

## **WESTERN AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING**

### **A. A List of the Annual Awards for Excellence in Teaching**

A total of 7 awards are available annually in four categories:

- Up to 6 awards may be distributed among the Pleva, Robinson and Armitt Awards. If in any year there are no recipients of the Marilyn Robinson Award, up to 5 awards may be given in the Pleva and Armitt categories combined.
- One additional award may be given in the “Western Award for Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching” category.

#### **1. The Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching**

All continuing members of full-time\* faculty who are either Limited Term or tenured at the University and its Affiliated University Colleges are eligible for nomination. Previous recipients of this award are ineligible for renomination.

Award recipient(s) will receive a medal and commemorative scroll which normally will be presented at the appropriate Spring Convocation. In addition, his/her name will be inscribed on a plaque which will be displayed in a prominent location in the University.

The University Awards for Excellence in Teaching were created in 1980-81. In 1987, the awards were named in honor of Edward Gustav Pleva, Western's first geography teacher in 1938. Dr. Pleva was Head of the Department of Geography from the time it was established in 1948 until 1968. He has received a number of teaching awards for his contribution to the development of modern geographical education in Canada at all levels. His special area of interest is the Great Lakes region.

Dr. Pleva has acknowledged that, "Teaching has always been central to my career. My only claim to recognition rests in the relationship I have with the thousands of geography students in the classes I taught. I appreciate the many awards, including the Massey Medal, I have received as a teacher. In my opinion teaching is one of the highest callings."

\* For the purposes of this award, Clinical Academics appointed under *Conditions of Appointment: Physicians Appointed in Clinical Departments and Clinical Divisions of Basic Science Departments* are eligible for nomination.

#### **2. The Angela Armitt Award for Excellence in Teaching by Part-Time Faculty**

The award for excellence in teaching by part-time faculty was established at Western in 1989-90. It is to be awarded based on evidence of continued outstanding contributions to the academic development of students.

All part-time\* members of faculty of the University and its Affiliated University Colleges are eligible for nomination for the award. Previous recipients of the award are ineligible for renomination.

Award recipient(s) will receive a medal and commemorative scroll which normally will be presented during the appropriate Spring Convocation. In addition, his/her name will be inscribed on a plaque which will be displayed in a prominent location in the University.

In 2003, the award was renamed in honor of Angela Mary Armitt (BA'36, MA'67, LLD'87), a champion of life-long learning, and Western's first Dean of the Faculty of Part-Time and Continuing Education. In addition to her honorary degree from Western in 1987, York University conferred a Doctor of Laws upon her in 1975 as “one of education's best

ambassadors.” A much-loved administrator, she was dedicated to helping others achieve their university degrees and she travelled to the many extension centres where adult students were able to work towards a university degree on a part-time basis. She described herself as, “the first travelling saleswoman extolling the virtues of a degree from Western.”

\* For the purposes of this award, a part-time faculty member is one who held an academic appointment to teach at least one full (1.0 or equivalent) degree-credit course offered by Western or an Affiliated University College during the fiscal year (May 1 through April 30) preceding nomination, and was not a regular full-time faculty member, visiting faculty member, or graduate teaching assistant during the fiscal year (May 1 – Through April 30) preceding nomination. Previous recipients of this award are ineligible for renomination.

### 3. **The Marilyn Robinson Award for Excellence in Teaching**

In 1996-97, the award for excellence in teaching was established at Western to be awarded based on evidence of outstanding contributions in the area of classroom, laboratory, or clinical instruction.

All continuing members of full-time faculty who are either Limited Term or Probationary at the University and its Affiliated University Colleges and who usually have seven years or less of full-time university teaching experience at the time of their nomination are eligible for nomination for the award. Previous recipients of this award are ineligible for renomination.

Award recipient(s) will receive a commemorative scroll which normally will be presented at the appropriate Spring Convocation. Also, at the appropriate faculty's award ceremonies, the award recipient will be presented with an item that is emblematic of Marilyn's love for beauty and life: a framed reproduction of an artist such as Georgia O'Keefe or Claude Monet, to be selected by the recipient in consultation with the Teaching Support Centre. In addition, the award recipient's name will be inscribed on a plaque which will be displayed in a prominent location in the University.

Marilyn Robinson was an enthusiastic and inspirational lecturer who was much loved and respected by both colleagues and students. In her roles as Assistant Professor in Physiology and Coordinator of the Educational Development Office, she helped raise the profile of teaching at Western. One special gift was an ability to establish a rapport with students: she was always available for students, and each was dealt with warmly and compassionately, whether it was to discuss an academic or a personal problem. Through interaction with many colleagues she became captivated with the idea of exciting students by means of active learning and problem solving, and convinced many throughout the University of the benefits of this approach. Her expertise was recognized with many teaching awards including the 3M Teaching Fellowship and the Excellence in Teaching Award (Pleva).

### 4. **Western Award for Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching**

Skillfully and meaningfully integrating technology into a course in order to benefit student learning is a complex endeavour. Continuing to innovate, reflect, and improve the integration of technology across courses is a recognition of the capacity of technology to enhance student learning. The Western Award for Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Teaching is meant to recognize and reward the contributions of faculty members at Western University and its Affiliated University Colleges who have significantly improved the experience and outcomes of their students through the intentional incorporation of technology into their teaching practice.

All continuing members of faculty who are Tenured, Probationary, or Limited Term at Western or the Affiliated University Colleges are eligible for nomination. In addition, part-time\* members of faculty are also eligible for nomination. Previous recipients of this award are ineligible for renomination.

\* For the purposes of this award, a part-time faculty member is one who held an academic appointment to teach at least one full (1.0 or equivalent) degree-credit course offered by Western or an Affiliated University College during the fiscal year (May 1 through April 30) preceding nomination, and was not a regular full-time faculty member, visiting faculty member, or graduate teaching assistant during the fiscal year (May 1 – Through April 30) preceding nomination.

The award winner will receive a medal and commemorative scroll, which will normally be presented during the appropriate Spring Convocation. The award winner's name will be also inscribed on a plaque, displayed in a prominent location in the University. The winner's achievement will be captured as an on-line video and profiled on the Western Award for Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Teaching microsite.

**B. The Awards Committee (SUTA)**

A subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Awards (SCAPA), the Subcommittee on Teaching Awards (SUTA), will consider the nominations. Wherever possible, SUTA seeks a consensus regarding the awards on the basis of the materials contained in dossiers submitted to the University Secretariat. The members of the Subcommittee are willing to provide informal advice on the preparation of dossiers.

**C. Nomination Procedure**

Nominations may be initiated by an individual or group, including students, alumni, fellow faculty members, Deans, and department Chairs. However, all nominations should be submitted by two primary nominators through the Dean of the nominee's Faculty or School, or Principal of the nominee's Affiliated University College. The Dean or Principal is ultimately responsible for the compiling of the nomination dossier and for forwarding the electronic copy as one PDF file to the University Secretariat no later than January 15. (See additional information about formatting of the electronic dossier in Section D. Format for Nominations). Regardless of who initiates the nomination, consultation with other relevant parties, including the Faculty's or department's Awards Committee, is strongly advised.

Each nominee will be given the opportunity to decline to let his or her name stand and should be given the opportunity to attest to the completeness of the dossier prepared for viewing by the nominators.

Each nomination dossier should contain two official letters of nomination. The nominators should be familiar with the nominee and the contents of the dossier.

The Committee strongly suggests that letters of support be solicited by the nominators rather than by the nominee. Nominators are responsible for advising people who will be forwarding letters of support that their letters will be available for public view if permission is given by a winning nominee for general viewing at the University Secretariat. All letters of support must include a Release Statement (see Section D, point 7.)

All nomination dossiers must include a consent form signed and dated by the nominee containing the following statements:

*1) I hereby agree to let my name stand for consideration by the Subcommittee on Teaching awards (SUTA) for the Angela Armitt/Edward G. Pleva/Marilyn Robinson/Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching (select one) award.*

*2) I hereby attest to the completeness of the dossier prepared on my behalf for viewing by SUTA.*

*3) I do/do not (select one) grant permission for the release of my dossier for general viewing in the University Secretariat, should I be selected as a recipient of the award.*

#### D. **Format for Nominations**

The nomination dossier shall be submitted electronically to the University Secretariat's Office as one single PDF file by the deadline. Up to eight sections as listed below must be bookmarked in the electronic file for easy navigation. Material included in the dossier must have a font size of 12 and page margins not less than 1 inch (2.5 cm).

Contingent upon receiving statements to permit public viewing, electronic dossiers of successful nominees from the previous three years can be accessed by submitting a request for access to the University Secretariat's Office

For items 5, 6, 8 and 9 below, only the first ten pages will be considered by SUTA. Material in excess of the 10 pages will be removed from the dossier.

##### 1. **Letters from Primary Nominators:**

Separate letters from two primary nominators will initiate the dossier. In the past, such nominators have taken a leading role in the compiling of the dossier. The pertinent criteria listed in **Section E** should be addressed. For the "Western Award for Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching", an overview of innovations statement (not to exceed 500 words) should outline the nature and scope of the nominee's innovation in technology-enhanced teaching.

Note: Letters from nominators, peers, colleagues and students should clearly identify the nominee's particular contributions in the factors to be considered. It is not necessary for a nominee to make equal contributions to all 12 criteria, but outstanding performance in at least four criteria is desirable.

##### 2. **Letter from the Dean:**

If the Dean is not one of the primary nominators, he or she may wish to endorse the nomination by way of a supporting letter.

##### 3. **Curriculum Vitae of the Nominee (not to exceed five pages):**

This is essential to enable the Subcommittee to consider the nominee properly. SUTA recommends that the number of published articles and/or books be summarized but not listed. Research papers with students as co-authors should be highlighted.

##### 4. **A Brief Statement (not to exceed 500 words) by the Nominee on his/her Teaching Philosophy**

This statement should outline the nominee's philosophy of the nature and purpose of teaching. Nominees for the Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching Award should also explicitly make connections among their innovations, their approach to teaching and the impetus for making the change.

5. **Letters from Peers and Colleagues (not to exceed ten pages in total):**  
Such letters can provide valuable information about commitment to teaching, academic standards and general reputation among colleagues and students. **Up to six** letters may be included. For nominations in the Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching Award category only two letters are required.
6. **Letters from students (not to exceed ten pages in total):**  
Thoughtful letters from current and former students are helpful; in particular, letters from former students who can look back on their entire university career and assess the nominee in a broad context, are especially valuable. Student "petitions" of the type hung up in a department office or a laboratory for everyone to sign are, at best, supporting material. **Up to six** letters in total from both graduate and undergraduate students may be supplied. For nominations in the Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching Award category a minimum of four letters are required.
7. **Release Statement for Public Viewing:**  
The nominator(s) will determine which letters of support from peers, from colleagues and from students will be included in the dossier.

The successful nominee may grant permission to release his/her dossier for public viewing. At the bottom of each letter – including the letters from the primary nominators and from the Dean - the following statement should be included with “do” or “do not” clearly indicated:

*I do/do not grant permission for my letter to be included in the dossier if the nominee agrees to release the dossier for general viewing at the University Secretariat.*

The nominators are responsible for ensuring that this statement is clearly shown in all letters included in the nomination dossier.

8. **Teaching evaluations (not to exceed ten pages in total):**  
The Subcommittee finds it very helpful to have the results of evaluations by students. However, raw computer output from teacher or course evaluations should not be included but rather summaries of results should be provided. The task of assessing teacher evaluations from across the University is difficult under the best of circumstances and the more guidance the nominators can provide the better. Clarification must be provided as to: what type of activity is being evaluated - whether it is a lecture, seminar or clinic; the number of hours for which the nominee was responsible; the class size, year, and number of students. It would also be very helpful to know how the nominee's evaluations compare with those of his or her colleagues in the department or faculty.
9. **Teaching materials (not to exceed ten pages in total):**  
Do not include copies of teaching materials but rather assessments of course and teaching materials.  
  
The material submitted to the Subcommittee should relate directly to the current nomination. Promotion and tenure letters or newspaper clippings relating to other awards or relaying rather unfocussed opinions are unacceptable. Letters dealing specifically with teaching in a broad context are more useful than letters relating to the nominee's standing in the profession or to other matters.

E.1. **The 12 Factors to be Considered by SUTA – Pleva, Robison and Armitt Awards**

Twelve criteria are listed below with explanatory notes which have been added by SUTA. The Subcommittee gratefully acknowledges its indebtedness to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations and 3M for assistance provided by their Guidelines for Teaching Awards.

While these 12 factors will be considered for all nominees, the committee recognizes that nominees for either the Angela Armitt or Marilyn Robinson Award, may not have yet made contributions to all 12 criteria.

1. **Teaching Philosophy:**  
The nominee's brief statement on his/her vision of the nature and purpose of teaching is one of the most important factors for SUTA.
2. **Instruction:**
  - A) *Classroom teaching:*  
This is obviously more than just "lecturing"; it covers all activities involving the teacher in all types of "classrooms" including undergraduate and graduate tutorials, seminars and laboratories.
  - B) *Clinical teaching:*  
Instruction of students in dynamic, professional practice situations where the content of the teaching-learning interaction is the client whose physical, emotional, social and/or intellectual well-being, is (are) directly affected by the actions of the student.
3. **Academic counselling, tutoring and mentoring of students:**  
SUTA regards this item as one of the most important considerations, even though it is difficult to describe and even harder to evaluate. The most compelling evidence of the quality of interactions outside the classroom often comes from student letters. It also involves items on questionnaires regarding availability, readiness to answer questions, concern for student progress, informal conversations, and the like.
4. **Graduate student and thesis supervision:**  
In departments where graduate programs exist, SUTA regards evidence of excellence in this area as important in a nomination. The evidence often takes the form of letters from present or former graduate students or colleagues.
5. **Course design:**  
This might include innovative course structures beyond the simple format of a lecture, laboratory or seminar.
6. **Curriculum development:**  
This is a longer term process than course design. It involves an ability to recognize a need (either for new subjects or for revisions of existing subjects) and the ability to integrate its parts into a workable and acceptable sequence of courses or study units.
7. **Educational materials development:**  
The materials should arise out of a recognized need in the teachers' own disciplines and might include audio-visual materials, software, slides, films, handouts, or lab manuals.

It is helpful if the nominators identify what is unique and exceptional about the course materials included and help SUTA members locate those elements that are noteworthy. This might include highlights of course materials or better, include excerpts with an explanation. For example, a textbook in chemistry that encourages students to be more

self-directed might include a sample from the text and explain in what way students would learn more effectively using this text.

8. **Instructional development:**  
This includes any activities intended to assist other faculty members to improve their teaching, such as participation in workshops and consulting with individuals, groups, or curriculum committees.
9. **Research and/or Publications on University teaching.**
10. **Development of innovative teaching methods.**
11. **Educational planning and policy-making.**
12. **Educational outreach at the local, provincial or national level.**

While it is not necessary for a nominee to make equal contributions to all 12 criteria, outstanding performance in at least four criteria is desirable.

#### E.2. **The criteria to be Considered for the Western Award for Innovations in Technology-Enhanced Teaching**

The award will be given to an outstanding individual who has, through the use of technology, transformed his or her teaching practice to significantly improve student learning, at either the classroom or program level. The nominee will be recognized for the ability to identify an opportunity (or opportunities) to improve student learning and align this opportunity with an appropriate use, modification or development of an educational technology. Nomination packages will be evaluated using the following three broad criteria: Impact, Scale and Creativity.

##### Impact of the innovation

Impact is defined by the faculty member's use of technological innovation having a positive influence on student learning or the learning environment. This will be evaluated, in part, by:

- Evidence provided of the impact of the innovation on the student learning experience.
- Publications or presentations disseminating information about the innovation or evidence of the effectiveness of the practice.
- Published educational or instructional materials developed in support of the technology-informed teaching practice.
- Faculty member's integration of best practices in teaching and learning in higher education into the design or use of the innovation.

##### Scale of change

Scale is meant to describe the size of change or degree of implementation that the faculty member's technological innovation has influenced. This will be evaluated, in part, by:

- The degree to which the innovation has been implemented.
- The number of innovations incorporated to improve student learning.
- The degree to which other instructors have adopted the innovation, across: the department, Western University, other institutions or disciplines.
- Demonstration of a long-term and on-going commitment to integrate technological innovation(s) across a series of courses or across a program.

##### Faculty creativity

Here, creativity is a faculty member's ability to see an opportunity that aligns with students' learning needs and imagine a novel solution using a technological tool or practice to help address the opportunity (in part or in whole). This will be evaluated, in part, by:

- The degree to which the transformation is a novel approach or new application of the technology.
- Evidence of the innovation's implementation fostering new models of teaching practice.