



### **Distinguished Teaching Award 2021**

This award is to be given to a faculty member at the University of Mount Union who has engaged their students in innovative, rigorous, responsive classes.

This year's award winner is Dr. Richelle Teeling-Smith, assistant professor of physics in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Dr. Teeling-Smith has established herself as an all-around effective and caring educator. As one of her colleagues noted in his nomination letter, "she has a knack for pulling students into the topic at hand, even if (as can be the case in physics courses) the material is abstract." A PHY 445 (Methods in Mathematical Physics) student confirms her ability to help students stay engaged with such material, noting that "[T]he content of this class is far from exciting, but I feel like Dr. Teeling-Smith did a good job of presenting it in a way that it never got too dry."

Another mark of Dr. Teeling-Smith's teaching effectiveness is her commitment to fostering an environment of mutual respect. One student remarked that she "[R]espected each student and gave them the space they needed; checked up on each student every now and then to individually ask them how they were doing both on the current lab and in life in general."

Dr. Teeling-Smith embraces active student mentoring by stressing active learning and problem-solving. Commenting on PHY 230 (Electronics), one student remarked that the "[C]ourse really made me learn how to become a better problem solver. There was little instructions given, so a lot of learning along the way and growth took place." Additionally, Dr. Teeling-Smith incorporates guest speakers in her classes to help students connect the academic training with the professional world. Finally, she also deserves recognition for her efforts in strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion in her discipline by providing opportunities for female Physics majors to engage the broader physics community through participation at the Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics.

Congratulations, Richelle!