

Gretchen Kerr

The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee takes pleasure in presenting a 2007 Teaching Award to Gretchen Kerr, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education in the Faculty of Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto.

In her statement of teaching philosophy, Professor Kerr wrote:

“I enter each new course with excitement and the belief that I am about to meet a group of talented young people, all of whom are intellectually bright, conscientious and eager to learn. It doesn’t matter that there may be some who are exceptions to this belief; instead, it sends a message to the students that I think highly of them as people and as learners. I believe that every student in the class is gifted and has passion in some area - and it is part of my job to help him or her discover it.”

And, throughout the letters received was the recurring theme of the excellence of Professor Kerr’s teaching and her extraordinary dedication to her students. A colleague wrote that she “is without a doubt the most conscientious and dedicated mentor of students in our Faculty... She has ‘raised the bar’ to a level with which the rest of us are unfamiliar.” A former student wrote that Professor Kerr was “one of my most memorable professors, not only because of the quality instruction she offers in the classroom, but also because of the friend and role model she is outside of the classroom.”

Professor Kerr is also credited with affecting a transformational impact on the undergraduate program of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health. As Chair of the Curriculum Committee she led the process of curriculum revisions that resulted in program accreditation in both the areas of Kinesiology and Physical Education (Teacher Preparation), one of only four Faculties in Canada to earn both accreditations. More recently she has represented the Faculty in the planning of the Concurrent Teacher Education Program in partnership with five other divisions and with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Students who complete this new, five-year program in the Faculty will receive both a Bachelor’s degree in Physical and Health Education as well as a Bachelor of Education degree.

A student wrote: “Professor Gretchen Kerr is an outstanding educational facilitator. She stimulates, challenges, and entices students to learn in a very empowering, effective, and innovative fashion. She is not averse to using in-depth discussion, humor, sensory experience, and demonstrations of physical activity to deliver her message.”

Professor Kerr’s statement of teaching philosophy opens with “I love to teach!” Her effectiveness is documented by the students who say that she makes them love to learn.

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