

# Spotlight

academic awards triannual

ISSUE 2, MAY 2007

According to Dr Ivan Steiner, the job of an emergency room physician is simple. It is to set the patient on a diagnostic course of action that will inevitably lead to the right answers. "If you are on the yellow brick road," he says, "you will eventually get to see the Wizard of Oz."

## The Yellow Brick Road

Steiner is one of two U of A professors selected for a 3M National Teaching Fellowship in 2007. The 3M award recognizes excellence in undergraduate teaching and is the only national award of its kind in Canada.

His particular brand of teaching adds humanity and independent learning to the mix of science and discipline that normally attends a physician's training. He admits that it is a leap of faiths, and tremendously stressful to allow students to determine a course of action, but Steiner, the son of European Holocaust survivors, is no stranger to faith. He remembers his own experience as an intern in ICU when an attending believed enough to allow him the opportunity to make his own decisions. "He told me that I knew what to do. It was tremendously empowering." Steiner monitors things—but from a distance, ensuring that both patient and student are ok, knowing that for his students to succeed they have to be able to develop the confidence to make their own decisions. "You have to give each learner the opportunity to prove to themselves what they are capable of and they will grow from that experience."

Steiner also feels that it is important that his students learn to walk a mile of that yellow brick road with their patients. Empathy and humanity are qualities he tries to instill as equal partners to the clinical science of medical practice.

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### Dr Ivan Steiner

Professor of Emergency and Family Medicine  
2007 3M National Teaching Fellow

building a **community** | building a **reputation**



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...“Steiner” continued

“Over time, I realized that it is more important to walk the patient and their family that extra mile so that their fears are resolved.” Emergency rooms are chaotic, the nurses and doctors are strangers—not familiar family physicians—and often patients and their family are as afraid of what is not wrong as much as what is wrong. “If at the end of the day, we have ruled out the bad things, and set them on a correct course of care, then we have done our job.”

On the last day of class, a professor of Steiner’s told his students, “Please take your work very, very seriously, but for God’s sake, don’t take yourselves too seriously.” It was a statement that stuck with him. “One of the biggest things I have learned over time is the humility and honesty to say ‘I don’t know.’ It is important to teach students how to know

when to stop and ask for help.” Steiner feels that he learns as much from his students as they do from him. Their youth and vitality assists in critical situations, they help keep him up to date. His students come from all over the world and they teach him about their own culture thus helping him improve care and communication in a fashion that is more sensitive to patients’ ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

A self-admitted very impatient man, Steiner is a perfect fit for emergency medicine, and is taking a sabbatical this coming year to work on some research connected to his teaching—some self-directed learning of his own. He will also spend time in Haifa, Israel studying responses to mass casualties and helping develop emergency medicine curriculum for their students. ■



**Dr Frank Robinson**, Professor, Poultry Management/Physiology, Department of Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science, is also the recipient of a 3M National Teaching Fellowship. Robinson is known for bringing his students to the community and bringing creativity and an interdisciplinary twist to his class assignments. Word of mouth among the student body ensures that his classes are among the first to fill up each year. “People often talk about the research culture at the U of A, but I believe that the teaching culture is just as strong,” says Robinson. He will be featured in the next issue of *Spotlight*.

## Upcoming Deadlines for Academic Awards

### 3M National Teaching Fellowship

A national award that recognizes teaching excellence as well as educational leadership. University of Alberta faculty members have won 28 3M Teaching Fellowships, the highest number in Canada, making our university the national 3M leader.

The 3M National Teaching Fellowship is open to all individuals currently teaching at a Canadian university, regardless of discipline or level of appointment. Up to ten Fellowships are awarded each year. The deadline to submit a 3M nomination package to the Academic Awards and Ceremonies Office is noon on **November 2, 2007**.

Copies of previous successful 3M nomination packages are available for review in the Academic Awards and Ceremonies Office, please contact us at 492.2644 to make arrangements to view them.

### Traditional Fulbright Scholar Awards

The Canada-US Fulbright Program offers a unique opportunity to explore important contemporary issues relevant to Canada and the United States and the relationship between the two countries. Traditional Fulbright Scholar Awards are intended for candidates who wish to conduct research, teach or to undertake a combination of both activities at an academic institution of their choice in the host country.

Post-doctoral researchers, emerging and established faculty members, as well as experienced professionals are eligible to apply for a Fulbright Award. Candidates must

have obtained a PhD by December 31, 2007 or have equivalent professional experience. Candidates must be a Canadian or American citizen at the time of application. The application deadline is **November 15, 2007** (for awards tenable in September 2008 or January 2009).

### Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF)

The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF) has been created to improve teaching and learning effectiveness.

Applications are invited from all University of Alberta instructors who seek innovative ways of integrating teaching and research. It is anticipated that this fund will support a diverse range of initiatives specifically focused on creating exceptional and life changing university experiences for students.

There are two levels of funding for the TLEF: personal development in the area of teaching and learning, and projects or research. Applications for funding for personal development are accepted on a continual basis. The next deadline to apply for funding for projects or research is **October 15, 2007**.

### For more information...

Visit our website, [www.ualberta.ca/academicawards](http://www.ualberta.ca/academicawards), use the search tool and navigate to the award you are interested in.

For **discipline specific awards**, please visit our website, select the appropriate field of study and determine which award(s) are applicable to you. ■

## The Academic Awards and Ceremonies Office

The Academic Awards and Ceremonies Office has created a website to assist University of Alberta faculty in their pursuit of awards in teaching excellence and/or citizenship. The website also celebrates those who have received awards in teaching, citizenship and research. If you have received an academic award and your outstanding accomplishment is not celebrated on our website, please contact us so that we may recognize your achievement. A special thank you to all those who assisted us in making this information available on the website.

[www.ualberta.ca/academicawards](http://www.ualberta.ca/academicawards)

We look forward to assisting you so that you or a colleague may be successful when being nominated for an academic award. For more information or assistance with award nominations, please contact Bobbi Schiestel, Faculty Awards Facilitator, at 780.492.2644 or via e-mail at [bobbi.schiestel@ualberta.ca](mailto:bobbi.schiestel@ualberta.ca)



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