

The CFES Geoscience Teaching Excellence Award

A proposal to the Canadian Federation of Earth Science (CFES) from the Canadian Council of Chairs of Earth Science Departments (CCCESD)

Purpose of the Award

To recognize outstanding contributions to the teaching of geoscience in Canada at the post-secondary level.

Reasons for proposal

To promote and recognize the importance of geoscience teaching in Canada at the post-secondary level. Contributions to research, mentorship and the geoscience community in Canada are well recognized through annual awards by GAC, MAC, CGU, CSPG and CFES, among others. Yet there is no similar recognition of contributions to geoscience teaching at the national level, with the exception of non-discipline specific awards such as the 3M Teaching Fellows program. The proposed CFES teaching award will add balance to the spectrum of academic honours available in Canada and emphasize the importance of teaching to the geoscience community.

Nature of the proposed award

To be awarded annually in May at the GAC-MAC meeting or its equivalent. The award will consist of a citation, a certificate or medal and a cash prize (amount TBA – see below).

Eligibility

Nominees must hold a full-time academic position (professorial, lecturer, or teaching stream) at a recognized post-secondary (degree or diploma granting) institution in Canada. Nominees can be at any academic rank. Nominations must have the support of the applicant's chair or dean, although self-nominations are admissible.

Nomination Process and Materials

Nominations should consist of the following, submitted electronically:

1. Up to 5 letters of support from colleagues or former students, in addition to the nomination letter.
2. Letter of support from the nominees chair or dean.
3. Nomination letter (**no more than 4 single-spaced pages**) addressing the following:

Teaching Ability: what teaching and assessment techniques does the nominee employ? Are courses comprehensive, yet enjoyed by the students? What is the teaching philosophy?

Inventiveness/Pedagogical Innovation: What new ideas are used? What new curriculum and support materials have been produced? What new methods or devices have been introduced?

Initiative/Originality: How are new situations handled? How are students with varying abilities accommodated?

Cooperation/Collegiality: How does the instructor cooperate with and contribute to the entire program and in other academic areas.

Human quality and influence on students: How has the instructor been sensitive to student needs and influenced students to further their studies in the geological sciences?

Outreach: how is the instructor involved with the promotion of the discipline within the community, locally, nationally and internationally?

Professional Activities and Development: publications, advising, program development and other contributions to pedagogy.

Summary: of the candidates strengths and complements as they relate to the nomination for the teaching award.

4. The nominee should be involved by providing the following:
 - a. A one-page teaching philosophy
 - b. A brief CV (4 pages or less)
 - c. Examples of teaching materials or methods, evidence of teaching effectiveness and improved student learning (e.g., examples of lectures and exercises, numerical data from teaching evaluations, examples of student comments, evaluation of teaching by peers).
Maximum 6 pages.

Need for Funds and Naming Opportunities

The prestige of the award will be greatly enhanced if it is endorsed by a private or industrial donor(s). An endowed fund should be set up to provide a cash prize and medal/certificate annually on an ongoing basis. An endowed contribution of \$200,000 would guarantee an annual payout of \$8000 to \$10,000 per year, assuming a conservative rate of return. Alternatively, a donor could pledge an annual contribution of \$10,000 (or less) per year for an indefinite or fixed period (minimum 10 years?). The donor(s) should be given naming rights for the award, in consultation with CFES and CCCESD.

Management

The award will be managed by CFES. The selection process will be the responsibility of a sub-committee of CCCESD. A representative from CFES will chair the CCCESD selection committee. The donor should be given the option to have a representative on the committee, but not veto rights.