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McDaniel one of three finalists for SSHRC Insight Award

Dr. Susan McDaniel, a University of Lethbridge sociology professor, has been chosen as one of three top finalists in the Insight Award category of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) 2016 Impact Awards.

"I extend my respect and congratulations to Susan, whose career is one most of us aspire to but few of us achieve," says Dr. Claudia Malacrida, associate vice-president of research. "This is a real coup; a quick glance at the history of this award reveals that recipients have primarily come from five institutions in the country."

"I am very honoured that the University of Lethbridge nominated me for this award and deeply pleased to be on the list of three finalists. That said, this award is not about me or individual researchers, but that social science research makes a difference. Sometimes, as in the case of my research, it makes a big difference to policy and Canadian society," says McDaniel.

In addition to McDaniel, the other two finalists are Marc-André Bernier from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and James Waldram from the University of Saskatchewan.

Each year, the Impact Awards acknowledge the achievements of exceptional researchers, students and research partners who have received SSHRC funding. Awards are bestowed in several categories, including talent, insight, connection and partnership categories, and a Gold Medal recipient is chosen. This year's awards ceremonies are scheduled for Nov. 22 in Ottawa.

McDaniel, director of the Prentice Institute and Canada Research Chair in Global Population and Life Course, primarily studies macro-level trends that intersect with the life courses of Canadians and others around the world. She was nominated by the U of L for her work in a SSHRC-funded study that compared Canadians' and Americans' views on retirement and financial security in middle age. This research project showed that older people in the future will likely be very different from older people today and their lives are being shaped dramatically by recent economic and political events. These differences highlight the need to adjust policy. From this research project, McDaniel launched another project looking into the aging workforce in Canada and the effects on the future labour market.

As a result of her research work, McDaniel is sought out by policy officials in Canada and elsewhere to advise on a range of social issues and challenges. McDaniel's work has set the research agenda in several areas of population studies and sociology. Her research project informs a variety of initiatives in social and health policy related to healthy aging. Corporate policies about retirement planning and the aging workforce have been significantly impacted by her research results.

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