

**Profile of
Leonard L. Gambrell
Professor Emeritus Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
2002 Regents Teaching Excellence Award Recipient**

Background and Experience (Selected)

- Thirty-five years as a teacher, scholar, and university citizen on the UW-Eau Claire campus.
- Ph.D. from the University of Virginia; B.A. and M.A. from Oklahoma State University.
- Chair of Political Science from 1992-2002, a position in which he demonstrated exemplary leadership in the recruiting, hiring and retention of new faculty focused on teaching excellence.
- Developed courses on International Relations Theory, National Security Policy, U.S. Defense Policy, Global Politics and Business, International Political Issues, Dilemmas of War and Peace, and The Vietnam War.
- Led several for-credit trips to Vietnam for students and community members as part of his course on Vietnam (considered a “signature class at UW-Eau Claire”).
- Collaborated on and developed a variety of interdisciplinary courses with colleagues in the School of Nursing (World Health and Politics), and Management and Marketing (Policy for an Entire Society), among others.
- Developed an extremely successful, credit-based mentoring program that uses top upper-division students to mentor other students in introductory classes, a formative experience for the student mentors and an inspirational model for the introductory students.
- Taught University Outreach Courses, some of them broadcast over Wisconsin Public Radio’s University of the Air on topics like The Vietnam War, and Issues in War & Peace.
- Co-Author of “Dilemmas of War & Peace, Annenberg/Corporation for Public Broadcasting Audio-Print course package, 1993.
- Appointed by the Chancellor to serve as UW-Eau Claire’s representative to the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (1986-1991).
- National Chairperson, Consortium on Peace, Research, Education and Development (COPRED) from 1979-1981, with responsibilities for program planning and grant writing.

In Professor Gambrell’s own words:

- “Successful teaching is *not* at all about ‘covering’ a certain amount of material. . . . It is far better to teach a few ideas or principles well than to leave the student with a pile of notes but little understanding. If I have done my job right, students can continue to learn, on their own, about my particular subject matter for the rest of their lives. Experience has taught me that developing the capacity to think is at least as important as the specific content of a course. My success is directly related to the extent that I am able to *help* students develop the capacity to engage regularly in critical thinking, analysis and synthesis. These are life-long learning skills valuable in all walks of life.”
- “Thus, my methods must include ways to *engage* the class on a regular basis. Seldom can there be much success if the instructor is not listening carefully to the students. This means paying careful attention to the silences as well as the puzzled looks.”

In the words of his students:

- “Dr. Gambrell takes a marked interest in his students, pushing them to excel beyond their perceived abilities. His enthusiasm for the subject inspires students to pursue political science as a major and as a career beyond the University.”
 - Erin Brandt, 2002 UW-Eau Claire Political Science Graduate
- “[Professor Gambrell] rewarded me for all of my hard work with what I consider one of the greatest experiences as an undergraduate. The summer before my junior year, I received a letter from him. He asked me to serve as one of his mentors in his “Dilemmas of War and Peace” class. In his letter he told me that he thought I would make an excellent student teacher and that this would be a great way for me to learn to express the information I had trapped in my head. He was right. Acting as his student mentor gave me the confidence to express my opinions in front of a large group of students.”
 - Ally Clark, Political Science Major, UW-Eau Claire
- “In essence, [Professor Gambrell] taught me *how* to think about issues versus teaching me *what* to think about issues, and that valuable asset has carried me through a number of challenging situations both in and out of the classroom.”
 - James Hanke, UW-Eau Claire Political science Graduate, Assistant City Planner, City of Chippewa Falls, WI

In the words of his colleagues:

- “As Department Chair, he has particularly emphasized improvement of our Department’s teaching by his tireless work in recruitment, his encouragement to us all in the development of a wide range of teaching methods, and participation in the teaching community. As the Chair of our Department Personnel Committee, I can see his hard work paying off as we have achieved steadily improved teaching evaluations that began well above average and now are almost universally outstanding. In short, he has shown that excellence in teaching is more than just what he does with his students; it also reflects what he does as a leader in the Department and at UW-Eau Claire. . . . [As a teacher and colleague, Leonard Gambrell] made me think about issues in ways that made me a better teacher and in ways that have undoubtedly affected my students. Len is one of those colleagues that can find time to have that hour-long discussion that keeps us alive as thinkers and fights the cynicism that can too easily develop after decades of piles of papers to grade.”
 - Michael Fine, Chair, Department of Political Science, UW-Eau Claire
- “‘Learner-centered education’ is at risk of becoming another cliché. But if you have the opportunity to watch Len Gambrell in action, you begin to understand and to appreciate what it means to put students first. While other department chairs’ first concern might be their faculty, Leonard’s first question is invariably, ‘How will this make things better for our students?’”
 - Ted A. Wendt, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UW-Eau Claire