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MacEwan University announces 2023 Teaching Award recipients, expansion of award program

Edmonton - Aiming to acknowledge and celebrate more excellent teachers, MacEwan's [Teaching Awards](#) are expanding for the first time since they were introduced in 1994.

The university's Teaching Awards will now be divided into categories. In 2023, the university is presenting awards for Distinguished Teaching, Early Career Teaching Excellence and Teaching Leadership.

"As our university and faculty continue to grow and evolve, so too are the ways in which we recognize teaching greatness," says Dr. Craig Monk, provost and vice-president, Academic. "Faculty members at all stages of their teaching careers can make an incredible difference to the experiences of our students, and we are thrilled to have a new way to celebrate their contributions."

The 2023 Distinguished Teaching Award recipients are Dr. Sarah Copland (associate professor, English), Lee Makovichuk (assistant professor, Human Services and Early Learning) and Dr. John Valentine (associate professor, Allied Health and Human Performance). Distinguished Teaching Awards will be presented in June at the university's Spring Convocation ceremonies.

The newly created Early Career Teaching Excellence Awards will be presented to Dr. Steve Lillebuen (associate professor, Communications) and Neetu Sharma (assistant professor, Accounting and Finance). Dr. Diane Symboluk (professor, Sociology) will be the first recipient of the Teaching Leadership Award. Both the Early Career Teaching Excellence and Teaching Leadership Awards will be presented at the Fall Convocation Ceremonies.

About the recipients

Distinguished Teaching Awards

The Distinguished Teaching Award is presented to faculty who demonstrate outstanding teaching at MacEwan University.



Dr.

Sarah Copland, Associate Professor, English

Dr. Sarah Copland joined MacEwan's Department of English in 2012. Her primary teaching and research areas are modernist and contemporary literature, narrative theory and the short story. She is also working on two Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) projects: one on teaching gender-inclusive language in the first-year writing classroom, and one, with faculty collaborators, on structured flexibility in assessment .

As an educator, she encourages students to engage interpretively, ethically and effectively with narratives (novels, short stories, films, graphic narratives and more) so they can gain greater appreciation of complexity and develop clear, persuasive and nuanced responses to that complexity.



Lee

Makovichuk, Assistant Professor, Human Services and Early Learning

Lee Makovichuk is passionate about fostering students' sense of who they want to be in the lives of children as early childhood educators. Her areas of teaching and research focus on the relational aspect of early childhood curriculum and pedagogy that embraces diversity as an inherent attribute of all learners. As a faculty mentor at the university's lab school, Early Learning at MacEwan, she is dedicated to supporting the educators' understanding of themselves as co-researchers and innovators in the field of early learning.



Dr.

John Valentine, Associate Professor, Allied Health and Human Performance

Dr. John Valentine began teaching at MacEwan in 1998, primarily in computer science before moving into physical education, where he chaired the Bachelor of Physical Education Transfer program for more than a decade. Currently an associate professor, he teaches courses in critical thinking, health, sport history and sociology. He also offers activity courses in soccer, swimming, triathlon and fitness. Dr. Valentine has been involved in inclusive education throughout his 30 years as a teacher. His research, which focuses on many aspects of sport, has been featured in popular media across the country.

Early Career Teaching Excellence

The Early Career Teaching Excellence Award recognizes faculty who have less than five years of instructional experience, demonstrate teaching excellence and display ongoing development and potential for excellence in educational leadership.



Dr.

Steve Lillebuen, Assistant Professor, Communication

Dr. Steve Lillebuen has been a full-time faculty member at MacEwan since July 2020. He is passionate about investigative journalism, digital media and narrative storytelling; as an academic, he is researching journalism ethics, media accountability and the future of journalism. He spent nearly a decade in Australia as a journalist for *The Age* and *Australian Associated Press*, and his work has appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Edmonton Journal* and CNN.com, among other publications. As a dual Canadian-Australian citizen, he brings a number of industry and university partnerships to the journalism program for the benefit of his students.



Neetu

Sharma, Assistant Professor, Accounting and Finance

Neetu Sharma has an MBA from the University of Alberta and is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CMA). Before joining MacEwan in 2018, Sharma worked in the finance and accounting fields in the U.S. and Canada for over 15 years. She enjoys sharing her passion for accounting with students.

Teaching Leadership

The Teaching Leadership Award recognizes faculty who contribute to the significant transformation of teaching and learning at an institutional, disciplinary, community or societal level.



Dr.

Diane Symbaluk, Professor, Sociology

Dr. Diane Symbaluk teaches a range of courses in various formats including an in-person organized crime seminar, an online criminology class and a hybrid research methods course. Her exemplary teaching spans 27 years and is formally recognized through two distinguished teaching awards, a 3M National teaching fellowship and this inaugural teaching leadership award. Dr. Symbaluk's educational leadership is most evident in her mentorship of colleagues and students, her pioneering work in helping to establish the Department of Sociology and research at MacEwan, her active engagement in the SoTL and her many contributions to the theory and practice of teaching. Dr. Symbaluk's current research interests focus on student success, qualities of award-winning instructors and how educational leadership is defined and formalized in Canadian universities.

For more information, please contact archerj24@macewan.ca

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 90 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.