



PACIFIC COAST UNIVERSITY
FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH SCIENCES

Susanne Bruyère

Susanne Bruyère holds a PhD in rehabilitation counseling psychology. She is professor of disability studies at Cornell University located in Ithaca, New York, and teaches in the Cornell School of Industrial Labour Relations (ILR).



Bruyère obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology and special education and a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation counselling prior to completing her doctorate in rehabilitation counselling psychology. She has since added a master's degree in adult education and another in public administration. She worked as a practicing psychologist at a stress and biofeedback clinic and taught professional development for practicing rehabilitation counsellors prior to going to Cornell.

The ILR is a multi-disciplinary environment with faculty expertise in labour relations, human resources, organizational behaviour, labour economics and other areas, which enables them to examine workplace issues and design related solutions from a multiplicity of perspectives.

While Bruyère has served as a practitioner and program administrator in disability management in prior positions, her focus has been on workplace discrimination and human resources practices, both of which are specifically targeted on disability. During her time at Cornell, she has strived to bring the issues of disability in the workplace to the forefront within the ILR School and the University as a whole. She believes that PCU-WHS can partner with Cornell in advancing the disability-focused disciplines into the academic conscience.

Cornell has developed, over the last three years, a series of 11 courses focused on disability in the workplace and as they are eager to see workplaces change, a collaboration between the two Universities provides an opportunity to reach even more young professionals with this much needed information. Cornell does not offer a degree in disability management. The ILR offers both undergraduate and master's degrees in industrial and labour relations, with specializations in fields such as human resources, labour relations, conflict resolution and organizational behaviour, and Bruyère has been working toward trying to get disability into that course work.

The human resource professionals of tomorrow and workplaces need to understand effective case management for workers returning from health-related absences. While her students are not training to become case managers, she envisions introducing select disability management concepts and approaches to broaden awareness of the value of these approaches within the workplace, and she sees a partnership between the two Universities as a viable future goal, perhaps in the form of shared projects.