



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Award for Excellence in Teaching
2010
Distinguished Teaching Award

DR. DIANA AUSTIN

Dr. Diana Austin is a superb teacher and an eager student, a willing partner in her students' learning journey and a dedicated mentor of others. These defining features weave their way through the numerous accolades she has received from current and former students, colleagues, and administrators. One of her nominators summarizes the essence of this extraordinary teacher: Diana Austin is able to inspire excellence by modeling excellence.

In her 25-year teaching career as a professor of English Literature, Dr. Austin has won the University of New Brunswick's most coveted awards: the Arts Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Allan P. Stuart Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching and the University Teaching Scholar Award. And, students continue to nominate her annually for awards even though, as a past recipient, she is no longer eligible to receive them. Her teaching evaluations are always outstanding and she frequently scores 100 percent on all the major categories.

Diana Austin believes that teaching is not done *to* or *for* students. She says, "It should be an enjoyable, challenging experience shared *with* students, involving teaching and learning on both parts, enriching the lives of everyone involved." She refers to herself as a "pragmatic idealist" who believes that teaching can make a difference in the life of every student—and the evidence suggests that she has succeeded. For example, a past student writes: "Put simply, Diana inspired me. She set me on a new course that forever changed my outlook on the world, and most significantly my outlook on myself."

Dr. Austin's teaching is characterized by humanity, authenticity and commitment. She seeks out the uniqueness and the potential in all her students, challenging them to think independently and to do better than they thought they could. She strives to inspire confidence in students about the worth of their own ideas. She promotes intellectual openness and mutual respect in her classes, and her students feel that their work and ideas are taken seriously. In short, Diana Austin encourages students to become partners in the teaching and learning process.

In the words of UNB's Provost and Vice-President (Research), "...Dr. Austin is a phenomenal teacher and an influential leader" who has devoted herself "...to improving university teaching, to enhancing student success, and to building a stimulating, accessible learning environment."

Dr. Diana Austin has been practicing, modeling and advocating for teaching excellence throughout her academic career at the University of New Brunswick. She is, indeed, a worthy recipient of the 2010 AAU Distinguished Teaching Award.