

2015-2016 OCUFA TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS

CITATION FOR DR. MARJORIE JOHNSON



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Prepared and read by Edmund Pries, Wilfrid Laurier University

On behalf of the Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee, I am honoured to recognize Dr. Marjorie Johnson as a 2016 OCUFA Teaching Award recipient.

Dr. Johnson is a professor in the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University, where she teaches gross anatomy and histology. Dr. Johnson's innovative skill, her passion and her dedication as a teacher cause her to stand out from her peers. Students recognize this immediately and line up to get into her courses.

One of the first things students notice is Dr. Johnson's commitment to them by making herself available. Dr. Johnson has an open door policy for students and colleagues, exemplified by the small whiteboard on her office door, where she indicates where she is when temporarily unavailable. From her office door, students also learn that even after they graduate, she will be supporting their journey as Dr. Johnson celebrates every current and former student's success by pinning the media announcement to her door. Every student and colleague is precious to her and she mentors each one, seeking always to help them "reach their full potential." Amanda Sauvé notes: "I will forever remember the impact that Dr. Johnson's support and mentoring had on my confidence, ambition, and professional development. I will continue to strive to mirror the admirable qualities I see in my mentor as I move forward in my medical career."



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Unlike some professors and scholars who eschew teaching in favour of research, Dr. Johnson immerses herself in teaching while maintaining a top research agenda. She is in the classroom five days a week and commits herself to an incredible 300 student contact hours per year. In addition, she mentors students, including Master's and PhD students, and new faculty members. She regularly undertakes extensive course development and redevelopment for both her department and her field. Recently, she revamped "all of the first and second year undergraduate medicine labs in response to changes in accreditation standards" – an immense task by any standard of measurement. None of this intensive workload has stunted her creativity or reduced her individualized attention to students. Instead, Dr. Johnson is known as a professor who gets to know her students personally and takes time for each one, and also injects delightful creativity into her classroom teaching. Who else would cover themselves in a sheet and hold two footballs to demonstrate the structural relation between the uterus and the ovaries? Her many creative demonstrations and enactments of functioning body parts are legendary on her campus. No wonder her teaching reviews are higher than those for other professors.

Despite Dr. Johnson's commitment to creative teaching, it has not restricted her research productivity, including in the area of instructional innovation and teaching. In addition to publishing numerous articles, she has also "authored or co-authored several peer-reviewed manuscripts on teaching and learning." Dr. Johnson likewise does not shy away from leadership responsibilities. During her time as Director of the Clinical Anatomy Graduate Program from 2011 to the present, the graduate program grew from three students to 24 MSc and 6 PhD students. Additionally, Dr. Johnson currently sits on five faculty mentoring committees, leads by undertaking the planning of anatomy facilities and anatomy teaching at the Windsor campus of the Schulich School and serves on several accreditation committees – and by no means is this the complete list.



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Dr. Johnson's motivation and impact can be traced to one principle in her teaching philosophy: passion. In her own words: "Teaching is hard work and I am not a natural performer but I am passionate about my subject and about my teaching and focus on conveying my enthusiasm for the topic as I prepare my course materials." The students she has taught and colleagues she has mentored clearly agree.

Dr. Johnson's contribution to teaching and learning is perhaps best summed up by a PhD student, Tyler Beveridge, "As you can see, Marj puts her heart and soul into her students. Everything she does is altruistic; focused on always improving her student's experiences and learning. She is truly someone who loves what she does and I can say without hyperbole that she is an inspiration to our whole department." High praise indeed, and the Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee agrees enthusiastically with this assessment. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Marjorie Johnson as one of the 2015-2016 OCUFA Teaching Award recipients.