

# 2011-2012 OCUFA TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS

CITATION FOR WINNER PROFESSOR STEPHEN MACNEIL

The logo for OCUFA, consisting of the letters 'OCUFA' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

## **CITATION FOR PROFESSOR STEPHEN MACNEIL**

**Read by Andrea Buchholz, University of Guelph**

It is with great pleasure that the OCUFA Teaching and Librarianship Awards Committee presents a 2011-2012 OCUFA Teaching Award to Dr. Stephen MacNeil, Associate Professor of Organic Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Dr. MacNeil's nominator describes him as "an excellent lecturer who develops a rapport with his students and shows passion for his subject matter." And an excellent and engaging lecturer he does, indeed, appear to be, as demonstrated by the following quote, taken from a letter written by two students:

We remember sitting in a lecture of his back in CH203, and students were becoming unfocused, so he decided to sing a song to grab our attention which was certainly effective. Also, when we were engaged in an interactive discussion after he posed a question to the students he ran around the lecture hall and said to us that he would not stop running until someone gave an answer.

It is clear that Dr. MacNeil develops connections with his students, and that he cares deeply about their learning. This is demonstrated by many activities, not the least of which is his pre-final study sessions, held outside of lecture hours. As a student noted in a letter, "It takes a special person to give up a Saturday to volunteer to help tutor students in organic chemistry."

Dr. MacNeil's passion for his subject matter is equally clear. He redesigned organic chemistry labs to make them more green, by reducing the amount of toxic substances and by incorporating some of the principles of green chemistry into the curriculum, while encouraging students to consider the sustainability of chemical processes. This demonstrates how Dr. MacNeil goes above and beyond to provide rich and meaningful educational experiences.



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

While Dr. MacNeil's nomination package cites several more examples supporting his exemplary lecturing skills, rapport-building with students, and passion for organic chemistry, and provides rich accolades for other teaching accomplishments ranging from course development to consultation, for me what emerged as truly exemplary was Dr. MacNeil's unfailing passion for, and productivity in, educational material development. I would like to highlight a few examples.

Dr. MacNeil dedicated his recent sabbatical to transitioning the curriculum of the second year organic chemistry courses from lecture-based to a blended-learning format. He created a series of online videos that students could view prior to lectures to help them prepare for a more interactive lecture experience full of problem sets, peer-learning and iClicker activities, and formative assessment techniques. 84% of students stated that these videos were important or very important to their learning. What is perhaps even more impressive is the impact of the videos beyond WLU, as demonstrated by the following quote from a student:

These video lectures were not only a beneficial learning tool to our class, but for other Organic Chemistry students as well. For example, my sister was taking an equivalent course at a different University in Fall 2011, and found the videos extremely help[ful]. She went so far to say that Dr. MacNeil's lecture videos were a large factor to her success in the Chemistry course she was taking.

Dr. MacNeil's far-reaching impact is further demonstrated by his recent partnership with Nelson Education Ltd to introduce the On-Line Web Learning (OWL) homework program to various instructors and departments, his presentations of OWL at universities across Canada, and the fact that he is currently collecting data on the use of OWL in his classes – data which he plans to submit for publication. This also highlights Dr. MacNeil's dedication to the scholarship of teaching and learning, for which he has received grant monies, and for which he actively involves students, soliciting their feedback on new teaching strategies and assessment techniques.

I would like to finish by providing one final quote from a student, and which summarizes Dr. MacNeil's commendable teaching ability:



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

When asked why I like organic chemistry, the one answer I could think of is: “because I learned it from an outstanding professor.”

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Stephen MacNeil, a 2011-2012 OCUFA Teaching Award recipient, an honour for which he is most highly deserving.