



University of Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

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Care labour the focus of Liberal Education Symposium

Community invited to participate in new online symposium format

The global pandemic has shone a light on many different facets of society but perhaps none more than on those who provide care. Care labour — what is it, what does it mean to you, how does it affect the economy, how is it related to ethics, gender, sexuality and ability? These are just some of the questions that will be explored at the School of Liberal Education’s fourth annual Liberal Education Symposium.

For the first time, the University of Lethbridge will offer the symposium in an online format, inviting the community at large to participate. The event takes place Friday, September 25 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. and registration is free.



“When we talk about essential workers like doctors, nurses, teachers, daycare providers, janitors and housekeepers, we are talking about those who take care of others. Although the term care labour has been taken up recently to describe this kind of work, the questions it prompts have been around a long time,” says Dr. Jan Newberry, a professor in the University’s Department of Anthropology and one of the three keynote symposium panelists. “What does it even mean to say that we care? For the planet? For our communities? For one another?”

In her talk, Newberry will use relationality to consider forms of care and what the renewed questions about care labour tell us about humans, our connections to others, and social justice.

She will be joined by Tanya Pace-Crosschild (BSc ’98), the director of Opokaa’sin Early Intervention Society, an Indigenous Family Resource network that provides programs

and services for urban Indigenous families in southern Alberta. Pace-Crosschild will discuss the importance of accessible, affordable and quality driven childcare.

As well, Dr. Sienna Caspar, an associate professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences, will share her research on care aid engagement.

“There is now an overwhelming body of evidence to show that engaged staff really do deliver better health care. By engaged staff I mean staff who are committed to their organization and emotionally invested in their work,” says Caspar. “Yet despite the evidence, most long-term and continuing care settings are unsuccessful in creating a truly engaged workforce.”

The symposium opens at 1 p.m. with introductory remarks, followed by the keynote panel presentation at 1:15 p.m. and a question and answer session at 2 p.m. Participants can then choose from a selection of break-out sessions on a broad range of topics, each with a host to present a topic and facilitate discussion.

“This is an entirely different format than we have presented in the past, and it may also bring more people into the conversation by offering these discussions online,” says Shelly

Wismath, dean of the School of Liberal Education. “Care labour is such an important issue and in the midst of a pandemic situation, everyone is understanding just how essential care is to the health and well-being of our society.”

Registration is free for the symposium and is available on the conference web page.

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/care-labour-focus-liberal-education-symposium#.X2ojYdZ7k6U>

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