

TARA HOLLAND

CAG Award for Excellence in Teaching Geography

Excellence in Teaching

Dr. Holland has demonstrated widely recognized excellence in teaching. Since joining SFU, she has developed and taught nine interdisciplinary courses across all undergraduate and graduate levels and in face-to-face, online, and blended formats. Her courses include Earth Systems; Climate Change, Water and Society; Geography in Practice; Geography of Wine; Fundamentals of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in Geography (grad course); Introduction to Environmental Science; Environmental Science in Practice; Environmental Science Seminar, and Environmental Science Capstone. In her first five years at SFU, she taught over 3600 students in 28 course offerings with 49 TA supervisions.



Dr. Holland's hallmark is continual course refinement and redesign rooted in evidence-based research in education and cognitive science. She uses scaffolded assignments, active learning pedagogy and experiential learning opportunities. She constantly works to make her classrooms safe and inclusive spaces. Her ability to teach so many students is awe inspiring and she does it exceptionally well.

Dr. Holland's teaching excellence is evident in the high and increasing demand for her courses, her consistently high scores and positive comments in student course evaluations and her evidencebased and reflective pedagogic development. Students' comments share that Dr. Holland is a truly exceptional and transformational educator who engages, inspires and opens eyes. Indeed, Dr. Holland has become a role model for other faculty in Geography at SFU. By virtue of her innovation and engagement, she challenges us all to raise the bar on our own teaching. Her teaching accomplishments have been recognized by the 2022 FENV Dean's Excellence in Teaching Award and the 2023 SFU Excellence in Teaching Award, the most prestigious teaching award at SFU.

Educational Leadership and Curriculum Development

Dr. Holland has also demonstrated outstanding educational leadership. She has led Educational Goal development and mapping for the Geography curriculum, new program proposals and a departmental self-study on pedagogy. She has gone out of her way to conduct teaching reviews for temporary Instructors and has served as a teaching mentor to Tas and faculty colleagues.

In 2020, Dr. Holland was appointed Teaching Fellow for the Faculty of Environment at SFU with the goal of fostering a collaborative community of teaching practice. With the COVID pivot to remote instruction she produced 6 helpful remote teaching tip sheets and became the "go-to" person for remote teaching questions. During the pandemic, Dr. Holland made herself available for zoom drop-in and was above all motivating to all of us in Geography who struggled with the transition. Dr. Holland's generous support during COVID made the units' pivot to remote

instruction successful. She is also a sought-after panelist and presenter at teaching workshops. Dr. Holland's educational leadership is an incredible asset to the Geography at SFU and beyond.

Pedagogic Research and Innovation

Dr. Holland has the courage and willingness to try new pedagogy and share successes; she is an agent of innovation. Prior to joining SFU, Dr. Holland published three journal papers on pedagogy and currently has one under review. At SFU, she has continued the practice of pedagogic research, facilitated by multiple SFU Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grants. These explored 1) the impact of low-stakes assessments on student motivation, engagement and learning in online courses; 2) measuring student improvement in climate literacy in a 1st year interdisciplinary climate change course; and 3) the effect of two-stage innovative collaborative testing on student exam anxiety and performance. She was awarded the prestigious Amundsen Fellowship in 2022 to develop and research a Teaching Squares program for collaborative teaching observation. She has presented results in non-refereed reports and at Teaching and Learning conferences and symposia. Two ongoing research projects address 1) the impact of a peer evaluation exercise on student learning and 2) teaching climate change for resilience and action.