Mother, educator and film-maker based on the unceded traditional territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations. Assistant Professor with the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University, Dr. Gilpin's work intersects with land-based knowledge mobilization, critical intersectionality in relational governance, and multi-modal research methods.



## Dr. Peter Ryan

Dr. Peter Malachy Ryan is an associate professor with the Department of Public Relations at Mount Royal University (MRU). He is on the Advisory Board for the Centre for Crisis and Risk Communication (CCRC) in Canada. His professional and research interests include Canadian crisis and political communications, digital research methods, and social media issues management. He is accredited in public relations (APR) through the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) and was the CPRS Calgary President from July 2023 to July 2025. He is now in the supporting role of CPRS Calgary Past President for one more year and is also shifting to work on the CPRS National Accreditation Council in 2026.



## Dr. Lauren Dwyer

Dr. Lauren Dwyer is an Assistant Professor in the Information Design program at Mount Royal University. Her research examines how emerging technologies, including algorithmic media systems, AI-influenced journalism, and social robots, reshape communication, behaviour, and public trust. She investigates how machine systems curate perception, influence autonomy, and reorganize media and design ecosystems. Before joining Mount Royal, she served as Academic Chair for Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics at SAIT, where she developed applied AI education. She earned her PhD in Communication and Culture at Toronto Metropolitan University and York University, where she explored the communicative and emotional affordances of social robots. Her current work focuses on the politics of information design in algorithmic infrastructures, tracing how they mediate trust, well-being, and collective meaning in contemporary life.



### Dr. Rey Rosales

Dr. Rey Rosales holds a Master's in Education Leadership from Harvard and a PhD in Journalism from Southern Illinois University (Dissertation Research Award). He completed an entrepreneurship program at MIT Sloan School of Management. Rey is an award-winning professor with over 20 years of university teaching experience in the US and Canada, and has demonstrated leadership in education, journalism, and entrepreneurship. He received a Fulbright scholarship and fellowships from the American Press Institute, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Institute for Journalism Excellence, the Emmy Awards Organization, and the International Radio-TV Society. Rey specializes in innovation and entrepreneurship, digital media communication, online education, and data science. His expertise spans startup entrepreneurship, social media communication, academic research and writing, digital storytelling, data journalism, and online learning. He was a visiting fellow at MIT in 2018.



### Archie McLean

Archie McLean is an Associate Professor of journalism and digital media at Mount Royal University. His research focuses on digital journalism, including online publishing, artificial intelligence, media ethics, and engaged journalism. His work examines how emerging technologies and platforms are reshaping journalistic practice and public engagement. Drawing on extensive professional experience as a reporter and editor, his research is grounded in newsroom realities and contributes to ongoing discussions about innovation, responsibility, and trust in contemporary media ecosystems.



### Dr. Alex Sevigny

Alex Sevigny, PhD, APR, is a tenured associate professor of communications management at McMaster University and director of the MCM Research Lab, where he leads research on how data science and AI are transforming communications strategy and practice. A recognized authority on AI-enabled digital transformation, he combines academic rigour, technical depth, and applied insight. Beyond academia, Alex is an active strategic management consultant and executive trainer, advising governments, not-for-profits, and multinational corporations globally, with engagements across Asia, the U.K., the Middle East, Canada, and the United States. His clients include DP World, Harman International, the Bank of Canada, and other numerous Canadian institutions. He previously served as Director of Research and Analytics and Interim Director of Communications for the Federal Government Caucus. Trained in computational linguistics at the University of Toronto, he teaches executive graduate courses on AI and digital transformation and is co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Professional Communication.



### Dr. Duane Bratt

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