The Valley City State University (VCSU) Student Senate named Dr. Shannon Vanhorn the "Teacher of the Year." The award is given annually to a professor who shows dedication to the students of VCSU through innovative teaching methods and continued professional development both inside and outside of the classroom.

Elise Murphy, co-chair of the Teacher of the Year Award committee for the VCSU Student Senate, said, “Shannon was chosen because we wanted to give back to her a fraction of what she has given to us and to all of the students at VCSU. She is both tough and fair, and she is known by all her students for going above and beyond her duties. She has certainly earned this recognition for being the outstanding educator that she is.”

Dr. Vanhorn is the Interim Chair of the VCSU Division of Communication Arts and Social Science. She has been with VCSU since 1999 and holds a Ph.D. in Communication from North Dakota State University. She is the past co-chair of the National Communication Associations' Human Communication Technology Division and current chair of the Donald P. Cushman Award for Top Student Paper, past chair of the Central States Communication Association's Instructional Resources Interest Group, and a member of the Communication, Speech, and Theater Association of North Dakota, where she is currently the editor of their journal. She has co-authored articles that have been published in Communication Quarterly, Qualitative Research Reports, Argumentation and Advocacy, and the North Dakota Speech and Theater Journal, as well as chapters in two books. She presents regularly at NCA, CSCA, and CSTAND conferences, and has also presented at ICA and ECA conferences.

Professors are nominated by members of the student body and the winner is elected by the Student Senate.