

The Path to Recognition: Crafting a Compelling Teaching Award Nomination

Thursday, November 27, 2025

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Access Check

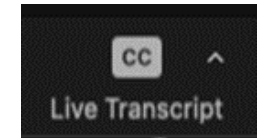
Is there anything about the virtual space that we can address before we begin?

Are there any other access needs that might affect your participation in today's session?

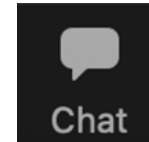
Let us know if you are having any audio issues



Turn on live transcript if you would like closed captioning



Type questions and comments into the chat or raise your hand



1. Welcome and Introductions.

Agenda

1. Welcome + Introductions

2. How do you identify candidates or how do candidates self-identify for teaching awards?

3. How do you work with the nominee?

3. How do you approach preparing a teaching awards nomination file?

4. How do you address key criteria meaningfully?

5. An overview of institutional and external teaching awards

2. How do you identify candidates or how do candidates self-identify for teaching awards?

Identifying Candidates

Evidence of Impact

- Impact beyond their courses
- Sustained commitment to teaching excellence (creative approaches to assessment, staying connected to current/emerging research or professional practice, striving for improved student supports, etc.)
- Evidence of connecting teaching practice to departmental / divisional / institutional priorities
- Who has won local awards? Who is active in teaching-focused department or divisional events? Who shares their teaching resources / successes? Who do people want to collaborate with? Who are the students talking about?

Review Existing Information

- Strong feedback from students
- PTR / Merit Assessment
- Interim Review for Tenure-Stream, Probationary Review for Teaching Stream Faculty or Promotion to Full Professor
- Institutional / divisional teaching & learning grants (e.g., LEAF, GEIF, Global Classrooms)
- Engagement with divisional institutional / divisional teaching & learning units (e.g., CTL, CTSI)
- Profiles of previous recipients to understand key characteristics

Identifying Candidates: How do academic leaders ensure they're recognizing more diverse candidates?

Foundations

Understanding that equity, diversity, inclusion and access are at the foundation of teaching excellence, how can we examine our existing awards practices and processes?

Barriers

Consider potential barriers that equity deserving individuals might encounter.

Communication

Inclusive messaging. Communicating across multiple channels.

Consultation

Are there pre-existing networks you might reach out to? For example, if your academic unit has a committee that explores issues of equity and diversity, consider engaging them in a conversation about candidates.

Messaging

Communicate U of T's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, access and Indigenous sovereignty.

Self-Identifying as a Candidate

Reflect:

- Feedback you've received from students and TAs
- Your accomplishments – what have you built / changed / innovated / improved? What specific contributions have you made to the life of the academic unit / program / division / field?

Discuss:

- Feedback from colleagues on your teaching
- Have a conversation with your unit head – provide goals / rationale for pursuing a teaching award

Tap into Resources:

- Self-driving: consider resources within your academic unit (e.g., previous teaching award winners, teaching and learning committees, community of practices)
- Divisional / Institutional Supports: connect with a teaching and learning team (or individual) for a consultation (e.g., CTSI, A&S Teaching & Learning, UTSC CTL)



Laddering: A Journey Through Teaching Awards

- Start thinking about awards early in your career (e.g., local awards)
- The idea is to methodically advance to higher rungs on the ladder – building your expertise as you go
 - What aspects of your practice need to grow as you move up the ladder?
 - What new areas must be focused on or is there an opportunity for continued learning? (e.g., leadership, capacity building, impact beyond your academic unit, etc.)



3. How do you work with the nominee?

Working with the Nominee

Deadlines and Documents

- Meet early: meet with the nominee as soon as possible to review the criteria for the award and start collecting materials. Map out deadlines together to ensure the nominee provides necessary materials.
- Be clear about documents they will need to provide: review the required documents for the award. For awards that require Statements of Teaching Philosophy, Practice, and/or Leadership, get the candidate drafting these right away; multiple iterations may be needed.
- Boundaries: be cautious of engaging the candidate too much—it's a delicate balance.



Working with the Nominee: Prompts for Personal Statements



Awards Criteria

What award criteria do your beliefs, accomplishments, activities and evidence relate to?



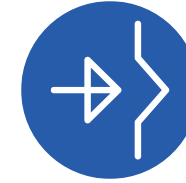
Beliefs / Strengths

What are the key beliefs that you hold related to teaching and learning?
What are the key claims that you make about your strengths, accomplishments and contributions to teaching and student learning?



Strategies / Activities

What strategies and activities do you use and put into practice that support these beliefs and claims?



Evidence / Impact

What information and materials provide evidence of your strategies and activities? What data and documentation provide evidence of the impact and effectiveness of your practice?



Critical Reflection

How can you put actions into context? How do they demonstrate your philosophy and beliefs? What have you learned from data and your experiences? How does this inform your practice? How will you grow and improve?

4. How do you approach preparing a teaching awards nomination file?

Approaches to Nomination Files: Scoping Out the Nomination

See: [Teaching Awards: Steps to a Nomination](#)



Criteria

Clearly understand the criteria that the adjudication committee will be using to evaluate the nomination file.



Gathering

Identify the evidence from the nominee's teaching experiences that address each criteria. Try not to duplicate.



Meaningful

Be selective, consider how the nominee meaningfully contributed to the teaching experience / initiative.



Signposts

Create clear signposts in your teaching award files to help guide the committee assessing the file against the criteria.



Narrative

Create a narrative about the evidence shared and how it address each criteria and speaks to the nominee's teaching story.

Approaches to Nomination Files: Breadth vs Depth

Breadth: listing and briefly describing everything a nominee has done

Depth: great detail is shared about a few highly impactful activities

Somewhere in Between: highlighting key details that share some depth but also allow space for breadth

- Try to avoid bullet point lists
- If you're including an initiative or experience, why? What was important or innovative about a nominee's contributions? (e.g., serving on a committee)
- Do take space to clearly explain what the initiative / experience was, how the nominee carried it out, its impact on student learning and how it relates to the defined awards criteria
- Partnerships / Collaborations: share the work involved in the development of the partnership and the collaborations and contributions of the nominee
- A note on student evaluations and feedback: yes, student evaluations and feedback is important, but try to limit this discussion

Approaches to Nomination Files: Telling a Story

Story

All nominees will be highly accomplished. Focus on creating a **consistent story** that speaks to the nominee's approaches and beliefs about teaching.

Impact

Weave together different pieces of **evidence** to show the impact of the nominee's teaching both **within and beyond** their classroom.

Stand Out

Share what's **unique** about this nominee's teaching experiences. Tell a human story that shows how they're different from the other nominees. Review their **teaching philosophy** to understand if you can learn more about their background, initiatives and teaching trajectory.

"Air it Out and Give it Space"

You will not be able to include everything your nominee has accomplished. Focus on sharing details about **experiences that support the narrative** you are creating and address the award criteria.

Approaches to Nomination Files: Letters

Letters from Colleagues

- Ask nominee to share names and emails of at least 4-5 colleagues who can speak to specific elements of their teaching and / or leadership and / or service to teaching
- Solicit letters from colleagues who have engaged with the nominee in **different** capacities and can speak to **different** areas of their work and impact
- Ask each colleague to:
 - Avoid listing information already represented in the CV
 - Avoid speaking in generalities. Rather select experiences / initiatives where they feel they could meaningfully share further insight to the Committee
 - Identify the impact of their work with the nominee (e.g., impact on them personally, on their academic unit, on the broader field, on students)
 - Consider their letter as a “story” or a “case”

Letters from Students

- Ask nominee to share names and emails of at least 6-8 students; former and prior students, try to avoid current students (3M disallows current students)
- Ask each student to:
 - Speak a **different** level of course / teaching (1st year, 4th year, graduate, etc.)
 - Speak to a **specific** strength of the nominee, and highlight the **specific** impact the nominee has had on their personal growth
 - Speak to **different** strengths and experiences
- Guide students on how to write their letters providing a framework (e.g., a series of questions they need to answer in their letter) and explaining the importance of language and structure

Approaches to Nomination Files: 7 Other Considerations

1

Request Feedback: ask someone, who isn't overly familiar with the nominee, and who can be an objective assessor, to review the file

2

Visuals: photos or other visual aids can be a powerful element of the story you are sharing about teaching (e.g., experiential learning)

3

Alignment of Data: bring together evidence from multiple sources to help convey impact (e.g., nominee, colleagues, students)

4

Start Early: collecting evidence and letters and crafting the narrative will take longer than you anticipate

5

Existing Resources: mine existing resources for evidence of experiences / initiatives and their impact (e.g., Annual Activity Report, teaching dossier)

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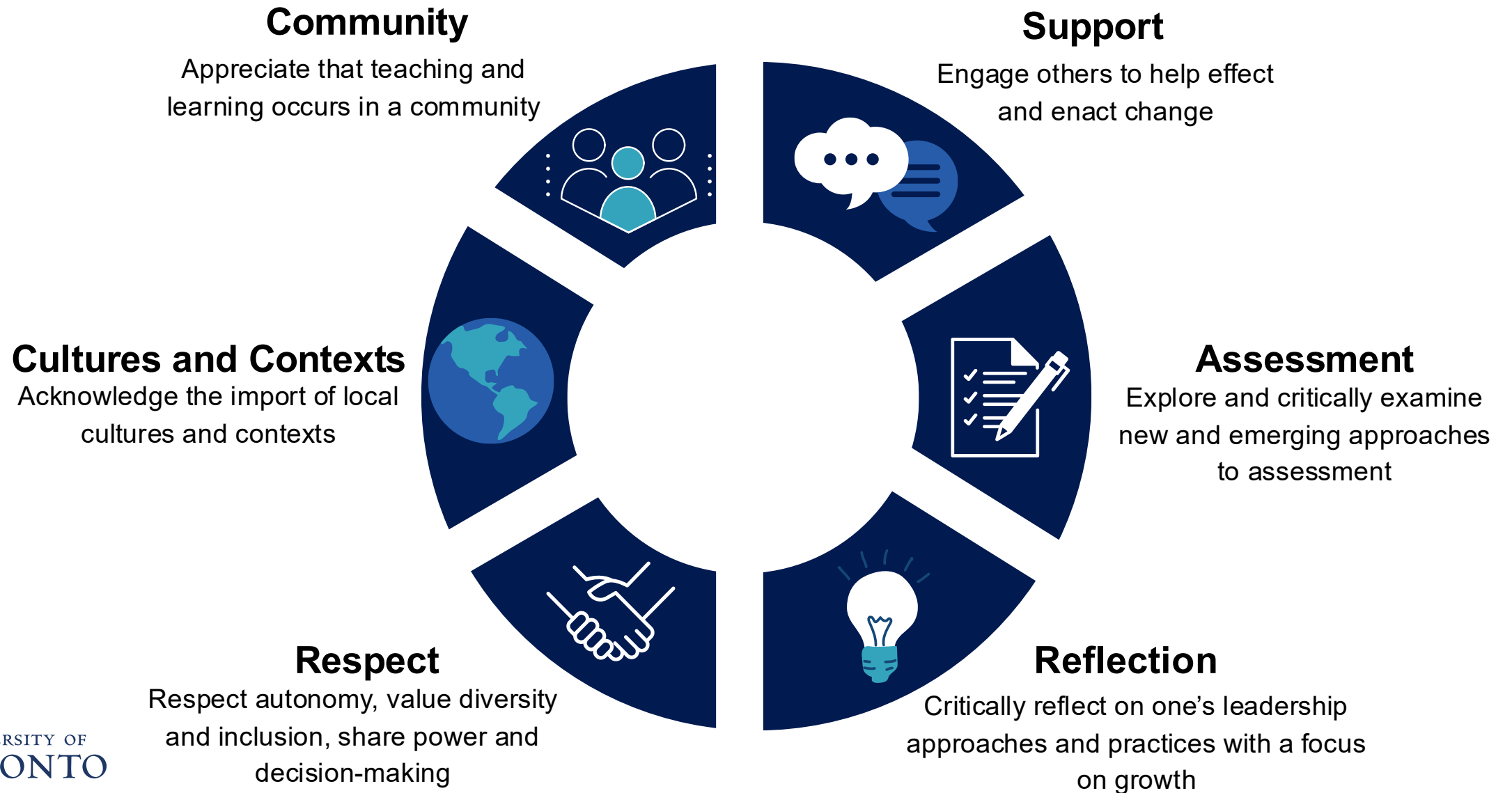
Don't Reuse Letters: make sure to solicit new letters that directly speak to the awards criteria

7

Whitespace: create reader-friendly documents. For example, whitespace is another signpost for your reader that you're moving onto a new section

5. How do you address key criteria meaningfully?

Educational Leadership



Educational Leadership: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Educational Leadership

- Demonstrating a sustained commitment to principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, access and Indigenous ways of knowing throughout teaching practices, experiences and initiatives
- Prioritizing equity and accessibility in development of new curricula or resources or teaching practices
- Engaging in scholarship or securing funding to explore or support EDIAI in pedagogy
- Creating reciprocal, sustained and meaningful partnerships with equity-deserving communities

Teaching Excellence and Innovation

- Showing an understanding and consideration of who your learners are and building a range of perspectives into your use of teaching examples
- Designing learning environments with accessibility considerations (e.g., evidence of use of UDL approaches)
- Engaging Indigenous frameworks and ways of knowing

6. An overview of institutional and external teaching awards.

Teaching Awards Deadlines

Institutional Teaching Awards

- [President's Teaching Award](#)
 - March 20, 2026 at 11:59 PM
- [Cheryl Regehr Early Career Teaching Award](#)
 - January 30, 2026
- [Northrop Frye Awards](#)
 - January 30, 2026
- [Global Educator Award](#)
 - January 30, 2026

Provincial Teaching Award

- [OCUFA Teaching Award](#)
 - TBD

National Teaching Awards

- [3M National Teaching Award](#)
 - TBD
- [D2L Innovation in Teaching & Learning](#)
 - TBD

Resources

U of T Resources

- U of T Teaching Awards Network: an MS Teams site with resources and announcements. Contact Tegan Mannisto, Teaching Initiatives Coordinator, to join (tegan.mannisto@utoronto.ca)
- Consultations: [consult with CTSI](#) or divisional offices to discuss applications to teaching awards
- [Course Evaluation Summary Sheet Template](#)
- [How to use the University of Toronto Course Evaluation Summary Sheet Template](#)
- [President's Teaching Award adjudication procedures and detailed instructions for submitting a nomination](#)

External Award Information

- [OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards:](#)
- [STLHE 3M National Teaching Fellowship](#)
- [3M National Fellowship "Before you submit" checklist](#)
- [University of Calgary guidance for preparing a nomination package](#)

Useful Articles

- [Weimer, Maryellen. \(2013\). Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice: John Wiley & Sons.](#)
- [Seldin, P., Miller, J. E., & Seldin, C. A. \(2010\). The teaching portfolio: A practical guide to improved performance and promotion/tenure decisions. John Wiley & Sons.](#)
- [Roxå, T., Mårtensson, K., & Alveteg, M. \(2011\). Understanding and influencing teaching and learning cultures at university: A network approach. *Higher Education*, 62\(1\), 99-111. Retrieved September 30, 2020.](#)

Appendix: Award Details

President's Teaching Award

Overview

- A nominee shall hold a continuing appointment and have demonstrated a sustained commitment to educational leadership, teaching excellence, and educational innovation, alongside a commitment to principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility

Criteria

- Criteria considered:
 1. Evidence of Teaching Excellence
 2. Evidence of Educational Leadership
 3. Evidence of Educational Innovation
- Sustained commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, access and Indigenous perspectives across all criteria

Notables

- Your Dean's Office is responsible for soliciting and compiling nominations and a decanal letter of support
- Not an end of career award. Recipients appointed to President's Teaching Academy for a 5 year term, and asked to actively participate in the Academy
- An annual professional development allowance of \$10,000 for 5 years

Cheryl Regehr Early Career Teaching Award

Overview

- A nominee is eligible if they have completed two-years of teaching at the University in their current continuing-status appointment. This includes tenure-stream Assistant Professors; teaching-stream Assistant Professors; as well as full-time clinical faculty– who are in the first six-years of their appointment

Criteria

- Criteria considered (evidence of at least 2):
 - Initiatives to enhance and/or support student learning
 - Initiatives promoting student-faculty interactions
 - Contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning
 - Pedagogical contributions outside the classroom
 - Ongoing pedagogical development/enhancement

Notables

- Up to 6 awards of \$3000 offered in 2025-26
- Nominations may be resubmitted once
- Award oversight by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education

Northrop Frye Award

Overview

- Recognizes the excellence of teams of faculty, librarian and/or staff members who have undertaken a teaching and learning project within the last five years that significantly enhanced the student learning experience. Projects could include (but not limited to):
 - Curricular Innovations
 - Co-Curricular Learning Opportunities
 - Instructional / Pedagogical Innovations

Criteria

- Criteria considered: nominations are assessed on the demonstration of at least one of the following:
 - Qualitative and quantitative data showing project impact
 - Adoption of project innovation by others
 - The project's impact on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access within the classroom or beyond

Notables

- This is not a humanities-focused award - nominations from across the University and from all departments and divisions are welcome and encouraged
- Team Awards can be comprised of 1) faculty-only 2) staff / librarians-only 3) a combination of faculty, librarians and staff members
- Up to two awards of \$2000 will be offered annually
- Award oversight by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education and Division of University Advancement

Global Educator Award

Overview

- Recognizes faculty members who both demonstrate and foster intercultural/global fluency, the ability to successfully operate and communicate within different cultural contexts and who employ pedagogies that reflect a diversity of perspectives and invite engagement from all students
- Open to all teaching-stream and tenure-stream faculty members in continuing appointments as of July 1, 2024

Criteria

- Criteria considered: clear evidence of ongoing contributions and impact at the level of course design and delivery:
 - Interactional Diversity: Enhance intergroup interaction (across domestic/international students and among international students)
 - Addressing Barriers to Inclusive Classrooms: Create the conditions for a global learning environment that engages and welcomes participation from diverse perspectives

Notables

- To be eligible for the Global Educator Award you do not have to be teaching internationally, rather you are bringing the global context into your classroom in a meaningful way
- One award of \$3,000 will be offered annually
- Award oversight by the Office of the Vice-President, International and the Vice-President & Provost

OCUFA Teaching Award

Overview

- Nominees may be full-time or contract faculty members
- A candidate must meet both of the following prerequisites to be considered:
 - 1. The candidate is a member of an OCUFA affiliated faculty association; and
 - 2. The candidate was not previously nominated; or, the candidate was nominated in a previous year, but did not win
- Embraces all level of instruction (graduate teaching, undergraduate, continuing education, faculty development)

Criteria

- Overall quality of the dossier
- Teaching philosophy
- Instruction
- Student advising/support
- Thesis/major paper/independent study/capstone supervision
- Course development
- Curriculum development and leadership
- Educational material development
- Service in teaching
- Research on university teaching
- Development of innovative teaching methods
- Educational planning and policy-making
- Dissemination on university teaching (conferences, etc.)
- Student and peer letters
- Student survey results
- Outreach
- Education/Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grants

Notables

- Maximum of 3 awards presented
- There are different criteria for contract faculty and full-time faculty
- Nomination packages cannot exceed 50 pages
- Committee will consider hyperlinks; however, each hyperlink provided will count for 3 pages in the nomination package (and contribute to your total page count)

3M National Teaching Fellowship

Overview

- Open to any individual currently teaching at a Canadian university or college, regardless of discipline, program, level, or term of appointment
- Nominees that demonstrate impact on students and institutions

Criteria

Nominees are expected to demonstrate excellence in three equally weighted categories:

1. Educational Leadership:

- “leading significant transformation in teaching and learning at an institutional, disciplinary, community, and/or societal level”

2. Teaching Excellence:

- “Excellent teachers engage in inclusive practices, scholarly teaching and ongoing reflection of their own teaching practice”

3. Educational Innovation:

- “..the novel execution of ideas that contribute to more effective teaching and learning practices. The result of educational innovation impacts people in academia and beyond to reach mutual goals”

Notables

- Mentoring support is available: there is a mentoring group for the Fellowship composed of 3M National Teaching Fellows and others who will assist anyone wishing to put together a dossier. Please contact 3mntfmentoring@stlhe.ca for further information
- The nomination package **must not exceed 30 pages (PDF)**
- Committee will consider hyperlinks; however, each hyperlink provided will count for 3 pages in the nomination package (and contribute to your total page count)

D2L Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning

Overview

- Recognizes excellence in collaborative teaching and learning in post-secondary education
- The Award is open to groups of two or more individuals, at least one of whom must be currently teaching, regardless of discipline or level of appointment
- Unique among the STLHE awards is that the D2L Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning is international and open to applicants from all countries; however, applications will only be accepted in French or English
- Candidates do not need to be members of STLHE to apply

Criteria

- Applications should demonstrate innovation(s) in areas including pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, course design, curriculum development, assessment methods, and various tools or technologies that enhance learning and have had a significant impact
- Example innovative approaches include:
 - Classroom and course management innovations, including new ways of teaching that promote student engagement, etc.
 - Leadership in innovation that forges new paths and inspires others within and beyond the institution, including mentoring colleagues about innovative approaches, etc.
 - Championing new visions of teaching excellence through the scholarship of teaching and learning, etc.

Notables

- The teaching innovation should be “completed” versus “in progress” to demonstrate evidence of impact as well as a reflection of the impact
- Award recipients receive \$3,000 and are expected to present a poster at the STLHE Annual Conference
- Application dossiers are strictly limited to 25 numbered pages, 12-point font