



*Senate Committee on Awards*

## **PRESIDENT'S UNIVERSITY-WIDE TEACHING AWARDS**

**The President's University-Wide Teaching Awards honour those who, through innovation and commitment, have significantly enhanced the quality of learning by York students. Four awards are offered each year in the following categories:**

- ◆ Full-Time tenured faculty with 10 or more years full-time teaching experience
- ◆ Full-Time faculty (tenured/tenure-stream/CLA) with less than 10 years teaching experience
- ◆ Contract and adjunct faculty
- ◆ Teaching assistants

The purpose of these awards is to provide significant recognition for excellence in teaching, to encourage its pursuit, to publicize such excellence when achieved across the University and in the wider community, and to promote informed discussion of teaching and its improvement. The awards demonstrate the value York University attaches to teaching. Recipients of the awards, selected by the Senate Committee on Awards, receive \$3,000, have their names engraved on the President's University-Wide Teaching Award plaque in Vari Hall and are recognized at convocation ceremonies. Recipients will also be invited to participate in the University's annual Teaching in Focus conference in May.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Faculty, students and/or alumni may make nominations, individually or collectively. Graduate students may not nominate their current supervisor. There is no limit to the number of nominations which may be made.

Nominees in the first three categories above must have taught at York for at least three years. The TA award is open to all teaching assistants currently enrolled in a graduate degree program at York who have held the equivalent of at least one full teaching assistantship in the year prior to their nomination or at least 1.4 teaching assistantships over the previous two years. Recipients of these awards will not, in the normal course of events, be eligible to receive an award in the same category more than once in their careers. The Committee reserves the right not to make an award in a given year. Current members of the Awards Committee are not eligible for nomination.

### **CRITERIA**

Defining teaching excellence is a challenging endeavour because it requires consideration of how teaching varies by discipline, context, technique, class size and additional factors, such as cultural or gender approaches and the enhancement of the learning environment for students with disabilities.

The criteria below represent some, but not necessarily all, of the characteristics associated with excellent teaching. The criteria are organized by the areas where excellent teaching has its greatest impact: i) on student learning, ii) on mentoring and the scholarship of teaching and learning and iii) on programs of study and curriculum development. The criteria are not ranked in order of importance, and the examples are intended to be illustrative but not exhaustive. It is expected that all nominations will demonstrate an impact on student learning. In addition, for full-time and contract and adjunct faculty, it is expected that nominations

will demonstrate continuing excellence over a period of years and some impact in the other two areas. However, it not expected that all criteria will be fulfilled. In addition, for TAs, it is expected that nominations will demonstrate a developing impact on student learning, but they are not expected to have mastered all criteria.

### **STUDENT LEARNING**

- fosters the development of intellectual growth of students by encouraging and supporting learners to develop critical thinking, achieve a deep understanding of a discipline or interdisciplinary field, challenge assumptions and develop new insights;
- inspires passion for the subject matter and an appreciation of its relevance;
- articulates clear learning outcomes and helps student achieve them, ensuring that outcomes relate to mastery of content, development of skills and academic and civic responsibilities;
- states clearly the expectations made of students and supports the development of learners' resourcefulness through guidance on strategies and on resources available to them;
- models the learning process and fosters the development of learner confidence through fair assessments and prompt and useful feedback;
- seeks opportunities for undergraduate students to be involved in research projects;
- models a variety of different teaching approaches (lectures, discussions, technology-enhanced, group work, experiential education) to support a variety of learning approaches;
- creates an inclusive classroom environment that acknowledges and respects diverse student backgrounds, experiences and values;
- demonstrates innovation and flexibility in accommodating students with special needs in ways that maintain academic integrity and demonstrate sound pedagogy;
- mentors students in developing effective learning behaviours.

### **TEACHING DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO MENTORING AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- stays abreast of current and emerging research into teaching to support students with different needs and learning styles, especially those that support the York student demographic;
- supports and mentors TAs and colleagues to develop effective teaching practices;
- collaborates with faculty (e.g. team-teaching) and other educational colleagues, units and centres to promote effective teaching and learning practices;
- participates in discussions, consultations, task forces and conferences that address pedagogical issues;
- conducts classroom-based research and prepare presentations and publications on teaching and learning.

### **PROGRAMS AND CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT, INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES**

- demonstrates an understanding of pedagogical theory as it informs teaching in the discipline, the program of study and Degree Learning Expectations;
- evaluates innovative practices and institutional priorities to identify how they can best contribute to the enhancement of student learning and overall support of the program (e.g. technology for learning, experiential education, accommodation of learners; General Education courses);
- develops new courses for the program and/or interdisciplinary courses;
- prepares presentations and publications relating to curriculum development in the discipline.

A complete nomination includes a statement of teaching/learning philosophy and practice (maximum 2000 words) that demonstrates that the nominee has fulfilled the required criteria, a summary of teaching evaluations (regular in-course assessment instruments or information collected expressly for the nomination), and three letters of support, two from current students and alumni in all areas of the nominee's teaching, and one from a colleague familiar with the individual's teaching activities who, in the case of TAs, can speak to the teaching, professional development/mentorship requirement. Letters will be solicited by the nominator; the nominee must not request letters from students. Nominations will normally be supported only by information from current and former members of the York community.

Nominators of TAs are encouraged to consult the [Teaching Commons](#).

## **PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY OF NOMINATION FILES**

Nominators, nominees and those writing letters of reference should be aware that **material in nomination files will not be treated as private or confidential** and may be quoted and/or summarized in the following forms: citations delivered at convocation; Senate reports; newspaper articles; and other publications. Nominators are asked to note and to make referees aware of the policy on the privacy and confidentiality of the material in these files.

Nominations must be submitted online by February 5, 2016. The online nomination form is available [here](#).