

OCUFA 2006 Teaching Award Citation – Ken Cramer

The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee is pleased to present a 2007 Teaching Award to Ken Cramer, Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Windsor.

Having achieved tenure in three years and full professorship in nine, Dr. Cramer is clearly an exemplary scholar and instructor. Recognized at his university as an expert in large-class pedagogy and the first year student experience, Ken is a tireless supporter of enhancing teaching and learning. He has pioneered the use of teaching technology in the classroom, including multimedia and student response systems, as well as additional online resources such as the Virtual Lecture Hall – a platform for delivering course materials with streamed audio and video for later review. His classes, with an average size of 750 students, are structured to provide a seamless blend of lecture, student activities and media. They are invariably full to capacity, and greeted with “an anticipatory buzz in the air.”

Dr. Cramer has created a caring and inclusive learning environment where students have opportunities to be inspired, to question, and to gain and improve their learning skills. Students talk about the impact his classes and personal guidance had on them, describe his teaching as “enthusiastic,” “engaging,” “thought-provoking,” and refer to the “Cramer Effect” – energy, drive and passion that he brings to teaching, his concern for student wellness, and commitment to their learning. Colleagues write about his charisma, boundless energy, his “revealing the joy and fun in teaching.” They say: “Ken’s door is always open...he arrives early for classes, and leaves late, always with a crowd of students in conversation with him.” Graduate students also speak glowingly about his leadership and support, and the degree of freedom, responsibility and inspiration that he engenders as their thesis supervisor, or when working with a large team of Teaching Assistants for his huge introductory psychology class. Despite large class sizes, Dr. Cramer’s teaching evaluations are well above the mean scores in the department. He was twice nominated for the TVO’s Best Lecturer, and made it to the final Top Ten in the 2008 Competition. His teaching excellence earned him top awards at Windsor – the Kathleen E. McCrone Teaching Award in 2003 and the Alumni Award for Distinguished Contributions to University Teaching in 2007.

In support letters, Dr. Cramer is also uniformly praised for the leadership and commitment to transforming the culture of teaching and learning. Described as “a discerning and reflective scholar with a relentless drive to improve teaching,” he brings a spirit of inquiry to examine his own teaching practice and to conduct pedagogical research, systematically assessing the outcomes. He is a frequent facilitator and workshop leader at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, a participant in conferences and has published papers on topics such as instructional technology and its effect on student achievement, engaging students with active learning, and university rankings and their implications for students’ welfare.

Dr. Cramer’s work impacts his own classroom, his faculty and institution and beyond. The Selection Committee is proud to honour him with this year’s OCUFA Teaching Award. Congratulations!