

## 2015-2016 Faculty of Education HSS Seed Grant Competition

**Peter Crocker (KIN)**

**Project Title:** Exploring elite female athletes' lived experiences of mental toughness and self-compassion

**Project Abstract:**

Mental toughness and self-compassion are psychological processes that may be critical for elite female athletes to succeed in their pursuit of excellence. The objectives of the proposed research will be to explore how elite female athletes perceive and experience mental toughness, and to examine their beliefs about self-compassion and its compatibility with mental toughness to manage stress and facilitate sport achievement. An interpretive phenomenological analysis approach will be employed to examine the meanings that particular sporting experiences hold for six to eight elite female athletes. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted focusing on the athletes' understanding of mental toughness, the potential benefits and drawbacks of self-compassion in achieving success, and their perceptions of the compatibility of self-compassion and mental toughness within the context of high performance sport. The findings will further our understanding of psychological processes and their influence on sporting achievement in high performance settings.