

**ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
2009
DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD
DR. SHELAGH CROOKS**

A student nominator wrote: “When she arrived that first day of class, she walked to the front of the room and asked if we thought she was the professor. It seemed strange that she did not tell us she was the professor but she wanted to know if we *thought* that possibly she *could* be the professor...she wanted us to produce evidence for why she was the teacher, and so we did.” So begins another academic year in Shelagh Crooks’ critical thinking classroom. Whether it is the first day of university for first-year students, or the final course in Philosophy for majors in the program, Dr. Crooks is committed to engaging her students. Hers is an intellectual journey that she invites and encourages her students to share with her.

Shelagh Crooks has been a professor in the Department of Philosophy at Saint Mary’s University for over two decades and is acknowledged campus wide as an outstanding teacher, an educational leader, and a model of collegiality.

Saint Mary’s students praise her ability to reach, teach and connect with students; they commend her for being a professor who is as interested in learning *from them* as having them learn from her; for managing a classroom where there is open discussion and mutual respect for ideas; and, as one student nominator wrote, for being a role model for female students “not to shy away from being a strong and smart woman”. For her commitment to student learning, Shelagh Crooks was awarded the Saint Mary’s University Students’ Association Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2003, and the university’s Father Stewart Medal for Excellence in Teaching in 2008.

In 2006, Shelagh was named Saint Mary’s first Teaching Scholar, a program which promotes the development of inquiry into teaching and learning and is awarded to a faculty member who is both an advocate for teaching and learning and a teaching scholar in his/her own right.

As embodied by the concept of teacher-scholar, Shelagh’s activities in support of teaching excellence extend beyond her individual pursuits to a willingness to ‘go public’- in her scholarly writings, in conference presentations, and in her service work. In recognition of her long-term commitment to develop, enhance and promote the quality of teaching and learning at Saint Mary’s, Shelagh was named the inaugural winner of the Dr. Geraldine Thomas Award for Educational Leadership in 2007.

Dr. Shelagh Crooks has been practicing and advocating for teaching excellence throughout her academic career at Saint Mary’s University. She is, indeed, a worthy recipient of the 2009 AAU Distinguished Teaching Award.