

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

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

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

- Up to six awards may be distributed among the Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Marilyn Robinson Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Angela Armitt Award for Excellence in Teaching by Part-Time Faculty. If in any year there are no recipients of the Marilyn Robinson Award, up to five 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 re-nomination.

Award recipient(s) will receive a medal and commemorative scroll. In addition, award recipients' names 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 honour 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 for Physicians (2018) 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 re-nomination.

Award recipient(s) will receive a medal and commemorative scroll. In addition, award recipients' names will be inscribed on a plaque which will be displayed in a prominent location in the University.

In 2003, the award was renamed in honour 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.

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

In 1996-97, this 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 re-nomination.

Award recipient(s) will receive a commemorative scroll. The award recipient will also 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 Centre for Teaching and Learning. In addition, the award recipients' names 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 re-nomination.

\*\*\* 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. The award recipients' names will be also inscribed on a plaque, displayed in a prominent location in the University. Each winner's achievement will be captured as an on-line video and profiled on the Western Award for Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Teaching microsite maintained by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

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

The Senate Committee on University 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 Chair of SUTA and the University Secretariat are willing to provide informal advice on the preparation of dossiers.

**C. Nomination Procedure (All Categories)**

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 the primary nominator(s) through the Dean of the nominee's Faculty or School, or President of the nominee's Affiliated University College. The Dean or President 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 below about formatting of the electronic dossier in Section D. Regardless of who initiates the nomination, consultation with other relevant parties, including the Faculty's or Department's Awards Committee, is strongly advised.

Nominators are encouraged to view dossiers of previously successful nominees. Electronic dossiers from the previous three years can be accessed by submitting a request for access to the University Secretariat, contingent upon the contents of those files containing statements to permit public viewing.

Nominees will be given the opportunity to decline to let their names stand and should be given the opportunity to attest to the completeness of the dossier prepared for viewing by the nominator(s).

Each nomination dossier must contain a single official letter of nomination, which can be prepared by up to two co-nominators. The nominator(s) should be familiar with the nominee and the contents of the dossier.

The Committee strongly suggests that letters of support be solicited by the nominator(s) rather than by the nominee. The nominator(s) is(are) responsible for advising those individuals who will be forwarding letters of support that their letters will be available for public viewing if permission is given by a winning nominee for general viewing through the University Secretariat. All letters of support must include a Release Statement (see Section D).

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 Senate Committee on University 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 through 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 as a 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).

The material submitted to the Committee should relate directly to the current nomination. Promotion and tenure letters or news media relating to other awards or relaying 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.

Material in excess of the page limits indicated below will be removed from the dossier.

#### **Release Statement for Public Viewing:**

The nominator(s) will determine which letters of support from peers, colleagues and 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 nominator(s) 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 through the University Secretariat.*

The nominator(s) is(are) responsible for ensuring that this statement is clearly shown in **all letters** included in the nomination dossier (i.e., letters for items 1, 2, 5 and 6 below).

<b>FORMAT FOR NOMINATIONS: PLEVA, ARMITT, AND ROBINSON AWARDS</b>	<b>FORMAT FOR NOMINATIONS: INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED TEACHING AWARD</b>
<p><b>1. Letter from Primary Nominator(s):</b> This letter will initiate the dossier. Ideally, the nominator(s) will have taken a leading role in the compiling of the dossier. The pertinent criteria listed in <b>Section E</b> must be addressed and be organized under relevant subheadings. The nominator(s) should clearly identify the nominee's contributions to the relevant activities.</p>	<p><b>1. Letter from Primary Nominator(s):</b> This letter will initiate the dossier. Ideally, the nominator(s) will have taken a leading role in the compiling of the dossier. The pertinent criteria listed in <b>Section F</b> must be addressed and be organized under relevant subheadings. The nominator(s) should clearly identify the nominee's contributions to the relevant activities.</p>
<p><b>2. Letter from the Dean:</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>2. Letter from the Dean:</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>3. Curriculum Vitae of the Nominee (<u>not to exceed five pages</u>):</b> This is essential to enable the Committee to consider the nominee properly. Teaching-related activities should be prominent in the CV. SUTA recommends that the number of published articles and/or books be summarized but the details of each publication should not be listed. Research papers and conference presentations with students as co-authors should be highlighted.</p>	<p><b>3. Curriculum Vitae of the Nominee (<u>not to exceed five pages</u>):</b> This is essential to enable the Committee to consider the nominee properly. Teaching-related activities should be prominent in the CV. SUTA recommends that the number of published articles and/or books be summarized but the details of each publication should not be listed. Research papers and conference presentations with students as co-authors should be highlighted. Reporting the results of the technology-informed teaching practice should also be highlighted.</p>
<p><b>4. Brief Statement (<u>not to exceed 500 words</u>) of the Nominee's Teaching Philosophy</b> This statement should outline the nominee's philosophy of the nature and purpose of teaching. The nominee should articulate how teaching activities are designed and implemented to help realize this vision.</p>	<p><b>4. Brief Statement (<u>not to exceed 500 words</u>) of the Nominee's Teaching Philosophy</b> This statement should focus on the educational purpose and philosophy of incorporating technology into teaching. The connections among the nominee's innovations, approach to teaching, and the impetus for making the technology-enhanced change should be explicit.</p>

<p><b>5. Letters from Peers and Colleagues <u>(not to exceed ten pages in total)</u>:</b> Such letters can provide valuable information about the nominee's commitment to teaching, academic standards and general reputation among colleagues and students. <b><u>Up to six</u></b> letters may be included.</p>	<p><b>5. Letters from Peers and Colleagues <u>(not to exceed four pages in total)</u>:</b> Letters should deal specifically with the impact, scale and creativity of the technological innovation. Up to <b><u>two</u></b> letters may be included.</p>
<p><b>6. Letters from students <u>(not to exceed ten pages in total)</u>:</b> Thoughtful letters from current and former students are helpful. In particular, letters from former students who can look back on their university careers 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. <b><u>Up to six</u></b> letters in total from both graduate and undergraduate students may be supplied.</p>	<p><b>6. Letters from students <u>(not to exceed ten pages in total)</u>. <u>Include letters only from those students who were enrolled in courses which employed the new technology</u>:</b> Thoughtful letters from current and former students are helpful. In particular, letters from former students who can look back on their university careers 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. A <b><u>minimum of four</u></b> letters from either graduate or undergraduate students must be supplied.</p>
<p><b>7. Teaching evaluations <u>(not to exceed ten pages in total)</u>:</b> The Committee 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 <b><u>summaries</u></b> 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 and year. It would also be very helpful to know how the nominee's evaluations compare with those of other faculty members in the department or faculty.</p>	<p><b>7. Teaching evaluations <u>(not to exceed ten pages in total)</u>. <u>Include evaluations only for courses in which the new technology was used</u>:</b> The Committee 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 <b><u>summaries</u></b> 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 and year. It would also be very helpful to know how the nominee's evaluations compare with those of other faculty members in the department or faculty.</p>



<p><b>8. Teaching materials (not to exceed ten pages in total):</b> Do not include copies of teaching or course materials but rather assessments of the educational materials. This could include excerpts or summaries of the teaching materials accompanied by comments or reviews of the materials that were prepared by colleagues, publishers, or others in a position to evaluate the materials' effectiveness. The impact or breadth of use of these materials should be indicated.</p>	<p><b>8. Teaching materials (not to exceed ten pages in total):</b> Do not include copies of teaching or course materials but rather assessments of the educational materials. This could include excerpts or summaries of the teaching materials accompanied by comments or reviews of the materials that were prepared by colleagues, publishers, or others in a position to evaluate the materials' effectiveness. The impact or breadth of use of these materials should be indicated. Depending on the innovation, it may be appropriate to also provide a photograph or written description of the technological innovation.</p>
<p><b>9. Release Statement for Public Viewing:</b> At the bottom of each letter the following statement should be included with "do" or "do not" clearly indicated:</p> <p><i>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 through the University Secretariat.</i></p> <p>The nominator(s) is(are) responsible for ensuring that this statement is clearly shown in <b>all letters</b> included in the nomination dossier (i.e., letters for items 1, 2, 5 and 6 above).</p>	<p><b>9. Release Statement for Public Viewing:</b> At the bottom of each letter the following statement should be included with "do" or "do not" clearly indicated:</p> <p><i>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 through the University Secretariat.</i></p> <p>The nominator(s) is(are) responsible for ensuring that this statement is clearly shown in <b>all letters</b> included in the nomination dossier (i.e., letters for items 1, 2, 5 and 6 above).</p>

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

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

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:**

This statement (maximum 500 words) should outline the nominee's philosophy of the nature and purpose of teaching. The nominee should articulate how course design and/or teaching activities help to realize this vision.

**2. Instruction:**

Evidence of excellence goes beyond having high scores on the Student Questionnaire on Courses and Teaching (SQCT). The most compelling evidence comes from students' letters of support and examples of student engagement.

*a. Classroom teaching:*

Classroom teaching involves more than just lecturing and directing discussions. Great teachers engage students in all types of "classrooms" including undergraduate and graduate tutorials, seminars, laboratories, field courses, community engaged learning activities and on-line activities.

*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 directly affected by the actions of the student.

**3. Academic counselling, tutoring and mentoring of students:**

This item is difficult to describe and even harder to evaluate. It is meant to reflect interactions outside the classroom. The most compelling evidence of the quality of these interactions often comes from student letters in which the impact of the instructor on students' success or academic choices, or other stories of interactions are recounted. It also involves items on questionnaires regarding availability, availability to

answer questions, concern for student progress, etc.

**4. Graduate student and thesis supervision:**

If the nominee's workload includes teaching or supervising graduate students, SUTA regards evidence of excellence in mentoring as important in a nomination. The evidence often takes the form of letters from present or former graduate students or colleagues but also includes measures of student success (e.g., academic awards, publications, conference presentations, successful applications for positions related to the area of study, etc.).

**5. Course design:**

Evidence for excellence goes beyond creating or modifying course content. This includes creating innovative course structures, learning activities (including community engaged learning), assessments, or on-line learning experiences to deepen student learning, provide opportunities for students to apply their newly learned skills or engage in discovery. Designing, implementing or incorporating novel course components is important, as is creativity. The number of courses taught is less important than the impact the instructor has had on course design.

**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. This may include membership on curriculum, undergraduate or graduate education committees at Western, but the nominee's specific role in achieving the outcome should be made clear. It also includes de-colonizing the curriculum of a discipline or incorporating international perspectives throughout an undergraduate program. Excellence is measured by the success of the resulting academic modules or programs, both in terms of student interest and enrolment, and in career trajectories of the graduates.

**7. Educational materials development:**

The materials should arise out of a recognized need in the nominee's own discipline(s) and might include audio-visual materials, software, textbooks, lab manuals or on-line learning objects. It is particularly compelling if the materials are subsequently used by other instructors at Western and beyond.

It is helpful if the nominator(s) or letters of support from colleagues identify what is unique and exceptional about the materials included and highlight those elements that are noteworthy. This might include

excerpts of course materials along with an explanation of their value. For example, a textbook in chemistry that encourages students to be more self-directed might include a sample from the text and an explanation of the ways students would learn more effectively using this text.

**8. Educational leadership:**

This category is meant to capture the nominee's efforts to 'teach the teachers'. This includes any activities intended to facilitate the teaching development of other faculty members or graduate students. Examples include organizing teaching development sessions or workshops at an academic conference, leading workshops at the departmental or university-wide levels, participating in panel discussions, and mentoring individuals, groups or curriculum committees.

**9. Research and/or publications on university teaching:**

Items in this category typically arise from pedagogical research and contributions to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). This includes publications or presentations of formal studies of various instructional or evaluation techniques as well as articles intended to share best practices in teaching.

**10. Development of innovative teaching methods:**

Teachers often adopt innovative teaching methods. This category is meant to go beyond this and capture teachers' foresight and creativity in developing or adapting new pedagogical methods for their courses. Evidence for excellence includes having other instructors employ the nominee's method in other courses.

**11. Educational planning and policy-making:**

This category includes more than curriculum development or publications on teaching, and items here should not duplicate those presented for points 6 or 9 above. For example, this category could include the design and implementation of new programs and modules at Western, active involvement at the Board and Provincial levels, or the preparation of policy documents directed at any level of education. Excellence in this category might be demonstrated by publication of a Purple Guide or similar guide to best practices, success of new programs and modules, involvement at the national level to identify student outcomes in a particular discipline that inform accreditation, contributions to the way teaching or research on teaching are recognized in a discipline, contributing to policy documents at Western, other institutions or at the national level.

**12. Educational outreach at the local, provincial or national level:**

This category encompasses the sharing of one's teaching innovations at the municipal, provincial and national levels. It may include the development of materials and activities for schools and community groups, organization and delivery of educational 'camps', and the development of educational materials that are not used in the classroom. Without duplicating items included within point 8 above, this could include presenting innovative teaching practices at a national conference, or consulting with colleagues at other institutions about program development or teaching innovation.

**F. The Three Criteria to be Considered for the Western Award for Innovations in Technology- Enhanced Teaching**

Nomination dossiers will be evaluated using the following three broad criteria: Impact, Scale and Creativity.

**1. Impact of the innovation:**

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

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

**2. Scale:**

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

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

**3. Creativity:**

Here, creativity is a nominee'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:

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