The University of Victoria
2021 REACH Teaching Awards

The Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching

About the Award
Since 1989, the UVic Alumni Association has been pleased to honour the outstanding level of teaching offered by the university's faculty and instructors. We are proud of our role in recognizing UVic teaching of the highest calibre.

The Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching bears the name of a former Senior Lab Instructor in the Geography department who, for 21 years, was a strong supporter of better teaching at the university, an active member of the advisory committee of the Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI), and a regular participant in the training of teaching assistants. This award is a tribute to Gilian Sherwin's commitment to the art of teaching and the influence she had on many students and colleagues.

The Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award is the highest honour for teaching excellence at the University of Victoria for Sessional Lecturers, Lab Instructors, and Senior Lab Instructors.

Eligibility
Who can be nominated?
This category is open to all Sessional Lecturers, Lab Instructors, and Senior Lab Instructors.

Nominees must:

- have taught for a minimum of three years within the last five years prior to nomination at the University of Victoria, currently hold a sessional position, and anticipate continuing in that position for the next academic year;
- have taught
  - a minimum of 4.5 units in all of the three years (or);
  - have held a .5 FTE instructional position for 8 months in all of the three years, (or);
  - be able to substantiate that they have had instructional responsibilities equivalent to either of the former requirements in all of the three years (a list of courses taught is required, see below); and,
• be the only nomination from their academic unit (i.e., only one new nomination per academic unit will be considered).

Who can nominate?
Nominations are to be submitted jointly by:

• a UVic student or former student (i.e., the student must not currently be enrolled in a course with the Nominee); and,
• a fellow faculty member colleague and/or Department or School Chair/Director.

If the Department Chair/Director is not a co-nominator, the Chair/Director must review and sign to endorse the nomination.

Re-nominations
Nominations of previous nominees who have not been selected as the recipient of the award will be held and eligible for review for a period of three years. Re-nominations of these nominees are welcomed and encouraged; however, nominators and nominees are reminded that the award criteria may change from year-to-year—please ensure that re-nominations conform to the current guidelines.

Award Criteria
As the highest honour for excellence in teaching at the University of Victoria for Sessional Instructors, Lab Instructors, and Senior Lab Instructors, the Gillian Sherwin Award recognizes both Teaching Excellence and Educational Leadership. Note that the information provided for this Award must focus on the Nominee’s time at the University of Victoria.

Teaching Excellence (75%)
The Nominee will demonstrate teaching excellence. Attributes of teaching excellence may include:

• Student-centred learning: Teaching practices that actively engage students in the learning process and are focused on student learning outcomes;
• Teaching enhancement and creativity in improving student learning as evidenced by reflection, continuous improvement of teaching practice (e.g., new teaching methods within disciplinary context, learning-centred lesson design/redesign, effective assignment development, incorporation of active learning strategies and educational technologies, formative assessment);
• Innovative course design/redesign and engagement in curriculum development;
• Incorporation of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) research into teaching practices;
• Mentoring of students within and beyond the physical or virtual classroom/lab; and,
• Collaborative approaches to teaching practice (e.g., collegiality, teaching observations,
  incorporating feedback from peers and students, and/or teaching assistants [TAs]).

This list of attributes of teaching excellence is not intended to be exhaustive but to provide
some examples of how a nominee may demonstrate teaching excellence.

Educational Leadership (25%)
The Nominee will demonstrate excellence in educational leadership associated with their
role at the University of Victoria. Evidence may be drawn from activities within UVic,
and/or in community-engaged learning and teaching, and/or their professional
discipline/field of study. The following are examples of evidence of educational leadership:

• Offering workshops for colleagues on some aspect of teaching improvement or
  inquiry both in one’s own discipline and beyond (for example, through LTSI);
• Sharing public and peer-reviewed teaching and learning discoveries, for
  example, through presenting at conferences in the field or in higher education
  more generally, publishing in academic journals;
• Being actively involved with learning and teaching related committees;
• Making contributions to curriculum development and reviews;
• Being involved with organizations/associations to promote teaching excellence;
• Obtaining grants in support of a teaching improvement or query;
• Actively engaged in SoTL research to further develop knowledge of learning and
  teaching;
• Being invited as a plenary speaker or being called on to speak within the
  community or through media on teaching and learning matters; and,
• Obtaining a grant for professional development in teaching.

The list of Educational Leadership activities is not intended to be exhaustive but to provide
examples of how educational leadership may be demonstrated. Where possible, evidence
should be provided in each of these areas.

Nomination Dossier (Revised for 2021)
The nomination is coordinated by the Nominator(s) and the Nominee.

Basic requirements:

• The nomination dossier must be submitted as a single electronic pdf file not
The following nomination components make up the nomination dossier:

1.0 Cover Page and Table of Contents with page numbers for each item
This is mandatory. The additional use of section dividers is optional and will not be included in the page count.

Materials provided by the Nominator(s)

2.0 Nomination Form

- **Award**
  Select Gilian Sherwin Award for Excellence in Teaching.

- **Nominee Contact information**
  The Nominee’s contact information must be included.

- **Nominator Contact information**
  Both the faculty member colleague and the student who are formally nominating this nominee must include their contact information.

- **Chair/Director Contact Information**
  Please provide contact information for the Nominee’s department/school chair/director. Signature of chair/director is required at the time of submission.

3.0 Letter from the Nominators (signed and dated; 3-page max.)
The letter from the Nominators serves as an introduction of the Nominee to the selection committee. The role of the Nominators is to be familiar with the entire dossier and to jointly write the nomination letter. The letter provides a comprehensive overview and addresses the award criteria. It highlights the most persuasive evidence and guides the reviewers toward what to look for and where to find it. This letter of endorsement clearly
communicates how the University of Victoria benefits from the Nominee’s distinctive contributions. The most compelling letter evokes and reinforces a vivid sense of the Nominee and thus is one of the most important documents in a successful nomination dossier.

The Nominators’ letter also includes the following (within the total page count of the letter):

- *A section that contextualizes* (200-word max.) or expands upon the teaching evaluation data provided by the Nominee (see 8.4); and that helps the Awards Committee in its interpretation. For example, what trends or patterns arise from the data? What information explains irregularities for a particular course?

- *A brief statement of the usual teaching load for the Nominee's peer category in the Nominee's department* so that the student evaluation data can be contextualized.

- *A summary/conclusion* (150-word max.) that may potentially be used as the foundation for the award citation if the nomination is successful.

**Please note:** Opinions about a candidate’s excellence are most credible when expressed by others providing clear and specific examples with evidence of outcomes.

### 4.0 Two letters of support (each 1-page max.)

Two letters of support from former students addressing teaching excellence. These two letters of support are in addition to the letter of nomination from the student Nominator. Please do not ask for letters from current students. Students are vulnerable by definition even when they express a strong, unprompted desire to play an active role in supporting the nomination.

Student letters of support are to be independent from one another. Each letter of support ideally will represent a different course. The best letters are authentic and specific by inclusion of concrete examples from the student’s own experience. The letter should address the Nominee’s teaching, identifying ways in which the Nominee has been effective in bringing about learning. Elements might include: commentary on student engagement, support for student learning, value of the courses to their overall program, effective teaching strategies (be specific), creativity in course design, teaching inspired by research, student mentoring, and innovative and/or effective assignments.

### 5.0 Peer Reviews of Teaching (each 2-page max.)

Two independent peer reviews of teaching within two years of the nomination are required for consideration of the nomination. Peer reviews must meet the standards for peer review
of teaching, be based on observation of teaching (physical and/or virtual class)\(^1\) and focus on pedagogy rather than content. They must be peer reviews of two distinct courses by two separate individuals. At least one of the two peer reviews must come from a faculty colleague within the Nominee’s department. The second review may come from a faculty member or a person in a teaching leadership role inside or outside of the department. The peer reviewer is encouraged to use (if possible) UVic’s Guidelines for Formative Peer Observation Process for Teaching Enhancement for this evaluation.

**Materials provided by the Nominee**

6.0 Current Curriculum Vitae

Apart from all other information, please ensure the following sections are included in the CV:

- *Nominee’s Education and Other Relevant Experience*
  
  List all educational certificates, diplomas, and degrees acquired and for each one the granting institutions. Also list Professional Development activities that are related to teaching and learning.

- *Employment History Relevant to the Award*
  
  Begin with the Nominee’s current position. Include the date for each appointment and the name of department, school or division.

- *Teaching Awards*
  
  If relevant, list any teaching awards the Nominee has received beginning with those awarded at the University of Victoria. Include the date that each award was given.

- *Educational Leadership Activities*
  
  - Within the University of Victoria
  - Community-Engaged Learning and Teaching
  - Disciplinary/Field of Study
  - Other evidence of educational leadership

**Teaching Dossier**

7.0 Statement of Excellence in Teaching (2-page max.)

This section should be current within the last two years and not repeat the CV, but offer a narrative that is supported by factual and explicit examples. It includes summarized evidence of how projects, activities and achievements support the key points presented in the

\(^{1}\) Virtual classroom refers to teaching online using educational technologies. For asynchronous courses, observation can be done through reviewing Brightspace or former CourseSpaces sites, postings, discussions and commentary, etc. For synchronous courses, observation will include “in-class” live attendance.
statement. The Nominee could, for example, highlight course development, the introduction of new instructional strategies or technologies, the presentation of workshops, or publishing on teaching and learning, specific projects, evidence of recognition, assessments of impact, and other supporting documentation (within the page limit).

This statement should include the following:

- **The Nominee’s Core Teaching Philosophy**
  Provide a self-reflective statement on core teaching philosophy and effective teaching strategies (current within the last two years). LTSI has a resource to help with writing a teaching statement. You are encouraged to consult it.

- **A Narrative of how the Nominee Implements Their Teaching Philosophy**
  Such evidence may include course syllabi, examples of the Nominee’s most effective teaching and learning strategies, their development and use of formative teaching evaluation, or the development of learning activities.

- **Effective Teaching Strategies**
  These strategies should illustrate how the Nominee’s philosophy is informed by the teaching decisions and actions in the teaching process.

- **A Rationale behind the Strategies, with evidence of their effectiveness**
  The evidence may, for example, include what worked; and what did not work. It is advisable to link these teaching strategies to student learning and learning outcomes showing concrete evidence of impact on student learning.

8.0 Evidence of Teaching Excellence

**Identifying Teaching Excellence:** What has the Nominee done to further student learning in their courses? What evidence is there of excellent teaching? What contributions has the Nominee made beyond the classroom or laboratory? How much and what kind of contact does the Nominee have with students?

This section will include the following:

- **8.1. Courses Taught**
  List all course taught for the last five (5) years, providing the number of units, term and class size, as well as the course number and title. If there were any breaks in teaching, include the relevant time beyond these five years; for example, a 6-month study leave or personal leave means that the details of the teaching history should be included for a 5-year 6-month period.
8.2. Statement Illustrating Course Development/Course Design (1-page max., cumulatively)

The Nominee must provide evidence for excellence in the design of no more than two recently developed or re-designed courses. The Nominee must describe the rationale for and process used to develop and refine the course and how the course design implemented relates to signature pedagogies in the Nominee’s discipline. If the course was successful because of design innovation, explain what was unique and effective. It is useful for the Nominee to link the new design to the statement of teaching philosophy and/or strategies, to student learning outcomes and to articulate effective assessment methods (e.g., assignments).

8.3. Examples of Course Materials (2-page max., cumulatively)

Here is the ideal opportunity for the Nominee to illustrate the link between teaching philosophy, strategy, and application. The Nominee should choose one to two unique examples, including one from a course included in 8.2 (e.g., a novel assignment, a series of lab experiments, exceptional fieldwork, innovative lecturing) that support these links, and write a brief narrative about each example. A copy of a course outline or major assignment is, by itself, insufficient. In a paragraph following each example, the Nominee must explain explicitly how each example links philosophy and strategy or how it enhances teaching excellence. Appended materials are not required; the committee will focus on the narrative provided here.

8.4. Two Sets of Summarized Student Evaluation Data

Identify two courses and attach the complete quantitative Course Experience Surveys for each course. Where possible, these courses should be distinct from each other and offered at different levels in the program (e.g., 100, 200, etc.).

The committee will consider other methods of collecting student data on teaching effectiveness such as student reflections, data from interviews, or focus groups, as long as the complete set of data are provided; please remove any individual student identifiers. It is essential to include a paragraph (150-word max. for each set of data—not to be counted with the total page count) that explains the context for the evidence of student evaluation of teaching that has been provided in the dossier. Include details of the method used to gather data, how it was administered, and what rationale led to that particular method. The Nominee should also explain how they have responded to, applied, or used student feedback to enhance their teaching and student learning. This will inform the Nominators’ interpretation of the data (3.1).

Note 1: Ideally the two courses selected should be distinct from each other. However, if an instructor only teaches multiple sections of the same course (e.g., a 100- or 200-level
course), then select two sections that are unique, for example, one taught 3x a week vs a 3-hour evening course taught 1x/week.

**Note 2:** Usually, teaching dossiers should not rely entirely on feedback from classes with fewer than ten students. If small classes are the norm for the Nominee or department, or the classes are graduate student classes, please explain how the data were collected and the significance of these data in the context of the dossier.

8.5. Other Evidence of Teaching Excellence (to be counted towards total page count)
Many instructors demonstrate excellence and commitment to teaching in innovative, radical, or novel ways. This is your opportunity to demonstrate innovative teaching excellence and the impact on student learning. Examples could include (but are not limited to) experiential learning, facilitating opportunities for community engagement, or land-based learning; the list is endless.

9.0 Statement of and Evidence for Educational Leadership (2-page max.)
The statement illustrates how a Nominee’s ideas, knowledge, and passion for teaching and learning have been implemented beyond the classroom (current to within the last two years). The statement should include the Nominee’s personal understanding of “leadership” and why it is defined this way. Effective leadership can be evident on multiple levels: within the university, in the community, and beyond.

The statement should not repeat the CV, but provide a narrative. Evidence for Educational Leadership can be demonstrated through specifics of: activities and achievements within the University of Victoria (going beyond sitting on university committees); in Community Engaged Learning and Teaching (such as initiating community forums, being involved in media on social or public issues, or facilitating connections with community agencies or other educational institutions on topical issues, or acting in an advocacy role); within a Discipline/Field of Study (fostering and sharing fresh ideas and knowledge, inspiring through advocacy because they are deeply invested in teaching; supporting change). Explain why something is important and how it makes a difference, and what the Nominee did to make that difference.

You are encouraged to consult resources on educational leadership.

10.0 Summary Statement from Nominee (150-word limit)
In the Nominee’s own words: What does excellence in teaching and educational leadership mean to you and why do you see yourself as a strong candidate for the Gilian Sherwin Alumni Award?
Award Administration and Process
The Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost administers the award on behalf of the Alumni Association.

Selection Committee:
- Chair, Vice-President Academic and Provost (or designate);
- Executive Director, Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (or designate);
- Three Regular Faculty Members (including Artists in Residence and Librarians); this usually includes a previous recipient of a University of Victoria Teaching Award and may include instructors who have sessional status;
- University of Victoria Students’ Society representative;
- University of Victoria Graduate Students’ Society representative; and,
- Chair, Grants and Awards Committee, Alumni Association (or designate); the Alumni Association representative will be a member of the Alumni Board (voting member); an additional member of the Alumni Association may attend in a non-voting capacity.

Details of the committee’s discussions and deliberations will be held in camera.

With the exception of the Committee Chair and the Executive Director, Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation, committee members shall usually serve for three years, with one third of the committee being replaced each year after the initial three years. Sitting members of the committee shall not be eligible to make nominations or provide references.

Recognition
One award is presented each year. The award includes a gift and a $2,000 cash prize. Recipients will receive their awards at the annual REACH Awards ceremony. The awards will be publicized by UVic Communications + Marketing. Portraits of award winners may be displayed on campus.

Submission Details
Please submit the nomination package to Carolyn Boss, LTSI Program Coordinator, at ltsipc@uvic.ca no later than 4:00 pm on May 17, 2021.

Please direct questions about the Award to Dr. Laurene Sheilds, Executive Director, Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation, at ltsied@uvic.ca.