



The Outstanding Adjunct Award

The Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award is given to an adjunct faculty member at the University of Mount Union to recognize the hard work and outstanding contributions made to Mount Union. For the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award, we would like to recognize and honor Leslie Shaffer.

Ms. Shaffer typically teaches one course in the Department of Education each semester. She has done so for the past eight year and has taught Health Education and Public Health courses, and she is the accreditation coordinator for the Alliance City Health Department; she works part-time in both capacities. Her expertise and commitment to our students is valued. The content of her courses is rigorous and difficult for students. However, Leslie makes classes enjoyable, and students learn. A few examples of comments from CoursEval describe her as fun, responsive, caring, and organized.

- Projects were fun and you learned a lot from them. Once we went online, she was very organized and on top of everything. Made the transition very easy.
- My emails were answered remarkably fast, which was incredibly nice. I always knew that I could ask a question about an assignment and have an answer before I had barely sent the email!
- Professor Shaffer is definitely a teacher who makes it easy to learn because she treats us students like peers rather than subordinates, she was always in a positive mood and made it exciting to go town 8:45 class. I think her as a teacher as well as this class will be one of my favorite classes in college.
- I always knew she cared.
- She is always prepared for every class session and knows exactly what the game plan was and did not waste any time.
- The strengths were how organized the professor was and being able to interact as easily as the class did with her. She also had guest speakers come and teach us about healthy eating.

In the past year, Ms. Shaffer has educated our entire university, made countless sacrifices, and saved lives. She has been a teacher in so many ways. In P-12, we often see the phrase, “To teach is to touch a life.” Ms. Shaffer has done just that. High quality, effective teachers do more than educate; they serve as mentors and counselors, and they have a deep sense of care for others. While Ms. Shaffer supports out community in countless ways, below are just a few that my colleagues and I have thoroughly appreciated:

Ms. Shaffer is incredibly knowledgeable: In March 2020, it was clear that Ms. Shaffer was learning everything she could about COVID-19. She met with Dr. Caitlin Reash, our coordinator of clinical partnerships, and myself [Dean Kristine Still] multiple times each week so we could devise the best plans possible for our candidates—particularly our clinical practice candidates who were now completing their final placements remotely. Ms. Shaffer was a quick phone call or text away, and she regularly attended education department meetings. Mount Union was confident—because of Leslie’s knowledge and ability to keep us informed. All programs were to report the number of candidates who did not fully complete their required field experiences to the Ohio Department of Higher Education. Because Ms. Shaffer helped us brainstorm and problem solve, all Mount Union candidates successfully completed all experiences, and our department was so very well informed (more so than others, given questions asked during Faculty Senate meetings, Department Chair meetings, etc.). Furthermore, she helped guide our campus leaders to know exactly when to follow certain protocols, how to design safe classroom spaces, when to cancel a game or match, and when to let our athletes compete because it was safe. Her knowledge has helped our campus remain open this entire academic year—a feat most universities cannot tout.

Ms. Shaffer is caring. She knows how to put people first. As our key contact tracer for COVID-19, Ms. Shaffer contacted our students who contracted COVID-19 on a daily basis. She Face Timed with them so she could see them and ensure that they were okay. She also connected with their close contacts on a daily basis. There were several days where she reached out to dozens and dozens of both Mount Union students and Alliance community members to check their health and welfare.

Ms. Shaffer is selfless. She was available to our students when they needed her. She worked around their schedules. She prioritized their needs over her own. She served as a counselor, therapist, mentor, mother, sister, and more. She also served as a sounding board to angry parents who screamed at her, terrified positive students who were ill and scared, and even Mount faculty and staff who needed her reassurance that everything would be okay. Over the past year, she is grieved the loss of her sister, slowed the writing of her dissertation (she would have finished by now if COVID-19 had not happened), and supported all of us—simply because she cares deeply about our community and puts everyone else’s needs first. I am not sure that she has had a week in the past year where she worked less than 80 hours, and, yet she does not work full-time for Mount Union or the Alliance Health Department.

To date, Ms. Shaffer has tested quite possibly every single athlete on campus, has helped to vaccinate more than 100+ Mount Union students, faculty, and supervisors, and she is helped secure hundreds more vaccinations for our students in the coming weeks. The education she is provided to all of us and the service she is devoted to the greater Alliance community is unprecedented, and I cannot imagine another person in her role who would have devoted hundreds of hours, made hundreds of phone calls, and cared as much and Leslie has.

Simply put, Ms. Leslie Shaffer is more than deserving of the Outstanding Adjunct Award, as her performance in the classroom and her service to our community is extraordinary.