

2013-2014 OCUFA TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS

CITATION FOR WINNER PROFESSOR MARGARET JANE KIDNIE

The logo for OCUFA, consisting of the letters 'OCUFA' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

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CITATION FOR PROFESSOR MARGARET JANE KIDNIE

Prepared and read by Jim Brett, University of Guelph

A student describes Dr. Margaret Jane Kidnie, Professor in the Department of English and Writing Studies at the University of Western Ontario as “an accomplished teacher, a generous mentor, and an all-around powerhouse – of knowledge, of enthusiasm, of heart, and of compassion.” This picture of a teacher who brings her passion and enthusiasm to all areas of her scholarly and pedagogical undertakings is one that is repeated by Professor Kidnie’s past and current students, by her peers and by community members.

In the classroom, Professor Kidnie combines her expertise and “infectious energy” with a distinctive blend of traditional lecturing, innovative teaching and evaluation methods, and hands-on skills development, to provide an incomparable learning experience.

In her Teaching Philosophy, teaching is described as “a kind of performance” and it is clear that Professor Kidnie brings her full performative acumen to each and every classroom. Her lectures are delivered with panache, boundless enthusiasm and wit. They are meticulously prepared yet appear spontaneous and effortless. They are imbued with energy and verve and seamlessly integrate the full range of available multi-media.

This same enthusiasm can be found in Professor Kidnie’s dedication to her students, who marvel at her ability to learn all their names and to relate to them as individuals. Numerous mention is also made of Professor Kidnie’s “marathon office hours,” her role as mentor and coach, and her diligence as an undergraduate and graduate student supervisor.



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No less insightful and appreciated are Professor Kidnie's myriad contributions to the delivery of innovative teaching and evaluation methods each tailored to the skills and level of the individual student. Recognizing that students are not necessarily taught essay-writing skills prior to university, Professor Kidnie implemented the "meta-essay" for her first-year courses where students write their first essay about writing an essay, thereby learning to articulate not just their position but also the process required for a successful essay. New students are also required to submit "idea cards" on which they can write questions or opinions on the subjects being taught, thus allowing for subject material to be fine-tuned accordingly.

Students enrolled in her honours courses are exposed to the "Commonplace Book" where they record favourite quotations from their readings and submit them for feedback; the "Director's Notebook" where they are required to jot down directorial notes, staging plans and production choices for staging a play; and the "Performance Choice Interpretation" through which students are given a problem of staging that they then attempt to "solve" through a class performance. Graduate students are even further immersed in the world of academia through Professor Kidnie's implementation of an annual Graduate Student Conference, where participating students are taught practical skills to prepare them for conferences and the job market.

Any testimonial on Professor Kidnie's pedagogical impact would be remiss if it did not mention her contributions to the university and to the community. Professor Kidnie is widely acknowledged as the "driving force" for the implementation of the new Theatre Studies program at the University of Western Ontario. Or as the Chair of the program states, "without M.J.'s energy and enthusiasm, this new program might well not now be heading so very successfully forward." Further afield, Professor Kidnie's work with the Stratford Festival's educational programs has resulted in enhanced educational opportunities not only for her students, but also for other teachers and the general public.

And the response to this blend of traditional, innovative and practical teaching is truly inspiring. Her course evaluations are described as "jaw-dropping" while testimonials from students,



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colleagues and community members are no less effusive in their endorsement of a teacher “who eats, sleeps and breathes her subject” and whose passion is distinctive and contagious.

Or as a colleague points out, “her influence as an educator is impressive, and worthy of acknowledgement. Dr. Kidnie is an exemplary teacher and mentor, eminently deserving of recognition.” The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee concurs and is pleased to present a 2013-2014 Teaching Award to Professor Kidnie.

Congratulations.