



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES  
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

*Award for Excellence in Teaching*  
*2019*  
*Distinguished Teaching Award*

**DR. AMANDA DIPAOLO**

Dr. Amanda DiPaolo, Associate Professor in the Human Rights Department at St. Thomas University, is a reflective and responsive teacher. The effects of this are clear: students demonstrate to themselves as well as to their classmates that what they learn inside is relevant to the world outside, and vice versa. Continuous new course development demonstrates her awareness of changes in her field, student interest, and their differing needs as they proceed through their degree. She includes mid-term teaching evaluations in every course to respond to the people in front of her, and has developed an “engagement passport” which students take to events on campus or in the community, and which the organiser signs as proof of the student’s involvement outside the classroom. Dr. DiPaolo also supervises independent studies and theses, including ones outside her programme. This speaks to her wide reading and formidable knowledge in the fields of Human Rights and Political Science. She is unfailingly generous with her time, her expertise, and her knowledge.

Dr. DiPaolo insists on precision, attention to detail, engagement, and reflection. Her standards are high, as all her students recognize, but she is committed to ensuring that the students are capable of accomplishing what she asks of them: she doesn’t just demand assignments; she also practices each part of the process with them in low stakes situations, until they can do them well. She even shows this commitment when the requirement in question lies beyond the boundary of her own courses, addressing the problem with energy and imagination. As one of her former students remarked, “Dr. DiPaolo continuously demonstrates that she wants nothing more than for her students to succeed. And we do; we always left class having learnt something that stretched the boundaries of what we thought we knew.”

As a vivid example of Dr. DiPaolo’s commitment to her students, her active training of their skills, and her support of their intellectual development, she participates in the Moot Court Programme. The rules for the American Moot Court Association had to be changed to allow a Canadian team to compete, and now students from Jamaica, USA, and other Canadian provinces choose to attend STU because of this Moot Court participation. A regular feature of many college programmes in the US, the St. Thomas Moot Court is unique in Canada. STU’s Moot Court team doubles in size every year, a testament not only to the persuasiveness of the results, but to the students’ desire to be challenged and stretched.

What we see in Dr. DiPaolo as a teacher is a conviction that teaching and learning are about growth mindset, practice, experiential learning and service, and engagement. It is because of her intense commitment to continuous teaching development that the Association of Atlantic Universities has named Dr. Amanda DiPaolo a 2019 recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award.