

**2010-2011 OCUFA TEACHING AND
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS
CITATION FOR WINNER PROFESSOR PAUL GRIES**

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CITATION FOR PROFESSOR PAUL GRIES

read by Sandy Hudson, Canadian Federation of Students

The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee is pleased to present a 2010-2011 Teaching Award to Professor Paul Gries from the Department of Computer Science at the University of Toronto.

Professor Gries is an exemplary teacher with a teaching style described as “enthusiastic,” “energetic” and “inspirational.” His reputation as a “master teacher” hinges around his ability to put students at ease and to inspire them to achieve their best. “I remember . . . feeling somewhat terrified that University was going to bring about my academic demise,” states one student. “Paul made all those fears just disappear by the end of the first lecture.” Another student sums up Professor Gries’ teaching excellence as follows: “If every teacher in the world was Paul Gries, course selection would become the most difficult decision of our lives. For how can we choose when every class is so interesting, exciting, and inspiring?”

More than an excellent teacher, Professor Gries is also a valued mentor to his students. They note that he is “always available for an appointment any time of the day, always willing to see you without an appointment, and always available with a cheerful smile,” And he is seemingly available for consultation on virtually any issue, including “course and program selection, meta discussions about computer science as a discipline, advice on interviewing and on choosing among job offers, ideas on how to be ore effective students, and advice about graduate school.” It is therefore not unusual to hear his current and former students describe him as not just a transformative teacher but as a pivotal influence in their lives.



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Professor Gries is also constantly striving to develop new and original ways to improve his classes. This has resulted in such innovative models and techniques as live programming in lectures, the development of a “memory model” showing students what is happening in the computer’s memory as their programs run, and “stupid question period,” a judgment-free space where students are required to only ask questions that they would otherwise be too self-conscious to ask.

In the fields of course and curriculum development, Professor Gries’ work is no less pioneering, resulting in the creation of new, much-needed courses and in the overhaul of the computer science curriculum. He has developed introductory courses designed to help non-traditional students and those with varying degrees of programming knowledge become better acclimatized to the discipline. More recently, he has spearheaded the revision of the entire curriculum, resulting in changes that have resulted in a smaller set of core courses and the introduction of concentrations. The response has been overwhelmingly positive from both students and fellow instructors.

The Chair of the Computer Science Department at the University of Toronto praises Professor Gries as “an absolutely amazing teacher, mentor and departmental citizen.” The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee concurs and is pleased to award him with a 2010-2011 OCUFA Teaching Award. Congratulations.