

## **Introducing Dr. Virginia McKendry**

Dr. Virginia McKendry is an associate professor in the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University, where she primarily teaches communication and cultural theory to mid-career students enrolled in the MA in Professional Communication program. A mature student herself, she earned an MA in Women's Studies from Simon Fraser University in 1993 and a PhD in British History from York University in 1998, focusing her doctoral research on the use of family values rhetoric in political communication. Virginia currently conducts research on women and leadership, gender and communication, and education and communication. In addition to her academic career, she has worked as an organizational culture consultant in the non-profit sector, as a researcher for a major Canadian PR agency, and is currently a member of CPRS' Vancouver Island chapter, where she is always looking for ways to connect education, research, and practice.

With her colleague Dr. Julia Jahansoozi (a PR scholar who also works at RRU), Virginia has recently begun a new line of research that looks at the career pathways and contributions of pioneering PR practitioners who helped to shape Canadian public relations as a professional field and a legitimate occupation in its own right. Virginia and Julia are writing a book based on their experience, in aid of understanding how women from different backgrounds navigated their way into typically male-dominated roles and what they contributed to the discipline along the way. The book also provides a model for considering both human agency and the impact of place in historical perspectives on PR, and how looking at PR's past in this way can meaningfully inform our response to current challenges within the profession.