

I Love My
Librarian!
2009 Award

Nominations for Séamus Ó'Scanláin (Scanlon)

Librarian and Assistant Professor

Center for Worker Education Library (The City College of New York)

New York, New York

Nominator:

Irina Silber

New York, New York

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

I write as a full-time faculty member at the City College of New York. I have known and worked with Seamus Scanlon for close to three years.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.

Seamus Scanlon is an excellent colleague who has filled a much needed position at the City College Center for Worker Education. We are the downtown campus of the City College of New York and for years had no on-site library or librarian. Seamus was explicitly hired as a full-time librarian for our students. Our students are non-traditional, working adult students, many who have interrupted their education and have not had much exposure to the library system. Seamus provides excellent classroom tutorials and one-on-one library services for our students. His expertise, humor, and imminent approachability have made him one of the most crucial faculty members in our department. He has also been an immense help for me in my teaching serving as a liaison with the uptown campus as well as helping me track down research material.

3. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process? Please be specific.

Seamus Scanlon has become an extremely important faculty member in our students' trajectory. He provides useful classroom tutorials and has the ability to work with both introductory level classes as well as advanced research seminars. He has also provided faculty research seminars that have been critical in keeping up with the ever expanding access to research materials now digitized through library services.

4. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place? Please be specific.

Seamus Scanlon links the City College of New York Center for Worker Education with the Uptown Campus through his library research services. Before his work at the Center students had very little access to the Uptown Library and library services and felt intimidated by the idea of online research as well as more "traditional" practices. Seamus Scanlon provides the expertise to put into practice what students learn in the classroom in their subject specific courses. As one student expressed to me, "He makes the Center feel like a research university."

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community or the profession?

Seamus Scanlon is not only a great colleague and instructor, he also continues to present his own research. The Center faculty (only 8) have to take on many service and administration tasks and Seamus is always ready to volunteer in multiple ways. He is a central force in our technology committee and has helped create best practices. We will inaugurate an MA program this spring 2010 and he will be an invaluable asset to our incoming graduate students. I nominate Seamus Scanlon with the highest possible recommendation.

Nominator:
Martin Woessner
New York, New York

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

Seamus Scanlon has been the librarian at the Center for Worker Education for the past two years. In addition to establishing the library and overseeing its programs for the Center for Worker Education, which serves non-traditional students who pursue their degrees while attending classes in the evenings and on weekends, Seamus has worked with faculty to incorporate library resources into our curricula.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.

Seamus has developed library tutorials for almost every one of my classes. He introduces students to the services offered by the library, to the research tools available via online resources, and to the realm of scholarly debate that all good teaching and learning is founded upon. Seamus has made our library into an active and lively component of our curricula, not just a supplement.

3. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process? Please be specific.

In addition to his regular duties, Seamus delivers countless library tutorials to students and faculty both each and every semester. He keeps faculty up to date on the latest research technologies and helps students navigate the ever-increasing wealth of online databases. Most of all, though, he is always available to help, ready to answer research questions of all shapes and sizes.

4. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place? Please be specific.

Prior to Seamus's arrival at the Center for Worker Education, students had little access to library services and faculty curtailed the kinds of research projects they incorporated into their syllabi. Thanks to Seamus, and to his untiring work with students, faculty members have transformed the curricula offered at the center into a research-driven format, benefiting not just faculty but students as well.

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community or the profession?

Working with our unique student population, Seamus has single-handedly helped to address the increasing digital divide in our society. Thanks to him, students leaving our program are as well prepared for digital research and learning as students from anywhere else in the country.

Nominator:
Clark Marlene
New York, New York

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

The City College Center for Worker Education is a unique facility offering B.A. degrees for working adults. In our old facility, we never had a library, and our students are so busy with work, school and family it was difficult to get to one during their "time off." When we moved to a new facility a couple of years ago, our Dean left space for a real library and asked for a librarian. Wonder of wonders, we got Seamus. He started that library in an empty room, all by himself. We had a lot of donated books and he has bought more with budgeted funds. They are all now properly cataloged. Best of all, Seamus is on site to help our students understand the value and techniques of real research. His library is a bustling place--and it is "his" library--he is the only one to staff it and see that all its needs are met. An incredible man and a wonderful colleague. The students love him too.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.

Many of our students didn't know what a library was when they came to Center for Worker Education! They are often the first in their families to graduate from high school, let alone go to college. Seamus not only helps students meet all of their needs, he has helped me many times in the course of my own research.

3. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process? Please be specific.

Seamus visits classes and gives mini-seminars on what libraries have to offer. He gives both students and faculty (in a variety of formats) the most up-to-date information on databases. He attends all orientation meetings to introduce himself and his library to incoming students. He staffs the library himself (and its hours are long) and helps students and faculty members individually.

We knew from our Middle States assessment process that we were weak in the research area. Seamus is single-handedly helping us turn that around.

He also thought to have his library acquire multiple copies of books assigned for courses being taught each semester. Many of our students are on very limited budgets and their kids come first. It does my heart good to see students sitting in class with a copy of the novel we are reading stamped as owned by our library. We never had that before he came.

4. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place? Please be specific.

I think of the above speaks to this question. Ours is a unique situation. Our new librarian was handed an opportunity to make a huge impact or none at all, and everything in between. Seamus is the kind of hard-working visionary we needed to make the biggest change possible. To walk by his bustling but quiet library after 4pm or so (all of our classes run from 6-9pm) makes the hearts of all library lovers sing.

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community or the profession?

He took this project on all by himself. He may have had some verbal support from the folks at the main campus uptown, but it was up to him to do the legwork of getting furniture, computers, bookshelves, etc. and getting the many boxes of books still unpacked properly cataloged and on the shelves. Then he had to do a PR campaign to let the students know he was there and what he could help them do and learn. Then he actually had to start teaching that stuff to an audience of library newcomers. All this and more he did with ample good grace. Amazing! He deserves an award--and so do the students at Center for Worker Education as new library "converts."

Nominator:
Daniel Werges
Brooklyn, New York

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

I have known Seamus since January, when I started teaching at the Center for Worker Education / City College of New York. I asked Seamus about the possibility of ordering some books for the library which supported the learning of the students in the class I was teaching.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.

Seamus has been extremely helpful in purchasing books for the library (not an easy task in the times of colleges cutting funding) which were used by the students in the class I thought. Seamus continues to be a great resource, always going out of his way to support the students at Center for Worker Education any way he can. And Seamus is not only an invaluable resource for the students I teach, but he has also been very supportive and helpful in my own graduate studies at CUNY. Seamus manages a small library, but he is the link to the large CUNY library system and helped me access a lot of resources.

3. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process? Please be specific.

The Center for Worker Education is located outside of the main campus of the City College of New York. Center for Worker Education only has a small library and Seamus has been invaluable in helping students connect to the CUNY library system and online resources. Seamus is always helpful and works in his quiet way to support students in any way he can.

4. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place? Please be specific.

Seamus made the small library at Center for Worker Education into a resource the students and faculty find invaluable. His presence allows students to embrace a library system which is difficult to navigate for new students. Seamus has made the process easy for countless of students.

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community or the profession?

Seamus has shown great leadership in promoting online sources at Center for Worker Education. He is active in promoting online library resources by interfacing with the faculty, adjunct faculty, and students. He has offered his

expertise to students in the classroom and has made the process of researching the vast amount of online information manageable for students.