



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
CONTINUING EDUCATION



REIGNITE

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

CONFERENCE SUMMARY



CAUCE 2024

CALGARY • MAY 22-24

REIGNITE

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

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Reignite Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Continuing Education

Continuing education units are being challenged in many ways. We are expected to develop programming that suits changing student demographics, to maintain high-quality instruction, to serve a global student body, and to remain financially viable. Consequently, it's time to reignite our commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship.

The word 'reigniting' is a nod to the 'great reset'. How we work, learn and live is changing quickly in a post-pandemic, digitally enabled world. From instructors and leaders to learners and governments, all interested parties are rethinking the evolving fluidity and intersectionality between work and learning. Successful Continuing Education units will respond and adapt to serve learners and communities by continuously reigniting our innovative spirit.

The entrepreneurial element of this theme is a nod to the University of Calgary's *Ahead of Tomorrow* strategy that states ". . . students will thrive in programs made rich by research, hands-on experiences and entrepreneurial thinking." In other words, similar to entrepreneurs, continuing education practitioners are always looking for new ideas and better ways of doing things. We are passionate, flexible, and resourceful in our mission to deliver high-quality educational opportunities.



"I was impressed with the openness of the attendees and everyone's willingness to engage with me."
- CAUCE 2024 delegate

"The concurrent sessions covered a variety of interesting topics and were the perfect length. I enjoyed being able to choose which sessions to attend."

- CAUCE 2024 delegate



CAUCE 2024: Calgary AB

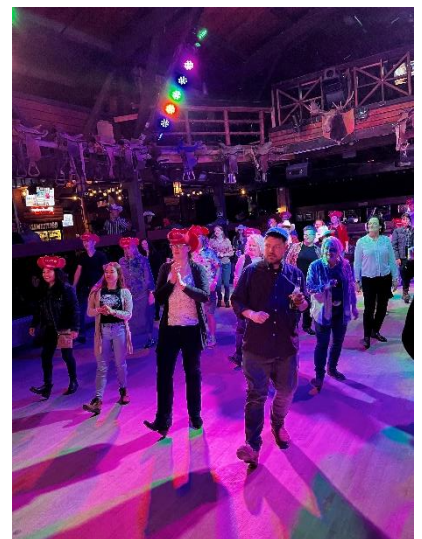
In May 2024, continuing education practitioners from across Canada gathered both virtually and in-person in Calgary Alberta to participate in the first hybrid conference for the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education's (CAUCE) 70th Annual Conference. Embracing this year's theme Reignite Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Continuing Education, conference delegates also celebrated and recognized leaders in the field of continuing education.

Hosted at the University of Calgary's Downtown campus, the event provided over 300 continuing education practitioners a diverse mix of plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, social events, and networking opportunities.

Held annually since 1954, this year's CAUCE conference continued to meet its mandate of enlarging the scope and quality of educational opportunities for adults at the university level. The conference also upheld CAUCE's goal of maintaining professionalism in program development, management, and administration, and stimulating and disseminating creative ways to provide programs that continue to meet the continuous changes in the workplace.



"An excellent
conference overall!"
- CAUCE 2024 delegate



The CAUCE 2024 conference provided valuable learning opportunities and fostered connections among CE professionals.

1. **Networking and Interaction:** Attendees appreciated the opportunity to network, share ideas, and connect with colleagues from across Canada. The chance to meet like-minded professionals was valuable.
2. **Energy and Organization:** The energy of presenters and attendees contributed to a positive experience. Additionally, the conference was well-organized.
3. **Relevant Information:** Delegates found the sessions relevant and applicable to their work, providing insights for program development and delivery.
4. **Diversity and Attractive Features:** The diversity of attendees and session topics stood out. Some attendees wished for more time to attend talks and interact with vendors.
5. **In-Person Networking:** In-person networking was highly regarded, along with the sessions, food, and conference swag.
6. **Timely Topics:** Sessions covered timely topics related to continuing education (CE) in Canada and the world.
7. **Well-paced Schedule:** The conference schedule allowed for breaks and rest, avoiding exhaustion from back-to-back sessions.



Statement from CAUCE president Rod Lastra



As the current president of CAUCE, it is my privilege to reflect on the successful 2024 annual conference held in Calgary, Alberta—a seminal gathering that underscored the vital role of lifelong education in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape.

This year's conference, themed "Reigniting Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Continuing Education," was not just a showcase of national and international advancements but also a vibrant hub for meaningful engagement. We delved into the challenges that stimulate opportunities and transformations crucial for adopting an innovative, **human-centered approach in continuing education**. Our conference emphasized the significance of discourse, celebrating the diversity of knowledge, perspectives, and the shared language that fosters open-mindedness.

We also cherished the informal exchanges—chatting, laughing, and sharing memorable moments—that are as enlightening as the formal sessions. These interactions remind us that our gatherings are more than just meetings; they are **epistemic communities** rich with insights and inspiration. As we move forward, let us carry the spirit of this conference to ignite creativity and passion in our fields, continually pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve in lifelong education. Together, let's start something remarkable.



"Great job, CAUCE team. As always, the event was a hit."

- CAUCE 2024 delegate

Statement from the conference host Sheila LeBlanc



As I reflect upon the 70th annual CAUCE conference, I am filled with the deepest gratitude to all who participated in making the event a resounding success. We filled the house—both virtually and physically—with 80 virtual and 221 in-person delegates. To the conference planning committee, the CAUCE Executive and Secretariat, our keynote and concurrent session speakers, the volunteers, and all the actively engaged delegates, thank you all for making it a conference to remember!

This gathering, both in person and virtually, of friends and colleagues provided a precious opportunity for us to share, learn, play, and reflect together. It was exciting to welcome our

colleagues and friends to Calgary. Hosting the event at the UCalgary Downtown Campus was both thrilling and nerve-wracking, as our Continuing Education team is new to managing this campus. It was a privilege to share a bit of Calgary's unique blend of natural beauty, urban vibrancy, and western charm. The city's entrepreneurial spirit mirrors the innovative mindset we strive to cultivate within our professional community. From the scenic landscapes to the energetic discussions, every aspect of this conference has been invigorating and memorable.

Over three days, we collectively explored the forefront of continuing education, addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by our rapidly changing world. The sessions were enriched by the experiences and perspectives of our colleagues from across the country and beyond, fostering a dynamic exchange of innovative ideas and best practices. We delved into topics such as digital transformation, the evolving use of AI in our practice, and the integration of entrepreneurial thinking into our educational strategies.

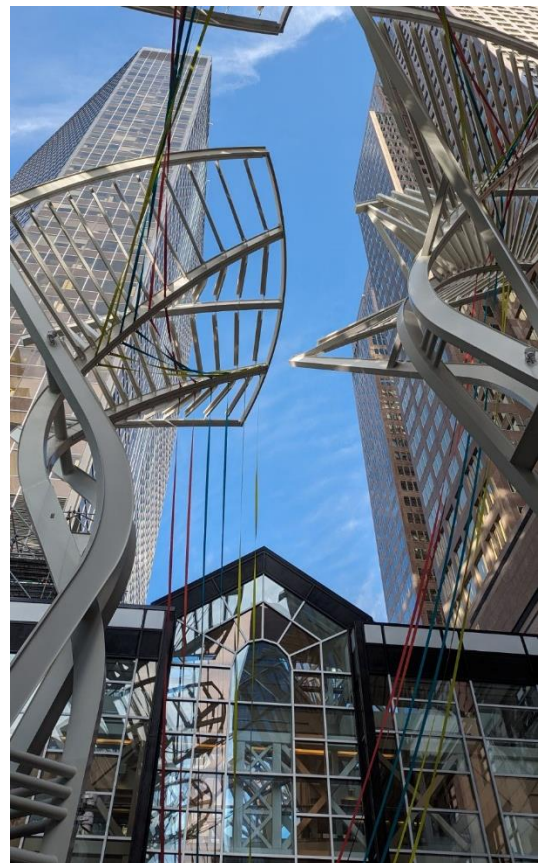
Amid a backdrop of our increasingly complex, polarized, and unstable world, our opening keynote, Former Mayor Naheed Nenshi, reminded us that this is indeed a “wet clay moment,” presenting an opportunity for Continuing Education teams to contribute to a brighter future by grounding our work in “service, empathy, and love.” We were further informed and inspired by our closing keynote, Dr. Malinda Smith, Vice Provost and Associate Vice President Research (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion), who shared critical data and insights regarding structural inequities and system biases. We were encouraged to continue and increase our efforts in supporting inclusion, access, and social justice for all.

In keeping with the theme “Reignite Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Continuing Education,” we even took some innovative and entrepreneurial risks! This included planning and operationalizing our **first hybrid conference** and a **pop-up panel** based on the interest generated by our delegates in the first day’s “hot topics” sessions. It was fun, chaotic, and a great learning experience—just like life in the field of Continuing Education!

The commitment to lifelong learning and educational excellence was evident throughout the conference. The presentations, conversations, and contributions underscored the resilience and adaptability of our field, demonstrating that together we can meet the evolving needs of our learners and communities. This conference has reinforced the importance of staying connected, sharing knowledge, and continuously igniting our creative spirit.

As we return to our respective institutions, let us carry forward the insights and inspiration gained from this conference. Our collective efforts will undoubtedly shape the future of continuing education in Canada, ensuring that we remain responsive, innovative, and dedicated to the success of our learners and communities.

On behalf of the University of Calgary, it has been an honor to host our distinguished CAUCE colleagues and dear friends in Calgary. I look forward to seeing the impact of our shared knowledge and renewed commitments in the coming year. Thank you once again for making this conference truly special.



Statement from the conference planning committee chair Jennie Atkins

As Chair of the conference planning committee, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for making this year's CAUCE conference in Calgary a resounding success. The theme, "Reignite: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Continuing Education," set the stage for an event filled with dynamic discussions, groundbreaking ideas, and inspiring moments.



Thank you to the University of Calgary for hosting CAUCE's first hybrid conference and pulling out all the stops for a truly memorable Calgarian welcome.

The energy and enthusiasm that permeated our conference were truly invigorating. From the keynote addresses from former Calgary Mayor, Naheed Nenshi and Dr. Malinda Smith to the collaborative workshops and networking opportunities, each aspect of the conference was designed to inspire and empower us.

I would like to extend a special thank you to all our speakers, presenters, and participants who contributed their expertise and passion to this conference. Your contributions were instrumental in creating a vibrant and enriching experience for all attendees. Additionally, I want to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the planning committee and the many volunteers whose dedication and hard work made this event possible.

Thank you once again for your participation, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to excellence in continuing education.

Opening Keynote: Naheed Nenshi

A Wet Clay Moment for Continuing Education ... and All of Us

Naheed Nenshi opened his keynote at the 2024 CAUCE conference by reflecting on a pivotal moment from 2014, when, as Mayor of Calgary, he was honored with a Blackfoot name by elder Pete Standing Alone, symbolizing leadership and collective movement. His address, enriched by the principles of inclusion, diversity, respect, and empathy, highlighted the crucial role of selfless service, or Seva, particularly vital in today's context of pandemic aftermath, mental health crises, and social upheavals. Nenshi emphasized that for those in lifelong and continuing education, embracing community service could lead to both personal and collective growth, fostering environments that educate, heal, and empower. He criticized the superficial responses to our age's crises, including inadequate pandemic preparedness and ongoing mental health issues, urging educators to rethink their approaches to support resilience and wellness beyond mere skills attainment.

Expanding on these challenges, Nenshi discussed the intertwined issues of economic displacement and environmental concerns, pressing the need for education systems that are agile and empathetic, rooted in real-world contexts. He argued for nurturing a culture of service, resilience, and innovation to help communities adapt and thrive in changing circumstances. Highlighting the transformative potential of education, Nenshi's vision for a "wet clay moment" offers a metaphor for the current era of significant creative potential, stating:

"We are actually living in a moment of unbridled and unprecedented creativity... a moment where we have the ability to mold a completely new future."

His perspective resonates deeply with the goals of lifelong education, positioning it as a pivotal force for addressing social inequities and fostering cohesion through informed, empathetic community action.

"Great speakers and very relevant topics"

- CAUCE 2024 delegate



Pop-up Panel: AI in the Age of Misinformation



“Whenever a new medium or human extension occurs, it creates a new myth for itself” — Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media (1964, p. 252)

This quote aptly encapsulates the dual nature of AI—a transformative technology set to redefine what we do and how we do it. At this year's CAUCE conference, discussions about AI ranged from enthusiastic endorsement to cautious concern, emphasizing that AI's influence is inevitable, like a tidal wave or a Calgary downpour. The panel featuring OpenAI's ChatGPT (the myth maker itself) as a special guest, alongside other non-algorithmic enabled human participant, highlighted the previous day's "hot topic" on AI ethics. More on the panel in a moment. Let me first provide a very brief summary of the previous day's main talking points (Please note that none of the aforementioned researchers were present at the conference; their arguments and perspectives were invoked during our discussions to enrich the debate).

The discourse on the risks associated with unbounded AI remains both fascinating and concerning. Researchers like Yann LeCun from NYU and Meta recognize the inherent dangers of AI, yet contend that achieving sentience or superintelligence is still distant. Conversely, Roman Yampolskiy of the University of Louisville suggests that superintelligent AI might emerge by 2030. Despite their vastness and energy demands, current large language models lack essential capabilities like memory retention and creativity, highlighting a significant gap between today's AI and the autonomous intelligence often depicted in media discussions. The

ethical concerns related to AI, including misinformation and systemic bias, have long been emphasized by scholars such as Noam Chomsky and Gary Marcus. AI's ability to amplify misinformation poses substantial risks to public perception, reinforcing harmful biases and creating false memories. Edward Bernays' historical manipulation of media highlights the rapid and broad spread of misinformation facilitated by AI. Despite regulatory frameworks like the EU's AI Act, the challenge of effectively regulating AI and ensuring enforcement persists. This underscores the need for a balanced approach that fosters innovation while establishing stringent regulatory measures. The main message conveyed was this: if we struggle to oversee and implement guardrails for today's technology, how will we manage much more advanced AI?

Although we explored the ethics of AI practice during the panel discussion, the main focus was on higher education—specifically, the factors we need to consider for its incorporation into learning and education. There is a need to redefine and update traditional pedagogical and andragogical models and address the apparent lack of preparedness in dealing with these issues, among others. Ethical standards and safeguards require a clear understanding of AI's



capabilities in its various forms, identifying areas of concern and vulnerabilities, and developing meaningful regulations and policies designed to contextualize ethics. All of this requires time and effort, resources we are currently short on due to the evolving and pervasive nature of the technology. We need time to discuss what creative works mean and how we assess them, especially since generative AI has reopened the debate on inspiration, style transfer, and creativity.

As Mario Carpo recently stated, "there is no creation without precedence"; what this means for the use of AI in learning and assessment remains to be seen. Sadly, despite an engaging exchange of ideas, our panel is somewhat dated. As of June 5th, OpenAI launched ChatGPT Edu for universities—marking another development that outpaces our ability to respond in a meaningful manner!

Closing Keynote: Malinda Smith



Understanding the complexity of diversity is important for inclusive excellence and innovation in the contemporary moment. Transdisciplinary research highlights the many ways in which diversity can spark ingenuity and innovation. Diversity fuels a greater array of ideas, knowledges, skills, perspectives, lived experiences and social networks. It can spark the imagination, unlock intellectual curiosity, and advances transdisciplinary scholarship. Diverse leadership teams and research teams outperform homogeneous teams, generating better and more sustainable problem solving, decision making, and overall performance. Yet, despite the benefits of diversity, there is a diversity-innovation paradox, and the novel

ideas of non-majority and non-traditional scholars encounter social exclusion or remain on the margins. Structural inequities and systemic biases, including the preference for, and the social injustice of, sameness remain persistent challenges.

This keynote explored why diversity is necessary, but not sufficient, for reigniting innovation. It highlighted the importance of social inclusion and meaningful engagement of diversity of peoples as well as knowledges, work experiences -- and credentials. Continuing education has an indispensable role to play in reigniting the power of diversity and innovation.



Concurrent Sessions

There were 73 individuals who presented 42 concurrent sessions, organized within five streams:

1. Innovating access, services, programs and partnerships
2. Supporting experiential learning and student success
3. Creating a pathway to lifelong learning
4. Exploring effective structures, models and ways of working
5. Alternative credentials

Thank you to everyone who attended CAUCE 2024, and a heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors!

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