

Maxwell Stevenson (MS): Reflection is one of the reasons that you might be thinking about a teaching award and Jamie and Carla, you both talked about different sorts of reflections. Equally Jessica, different sorts of reflections and why you might be engaged in that reflection. So you might be consolidating a lot of activity that's happened over the course of a very busy career. You might be consolidating a lot of activity that's happened over a very busy couple of years, punctuated by quite a lot of change and development. And you might be thinking towards how to start to document your career, your teaching career here at VIU so that you can reflect and project forward about how you want to carry on with your practice.

It might also be the case that alongside of those things, you'd like to win an award, which feels good by the way. It's nice to win things and it's part of the process. So Jessica and Pam will both talk to that a little bit. It is invariably the case that people we work with on this have a really positive experience of taking the time to reflect on why it is that they do the things that they do, and how it is that they've chosen to do those things. So, independent of the outcome, should you choose to apply I feel confident in saying to you that it's going to be a valuable experience. So why don't we get started? I've primed Jessica and Pam with five questions and they'll speak loosely around these, but I thought I'd tell you what they are ahead of time, just so you can orient yourself as they walk through their five to 10 minutes. The first thing, or in no particular order, they will speak about

who should apply for this award and why, how they structured their applications, what they needed to include in an application, how much time they would recommend you give yourself if you're putting together an application, and where they would suggest you start if you're thinking about an application

So five themes and they'll be woven together most likely.

Pam, would you like to start us off?

Pam Shaw (PS): Hello everyone. I'm very glad to be here and I'm very grateful to be asked to be here as well.

So my name is Pam Shaw and I'm here today on campus on the Unceded Lands of Snuneymuxw First Nation and grateful to be here. I've been at Vancouver Island University for 24 years, so back in the olden times when it was Malaspina University college so I know this because it popped up on LinkedIn it said congratulations on 24 years what thanks LinkedIn so that that recently happened which was a surprise I have been fortunate to have won some teaching awards at VIU and from some off-campus places as well and and I think it's a beautiful question to talk about and the first thing I wanted to say on to that first question about who should apply is all of you should apply.

Every single one of you whether we're talking about applying for teaching awards or in whatever area that you're working in and I ran into a colleague yesterday who's in in finance with a First Nation and he and he just won an award and and we were you know We're kind of laughing. Oh, didn't know that there was an award for this, but one, he is worthy and deserving of winning that award. And as are all of you who are here, are worthy and deserving. You've worked hard to get where you are today. People, you've accomplished things that are worth celebrating. And as humans, we just don't celebrate enough. We don't take the time. And we are super fast to hang on to something bad that happens. My understanding is the word hamster in German references back to the hamster sort of stuffing things into its cheeks and hanging on to them. And I think as humans, we hang on to negative things, probably as a survival mechanism. And we very quickly rush over accomplishments or hard work that we've done or to celebrate for it. And so think about these awards are a chance to break that, that cycle of not celebrating and celebrating either your own victories or perhaps someone else's. So who should apply? Everyone should apply for something and you are worthy and deserving of doing this. And I would put

it to the question as well of why, if there's any part of you that says, oh, I don't know, I don't know if I shouldn't. As well, it's really put the question for you and say, why shouldn't you do it? Who are, why not you, why not have you go on this quest, go on a path, you know, and perhaps it doesn't, perhaps you'll win the award, but still you will have put something together that can allow you to reflect on your own accomplishments and your own achievements. and that's all by itself is a very good thing to have in your pocket for some days when you need it. It's nice to look back and say, oh yeah, yeah, I did accomplish something. I have done some big stuff and I'm very proud of what I'm done.

So who should all of you? Let me send a comment. Over to you, Jessica.

MS: Sorry, Pam. Do you mind going through all the way through? So we'll through there and so we'll give you five to ten minutes and then we'll bring Jessica in for five to ten minutes also and then we can keep a consistent narrative of Pam and a consistent narrative of Jessica.

PS: Okay and so to the second question how how I got started is that the question Maxwell?

MS: You can go in any order you like.

Okay yeah whatever strikes you. Okay and so I think I'll I think the one I'll speak to because it was the hardest, we're seeing one of the hardest things I ever did was the 3M teaching fellow and the process attached onto the 3M teaching fellow. So how it got started was I was asked to apply by David Witty at Vancouver Island University when David was the academic vice president. And so not knowing at all what I was getting into on the application, downloaded the application form And it was among the most complex forms I had ever seen, and I fill out all kinds of forms and apply for all kinds of grants in my day-to-day activities. This was asked for a great deal of information from it. So what I found particularly challenging with this is it required you, beyond the usual contact information and in collecting reference letters and letters of recommendation for it. It asked for some, in my mind, what was very personal information.

And I'm not ashamed to say that I really struggled with. And so the first thing they asked about was your philosophy of educational leadership. And you had to write extensively. So it ended up being about five pages on your philosophy of educational leadership and my first thought was, what?

I don't know what you mean. And so what's the first thing you do then? It's Google. What is my philosophy of educational leadership?

And to see how would one respond to this question and realized very quickly that I was delving into an area of study that people spend their lives on, that people study the idea of educational leadership and teach it as a profession at universities. And I hadn't, let's say, is not a super self-reflective person, I don't think, I think that's fair, had not spent a lot of time thinking about this in any way. And then being forced to look at your own practice of teaching and pulling out examples of that, of educational leadership, providing the next section that required evidence so you can talk about what your philosophy is, but what is your evidence of educational leadership. So going back through my career and saying, okay, where was I showing examples of educational leadership, even if that isn't necessarily what I thought I was doing. And so it was this very difficult looking into your past. And my reflection on it at the time is, I wish I would have thought about this at the beginning of my career, not from up, because maybe someday I'll apply for an award, not from that perspective, but it was such an

interesting thought journey to think about what actually is my philosophical approach to this, and then if that is my approach, how am I putting it into practice? And as part of, I guess I'll suggest this as part of the onboarding of new faculty, this might be something that VIU talks about, and I'll put this to CIEL and say, new faculty as you're coming in, here's something for you to think about, reflect on, you know, maybe once a month or something, pull it out again and think, okay, what have I, if this is what I truly believe and this is my lens on the world, then how have I achieved that?

achieved that? And let that shape your practice of teaching. So I found it a very difficult process. And then the next was your teaching philosophy statement was the next part.

Again, not something ever in getting my PhD or in building my academic career had I thought about what is my teaching philosophy other than people should teach good.

I think it was the depth of my philosophy and I'm not embarrassed to say actually put my desk, head down on my desk and actually start to cry as I'm trying to write this. I don't know how to articulate what I'm trying to say on this.

So it was a very painful experience. It was a very, it was a very good for me experience actually, by putting together this 60 page application that was the by the end of the requirement for the 3M.

It changed my trajectory as an academic and made me a lot more thoughtful about what I was doing, what I was trying to achieve, what was I hoping would be the outcome for students. So even that idea of putting outcomes onto your course outline in the days before putting this application together, we're kind of, we have to include these outcomes on it. And having worked through that thinking process made me realize how important that is to really I think, but what exactly are we trying to achieve in this course? What am I trying to do? What do I hope people walk out the door with? These outcomes really matter. So it changed the way I thought about it. There were some other parts about teaching strategies that I didn't find that as hard to do. As well as I tried to bring some ideas and innovations into the classroom. So I thought, okay, I get what you're asking for here. But the other two very self-reflective parts I found very, very difficult. How much time do you need? A really good question that Maxwell asked, and I'll say I track my time really well. I have always have done so for my whole career, so at the end of every day, I look at what did I do that day, and I keep an analysis from back when I used to work primarily in consulting for it, and so it's just a habit that I have. the it took me about 120 hours to put that application together and so you you would say what that's a astounding amount of time for it but you know I suppose someone coming at it from a different perspective who had perhaps spent more time on their philosophical approaches to life maybe could have fast-tracked that application it took a long long time for me. The thing that helped me enormously was the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning and I remember being up in the fifth floor of the library and Maxwell was there and we were, Maxwell's whiteboarding, you know, here's trying to create a narrative to weave through the application and here's some ideas over here and ideas over here and creating that process so there's one takeaway I would say is it's really lean on the people who have enormous expertise in these areas.

There are people on campus that can really help you and are wonderful, not just for organizing today, but wonderful people who have spent their academic careers understanding these processes.

So ask for help when you need it and I hope you put me on your list of people who can help you. I'm happy to share whatever I can, the actual application if you're interested for it.

If you want to go for coffee and talk about process and how to find your own way through this, I'm happy to do that. So my best hobbit-like fashion, I'm at your service, should you ever need help with whatever it is you're working on, if I can in any way be of service on that. But to that question of how much time is needed is much more than you think. I think add a zero to whatever number is in your mind right now, and that's probably more likely for it. And then for some awards, especially the people that are new or early on in their careers, for some of them there's pieces that you need to have in place first before you can make that application. So the one comment around you have to be on staff, on faculty for three years. Okay, well, that's good to know. So now I can think about this and put it as a bring forward item three years from now to take a look at this. For 3M as an example, you must have won other teaching awards to even apply and they will not consider your application unless you have. And I was fortunate to have won one through the Western Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers. And so so not knowing that I was going to be in this other place a few years later, but had that piece of information. The other part we really struggled with with the application was teaching evaluations because this was in that time period when we were not doing teaching evaluations and there wasn't even the opportunity to do voluntary teaching evaluations. And so the CIEL and Maxwell reached back to students from previous years who are no longer at Vancouver Island University and asked if they could fill out an evaluation. of that class and of their experiences of that class. So we put together a very nice series of appendices from that, but it took a lot to recreate that. So if you're thinking that you might want to apply for a teaching award, having teaching evaluations are a really good thing to have in your back pocket. So where to start is to look at the, perhaps at the VIU awards and think, okay, what are the typical things that are needed as part of those VIU awards, look at 3M, look at this new one that Maxwell mention, I think it's West Coast teaching award, Western teaching award that's coming forward.

What do you typically need and then do I have, where am I in getting those things together? I think one of the things we didn't, we chatted yesterday about this session and one of the elements you absolutely will need is letters of support. And so you'll need letters of support from your colleagues, from the university, probably from the vice president as well. And then you'd say, well, how can I get those letters of support? And I, you know, again, I wasn't Machiavellian thinking, someday I'd like to apply for this, so I have to have, I have to take these actions today.

But I just always took the When you can so if they're looking for someone from social sciences to be on a committee and, you know, had the capacity at that time to be on a committee and thought it would be of interest and I could contribute then step forward. And so you start building those relationships with people who can support you in what you're trying to do and not and to not be afraid to ask people as well. So if you need a letter of support from your dean or from a vice president through the relationship that you've built with them already, not being afraid to say, I'd really like to apply for this and I need your support for it. And I would say in every instance of that, have been fortunate as I believe you would be that the person I was asking said, yes, yes, I can do it. It's happened that I've asked, sometimes you need several letters of support, and I've talked to a colleague and said, could I get a letter of support? In one instance, the person said, oh, I can't write you a letter because I'm actually writing a letter for someone else who's going for the same award for it. So I think that would be a conflict for me to write letters for both of you, and so that was fine. I agree with that, Ford. And I guess my last thing I would say is the other thing I have tried to do is to always at least be nominating someone for an award for something. And so I'm a planner by trade, so there are awards to the Canadian Institute of Planners or Planning Institute of British Columbia or the American Planning Association. And so I'm working right now on a nomination for a graduate from the

Master of Community Planning Program at VIU who's been practicing for a few years. And it's the Young Professional Award through the Canadian Institute of Planners. So we actually just met earlier this morning at a coffee meeting on teams to talk about what she needs as part of her award.

So I hope in my little circles that I move in that I'm a person that other people can count on to nominate them for awards or write the letters or help them work through the process because I think it every time someone I supported wins I feel like I won a little bit too even though I don't actually get to pick up the award I feel like there's a little there's a victory in that for me so it's all those all those good reasons I think end of the day why do this it's really nice to win an award it's nice I know it's you know is it is as important or necessary to get that certificate and to have it up on your wall, it is wonderful to have. For some awards that I have won and then students become aware of, it adds to your street cred, I'll say. It's something that the students actually celebrate as well with you and they're at a conference it's um yeah I think it's it's um all of us collectively can celebrate when one of us wins so it's it's it's um it is very nice uh to receive an accolade from from your profession or from your uh from your institution. Okay well now I'll turn it over to Jessica or Maxwell any questions?

MS: No, not yet we're going to do Jessica first and then we're going to do questions that was perfect that was perfect that Pam thank you you covered a lot of information that I think will open up the questions in a really good way. And I'll talk a little bit about that minimum of three years. It might not be a thing. Um, so if that's, if that's holding you back, anybody in the conversation, we can come back to that. Thank you very much for that, Pam. Over to you, Jessica. Thank you.

Jessica Gemella (JG): And thanks Pam for starting this conversation. You did cover a lot. So I'll, uh, I'll try and focus mine on to think some other things. So my name is Jessica Gamela and currently I'm a Curriculum and Teaching Learning Specialist at the Centre for Innovation Excellence at the CIEL here.

I'm on a secondment position and I'm regularly a faculty member in trades and applied technology.

I'm going to mainly talk about the provost of the awards was nominating a team of instructors from Trades and Applied Technology. It was Dr. Sally Vinden, Joanne Slocum, and Sandra Morside from HAIR, and so that was my first exposure to what the awards were about. And it was great to be part of supporting that and learning about colleagues in a different way and things that I didn't know about them and things I didn't know that they they might be doing in their department and I thought it was really important to recognize the teamwork there. So who should apply for awards? I did want to bring up that it's not just individuals, it can be a team.

So if you have been working together as a faculty to improve student experience that you as a team you should apply for the award. Also you should be applying for a Provost Award here if you're making changes to your teaching practice that are about improving your teaching and improving learning for students and anything that you're doing to make the overall improving student experience. Those are all reasons why you should be applying. And I'll echo what Pam said that many of you, I have already done a little bit of work with here at the CIEL and you should apply. So the process of applying for the award is another reason and many people have already mentioned that in the introductions is that the process itself is really meaningful and that's another reason to apply because it does give you a chance.

Just think about all the things that you've been doing and all the things that you're looking ahead to be doing and your values and your achievements and how your role has been and how you're changing it.

Those are all reasons to apply. Over the years that I've seen the Provost Award some of the categories have changed a little bit but there is an early career one so I will say that you should apply if you're also interested in working together with others to improve teaching and learning across the campus because it will be inevitable that if you apply for an award you will nominate others and it will continue you'll be paying it forward.

So I've nominated two, a team, and then Christine Quist from Horticulture was successful in getting an early practice award. And I'll get into a little bit about where you should start.

If you're thinking about doing that, you will need someone to nominate you and that's an important thing to think about who that would be and those the person who does the nominating has that letter right up front as part of the process and they will be pulling together and introducing the whole package so who you want to work together it's a it's really nice to work with somebody and you'll have lots of conversations and meetings probably about it so that's an important early step in where to get started and And in my experience, starting with your teaching philosophy, and like Pam said, I thought to myself, do I have one of those? And where would I find it? And a place I did start is I look at what I had already. I had, through the CIEL, done a team-based learning institute. And as part of that institute, a wrap-up at the end is to do a reflection. And I had written quite a bit because the team-based learning was something that really changed how I approached teaching and lots of new strategies and practices. So I started from there and it was, there were several guiding questions that came from the CIEL.

So in starting an early step in your process in doing this would be to reach out to the CIEL, and the team here can help with providing some questions to get you thinking about how to get started.

And then as I got through that, starting to teach about that, it wasn't a linear process for me. I was going back and forth between sort of putting together this teaching philosophy and gathering all the kinds of things, the evidence of the things I've been doing.

I had been using the CIEL's early feedback service for a few years, and so I could see students through the years how the responses to those same questions had been changing, which was really also helpful in gathering evidence of change, and more importantly, like, what the impacts were to student learning, how they were experiencing things in the classroom. And then again, the CIEL helped me with a lot of the writing. I hadn't written this kind of, I hadn't done this kind of writing before, and it was really important to include evidence and so that impact of change and it was Tina, Tina Reimers here at the Centre at the time, did a lot of coaching to help me gather that evidence and express that. Okay, I'm going to move on to the next question. I'm just looking at what the next question is. What materials will you need to include in your application? As Penn mentioned, there's support letters from colleagues and students, so you can expect particularly the student letters that you like to incorporate some time or templates or examples to help help write those letters. You'll need your teaching philosophy, you'll be writing about teaching strategies and practices and leadership achievements and then that all gets packaged into one PDF.

In my case, I included lots of photographs as part of the evidence.

And I, I put mine together as a reflective narrative. So it was very much of where

I started. And I did start from a place when I came to education, out of another career. And I was, I was teaching the way I had experienced education.

So I was, I was working through to, to build practices and skills that responded to current student needs and not necessarily my experience.

Summary or course evaluations if you have them but many don't so any kind of feedback they have I mentioned the early feedback service was really helpful for me if you use other feedback techniques in your ways of gathering that in your classes that'd be helpful so if you're looking ahead to do this this year you'll work with what you have and for those that are thinking of next year or further years these kinds of services provided through the CIEL can really help you get started in gathering what you're doing and then the evidence of change and the time that it will take you to put together package I think is really depending on where you're at. If you already have done a lot of reflective writing that you can draw on and you have documented and a lot of the things that you're doing already you know maybe it might take you I don't know I couldn't give the hours but less time. It took me quite a bit of time. I remember mine was in 2020 so I was in a really awkward setup. I think in my laundry room was my first initial office at that time. And I had a few weekends in there.

And in writing, in being the nominator, in being that role, whoever's doing that really needs to look at the whole package.

So that person needs time to have that influential piece at the beginning. So give yourself lots of time.

And it always takes longer especially at the end it can't be in bits and pieces it needs to be one package and so you want to give the time for that and for lots of proofreading and how I would structure it is this will sound very teacherly but really follow the evaluation criteria because it's given there on the website and I even used the headings and structured it very much so it made those who were evaluating on the evaluation committee easier. They don't have to work to find all the information.

So I am going to turn it over to Maxwell to field the questions.

MS: Wonderful. Thank you, Jessica. Thank you, Pam.