



July 31, 2019 [CAUT News Article](#)

CAUT welcomes settlement on equity targets for Canada Research Chairs Program

(Ottawa – July 31, 2019) The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is welcoming today’s announcement that an agreement has been reached to ensure more robust equity targets, transparency, and accountability within the Canada Research Chairs ([CRC](#)) Program.

Today’s settlement builds upon recent government changes to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion in the CRC program, and caps a process started in 2003 by eight academics who, with the support of CAUT, filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission over the program’s failure to reflect the diversity of Canada’s university researchers.

“Canada’s research community owes much to the eight women who came forward 15 years ago to challenge systemic bias in the CRC program and who persevered in holding the program to account,” says CAUT executive director David Robinson. “Over the past four years, the government has ushered in several initiatives aimed at increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the research and university sectors, and today’s settlement helps to further advance that work.”

The new agreement establishes a ten-year framework for the CRC program to reflect the diversity of the Canadian population, setting institutional targets for the representation of women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous peoples. Additionally, the under-representation of members of the LGBTQ+ community will be addressed for the first time.

“This is an important step towards ensuring that the Canadian research field both reflects Canada’s rich diversity and benefits from the talent and perspectives of those who were previously denied a seat at the table,” says the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Marie-Claude Landry.

Consistent with other recent changes, today’s announced settlement enhances accountability mechanisms for institutions that fail to consistently meet targets.

“The changes being made to the CRC program recognize that under-representation arises not from a lack of qualified candidates but from discriminatory and exclusionary principles or practices in society and in academia itself,” says Robinson. “By addressing these barriers we can better encourage excellence, innovation, and fairness in the research environment.”

The women academics who initially challenged the CRC program before the Canadian Human Rights Commission with the legal representation of CAUT are: Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Louise Forsyth, Glenis Joyce, Audrey Kobayashi, Shree Mulay, Susan Prentice, and the late Wendy Robbins and Michèle Ollivier.

Media Contact: Valérie Dufour, Director of Communications, Canadian Association of University Teachers; 613-293-1810 (cell); dufour@caut.ca

Backgrounder statements by some of the complainants:

"I am thrilled that this settlement addresses all the gaps in the 2006 settlement"

- Shree Mulay

"Too often, equity and diversity initiatives have been restricted to availability in a currently discriminatory pipeline. Under this new agreement, the Canada Research Chairs Program will move quickly towards reflecting the full and actual diversity of Canada. This is a path-changing understanding, for universities and other Canadian institutions."

- Susan Prentice

"This exciting agreement will change for the better what we know or think we know about ourselves, the natural world and the people in our world. It will throw doors open to everyone and welcome ways of seeing/thinking/being that have not yet found their place in schools, colleges and universities."

- Louise Forsyth

"When the agreement is in full force, the representation of the groups named will reflect their representation within the Canadian population – not just their representation in universities. This is a significant expansion of the concept of equality and something that has the power to effect significant change, especially if it is expanded to other groups and applied more widely in public institutions in the future."

- Marjorie Griffin Cohen