

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Susan Porter Receives Debra W. Stewart Award for Outstanding Leadership in Graduate Education**

Washington, DC – The Board of Directors of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) has announced that Dr. Susan Porter, dean and vice-provost of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC), is the 2020 recipient of the Debra W. Stewart Award for Outstanding Leadership in Graduate Education. Dr. Porter received the honor at an awards ceremony held as a post-meeting event of the virtual CGS 60th Annual Meeting.

A passionate advocate for graduate education, Dr. Porter becomes the fifth Debra W. Stewart Award recipient for her invaluable contributions to the University of British Columbia and the international graduate education community. Dr. Porter has been integral to the work on “reimagining the PhD” at UBC and across the globe, including as a co-lead of a Canadian task force on the future of doctoral research and the dissertation. She created the UBC Public Scholars Initiative to support doctoral students across all disciplines by reconceiving concepts of scholarship to include collaborative, action-oriented research intended to make lasting contributions to the public good.

As dean, Dr. Porter led initiatives that supported scholarly approaches to mentorship development and assessment, and oversaw the creation of innovative and widely used online tools for recruitment and faculty networking. Under her leadership, UBC became the first university in Canada to make individual graduate programs’ data on student completion times and rates, on application and enrollment figures, and on doctoral career outcomes readily available to the public.

Dr. Porter has also been involved in many CGS projects, including Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Graduate Students and the Global Postgraduate Diversity Resource. She has served as president of the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies and is currently on the Graduate Record Exam Board of Directors. In addition, she was an expert panel member for the Council of Canadian Academies *Report on Labour Market Transition of PhD Graduates*, commissioned by the Canadian government.

“Susan is widely recognized on our campus for her ethical thought leadership, her sincere commitment to outstanding, transformative education, and her indefatigable championing of broadened conceptions of graduate education to better address the needs of the 21st century,” said Santa J. Ono, president and vice-chancellor, University of British Columbia. Recognizing her many achievements and her exceptional leadership in advancing graduate education is a wonderful message to all who, like us, share her passion for creating a better university and scholars ready to contribute fully to the complex world in which we live.”

“Dr. Porter’s innovative approaches and solutions to notions of transparency and scholarship and her unwavering commitment to supporting graduate students are just a few of the reasons the CGS Board of Directors is pleased to recognize her leadership and service to the graduate education community,” said Dr. Andrew G. Campbell, dean of the Graduate School at Brown University and chair of the Council’s Board of Directors. “Susan’s creative and strategic thinking make her an outstanding leader, and deserving of this award”.

The award, created in 2016 by the CGS Board of Directors, recognizes outstanding leadership in graduate education, particularly those leadership qualities exemplified by the Council's fifth President, Debra W. Stewart. The selection committee considers nominees with a strong reputation for ethics and integrity, a history of active participation in the graduate community, and a record of strategic vision and actions resulting in meaningful impacts. Areas of special consideration include evidence-based innovation, program development, diversity and inclusion, student learning and career outcomes, personnel management, policy advocacy in support of graduate education and research, and fiscal responsibility.

Nominees for the award must be a current senior, graduate dean at a CGS member institution (Regular or Associate) and cannot be an active member of the CGS Board of Directors. Nominations are made by member institutions and are reviewed by a selection committee of former graduate deans in the CGS community. The winner receives a \$4,000 prize to support continuing innovations at the awardee's institution.

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*The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.*