



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Award for Excellence in Teaching
2016

Distinguished Teaching Award

DR. MARYANNE FISHER

Dr. Maryanne Fisher, a Professor of Psychology at Saint Mary's University, is an extraordinary teacher who instills confidence in her students by nurturing independent learning (both in the classroom and online) through a variety of active learning strategies that address different learning styles. Dr. Fisher is a highly respected and sought after supervisor, the developer of an innovative capstone course for fourth-year psychology majors, the co-creator of a Psychology Teaching Assistant Program, and the co-chair of the Annual Psychology Student Conference. She has shaped the science curriculum as the Faculty of Science representative for the e-Learning Committee and has contributed to the development of the teaching culture as a representative on, and current chair of, the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching. Colleagues say, "Dr. Fisher is my go-to faculty member when strengthening e-Learning design ideas and approaches to 21st-century learning."

Dr. Fisher's Teaching Philosophy statement outlines three core objectives that guide her practice: to foster life-long learning, to form learning collaboration, and to help students create clear learning and personal goals. She works diligently towards meeting these objectives in every student interaction, whether online, in face-to-face classes, in her General Experiment Lab, or at off-campus events. This type of active and consistent mentorship reaches far beyond the classroom as Dr. Fisher encourage students to present at conferences, publish articles, and volunteer for open-houses to serve as mentors to incoming students.

Dr. Fisher encourages her student to "do psychology" by having students teach each other difficult concepts, read one another's work, engage in research, and consider ethical issues as they design surveys. This means students have opportunities to think critically, make decisions, and recover from mistakes thereby maximizing their learning opportunities and leaning collaboration. Students report that they find Dr. Fisher's courses challenging while feeling supported in their learning and a sense of fairness in evaluation. In fact, students say, "she supports students in a balanced way by encouraging intellectual independence, allowing us to make mistakes and problem solve on our own; then she follows up by giving students constructive feedback on how to improve." Dr. Fisher's approach has also been recognized by the Dean of Science who says, "Maryanne does a substantial amount of outreach to the community, and becomes a mentor to many new students. I have personally seen a number of students flourish under her tutelage."

It is this ongoing dedication to teaching and student learning that makes Dr. Maryanne Fisher a very worthy recipient of the 2016 Association of Atlantic Universities' Distinguished Teaching Award.