ORIGINAL STORY

In the future, both of these need to grow and become much more stable within UTSC," Graf- man said. "For media studies, it means creating opportunity, engaging with students, outside of the classroom and with The Hub, in terms of engaging with students to help them carry their ideas further."

Apart from caring about his student's experiences, Professor Grafman also tries to create teachable moments, where he engages students with humour or current and shocking issues.

"I've found that things that create barriers tend to prevent that flow, so I work at lowering those barriers in any way I can," he said. "I encourage students to call me by my first name and I try to learn theirs. I try to understand what it is they are passionate about in their life. I try to engage. I try to create the feeling in the classroom where even if I'm lecturing to 250 students that everyone in the room thinks I'm speaking to them individually."

Entering her fifth year as a resident of Canada, Professor Todorova was born in Bulgaria and completed her PhD in cultural studies in the U.S. She currently teaches graduate courses in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and has taught at UTSC. When asked why she's interested in teaching, Professor Todorova points to politics. "I can't be just indifferent to the world," she said. "And I cannot imagine living my life without at least trying to change what I perceive is injustice and have a sense that our country would be a little bit better in the world."

Professor Todorova puts a great deal of time to prepare for every teaching session and tries her best to help her student's education and inspire them. "Teaching is an extraordinary privilege," said Professor Todorova. "I burn into my teaching and I just take it so seriously. Teaching is sacred and that means a lot to me. It makes me happy."

"In my teaching, I truly strive to foster critical thinking and create learning environments that encourage students to ask difficult questions and sometimes these questions are unsettling," she said. "My teaching philosophy is to create even moments of discomfort in the classroom by tackling these questions. But within this pedagogy of discomfort, I can also see the emergence of new consciousness and new awareness."

Professor Todorova believes that a sense of community is needed to be a good teacher. "It is only in such a supportive community that you can flourish as a teacher. I don't know what distinguishes me from colleagues, but I do know that without them, I cannot be the teacher that I am," Professor Todorova believes that hope is a key component in teaching. "Without hope there is no future," said Professor Todorova. "One of the most important things about teaching is teaching hope. As much as you are critiquing, you are also breeding hope, or else there is no future."

Ahmed Allahwala

Professor of the Year 2013 - 2014

KAREN CHOW, NEWS EDITOR

Born and raised in Germany, Professor Allahwala came to Canada in 1999 as an exchange student. He finally settled in Canada after returning to Germany for a year and a half. He completed his PhD in political science at York University and became a lecturer in city studies at UTSC in 2010.

Apart from the one-on-one personal contact and the sense of community that is allowed by a smaller and more intimate campus, Professor Allahwala also enjoys the community UTSC. "It is a very diverse student population. You can integrate diversity into the classroom," he said. "When talking about social issues, the diversity is really on stage and I really value that."

Being the associate chair of the city studies program and the department of human geography, Professor Allahwala has been successful in building the important applied urban planning program. He has also added to the growing enrollment numbers, the addition of interesting programs and helping students acquire basic academic skills. He also strives to integrate UTSC students in community-based research projects, such as the youth friendly community initiative. "I really try to create a community of learners, where everybody is equal, everybody has something to contribute and different perspectives are valued," he said.

Professor Allahwala tries to make himself available to students and has an open-door policy. He also makes the trek out to Scarborough more than once a week. "The essence of my teaching is creating a space for mutual learning and giving voice to the student to ask their own questions," he said. "And giving them the tools and skills to find their own answers, rather than looking to me to provide the answers."

Ahmed Allahwala

Professor of the Year 2013 - 2014