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MEDIA RELEASE

Professor who "brings math to life" named Royal Society of Canada College Member

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Education professor Nathalie Sinclair, whose research is transforming how teachers and learners approach mathematics, has been named a member of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists.

Sinclair, who holds a Canada Research Chair in Tangible Mathematics Learning, is one of 70 new members named to the cohort of the RSC.

The new College members join more than 200 current members from 55 universities, including three others from SFU. Members are Canadians who, at an early age in their careers, have demonstrated a high level of achievement.

"Professor Sinclair works across several fields, and actively communicates with diverse groups, to ensure that research findings and learning tools are fully explored and applied," says Joy Johnson, SFU's vice-president, Research and International. "Her creativity and leadership will be a valuable asset to the Royal Society community."

Fascinated by the potential of technology to bring mathematics to "vibrant life," Sinclair's work has led to the development of several tools for the classroom. These include TouchCounts, a free app that engages children in exploring mathematical concepts through touch, sight and sound.

The app has been downloaded more than 80,000 times across 10 countries, and is being translated into six languages, including two First Nations languages.

"My hope is that we get more kids thinking and feeling more confident about mathematics," says Sinclair, who earlier this year was named Canada's 2017 Mathematics Ambassador by Partners in Research (PiR). The award recognizes her longstanding contributions to, and promotion of, mathematics.

Sinclair has a passion for how digital technologies, and dynamic geometry software in particular, change the way people "think, move and feel" mathematically.

"Canada is committed to becoming a leader in science and technology, and mathematical understanding is critical to scientific and technological understanding," says Sinclair. "Developing high-quality mathematics learning applications that are available to all young learners and their teachers, in English and French, can play a key role in enhancing mathematical understanding in young Canadians."

Her own experience with technology's role in mathematics learning helped shape her research direction. After undergoing brain surgery a decade ago Sinclair was unable to interpret letters. Critical to her recovery was the use of tactile gestures and tracing shapes, which led her to co-develop TouchCounts with Nicholas Jackiw. Her research shows the app can play a role in developing young children's fluency in counting and adding.

Sinclair's research in mathematics education has been widely influential in Canada and internationally, sparking collaborations in the U.S., the UK, Israel, Australia and Italy, where she has been named a visiting professor at la Sapienza University in Rome. She is also the founding editor of the new journal *Digital Experiences in Mathematics Education*.

The college is Canada's first national system of multidisciplinary recognition for the emerging generation of the country's intellectual leadership. It comprises a fourth entity, along with three academies, within the RSC. Together, college members will address issues of particular concern to new scholars, artists and scientists, for the advancement of understanding and the benefit of society, taking advantage of the interdisciplinary approaches fostered by the establishment of the college.

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