

Akshai Aggarwal

The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee is pleased to present a 2006 Teaching Award to Dr. Akshai Aggarwal from the School of Computer Science at the University of Windsor. The word that most readily comes to mind when describing Dr. Aggarwal's contributions to learning at the University of Windsor is commitment – to his students both present and past, to the learning environment both outside and inside the classroom, and to the wider academic community.

Dr. Aggarwal's commitment to the educational process is certainly no surprise to those at the University of Windsor. He has been awarded the University of Windsor Faculty of Science Teaching Award for highest weighted mean teaching score for the past five years, and has also garnered the University's Faculty and Science Meritorious Staff Award, the Organization of Part-Time University Students' Faculty Award and the University of Windsor Alumni Award for Distinguished Contributions to University Teaching. Or as one student simply puts it: "the buzz is, if you want to learn a subject, wait for the subject to be offered by Dr. Aggarwal."

Professor Aggarwal's students are constantly amazed by his depth of knowledge, ability to transmit complicated concepts and apply them to real-life situations, and dedication to their educational well-being. His classes are described as "absorbing" and "inspirational" where "every lecture becomes a voyage of discovery." Going into them, students know that they will be challenged to work extremely hard and to solve extremely challenging problems; but they also know that "they will face those challenges with Dr. Aggarwal's unwavering support and concern for their progress."

Professor Aggarwal's reputation as a dedicated and inspirational instructor is not only limited to the classroom settings. Student and faculty testimonials speak to a professor who spends countless hours outside the classroom helping students with their work-load and acting as an advisor, facilitator and mentor. Many former students also comment on how his continued guidance helps them in their careers.

Especially telling in this regard is Dr. Aggarwal's commitment to the educational success of traditionally marginalized students. His work with the University's diverse student population, many of whom struggle with English language skills or a new culture, is legendary and he goes out of his way to provide extra sessions and language support to ensure their success.

Dr. Aggarwal is renowned at the University not just by his students but also his peers. They too are inspired by his pedagogical skills and utilize his various approaches to improve their own teaching.

Dr. Aggarwal's work in the areas of course and curriculum development should also not be over-looked. In a very real sense, his work in these areas has put the University of Windsor on the map as a leader in Computer Science instruction and research. Or as noted by various programme directors, "his course work on grid computing, parallel and distributed computing, and network security represent cutting edge curriculum, and because of Dr. Aggarwal, the University of Windsor is among the first, in Canada or internationally, to offer courses in these areas."

A former student perhaps puts it best when he comments that "Dr. Aggarwal is not only a professor but a true facilitator of learning, intellectual exchange, and intellectual development in the field of Computer Science." The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee fully concurs with this sentiment and is delighted to present Dr. Aggarwal with an OCUFA Teaching Award.

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