

# Spotlight

academic awards triannual

ISSUE 4, FEBRUARY 2008

Michael Brett may study a world so small we can't even see it, but the impact he's had on research and teaching at the University of Alberta has been huge. Brett is well known for his work as a pioneer in the field of nanotechnology research and his leadership in establishing the world-renowned National Institute of Nanotechnology at the University of Alberta. Brett has enjoyed many impressive accomplishments, but perhaps the most impressive is the impact he has on undergraduate and graduate students through his teaching and mentoring.

## No Small Achievement

Brett's excellence as a teacher is evident in the number of accolades and awards he has received for his teaching, the most recent being the 2007 University Cup, the highest honour the U of A can bestow on a member of its academic staff. It is granted to individuals who have achieved outstanding distinction in the areas of scholarly research, teaching and service to the University and the community at large.

The University Cup is just the latest in a long line of teaching awards that Brett has received over the years. He was one of the youngest professors to win the University of Alberta's top teaching award, the Alexander Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in 1994, and has consistently been ranked by students as one of the Faculty of Engineering's top instructors. In 2004 he won the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists (APEGGA) Excellence in Education Award.

Brett's teaching philosophy has been described as "straight forward excellence."

*continued overleaf...*



### Dr Michael Brett

Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering  
2007 University Cup Recipient

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



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALBERTA**

He believes that achieving excellence in the classroom requires great attention to organization, timing and details. More important than the detail, however, is the enthusiasm for the subject.

"Displaying enthusiasm is one of the key ways to connect with students," says Brett.

His students and colleagues believe it is his passion for nanotechnology that makes Brett such a successful teacher. A former student recounts his introduction to Brett and the world of Engineering Physics in a presentation he made to first year students. "Mike ... had the entire

first-year Engineering class hanging on his every word during his presentation about the Engineering Physics program. His infectious enthusiasm for science and for micro-and nano-technologies in particular, was inescapable." This enthusiasm has enticed numerous students to follow Brett into the study of nanotechnology, many of whom have gone on to become leaders and academics in the field.

Brett is also known among his colleagues and students for his generosity with his time and knowledge. He maintains an open door policy and

mentors students and new professors on everything from strategies to improve grades to how to write grant proposals. That generosity also extends to his respect for students and the way he views them as assets to his research group. As one student says: "In his mind, they (students) are the cornerstone of the lab and he always credits the students for any scientific and technical advances made under his supervision."

In a field that studies the most inconceivably tiny things, Brett is making a big difference at the U of A and beyond. ■

## Upcoming Deadlines for Academic Awards

### Centennial Professor – NEW

The title of Centennial Professor was created to recruit outstanding external candidates to the University of Alberta. Centennial Professor is bestowed on new members of the academy who have achieved outstanding distinction in their area of research and scholarship, teaching, and who have earned favourable regard from the community.

Any individual new to the University who is eligible to be appointed as a full-time member ranked as Professor of the Faculty (Categories 1.1 and A1.5) may be nominated for the title of Centennial Professor. The deadline to submit nominations is the **first working day of May (i.e. May 1, 2008)**.

### University Cup

The University Cup is the highest honour the University of Alberta can bestow on a member of its academic staff and is granted only to those individuals who have achieved outstanding distinction in each of the areas of scholarly research, teaching, and service to the University and the community at large.

Any full-time member of the academic teaching staff with 20 years of service as a faculty member in a university community and at least 10 years of service as a faculty member at the University of Alberta may be nominated for the University Cup. The deadline to submit nominations is the **first working day of May (i.e. May 1, 2008)**.

### University Professor

The title of University Professor was created to recognize contributions to scholarly research, teaching, and service to the community and University. The scholarly work of the University Professor must have merited international attention; their teaching and student supervision ability must be highly esteemed by colleagues and students; they must be regarded as exceptional.

Any full-time member of the academic teaching staff at the University of Alberta may be appointed as a University Professor. The deadline to submit nominations is the **first working day of May (i.e. May 1, 2008)**.

### Order of Canada

The Order of Canada recognizes a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation. The Order recognizes people in all sectors of Canadian society. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country.

All Canadians are eligible for the Order of Canada, with the exception of federal and provincial politicians and judges while in office. Any person or group is welcome to nominate a deserving individual as candidate for appointment to the Order of Canada. There is **no deadline** for nominations as it is an on-going process.

### For more information . . .

For more information, visit our website, [www.ualberta.ca/academicawards](http://www.ualberta.ca/academicawards), use the search tool or 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. ■

### News

The following academic awards have been updated on the U of A Policies and Procedures Online (UAPPOL) website under the parent policy, **Awards for Faculty Excellence**:

- McCalla Professor
- University Cup
- University Professor
- Vargo Teaching Chairs

For more information, please visit the UAPPOL web site at [https://www.conman.ualberta.ca/stellent/groups/public/@ppoladmin/documents/infodoc/pp\\_ppol-home.hcsp](https://www.conman.ualberta.ca/stellent/groups/public/@ppoladmin/documents/infodoc/pp_ppol-home.hcsp).

We look forward to assisting you so that you or a colleague may be successful when being nominated for any academic awards. For more information or assistance with an academic award nomination, 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)

With the support of the campus community, we have added numerous new awards that University of Alberta faculty members have received to our website, [www.ualberta.ca/academicawards](http://www.ualberta.ca/academicawards). If you have received an award and your outstanding accomplishment is not celebrated on our website, please contact us so that we may recognize your achievement.



UNIVERSITY OF  
ALBERTA

#### Office of the Registrar and Student Awards

Academic Awards and Ceremonies Office  
B19 Administration Building  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB T6G 2M7  
Telephone: 780.492.2644  
[www.ualberta.ca/academicawards](http://www.ualberta.ca/academicawards)