

## NEWS RELEASE



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### Laurier professor's book shortlisted for prestigious Donner Prize

WATERLOO – A book co-authored by Laurier political scientist Christopher Alcantara that pushes for legislative change encouraging Aboriginal land ownership is a finalist for the prestigious Donner Prize, awarding excellence and innovation in Canadian public policy writing.

*Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights* was co-authored by Alcantara, an assistant political science professor at Laurier; Tom Flanagan, a former University of Calgary professor and former advisor to Stephen Harper, and economist André Le Dressay.

"Many great books have won in the past and it's very exciting just to be nominated," said Alcantara. "Usually the books that are nominated are ones that are politically salient, and we're glad to see our book is considered to be important for Canadian public policy."

The Donner Prize is one of the largest and most prestigious of its kind. The prize is awarded by The Donner Canadian Foundation, which aims to encourage public policy research and promote discussion of policy issues in the public arena. The winning title is awarded \$35,000. Shortlisted finalists receive \$5,000 each.

There were five shortlisted books out of 69 entries. The jury for the Donner Prize said of *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights*: "Persuasive argument...admirable clarity of analysis and prescription...the strength of the book is the authors' ability to advance a compelling, alternative perspective to a long-standing issue for both governments and aboriginal peoples."

In the book, the authors defend the ideas of C.T. (Manny) Jules, chief of the First Nations Tax Commission and former chief of the Kamloops Indian Band. They argue that underlying title to reserve lands be transferred from the Crown to the First Nation.

"We noticed that there was a significant problem with how Canada was treating its Indigenous People in terms of property rights," said Alcantara. "Our book was a way of explaining to Canadian policy makers why this proposed change in legislation makes sense to Indigenous People and to Canada."

The other shortlisted books include *Perverse Cities: Hidden Subsidies, Wonky Policy and Urban Sprawl* by Pamela Blais, *Le CHUM, une tragédie québécoise* by Robert Lacroix and Louis Maheu, *Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World* by Doug Saunders and *Oka: A Political Crisis and its Legacy* by Harry Swain.

The winning title will be announced at a gala dinner in Toronto April 27, 2011.