



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

Award for Excellence in Teaching
2023

Anne Marie MacKinnon Educational Leadership Award

DR. STACEY MACKINNON

Curiosity and inquiry are two words which are emblematic of how Dr. Stacey MacKinnon from the Department of Psychology at the University of Prince Edward Island approaches just about everything. In fact, curiosity has been at the heart of her teaching, her service, and her scholarship since 2011. From Stacey's perspective, "true leaders don't create followers, they inspire more leaders" and Stacey is someone who encourages colleagues and students to engage their own curiosity and inquiry and take ownership of their own learning. Her enthusiastic embrace of inquiry-based approaches in so many aspects of her scholarly work motivates others to remain open to new circumstances, people, and ideas, even when they contradict their own beliefs.

Questions are key to Dr. MacKinnon's pedagogical approach and her "legendary" impact on teaching and learning at UPEI and beyond. She encourages students to ask critical questions in ways that are seamlessly integrated into her courses, where curiosity and inquiry serve as guiding forces for growth, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. The introduction of "Curiosity Projects" in one of her classes years ago has spun out in many provocative and productive directions—shared widely with colleagues and taken up in other classes and contexts, written about and shared at conferences and workshops at UPEI as well as other universities, and institutionalized on a broader scale. Amidst a reconceptualization of UPEI's first-year programming, 'curiosity' guided Dr. MacKinnon's development of University 1020: Inquiry-Based Learning. This is a multi-section course that provides first-year students an opportunity to ignite their curiosity and explore questions that are meaningful to them, all while developing many skills incorporated into a university education. This kind of focus is not only broadly interdisciplinary in scope, but also deeply transformative for everyone who engages in it—bringing together a wide range of skills and engendering a complex understanding of the interconnection of everything around us. Inquiry-Based Learning is an important foundational experience for students, and the University's adoption of 1020 as one of three foundation courses illustrates the significant respect and trust placed in Dr. MacKinnon's pedagogical leadership.

Beyond Stacey's sustained and significant record of curricular innovation and scholarly publication, her generosity in team building, collegial leadership, and mentorship has shaped the culture of teaching and learning at UPEI. As one of her colleagues noted, "As a teaching colleague, program coordinator, and educational researcher, Stacey is undoubtedly the most decisive influence on my own teaching practice." Her leadership approach is human-centered, whether working with colleagues to craft new frameworks, coaching instructional teams of new teachers, or encouraging students to embrace curiosity and wonder.

Stacey's substantial and ubiquitous contributions to the development of teaching and learning have been recognized within the University of Prince Edward Island where she has been awarded all four of the internal teaching and educational leadership awards. It is fitting that Dr. Stacey MacKinnon's commitment to educational leadership be recognized by colleagues in Atlantic Canada with the 2023 Association of Atlantic Universities' Anne Marie MacKinnon Educational Leadership Award.