

Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Full-Time Instructor
Presented to Dr. Carolyn Thorne
Faculty of Education
Written by Amy MacFarlane
Presented by Amy MacFarlane
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“With all my heart, I share with you that she *inspires amazing*.” Those are not my words but rather the words of a student describing Dr. Carolyn Thorne.

As the Faculty of Education’s specialist in inclusive education, Carolyn brings a passion for equity and social justice to the classroom while also advocating strongly for students’ well-being and mental health.

On Carolyn’s office door in Memorial Hall, you will see the following quote by Robert Frost: “*I am not a teacher but an awakener.*” According to one student, “this simple sentence embodies Carolyn’s teaching philosophy. She does not “teach at” students, she “awakens” her students by challenging them to take on new perspectives, dig deep and carefully reflect on their teaching practice.”

From Carolyn’s perspective, she is a “facilitator of knowledge, not a provider of knowledge.” Through interactive sessions and experiential activities, she seeks to actively engage a learner through doing. Carolyn’s teaching dossier was full of many examples of her classroom practices such as Gives and Gets; Check Ins, Brain Breaks, and Exit Tickets. She applies principles of Universal Design for Learning in her classroom which is a framework for creating inclusive learning environments. In Carolyn’s words, “for me, the foundation of my teaching reflects my belief that there is no such thing as ‘normal’”.

Described by students as a masterful, superb, and gifted educator, one student shared that they have “become a better teacher, **and** human being, just by knowing Carolyn.” Another student wrote, “to be Dr. Thorne’s student is to be respected, valued, and cared for”. “She does a morning check-in with her students every day. If someone seems tired or off, she notices. I have never had a university professor like this before.”

Finally, in the words of another student, “Dr. Thorne shines at the very top of my list of professors who have gone above and beyond, who have stimulated and encouraged in equal measure. Dr. Thorne is a natural motivator, champion, and mentor.”

On behalf of the selection committee, I am honoured to present the prestigious Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Full-Time Instructor to Dr. Carolyn Thorne. She does indeed *inspire amazing*.