

Carol B. Duncan

The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee is pleased to present a 2006 Teaching Award to Carol Duncan, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Dr. Duncan is praised for her dedication to the scholarship of teaching “since she first entered the classroom as a teaching assistant while a graduate student at York University”. Since her arrival at Wilfrid Laurier University in 1997, Dr. Duncan has maintained a superior research and publications record while consistently stimulating students in a wide range of subjects, including religious studies, social work, sociology and culture, developing and offering new, highly successful, inclusive and innovative undergraduate and graduate courses, and serving on a multitude of committees. She directed her remarkable energy towards work not only at WLU, but also in the joint doctoral program with the University of Waterloo, in invited teaching at Drew University and Emory University, as a Teaching Fellow at Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, as well as within the community at large, with students in campus organizations, in the authors’ series at the WLU Bookstore, serving on secondary school curriculum reviews, and consulting for the media.

Dr. Duncan is widely admired by her students for her “ability to engage individuals from varying backgrounds”, “gift of being able to make complex subjects understandable”, “remarkable skill in maintaining a scholarly perspective while engaging students in topics as widely-ranging as international affairs and science fiction”, and her “ability to offer compassion and firm direction”. Indeed, the two aspects of her supervision standing out for her graduate students are: challenging them and inspiring excellence at the scholarly level, yet at the same time being supportive on a personal level. Her colleagues speak of her as “innovative”, “energetic”, “articulate, insightful and original thinker”, and praise her “ability to put her students’ learning at the centre of her thinking about teaching”. While maintaining debate, dialogue and critical discussion as central to her teaching, she connects with the students through the use of visual and audio materials from popular texts, films and the Internet. She is unanimously praised by the students for understanding their needs, maintaining a close contact with them in spite of an extremely busy schedule, her respect for them and for her love for teaching. Her nominator summed up his reflections of Dr. Duncan’s teaching stating that “she teaches because she cares, and she cares passionately”.

Dr. Duncan’s contributions to teaching and learning have been recognized with many teaching and merit awards from her home university and elsewhere, including the Wilfrid Laurier University Award for Teaching Excellence in 2004, Women and Minority Lecturer of the Year from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia in 2002, and the invitation to serve as Visiting Associate Professor of Women’s Studies and Religion and Society at the Harvard Divinity School, 2006-2007.

Dr. Duncan is a passionate and inspirational educator and a superb scholar. We are proud to honour her with this year’s OCUFA Teaching Award. Congratulations!

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