Kathleen O'Connell Teaching Excellence Award

New College

This award honors outstanding teaching and recognizes the important contributions made by sessional instructional staff to the teaching mission of New College in its academic programs, interdisciplinary courses and writing centre. Dr. Kathleen O'Connell has taught courses on Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray at New College for two decades, beginning in 1993. Her teaching, in the spirit of both Tagore and Ray, exemplifies New College's commitment to socially engaged education and pedagogical innovation.

New College Programs included are:

- Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health
- Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity
- New One: Learning without Borders
- International Foundation Program
- New College Writing Centre

Interdisciplinary courses offered in 2025/26 taught by eligible sessional instructors: JQR360H, NEW302Y1.

Value of the Award

A Certificate of Recognition and a prize of $2500.

Eligibility

All sessional instructors who are members of CUPE3902 Units 1, 3, and 6, teaching courses offered by New College or working as writing instructors at the New College Writing Centre within the current academic year are eligible to be nominated. Instructors must have taught a minimum of one half course or 130 hours in the current year. The current year refers to the year ending on 30 April 2026. If in doubt of eligibility, consult nc.progsupport@utoronto.ca

Nomination Process

The Vice-Principal, New College, will solicit nominations annually to be submitted by April 30. Nominations may be made by students on the basis of their experience of the candidate's teaching in courses offered by New College or in the New College Writing Centre, or by

colleagues teaching in New College programs and courses, including faculty, sessional instructors, writing instructors and teaching assistants.

Nominators will fill in an electronic form outlining how the candidate exemplifies excellent teaching at New College.

Upon receipt of a nomination, the Vice-Principal will confirm the eligibility of the nominee and solicit the following supporting materials from the candidate:

- a 2-3 page response to the nomination
- a CV
- relevant teaching materials

The Vice-Principal will also supply teaching evaluations to the Awards Committee.

Candidates will be assessed by a committee consisting of the Vice-Principal, two faculty members, a student from New College or taking courses in New College programs, and a member of CUPE3902, if possible, the previous year's winner. Preference will be given to candidates who have not previously received the award.

The award may not be conferred every year.

Criteria for excellence may include:

1. Excellent knowledge and communication of subject area
2. Motivating and engaging students in learning
3. Promoting socially engaged learning
4. Promoting deep learning, critical thinking, and independent learning
5. Promoting and developing teaching practices that foster equity and diversity
6. Effective or innovative approaches to fostering interdisciplinarity
7. Excellent course design
8. Creating effective learning environments
9. Designing effective or innovative learning activities
10. Designing effective or innovative teaching materials
11. Effective use of technology
12. Effective methods to develop core skills (e.g., communication, collaborative, and research skills)
13. Effective or innovative assessment methods and effective feedback
14. Reflecting critically on teaching and learning; demonstrated commitment to teaching