

The logo for OCUFA, consisting of the letters 'OCUFA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The background behind the letters is a dark blue, angular shape that fits into the overall geometric design of the cover.

OCUFA

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des associations des professeurs des universités de l'Ontario

**2020-2021 OCUFA
Teaching and
Academic Librarianship Awards**

Citation for Dr. Kathryn Plaisance



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Prepared by Mindy Thuna, University of Toronto

I love to teach. For me, teaching is about more than just imparting knowledge and helping students develop particular skills – it is fundamentally about building capacity and empowering others. Through my courses, supervision, advising, and mentorship, I help students value and leverage their existing knowledge and capabilities. I also teach them to identify the limits of their knowledge and recognize how much they have to learn from others... Most importantly, I motivate them to take a more active role in their own education.

This is the opening paragraph to Dr. Kathryn Plaisance's teaching philosophy and from this starting point and continuing through her nomination package, it becomes abundantly clear that the combination of her pioneering approach to teaching, her pedagogical leadership, and the continual sharing of her knowledge and passion make Kathryn an exceptional educator.

One of the qualities that sets Kathryn apart as an educator, according to a colleague at Waterloo, is that "she sees students as key stakeholders in their own learning...Katie implements innovative student-centered educational practices that increase student agency, engagement, and ultimately their learning and growth." A graduate of the Knowledge Integration program, who also served as a teaching assistant for Dr. Plaisance, corroborated this in her description of Kathryn's teaching, "Katie's teaching strategies shaped an environment of psychological safety, where students felt able to take risks, share their vulnerabilities, and bring their full selves to the courses...This process encourages students to integrate this understanding into their identities, beliefs, and interactions...Katie creates environments where students feel valued, becoming a source of continued learning and personal growth."

The strength of Kathryn's role as an educator is enhanced by her leadership in this realm and her willingness to share what she does beyond her own classroom. This can be seen in her SoTL research, but also in the Open Educational Resources that she has developed, often in collaboration with her students, including a template for team charters, an interactive manual for student collaboration, and written guides for collaborative brainstorming, effective team meetings, and motivating students to work in diverse teams. This is further exemplified by her mentorship of and guidance to colleagues and was mentioned by peers from multiple disciplines, including some very high praise that "she is the only faculty member I know who can easily adapt teaching strategies in her mentoring to match a colleague's context, whether it be class size, discipline, assessment standards, or course content."

While Kathryn's colleagues from the Centre for Teaching Excellence at the University of Waterloo, describe her as an unstoppable force, it is a former student who she supervised, mentored and collaborated with who best articulates why the OCUFA Teaching and Academic

Award committee has chosen to award Dr. Kathryn Plaisance with a 2020_2021 OCUFA Teaching Award. “Having now studied, taught, and been affiliated with many institutions across North America, Katie is the most exceptional and caring professor I’ve met. She’s created a community of students and graduates who think more critically, read more attentively, and write more thoughtfully because of her instruction. Katie is the ideal recipient of the OCUFA Award – an exceptional teacher and mentor who embodies the ideal of what other faculty should aspire towards.”

Congratulations Dr. Plaisance!