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Brandon University presents teaching, research awards

October 29, 2020

Brandon University today celebrated faculty who demonstrate particular excellence in teaching and in research.

“We have excellent, dedicated instructors who are devoted in the classroom, and the work they are all doing to make sure students have the best experience possible this year is remarkable,” said BU President David Docherty, who announced the awards this afternoon at a General Faculty Council held virtually. “Our researchers are also doing tremendous work, driving important discovery right here in southwestern Manitoba that addresses very real needs in our communities.”

Four awards were announced – two awards from the Brandon University Senate honouring Excellence in Research, a Senate award honouring Excellence in Teaching, and a BU Alumni Association award also honouring Excellence in Teaching.

The awards are normally presented at Convocation, which was cancelled this past spring due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although students still graduated and received their degrees, many ceremonial aspects of Convocation, including honorary degrees and awards, were postponed.

Last week, Dr. Docherty was able to personally present award certificates in physically distanced fashion on the grounds of the BU campus.



David Docherty presents an award to Dr. Sheila Scott.



David Docherty presents an award to Dr. Mousumi Majumder.



David Docherty presents an award to Dr. Cathryn Smith.

AWARD WINNERS:

Dr. Mousumi Majumder

Senate Award for Excellence in Research – Tier 2

This award was established to emphasize the importance of research at Brandon University and to recognize and honour those individuals who excel in scholarship and research.

Dr. Mousumi Majumder is an Associate Professor at the Department of Biology who specializes in Cancer Genetics and Cell Biology. She has established a translational breast cancer research program at the Department of Biology and long-term goal of her program is to develop a blood test kit for breast cancer early detection. Her team of highly qualified personnel (HQP) including undergraduates, MSc students and Bioinformatician, is investigating the roles of small molecules known as micro RNA (miRNA) in breast cancer. They discovered novel roles of these two miRNAs in promoting aggressive breast cancer phenotypes and published in highly reputed scientific peer-reviewed journals.



Currently, they are devising methodologies to measure miR526b and miR655 in breast cancer patient's blood plasma to find a signature of miRNA expression associated with breast cancer progression. Once successful, these miRNAs can be used as a diagnostic tool for breast cancer screening. Dr. Majumder's research program is supported by NSERC-Discovery grant and Brandon University Research Committee grant and her trainees are supported by Canada Summer Job funding, NSERC-USRA, BURTA, Research Manitoba and CIHR MSc scholarships.

Dr. Mousumi Majumder

Dr. Sheila Scott

Senate Award for Excellence in Research – Tier 1

This award was established to emphasize the importance of research at Brandon University and to recognize and honour those individuals who excel in scholarship and research.

Dr. Scott thanks colleagues in the School of Music for nominating her for the Senate Award for Excellence in Research (Tier I) and colleagues in the wider university community for honouring her work.

Sheila Scott began her career with degrees in Music and Music Education from the University of Saskatchewan. After success as an elementary music teacher, she embarked on the degree M.Mus. (University of Calgary) followed by a doctorate in Elementary Education from the University of Alberta.



Dr. Sheila Scott

Her research interests have varied over the decades. After doctoral work in student assessment, she explored a variety of pedagogical issues in music education. In 2005 she began a music program for children with exceptional learning challenges, culminating in the book *Music education for students with autism spectrum disorder: A resource for teachers* (Oxford University Press, 2017). Currently, Dr. Scott is exploring mindfulness in inclusive education settings.

Dr. Scott has published extensively in journals devoted to teaching and learning in music education. Internationally, she is working with a leadership network through the Berklee (Boston) institute for arts education and special need and collaborating with music educators at the Singapore Teachers' Academy for the aRTS.

Dr. Corinne Mason

Senate Award for Excellence in Teaching

This award affirms the importance of teaching at Brandon University, while recognizing and honouring those faculty members who excel in this endeavour.

Dr. Corinne L. Mason is a queer femme white-settler feminist (She/They), and an Associate Professor of Gender & Women's Studies and Sociology.

Their teaching philosophy is influenced by bell hooks' conceptualization of an engaged pedagogy. Dr. Mason believes that there should be pleasure in the classroom, and that higher learning is fundamentally a liberatory endeavour. Committed to radical social justice, they approach the classroom as an intellectual community where collaborative learning about the intersectional functioning of misogyny, white supremacy, cissexism, ableism, classism, colonization, and imperialism is paired with exposure to social movements working to dismantle these oppressive systems.

Their research program investigates how social movement concerns become incorporated into mandates of organizations. Grounded in a commitment to activists working both inside and outside institutions, her research offers critical insights into the realities of those working for change. In this pursuit, she has studied diverse institutions, most recently



Dr. Corinne Mason

Canadian universities. Dr. Mason's current SSHRC-funded research explores the impact of the #MeToo movement on Canadian university campuses, focusing specifically on feminist faculty responses to the issue. This research illustrates the unique, and often constrained, position of faculty in advocating for wholistic and radical approaches to dismantling rape culture. Their first book *Manufacturing Urgency: Development Perspectives on Violence Against Women* won the 2019 Women's and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministe Outstanding Research Award. She is currently completing her second book *Queer Parenting at the End of the World*, which is a hybrid scholarly memoir about reproductive justice, queer kinship, and climate crisis.

Dr. Cathryn Smith

BUAA Excellence in Teaching Award

The Brandon University Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award is presented to a member of the Brandon University teaching staff who has exemplified excellence in teaching at Brandon University.

Cathryn Smith joined Brandon University's (BU's) Faculty of Education in 2015 after completing her PhD in Transformative Teaching, Leading and Learning at the University of Manitoba (U of M). Prior to beginning her doctoral studies she taught in the public education system for the Winnipeg School Division (WSD). She held a variety of positions at different grade levels, including 15 years teaching and 10 years as a school administrator.

While working as a school principal in Winnipeg's culturally diverse inner city, Cathryn completed her Master of Education with a focus on General Curriculum. In her formal leadership roles she focused on inclusive education, positive behaviour supports, co-teaching, curriculum leadership and feedback for learning.

By working with community leaders, she was able to establish a coalition of community organizations in the school neighbourhood to facilitate communication and improve families' access to much-needed resources.



Dr. Cathryn Smith

After leaving the division to pursue her PhD she taught as a sessional instructor at the U of M, BU and the University of Winnipeg, and supervised a cohort of pre-service teachers in the Philippines. Upon completion, she received a Doctoral Dissertation Award from the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE) for her research titled *Developing teacher leaders for social justice: Building agency through community, critical reflection and action*. Currently she is President of CATE, which is an integral part of the Canadian Society for Studies in Education, Canada's largest organization for education scholars.

This has been a busy and productive year for Cathryn. She received tenure and promotion, was elected Grad Chair within the Faculty of Education, completed her term as Chair of the BU Status of Women Review Committee and now is humbled to be receiving recognition for excellence in teaching.

Cathryn is proud of the BU Faculty of Education and feels that this award is recognition of the passion and expertise faculty members dedicate to providing high quality learning experiences and mentorship within their undergraduate and graduate programs.

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