



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Award for Excellence in Teaching
2023
Distinguished Teaching Award

DR. RACHEL ALPHA JOHNSTON HURST

Within the vibrant educational landscape of Atlantic Canada, Dr. Rachel Alpha Johnston Hurst emerges as a beacon of inspiration and excellence in teaching.

As noted by StFX Professors Peter Mallory and Kim MacLean, Dr. Hurst's continuous work in developing and revitalizing the Women's and Gender Studies curriculum showcases her dedication. Notably, her contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning are evident through the publication of four peer-reviewed articles and two book chapters on feminist pedagogies. She not only experiments with innovative teaching strategies but also rigorously assesses their outcomes, generously sharing her findings for the benefit of the wider academic community.

Creativity is a hallmark of Dr. Hurst's pedagogical approach. She possesses an uncanny ability to infuse her courses with fresh perspectives, encouraging her students to think beyond the confines of conventional wisdom. Her innovative teaching methods not only captivate but also challenge students to explore complex issues with a creative lens, fostering an environment of intellectual curiosity.

According to Dr. Hurst's colleague, Dr. Nancy Forestell, Dr. Hurst's prodigious pedagogical and leadership skills have been a key element in the growth of the Women's and Gender Studies program at St. Francis Xavier University, not only in numbers but in the active involvement of feminist scholars across campus.

Dr. Hurst's prowess as an educator finds its true testament in the resounding voices of her students. They laud her as "excellent," "phenomenal," and "amazing," and consistently remark on her passion, enthusiasm, and inclusivity within the classroom. Her classes are renowned for their meticulous preparation, clear communication of expectations, and the reliability of her syllabus as the course's guiding light. Students describe her courses as both "challenging" and "eye-opening," emphasizing the rewarding nature of the intellectual journey she facilitates.

Dr. Hurst's classes are vibrant spaces where learning transcends the classroom walls. Through her passion and grace, she ignites a spark within her students, inspiring them to become active participants in their own education. Dr. Hurst's energetic teaching style cultivates an atmosphere where students feel empowered to delve into topics that are often emotionally charged and controversial. Dr. Hurst approaches her work with empathy and a refreshing humility, eager to learn alongside her students. Her joyful and welcoming demeanour creates a comfortable and inclusive classroom environment where students feel valued and heard.

Dr. Rachel Alpha Johnston Hurst's exceptional teaching abilities, characterized by creativity, student engagement, critical thinking, energy, humility, humour, and inclusivity, are truly deserving of the 2023 Association of Atlantic Universities' Distinguished Teaching Award.