

**2008-2009 OCUFA TEACHING AND
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS
CITATION FOR WINNER PROFESSOR SHEILA SAMMON**

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CITATION FOR PROFESSOR SHEILA SAMMON

read by Professor Zopito Marini, Brock University

The OCUFA Teaching Award Committee is delighted to present Professor Sheila Sammon with the 2008-2009 award in recognition and celebration of her excellence in teaching and mentoring.

Professor Sammon is a faculty member in the School of Social Work at McMaster University, where she has distinguished herself by her continuous involvement in curriculum development, teaching innovations, and mentoring of students and colleagues.

Students describe her classrooms as an exciting place where she makes the material “come alive.” In reinforcing this theme, one student remarked that, in her class, one always feels like a participant and never a spectator. Other students also note Professor Sammon’s generosity in sharing her own experiences in the creation of a collaborative learning environment in which the learning needs of each student are of paramount importance. For instance, a first-year student found her to be supportive and “anything but intimidating” while, at the same time, a mature student found her own experience recognized and welcomed.

Perhaps there is no better place for Professor Sammon’s educational leadership to shine than her many roles associated with Field Education. Her dedication, commitment, and guidance ensure that the field placements (a type of internship) are an inviting and effective context for students to translate theory into practice. In addition, her skill in assessing individual needs and structuring appropriate learning opportunities is what makes these experiences transformational in nature. Her students write



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eloquently and passionately about their very rich experiences. One student wrote: “Extremely relevant and inspirational and helpful in promoting critical thinking and the challenge to think reflectively and creatively.” Another student commented on the fact that “Sheila has always been an exceptional teacher, her kind, warm-hearted nature is safe but also challenges appropriately.”

Colleagues mention that the overarching purpose of Professor Sammon’s teaching is to foster critical engagement in analyzing the social world and finding ways to make a difference both as a professional social worker and as an active and responsible citizen.

Professor Sammon’s contributions to teaching and learning have been recognized through many teaching and merit awards from her home university with the President’s award to the Alan Blizzard award from the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education for her exemplary contribution to course design that focuses on experiential and self-directed learning.

Lastly, we would like to highlight her outstanding mentoring. One student remarked that Professor Sammon encouraged them to think of career possibilities they could not imagine for themselves and to look confidently at horizons that may not have been part of their own particular station in life.

Professor Sammon is a passionate and inspirational teacher, and we are proud to honour her with this year’s OCUFA Teaching Award. Congratulations!