

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 page.

# 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. Rosa da Silva



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## **Citation for Dr. Rosa da Silva**

*Prepared by Dora Cavallo-Medved, University of Windsor*

In 2020, as most instructors were trying to figure out how to pivot to remote learning, Dr. Rosa da Silva took a hands-on, innovative approach by packaging and delivering biology lab teaching kits filled with equipment, reagents and a feedback survey to over 2000 biology students. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, she was determined to give her students the best learning experience by allowing them the opportunity to do biology lab exercises in the safety of their own homes. As one of her teaching assistants writes, “Beyond shaping students into dexterous scientists, these at-home lab kits allow for some of the best student engagement I have ever been able to witness as a TA.” This is a shining example of how Rosa puts students first, ensuring that they have maximal accessibility in all aspects of her teaching and that they feel included in the process.

Rosa’s teaching philosophy is founded on active learning, student engagement and innovation. Blended learning is at the forefront of her teaching, which includes a wide-range and diverse set of learning strategies. Both in the classroom and laboratory, Rosa engages her students with online learning modules, curated animations and videos, project-based teaching labs, in class gaming and social media platforms. Moreover, Rosa also creates a safe and inclusive environment, encouraging students from all backgrounds to feel empowered to contribute to and lead class activities.

She is also passionate about knowledge application, taking great care to ensure that her teaching examples are relevant to her students. Rosa’s forward thinking has also revolutionized undergraduate experiential learning. For example, Rosa secured funding to create a state-of-the-art cell biology training lab, as well as, a dedicated undergraduate research space - the ALLURE lab – which has supported and enhanced the learning of hundreds students across campus. And through collaborations with local conservation industries and researchers at neighbouring universities, Rosa established the Stink Bug Project, a discipline-based research program that has provided many undergraduate students the opportunity to strengthen their research skills, build professional networks and connect with others in the local community. Rosa is also actively engaged in science communication through the McMaster’s STEM Engagement Project (StEP) that exposes high school students to university science classrooms through research-based lab workshops. This empowers young students to pursue science careers and strengthens the relationships between secondary and postsecondary educators.

As a program coordinator and administrator, Rosa has overseen the development of numerous programs. Her collaborative approach is demonstrated in her a partnership with the School of Earth, Environment and Society, and the Indigenous Studies program to create a new program on Indigenous Knowledge, Environmental Conservation, and Society. As a

leader, she also shares her expertise with others through the Biology Teaching Squares, an online teaching and learning collaboration space that she established, and through her appointment to the Canadian National Biology Curriculum Task Force, where she is advised and contributes to country-wide Biology curricula. With her passion and dedication, Rosa truly is an inspiration to all around her. As her nominator states, “Dr. da Silva has revolutionized our department. Indeed, she is driving pedagogical innovation McMaster-wide, and is an emerging national leader in teaching and learning.”

Congratulations to Dr. Rosa da Silva, recipient of the 2020/2021 OCUFA Teaching Award.