

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TEACHING

This year's University Cup winners work in radically different disciplines, but share a similar vision for teaching

At first, Liz Ingram was resistant to the idea of teaching. As an MFA student at the University of Alberta, she imagined herself living the stereotypical artist's life, far from the walls of academia.

"I thought, 'I'm going to focus completely on art that'll make an impact on society and break new ground.' I had all of these ideals," she says. Teaching didn't figure into her ambitions.

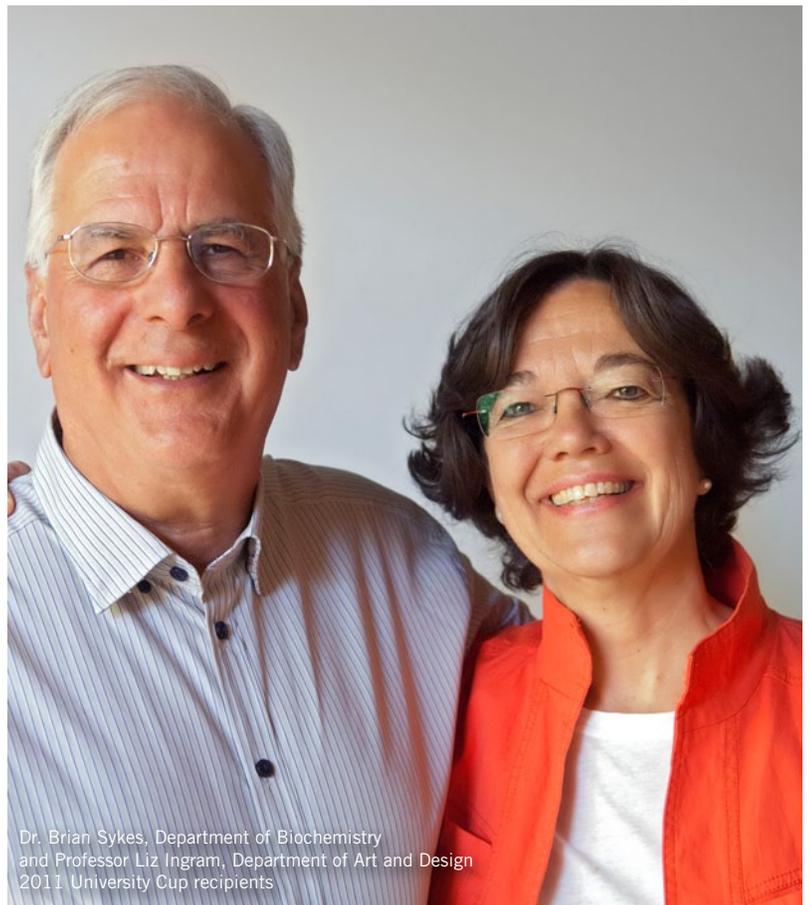
While Ingram has never lost her passion for making meaningful art, her stance on teaching changed rapidly when her MFA required her to work as a teaching assistant. "I really thrived in those graduate teaching assistantship roles. I realized the great sense of accomplishment I got from teaching. I loved it." This accidental discovery led to a job as a sessional instructor in the Department of Art and Design and eventually, a full professorship.

Thirty-seven years into her academic career at the U of A, Ingram still gets butterflies before starting a new class. She compares it to the jitters actors and musicians feel before stepping on stage. "It wakes you up. I think it's good for the whole teaching process," she says.

For the last seven years, she's taught and conducted her own printmaking research from both campus and her home studio. Ingram takes a less traditional approach to pedagogy. "I see my role as a kind of catalyst for learning. I want to help students discover and realize and push their own creative directions," she says. "Rather than imposing my own ideas or particular way of working, I like to work with a student to discover where they are coming from and find out where their strengths and abilities lie."

Teaching is also a way for Ingram to test her own creative boundaries. "I know the work I do as an artist would not be what it is without my teaching activity," she says.

Like Ingram, Dr. Brian Sykes – a professor in the Department of Biochemistry – has had a long career at the U of A. After earning a BSc in Honours Chemistry at the U of A, he earned a PhD at Stanford and spent six years teaching in the Department of Chemistry at Harvard University before taking a position at the U of A in 1975.



Dr. Brian Sykes, Department of Biochemistry and Professor Liz Ingram, Department of Art and Design
2011 University Cup recipients

Sykes' research has kept pace with rapid advances in biochemistry. For much of his career, his research revolved around how an analytic tool called Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) could be used to examine the structure of biological macromolecules. These days, his work focuses on understanding how cardiac muscle proteins regulate the heart's contractions.

For almost 40 years, Sykes has enjoyed sharing his own scientific advances – and discoveries in his field – with hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. Dozens of his trainees have gone on to start labs of their own at universities across Canada and the world.

While Ingram and Sykes work in very different fields, their approach to teaching bears many similarities.

"Students have been integral to my research program," says Sykes. In addition to conducting the basic biochemistry work in the lab, students generate ideas and solve problems that improve the research program as a whole. "It's a close working relationship. We sit side by side, doing experiments," he says.

UPCOMING DEADLINES FOR ACADEMIC AWARDS

CAFA DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC AWARDS

The annual Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA) Awards, the Distinguished Academic Award and the Distinguished Academic Early Career Award, are specifically designed to honour excellence and raise awareness of the many ways in which the scholarly or creative work of university academic staff serves the wider community outside our universities.

Nominees must be current members of one of the academic staff associations within CAFA (e.g. AASUA). For a group nomination, a majority of group members, including the primary researcher or group leader, must be current members of one of the CAFA academic staff associations. Nominees for the Distinguished Academic Early Career Award must be no more than eight years beyond the completion of a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification. The deadline to submit nominations is **Friday, April 20, 2012**.

CENTENNIAL PROFESSOR

The title of Centennial Professor was created to recruit outstanding external candidates to the University of Alberta. Centennial Professor is bestowed on new members of the academy who have achieved outstanding distinction in their area of research and scholarship, teaching, and who have earned favourable regard from the community.

Any individual new to the University who is eligible to be appointed as a full-time member ranked as Professor of the Faculty (Categories A1.1 and A1.5) may be nominated for the title of Centennial Professor. Nominations are accepted on a continual basis.

UNIVERSITY CUP

The University Cup is the highest honour the University of Alberta can bestow on a member of its academic staff and is granted only to those individuals who have achieved outstanding distinction in each of the areas of scholarly research, teaching, and service to the University and the community at large.

Any full-time member of the academic teaching staff with 20 years of service as a faculty member in a university community and at least ten years of service as a faculty member at the University of Alberta may be nominated for the University Cup. The deadline to submit nominations is the first working day of May (i.e. **Tuesday, May 1, 2012**).

ORDER OF CANADA

The Order of Canada recognizes a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation. The Order recognizes people in all sectors of Canadian society. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country.

All Canadians are eligible for the Order of Canada, with the exception of federal and provincial politicians and judges while in office. Any person or group is welcome to nominate a deserving individual as candidate for appointment to the Order of Canada. There is no deadline for nominations as it is an on-going process.

OTHER UPCOMING DEADLINES

Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching: **February 24, 2012**

Provost's Award for Early Achievement: **February 24, 2012**

Rutherford Award: **February 24, 2012**

Teaching Unit Award: **February 24, 2012**

William Hardy Alexander Award: **February 24, 2012**

NEED HELP WITH A TEACHING AWARD NOMINATION?

For more information or assistance with an academic award nomination, please contact Bobbi Schiestel, Faculty Awards Facilitator, at 780.492.2644 or via email at bobbi.schiestel@ualberta.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

visit our website, www.ualberta.ca/academicawards, use the search tool or navigate to the award you are interested in. For discipline specific awards, select the appropriate field of study and determine which award(s) are applicable to you.



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With the support of the campus community, we have added numerous new awards that University of Alberta faculty members have received to our website, ualberta.ca/academicawards. If you have received an award and your accomplishment is not celebrated on our website, please contact us so that we may recognize your achievement.