

# 2015-2016 OCUFA TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS

CITATION FOR DR. DANA LEE



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## **CITATION FOR PROFESSOR DANA LEE**

*Prepared and read by Prof. Shafique N. Virani, University of Toronto*

On behalf of the Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee, I am honoured to present Dana Lee, Professor of Radio and Television Arts at Ryerson University, with a 2015-2016 teaching award.

William Shakespeare writes in Act II, Scene VII of *As You Like It*, that “All the world’s a stage.” Had the illustrious bard sat in Dana Lee’s class, he may have concluded that it’s also a YouTube channel. Several years ago, Professor Lee realized the power that online videos have to augment more traditional teaching methods. He therefore created over one hundred videos on topics ranging from animation to audio technology, from light theory to video production. Whether deconstructing a plasma screen television piece by piece or climbing into a concrete sphere to demonstrate the effect of echo and reverberation, he meticulously crafts these videos as one of many methods he uses to create accessible, meaningful, engaging, and humorous learning experiences for his students. His YouTube channel has over 2,000 subscribers, and has been viewed over 1.7 million times. If you scroll down the page, you’ll even find Mr. Lee actively engaged in the comments section, painstakingly responding to questions not just from his own students, but from viewers around the world.

His performance in class parallels his success on screen, and it’s clear from student feedback that they can’t get “too much of a good thing.” The results of Ryerson’s Faculty Course Survey place him in the top echelons of instructors on all fourteen questions. One student writes:

If there was a “Strongly Agree” option I would have picked it. Dana Lee is awesome.



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He's exactly the kind of professor who should be teaching this course to first-years - He's friendly, outgoing, smart, and hilarious. Put simply, he makes learning about wiring a whole lot more interesting than I ever thought it could be.

It's noteworthy that Professor Lee successfully teaches one of the School of Media's most notoriously complex and difficult courses – Media Technical Theory. In many ways, Media Technical Theory can be as confusing as the character “Ganymede” in *As You Like It* - a boy actor playing a girl disguised as a boy impersonating a girl – yet somehow Professor Lee manages to make it comprehensible. This is at least partially because he has always been at the cutting edge of innovations in pedagogy, and particularly student-centred learning. He was among the first to hold online office hours when technology was still trying to catch up, has developed several free online textbooks (one of which replaced a \$200 required text), and builds complex demonstration set-ups that enable hands-on learning even in mass lectures. In his efforts, he therefore caters to students of all backgrounds, interests and abilities. A student writes:

[He] is by far one of the best teachers that I have had the pleasure of studying under. He teaches in a way that allows students with different learning styles (auditory, visual, tactile) [to] understand what is being taught. I have yet to meet any other teacher who puts so much of himself/herself into what they teach.

Professor Lee brings the world to his class and brings his class to the world. In 2013, he was a mentor to about two dozen students who travelled to Ghana to build a school. While there, he was the chief technician to design and build a local FM radio station control room for the surrounding villages, using donated equipment from various industry partners in Canada. This unique opportunity allowed students to teach local people what they themselves were learning about radio production, all while discovering a new culture and applying their skills



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in a practical way. Professor Lee's commitment to community-based and experiential education shines forth from this example. Far beyond providing students with knowledge about technology and techniques, he teaches them the values of engagement and contributing to society.

In the famous "All the World's a Stage" monologue, the melancholy Jacques describes "the whining school-boy with his satchel...creeping like the snail Unwillingly to school." Nothing could be further from the experience of Professor Lee's students. William Shakespeare titled his play about the adventures of Rosalind and Orlando "*As You Like It*." Had the bard written about the students' experience of Professor Lee's teaching, he may have titled the play, "*As They Love It*." On the occasion of this OCUFA award presentation, please join me in congratulating the incredible Dana Lee.