

Report of the Associate Dean, Teaching to Faculty Council, 2024 - 2025

Christine Barbeau

Over the past year, my involvement in various initiatives has further contributed to the promotion of effective teaching within the Faculty of Environment and shaping our One Environment approach under Environment 2035.

Faculty of Environment Teaching Fellow

As the Faculty of Environment Teaching Fellow, I represent the faculty on various university-level committees and consult on key campus-wide teaching initiatives. Each year, the lead teaching fellows select an initiative to champion across campus, in addition to supporting faculty-specific initiatives. In 2024, we prioritized accessible education across campus. This ongoing work aligns with my efforts in the Faculty to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in teaching.

AODA Compliance and Accessible Education Initiatives

A significant focus of my work has been addressing AODA compliance within the Faculty of Environment. I spearheaded proactive strategies to meet evolving accessibility requirements, contributing to the Accessible Education Project – Instructional Programs and Practices Team within the Teaching Innovation Incubator. This work includes developing accessible experiential learning opportunities and establishing bona fide academic requirements. In December 2024, the Faculty of Environment Accessible Education Working Group, held its first meeting, marking a major step toward supporting inclusive teaching practices.

Peer Review of Teaching

Winter 2025, was the soft launch and implementation of the Peer Review of Teaching (PRT) process within the Faculty of Environment. Drawing on training from the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and informed by best practices across campus, I supported the rollout by conducting peer reviews and helping to shape a faculty-specific framework and approach. This work aligns with the Teaching Effectiveness Framework and emphasizes thoughtful reviewer selection and implementation strategies that encourage reflective teaching and continuous improvement.

Outline Repository Initiative

A major focus of my work in 2024/25 has been advancing the institutional use of the Outline Repository. In 2024, I transitioned into a leadership role as co-lead of the

Outline Working Group. This group has been responsible for developing updated recommendations to Senate, focusing on critical issues such as outline ownership, boilerplate content, required structural elements, and compliance with Bill 166. These efforts are shaping the repository's evolution and have positioned it for mandatory use across campus.

Teaching Conversations Series

The Teaching Conversations Series—launched in Fall 2023—continues to serve as a valuable forum for instructors and staff within the Faculty of Environment. The series fosters a supportive teaching community by facilitating discussions on topics such as student engagement, generative AI, and accessibility in education. Its ongoing success reflects the faculty's commitment to collaborative professional development and the sharing of effective teaching practices.

Other Initiatives

Over the past year, I have led several key initiatives to enhance teaching and student engagement within the Faculty of Environment. These include the Student Experience Survey, the Distinguished Teaching Award nomination process, and ongoing work with the Educational Technologies Advisory Group. I've also contributed to sustainability and curriculum development through roles on the Sustainability Integration in Curriculum Grant Committee, the Advisory Group for the Sustainability Curriculum Integration Project, and the Excellence in Online Teaching Awards Committee.

This year represented my third time organizing and hosting the Grand River Envirothon. The Faculty of Environment also hosted the 2025 Ontario Envirothon Competition, welcoming 120 high school students from across the province. This hands-on environmental science competition promotes ecological literacy and leadership through challenges in forestry, soils, aquatic ecology, and wildlife.