

MEDIA RELEASE

CUFA BC Announces Recipients of the 2025 Distinguished Academics Awards

**ACADEMIC OF THE YEAR**

Dr. Dennis Hore & Dr. Bruce Wallace

EARLY IN CAREER

Dr. Laura Schummers

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

Dr. Philip Owens & Dr. Ellen Petticrew

(For Immediate Release – Port Moody, BC, February 27, 2025) – The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 Distinguished Academics Awards, recognizing faculty members whose scholarship makes significant contributions beyond the academy to the public interest. The winners are:

- **Early in Career Award: Dr. Laura Schummers** (University of British Columbia)
- **Ehor Boyanowsky Academic of the Year Award: Dr. Dennis Hore & Dr. Bruce Wallace** (University of Victoria)
- **Paz Buttedahl Career Achievement Award: Dr. Philip Owens & Dr. Ellen Petticrew** (University of Northern British Columbia)

Since 1995, the CUFA BC Distinguished Academics Awards have celebrated research excellence and innovation in British Columbia's universities. The awards highlight the essential role of university-based research in advancing social, intellectual, and economic innovation.

CUFA BC President Monica Prendergast emphasized the importance of these contributions:

“Faculty members in BC’s universities engage in outstanding scholarship that shapes new discoveries and deepens our understanding of the world. While much of this work happens beyond the public eye, it has far-reaching impacts on policy, technology, and society. The Distinguished Academics Awards provide a platform to acknowledge the invaluable role of university research in our communities.”

Award Recipients

Dr. Laura Schummers – Early in Career Award

Dr. Schummers is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia. Her research focuses on improving reproductive population health through health policy and outcomes research. She leads a national, four-year study funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to assess the impact of BC’s first-in-Canada policy making prescription contraception free. This work may guide contraception and pharmacare policy across Canada. Dr. Schummers is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of scholars and public policy leaders.



Dr. Dennis Hore & Dr. Bruce Wallace – Ehor Boyanowsky Academic of the Year Award

Dr. Hore (Department of Chemistry and Computer Science) and Dr. Wallace (School of Social Work and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research) from the University of Victoria are recognized for their groundbreaking project, [Substance](#). This initiative developed a drug-checking program to address BC's toxic drug crisis. Their interdisciplinary team, consisting of students from social work, chemistry, public health, and computer science, created innovative public health responses using drug-checking technologies integrated with harm reduction strategies. Their work has had a direct impact on community health and safety in BC.

Dr. Philip Owens & Dr. Ellen Petticrew – Paz Buttedahl Career Achievement Award

Dr. Owens and Dr. Petticrew, the Forest Renewal BC Endowed Research Co-Chairs in Landscape Ecology at the University of Northern British Columbia, are honored for their lifelong contributions to environmental conservation and management. Over the past three decades, their research has significantly shaped environmental policies in BC and beyond. One of their most impactful projects involved a decade-long study into the aquatic and environmental effects of the 2014 Mount Polley Mine disaster, Canada's largest mining catastrophe. Their interdisciplinary research contributed to the submission of formal charges under the federal Fisheries Act.

Awards Gala and More Information

The awards will be presented at a **gala reception on April 24 at the Fairmont Empress in Victoria, BC**. Guests will include government officials, university administrators, faculty members, union groups, and allied organizations.

Congratulations to the winners and all the nominees for their outstanding achievements. For more information about the Distinguished Academics Awards and this year's recipients, please visit www.cufa.bc.ca/awards.

For further information or media inquiries, please contact:

Annabree Fairweather

Executive Director, CUFA BC

Phone: 604-367-5856

Email: executive.director@cufa.bc.ca

CUFA BC represents over 5,500 faculty members, professional librarians, lecturers, instructors, and other academics at the five research-intensive universities in British Columbia, which include University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, Royal Roads University and University of Northern British Columbia.

CUFA BC [celebrates over fifty years](#) of working closely with the member Faculty Associations at each institution. Our purposes are to support high-quality post-secondary education and research in British Columbia and to advocate for the interests of our members.