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## Laurier Professor Jason Roy wins OUSA teaching award

WATERLOO – Jason Roy, an assistant professor in Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of Political Science, is the recipient of a 2013 Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) Award for Teaching Excellence.

This award recognizes educators who go above and beyond the textbook to inspire their students to learn. It is awarded annually to professors from each of OUSA's member campuses as selected by students as examples of teaching excellence.

"Jason continuously strives to find ways to use innovations in his teaching and improve the learning environment for students," said Pat Rogers, Laurier's associate vice-president, Teaching and Learning. "Being the recipient of an award sponsored by students is truly a recognition of teaching excellence, and Jason is a most deserving recipient."

Roy, who has been teaching at Laurier since 2010, specializes in teaching courses in political behaviour, public opinion, and the challenging Research Methods courses for undergraduate and graduate students.

"Many of my students come into the research methods course thinking it's all about statistics, and if they didn't do well in math in the past they think it's going to be a terrible course that they're going to dread," said Roy. "Instead I try to get students to look at the course in terms of how best to do research with statistics being one of a number of tools that may be helpful in the process."

Roy says his teaching philosophy is to help students think critically and look beyond to the bigger picture. One way he facilitates learning is by taking a question – such as whether university graduates earn higher salaries than non-university graduates – and leading his students through the exercise of building a mini-research project to help answer the question.

"It's not simply about just being able to understand statistics. It's being able to wander down the street one day and see something interesting and say, I wonder how that works, or I wonder why that is the case, and then to build a whole research project around that simple question."

He also promotes student participation and discussion through in-class activities, encouraging students to take an active role in their education. Outside of class, Roy encourages students to participate in an online discussion board where they can post questions anonymously, or to meet with him one-on-one to discuss class content or assignments.

Roy said he is honoured to win the 2013 OUSA teaching award.

"It's very rewarding to know students enjoy my teaching style," he said. "I'd like to thank the students for nominating me for this award, and for putting up with my bad jokes."

The OUSA teaching awards will be presented April 3 in Toronto.