

2022 Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Full-time Instructor

Dr. Mike MacLellan (Applied Human Sciences)

Presented by: Amy MacFarlane

It is an honour to recognize Dr. Mike MacLellan, a professor in the field of Biomechanics in the Department of Applied Human Sciences with a 2022 Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Full-time Instructor. Comments received from students and colleagues alike were unequivocal and unanimous in their support and praise for “Dr. Mike” as he is affectionately known. One colleague noted that Dr. Mike’s “devotion to teaching is contagious”.

Despite teaching some of the most challenging courses in their program, Dr. Mike has a gift for taking the complex, breaking it down and making it understandable, accessible, and even enjoyable according to students. “He has a knack for explaining things in different ways that are easier to grasp and allow for complete comprehension.” wrote one student.

There was an incredible degree of consistency in his student surveys. Repeatedly students shared that Dr. Mike is caring, passionate, enthusiastic, and approachable. He goes above and beyond to help students academically and connects with students by showing interest in their lives outside the classroom.

The energy in his classroom is said to be palpable. Through innovative teaching techniques, Dr. Mike creates an interactive classroom. Students report that “he uses active demonstrations of different motor control principles which get every student involved” and creates “a fun environment without sacrificing learning”. Dr. MacLellan used the COVID pandemic as an opportunity to explore new teaching practices. Evidence of this included the design of novel laboratory assignments to create remote hands-on experiences which could mimic the in-lab experience. One such example highlighted was the use of a smartphone app to turn the phone into an accelerometer in a 4th year biomechanics course.

Students appreciate the high standards that Dr. Mike expects and his emphasis on understanding the subject, not just memorizing the material. One student wrote “he wants his students to succeed, and will push you further than what you thought you were capable of.”

It is evident that Dr. Mike’s teaching has a lasting impact on his students as captured in the following sentiment: “Dr. MacLellan has been the most enthusiastic and engaging professor I have ever had. He walks into class every day with a positive attitude and creates an amazing learning environment for all students. I personally think there is nobody more deserving than him.” Congratulations Dr. MacLellan.