

2006 - Kerry Jang (UBC) and Roland Case (SFU)

Contributed by Robert Clift
Tuesday, 11 April 2006
Last Updated Thursday, 31 August 2006

Kerry Jang and Roland Case

2006 Distinguished Academics Awards Recipients

A University of British Columbia professor of Psychiatry who applied his research on mental illness to problems in his community, and a Simon Fraser University Education professor who is integrating critical thinking skills into the elementary and secondary school curriculum were honoured on April 11th by receiving the 2006 CUFA/BC Distinguished Academics Awards.

UBC's Kerry Jang was named Academic of the Year for his work in creating support programs for homeless people in the Collingwood area of Vancouver, and in the process fostering understanding throughout his community of the problems of homeless people.

SFU's Roland Case received the Career Achievement Award for his tireless work in redefining classroom teaching to replace memorization and rote learning with subject-specific critical thinking.

These awards are presented annually to recognise faculty members at BC public universities who use their research to make contributions beyond the academy.

"Prof. Jang and Dr. Case are stellar examples of BC public university faculty who use their considerable knowledge and skills to conduct research and carry out activities that directly contribute to the community beyond the academy," said Norma Wieland, CUFA/BC President.

"Prof. Jang engaged his community in a discussion about homeless people, and created an evidence-based program to provide for some of their basic needs and in the process help them towards recovery from mental illness and addiction," Wieland continued. "Dr. Case took on the challenge of fostering critical thinking in our classrooms, and succeeded in doing so."

Priya Ramu, host of CBC Radio One's On the Coast, emceed the awards dinner on April 11th at the Law Courts Inn in Vancouver.

The CUFA/BC Distinguished Academics Awards are in their twelfth year and receive generous support from Network Appliance Inc., Sun Microsystems of Canada, the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Backgrounder

2006 CUFA/BC Distinguished Academics Awards Recipients

April 11, 2006

Academic of the Year Award - Prof. Kerry Jang

Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia

Kerry Jang has an international reputation as a researcher into the genetic and environmental factors underlying mental illness, but it is his work in his own neighbourhood for which he is being recognized.

A resident of the Collingwood area of Vancouver, Jang has long been involved in community affairs. His volunteer work in educating parents about the mental health issues facing young people lead to his joining the Board of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House. It was while on this Board that Jang had the opportunity to apply his research to the needs of his community.

As part of Vancouver's "Four Pillars" approach to dealing with the consequences of drug abuse, Jang engaged his community in a discussion of how the Neighbourhood House could constructively contribute to this city-wide effort through the use of harm reduction.

Rather than adopting a "father knows best" approach to the creation of social programs, Jang employed his skills as an educator to bring together residents, the police, politicians, and potential clients to discuss the causes of the problems and possible solutions. This resulted in the creation of a support program for homeless people that is not only effective, but also is accepted by the community.

Jang's use of evidence-based medicine in the design of Collingwood's "Breakfast and Shower" program resulted in increased referrals to other agencies and programs. In the first year of operation, more than a dozen homeless people were helped to obtain proper care and now qualify for entry into transition housing, and many more were put on the road to recovery by entering detox programs.

For his work fostering dialogue and understanding and applying his research to directly meet the needs of his community, Prof. Kerry Jang received the 2006 CUFA/BC Academic of the Year Award.

Career Achievement Award - Dr. Roland Case

Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Department of Curriculum Studies, University of British Columbia (Adjunct)

An elementary school teacher early in his career, Roland Case has since made it his life's work to study how reasoning is taught in elementary and secondary school classrooms and to provide teachers with the tools to integrate critical thinking skills into all subject areas.

One of the founders of The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC2), Case is the driving intellectual and organizational force behind the group. Over the past 10 years, he has authored or co-authored 19 teacher resource guides, and made over 300 academic, professional and community presentations in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and India.

Rather than viewing critical thinking as a stand alone skill, Case seeks to develop students' abilities to make sound judgments within the context of the subject matter being taught. In this way, critical thinking becomes more than a learning objective in and of itself-it becomes a "way of life" in the classroom.

Over the last four years, the Consortium, under Case's leadership, has focused on publishing and disseminating teaching resources for British Columbia's elementary and secondary social studies curriculum. Twenty-three teams of teachers drafted, tested, and refined the equivalent of a lesson plan in social studies for every day of the year from Kindergarten to Grade 11.

The power of Case's vision is evident in the enthusiasm expressed by academics and practitioners alike. Although his work has strong theoretical roots, its practical application has had an immeasurable effect on student learning and broadened the approaches to teaching of literally thousands of educators.

For his tireless commitment to the study and promotion of integrating critical thinking into elementary and secondary school classrooms, and the effect of this work for generations to come, Dr. Roland Case received the 2006 CUFA/BC Career Achievement Award.

2006 Distinguished Academics Awards

Sponsored by

