

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO TEACHING AWARDS

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

Up to 6 awards may be made annually. If in any year there are no recipients of the Marilyn Robinson Award, up to 5 awards may be made.

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 had 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, graduate teaching assistant or previous award recipient.

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'Keeffe 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 UWO. 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).

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.

Copies of the dossiers of previous award recipients are available for viewing in the University Secretariat and in the Archives and Research Collections Centre of Western Archives. .

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 original and one copy to the University Secretariat not later than December 15, and also for advising nominators about the confidentiality of information in the nominee's academic file. Regardless of who initiates the nomination, consultation with other relevant parties, including the Faculty's or department's Awards Committee, is strongly advised.

Each candidate will be given the opportunity to decline to let his or her name stand. Willing candidates must also give permission to those preparing their dossiers to examine data contained in their academic files and should be given the opportunity to attest to the completeness of the dossier prepared for viewing by the nominators .

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

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 candidate to the University Secretariat to show the dossier in both the Secretariat and Western Archives.

All original 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 (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 Western Archives and in the University Secretariat, should I be selected as a recipient of the award.

The award recipient's original dossier will be sent to the Archives for full or selective retention. The copy of the dossier will be retained in the University Secretariat for three years, on condition that release statements to permit public viewing have been signed by the award recipient and individuals who have written letters of support. For the dossiers of unsuccessful candidates, the original and copy will be returned by the University Secretariat to the nominator after completion of the selection process.

D. **The 12 Factors to be Considered by SUTA**

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 twelve 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 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. Format for Nominations

The two nomination dossiers (i.e., the original dossier and a copy of it) shall be submitted in binders, subdivided into (up to) eight sections as listed below. Use of spiral coiled binding is not desirable. As a guideline, SUTA suggests the use of a font size between 10 and 12.

For items 5 to 8 below, only the first 10 pages will be considered by SUTA. Material in excess of the 10 pages will be removed from the dossier and returned to the primary nominator.

1. **Letters from Primary Nominators:**

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 D (above) should be addressed.

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 articles 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 candidate's philosophy of the nature and purpose of teaching.

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.

Note: If selected, the nominee may grant permission to release his/her dossier for general viewing. The nominator will determine which letters of support from peers and colleagues can be shown as part of the dossier. When letters of support are solicited, at the bottom of each letter 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 in the Western Archives and University Secretariat.

6. **Letters from students (not to exceed ten pages in total):**

Thoughtful letters from present 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.

Note: If selected, the nominee may grant permission to release his/her dossier for general viewing. The nominator will determine which letters of support from students can be shown as part of the dossier. When letters of support are solicited, at the bottom of each letter 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 in the Western Archives and University Secretariat.

7. 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.

8. 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. The Committee strongly suggests that letters of support be solicited by the nominators rather than by the nominee.

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This file is on the web <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/senate/sutaregs.pdf>

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