

SHINE
SWAAC 2026



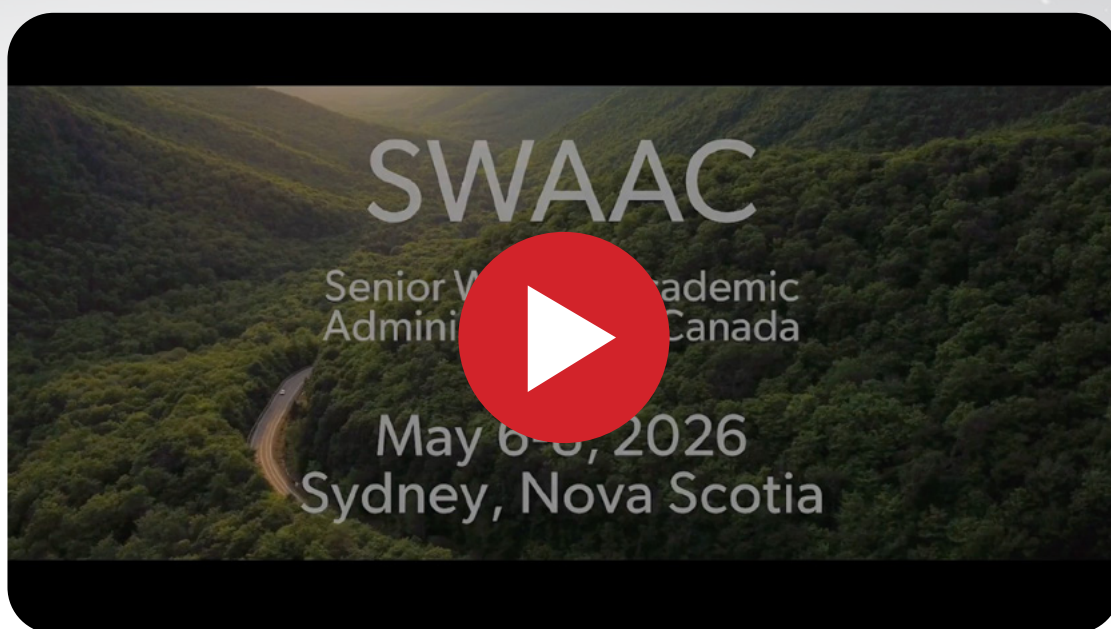
Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada **CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

Sydney, Nova Scotia
May 6-8, 2026

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT



Message from the Chair of the Organizing Committee

Dr. Ellyn Lyle
Professor and Dean, School of Education
and Health, Cape Breton University

For more than 25 years, SWAAC members have been gathering to learn with and from each another. The annual conference is an integral part of the organization’s collective history. It is a privilege to serve as an executive member representing the Atlantic region and, in that role, to host you in Sydney for the 2026 conference. Like those before me, this opportunity to welcome members is an honour.

Supported by an extraordinary conference planning committee, I look forward to welcoming you to Unama’ki. As is a trademark of the East Coast, the community has come together to support what we hope will be an excellent conference experience. We have curated speakers, entertainment, and artisanry set against a backdrop of local treats, ciders, and seafood plucked fresh from the Atlantic, hoping your time here is rich with delight.

Deep appreciation to all our sponsors, speakers, and volunteers, and a very special thank you to the members of the conference organizing committee: Allison Boutilier, Alanna MacQueen, Melissa McDonald, Brittany Mullins, Kristin O’Rourke, Rebecca Rimmer, and Mora Giovannetti.



Dr. Ellyn Lyle
Professor and Dean, School of Education and Health
Cape Breton University



Acknowledging Land and Peoples

Cape Breton University respectfully acknowledges its campus is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the treaties of peace and friendship, which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik peoples first signed with the British crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources but, in fact, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Cape Breton University also acknowledges peoples of African descent whose distinct histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for more than 400 years.



Welcome Message from

President and Vice-Chancellor, David C. Dingwall, Cape Breton University

On behalf of Cape Breton University, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada (SWAAC) Conference. CBU is pleased to host this important gathering of leaders whose work continues to shape the future of higher education across Canada.

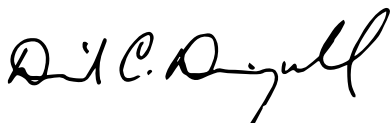
Cape Breton University is committed to high-quality, accessible education; innovative research; and a vibrant, multicultural future for Cape Breton Island. We are a young institution built through the grassroots collaboration, advocacy, and spirit of Cape Bretoners over the last seventy years. CBU's story is the story of Unama'ki/Cape Breton – an Island of immigrants, cultural exchange and expression, and unparalleled natural beauty.

For decades, SWAAC has provided a vital forum for connection, collaboration, and leadership development among women in senior academic roles. The opportunity to convene distinguished colleagues from across the country here in Cape Breton is a tremendous privilege. This conference offers an important opportunity to reflect on the evolving landscape of post-secondary education, share knowledge, and strengthen networks that support women leaders in navigating complexity and advancing institutional transformation.

I extend my sincere thanks to the conference organizers, presenters, and participants whose dedication and expertise make this gathering possible. I also encourage you to take time to experience the warmth, culture, and hospitality of Cape Breton Island during your stay.

Welcome to Cape Breton University. We are delighted to host you and wish you a productive, and memorable conference.

Yours very truly,



David C. Dingwall, P.C., K.C., ICD.D
President & Vice-Chancellor
Cape Breton University



AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

6:30-8:30pmRegistration and Welcome Reception - *The Great Hall*

THURSDAY, MAY 7

7:30-8:15amRegistration and Hot Breakfast - *The Pit Lounge*
(Vendor Market in The Great Hall)

8:20-8:35amWelcome and Opening Remarks - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

8:35-8:45amWelcome to Unama'ki - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

8:45-10:00am**Plenary Panel: From Survival to Solidarity: Rewilding Academic Leadership as an Ecology of Care** - Alysha Farrell, Candy Jones, & Sherry Baker (Brandon University)
Moderator: Lisa Starr (University of Lethbridge) - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

10:00-10:30amNetworking and Break - *Yvonne LeVert Hospitality Suite*
(Vendor Market in The Great Hall)

10:30-11:45amConcurrent Sessions:

Bioenergetics of Conflict: Understanding the Impact of Conflict on the Body -
Katerina Standish (University of Northern British Columbia).
Presented by Griffith Group (Caroline McLean) - *CE-311*

Leading Through Transition and Uncertainty: Lessons from the Trenches -
Brenda Brouwer (Queen's University), Tammy Eger (Laurentian University), Sheila Embleton (Algoma University). Moderator: Shanthi Johnson (University of Windsor) - *CE-325*

Science-Backed Secrets for Setting and Keeping Boundaries:
Dayna Lee-Baggley - *CE-318*

11:45am-1:00pmLunch and SWAAC AGM - *The Pit Lounge*
(Vendor Market in The Great Hall)

1:00-2:15pmRecruitment Panel with Boyden, Griffith Group, and KBRS.
Moderator: Megha Ajmani - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

2:15-2:45pm.....Networking and Break - *Yvonne LeVert Hospitality Suite*
(Vendor Market in The Great Hall)

2:45-4:00pm Concurrent Sessions:

Taking a Coach Approach - Anna Stuart, Presented by KBRS (Katherine Frank) - *CE-311*

Cultivating Collegiality: Transforming Academic Search & Review for Leadership - Tracy Whalen (University of Winnipeg), Dena McMartin (University of Lethbridge), Kathleen Matheos (University of Manitoba), Yabome Gilpin-Jackson (Simon Fraser University), Presented by Boyden (Kathy Rahme) - *CE-318*

The AI Revolution in Education: Insights from Students, Faculty, and Administrators: Allison Boutilier and Tanya Brann-Barrett (Cape Breton University) Presented by Academica (Bonnie Crocker) - *CE-325*

4:30pm Buses leave campus for conference hotels

6:00-9:00pm Gala and Awards Dinner - *Flavor on the Water, Royal Cape Breton Yacht Club Room*

FRIDAY, MAY 8

8:00-9:00am Hot Breakfast - *The Pit Lounge*

9:00-9:15am Welcoming Remarks - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

9:15-10:00am Keynote Speaker, Laura Lee Langley.
Moderator: Ellyn Lyle - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

10:00-10:30am Networking and Break - *Yvonne LeVert Hospitality Suite*

10:30am-11:45pm ***President's Panel*** - Susan Tighe (McMaster University), Joël Dickinson (Mount Saint Vincent University), Sheila Embleton (Algoma University), Janis Goldie (Alberta University of the Arts), Sandra Efu (Canadore College)
Moderator: Donna Kotsopoulos - *RBC Lecture Theatre CE-258*

11:45-1:00pm Closing Remarks and Lunch - *The Pit Lounge*

SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

12:00am Pick up from airport to hotels (exact time to be determined)

12:00pm Pick up from airport to hotels (exact time to be determined)

6:00pm Pick up from hotels to CBU

8:30pm Pick up from CBU to hotels

THURSDAY, MAY 7

7:00am Pick up from hotels to CBU

4:30pm Pick up from CBU to hotels

FRIDAY, MAY 8

7:30am Pick up from hotels to CBU

1:00pm Pick up from CBU to hotels

PARKING DETAILS

Cape Breton University has on-site parking for **\$1 per day**, with a kiosk available for payment in the Great Hall.

SHINE
SWAAC 2026



SENIOR WOMEN ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS OF CANADA

May 6 - 8, 2026



PRESENTED BY:



SWAAC 2026 Organizing Committee and Student Volunteers

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- **Allison Boutilier**, Information Technology and Services
- **Mora Giovannetti**, Development
- **Ellyn Lyle**, School of Education and Health
- **Alanna MacQueen**, Events and Facilities
- **Melissa McDonald**, School of Education and Health
- **Brittany Mullins**, School of Education and Health
- **Kristin O'Rourke**, School of Education and Health
- **Rebecca Rimmer**, School of Education and Health
- **CBU Events/Facilities Team**
- **CBU Technology Services Team**
- **Chartwells Catering Team**

SWAAC 2026 Sponsors

PLATINUM:

Academica Group

GOLD:

Boyden
Griffith Group
KBRS
Cape Breton University

SILVER:

Royer Thompson
Ellucian

BRONZE:

The Ability Collective
Glass Artisans
Island Folk Cider House

IN-KIND KINDNESS:

Anita Clemens Photography
Cape Breton Fudge Company
Leatherworks by Jolene
Vango Signs and Designs