

**2013-14 OCUFA TEACHING AND
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS
CITATION FOR J. MARSHALL BEIER**



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
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CITATION FOR PROFESSOR J. MARSHALL BEIER

Prepared and read by Andrea Buchholz, University of Guelph

University instructors are busy people. So why would a faculty member willingly offer to develop and teach a course in addition to his regular teaching load? If you are Dr. J. Marshall Beier, the answer is simple, and is found in his statement of teaching philosophy: “Most fundamentally, teaching bespeaks relationships. I am forever learning from my students and the new perspectives they bring to our subject matters.” In other words, and as is the hallmark of exceptional teachers, Dr. Beier teaches a course on overload because he values relationships with, and learns from, students.

Dr. Beier is an Associate Professor of Political Science at McMaster University. In his tenure at McMaster, he has touched the lives of countless students. This is illustrated in the following quote: “Dr. Beier treats us not as students, but as people who are worth listening to. We are made to feel that we have voices, we have opinions... Dr. Beier takes us seriously as people and as scholars. I value so highly the fact that I am respected as more than a transient passenger working towards a piece of paper.” Indeed, Dr. Beier’s teaching philosophy captures this exactly: “I feel strongly that students are much more than transitory guests of the collegium – they are an indispensable part of it.”



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Teaching and research are often considered independently of one another, but not by Dr. Beier. It takes an insightful and well-rounded scholar to enmesh faculty research into the educational experiences of undergraduate students. Dr. Beier does just that; he is a bridge builder. He has developed the “Innovation in Arms Control Project” and which engages undergraduate students in research on multilateral arms control and disarmament. This project is founded on two undergraduate courses created by Dr. Beier, one of which – a third year course - includes a novel arms control simulation, an initiative supported by a competitive Experiential Education Academic Innovation grant awarded to Dr. Beier. Some students from the third year course go on to complete the fourth year seminar course, the one that he teaches on overload. As if this were not sufficient evidence of dedication to teaching, students in this course have the opportunity to publish their work in a peer-reviewed working paper series established by, naturally, Dr. Beier. A graduate writes: “The structure of this course was unlike any other that I had taken. The culmination of our work was the drafting of a collective working paper, an exercise that proved to be highly instructive. I had never before been asked to work so closely with classmates to produce a final coherent piece of writing, and so I found this to be one of the most challenging but also one of the most rewarding assignments that I completed in my undergraduate education.”

Dr. Beier’s teaching excellence extends beyond the classroom. He has supported undergraduate students in their own projects funded by McMaster’s prestigious Undergraduate Student Research Awards, and has taken undergraduates to academic conferences attended typically by only professors and graduate students.



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But do not be fooled into thinking that Dr. Beier's teaching is limited to university students; he has even been involved in the development of – wait for it - the McMaster Children and Youth University, a series of kid-friendly lectures on Saturday mornings.

In sum, Dr. Beier's accomplishments in instruction; student supervision; course and curriculum development; outreach; and service and innovation in university teaching, are many and exemplary. But do not take my word for it: he is the recipient of several teaching awards and honours, including a 2012 3M National Teaching Fellowship and most recently, a 2013 citation for teaching excellence in the Globe and Mail's *Canadian University Report*. Please join me now in congratulating Dr. Marshall Beier on his newest honour, a 2013-2014 OCUFA Teaching Award.