



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Award for Excellence in Teaching
2022

Anne Marie MacKinnon
Educational Leadership Award

DR. FIONA BLACK

Dr. Fiona Black is a force to be reckoned with. She brings a tenacious commitment to educational projects, research and practice at Mount Allison and beyond into local educational and non-profit communities. For twenty years, Dr. Black has been a fierce and passionate advocate for learning activities, projects, and development. As Dr. Black says herself, “I agitate for positive social change...and I operate with a mix of audacity, hopefulness and persistence.” Dr. Black’s tenaciousness, her hope, and her commitment to social justice pedagogies have brought to life many projects and programs.

Dr. Black was the instigator and is the coordinator of R-PEACE (Research Partnerships in Education and Community Engagement). R-PEACE connects students in K-12 and post-secondary contexts to faculty and teacher praxis in the community. In only four years, dozens of projects have been developed and led by Dr. Black through R-PEACE. These projects have included the development of a Learning Lab through which research associates have developed and completed research on SoTL projects around community and student engagement, among other topics. The Learning Lab encourages engaged learning and social constructionist pedagogies in a bright, dynamic space while also integrating various technologies. Dr. Black organized a conference on learning design spaces in the Learning Lab and has been heavily involved in the development and renovation of two new innovative teaching spaces on campus. She has been approached to advise on classroom design and is now developing an outdoor community Green Lab project at MTA, addressing green energy, food security, community wellness and environmental practices.

Connecting to community is a theme in Dr. Black’s work. She successfully lobbied for the inclusion of community engagement in Mount Allison’s strategic academic plan. This resulted in a new program in Community Engaged Learning (CENL) that connects local schools, parents, volunteers and political leaders. This innovative program is already being developed as a major with the Provost’s encouragement, a testament to its early success and Dr. Black’s efforts.

Dr. Black’s work has been remarkable. Underlining it is a commitment to student agency, to community development and to addressing social injustice. This has led Dr. Hennessy (Provost and Vice-President Academic) to note that Fiona is, “deeply and fiercely committed to education in innovative and transformative ways and is willing to make it happen.” With great respect of students and colleagues, Dr. Fiona Black is an excellent choice to receive the 2022 Association of Atlantic Universities’ Anne Marie MacKinnon Educational Leadership Award.