

ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES  
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING  
2008  
DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD  
ELIZABETH WELLS

Dr. Elizabeth Wells has taught at Mount Allison's Marjorie Young Bell Conservatory of Music for seven years, and she is passionate about her work: "My job is the easiest in the world because I teach the most interesting subject," she says. "Music remains a fundamental mystery, considered by many the highest manifestation of human expression."

The following scene illustrates Elizabeth's extraordinary influence: On the last day of classes, a time when professors and students alike usually curl up in exhaustion, Mount Allison's Brunton Auditorium is packed. Elizabeth stands to introduce a concert featuring the best in-class performances by students in the new Beatles course she developed and taught for the first time that term. "I'm Dr. Elizabeth Wells," she says—and the room erupts into cheers and calls of "Best professor ever!" An hour later, the audience spills out of the Auditorium humming, energized, and in full agreement with the students' accolades.

Passionate about her discipline and about teaching, Elizabeth Wells embodies the concept of teacher-scholar. Mount Allison Music students praise her ability to inspire thinking through innovative projects, provocative readings, and vibrant discussions. Her courses have been described as "perfection." Elizabeth is also known for her high standards and meticulous organization. She provides detailed guidelines for each assignment; she has developed a handout with careful interpretation of what individual grades mean; and, instead of participation marks, she lets students earn professionalism marks. Balancing professional expectations with generous support and careful feedback, Elizabeth has made an indelible impression on her students. One recent graduate describes her as a "phenomenal" teacher and mentor, continuously analyzing and enhancing her teaching: "Dr. Wells inspires success by providing challenges, giving encouragement, and being an example of excellence herself."

Elizabeth completed her Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Toronto, earned both her Master's and Doctoral degrees from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, and is a renowned scholar of Musical Theatre. She has also acquired a growing reputation as a scholar of teaching and learning. She regularly presents at educational conferences and publishes in journals dedicated to teaching.

In 2008, Elizabeth received the Herbert and Leota Tucker Teaching Award, Mount Allison's most prestigious recognition of teaching excellence. The award citation celebrates her as "an exceptional colleague, professor, and mentor, who engages many facets of excellence at once," and who is a leader amongst her peers and a role model to her students.

Dr. Elizabeth Wells is, indeed, a worthy recipient of the 2008 AAU Distinguished Teaching Award.