“The Janet Pottie Murray Award for Educational Leadership is to recognize outstanding leaders in education on campus: not leaders in research or in university administration, but those who demonstrate a consistent commitment to the improvement of university teaching with particular emphasis on contributions beyond the nominee’s discipline or profession.

The award is named for Janet Pottie Murray and was created by her daughter, Dr. Shannon Murray. In her daughter’s words this award is “in recognition of her model of leadership in learning despite the fact that she has never taught; but leaders support, encourage and direct others, and that’s what she has done. Those whom she has supported have been fortunate to be publicly recognized for their work; but the best leaders, and the best teachers, are not always those who are most visible.”

Dr. Charlene VanLeeuwen’s excellence in teaching was recognized with a Hessian Merit Award two years ago. Now, we recognize that her contributions to teaching at UPEI go far beyond the students in her own classroom. The citation for the Hessian Merit Award described Dr. VanLeeuwen’s open door (or “revolving door”) policy which invites not only students but also faculty to drop in for advice or to share ideas. It is exactly this generosity of time and spirit to cultivate sharing knowledge which makes her so deserving of the Janet Pottie Murray Award for Educational Leadership. Dr. Jennifer Taylor served as her department chair, and describes her as a valuable mentor to faculty: “No matter how busy she is, she will stop and listen and always has an idea to address challenges effectively.” Not only does she do this informally, but her research also focuses on teaching and learning. She presents her research at conferences which range in scope from local to international, and her publications are also international in impact. Her colleagues across campus speak of her consistent and passionate support of teaching, her humility and self-less giving as she shares her experiences and expertise. She does this as a sessional instructor with precarious employment.

Dr. Charlene VanLeeuwen, in recognition of your contributions to teaching and learning at our university, the Faculty Association is pleased to present you with the Janet Pottie Murray Award for Educational Leadership.