



UPEI's Twenty-fourth Recognition of Founders Ceremony  
Schurman Market Square  
Don and Marion McDougall Hall  
Thursday, February 26, 2026, 1:30 pm

Citation for Dr. Debbie MacLellan  
Read by Luciana Quiroa Paredes

Good afternoon,

It is my honour to introduce Dr. Debbie MacLellan—exceptional teacher and researcher, respected administrator, and UPEI alumna.

Dr. MacLellan's connection to UPEI runs deep. She graduated in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics and earned a master's degree in nutrition from the University of Alberta in 1979 and a PhD in human nutrition from the University of Saskatchewan in 2005. She began her teaching career at UPEI in 1990.

During her tenure, Dr. MacLellan made significant contributions to UPEI through teaching excellence, administrative and service roles, and program development. She served in numerous administrative roles, including as chair of the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Dean of Science, interim Dean of Education, and Provost of UPEI's Cairo Campus. She was the first female president of Universities Canada Egypt.

She was known as a strong, fair, and supportive leader who treated colleagues and students with respect and compassion; in fact, she was the University's first Fair Treatment advocate. She truly demonstrated these qualities when she served as interim Dean of Education during a challenging time for the faculty from 2022 to 2023.

Throughout her career, students were always at the centre of Dr. MacLellan's work. She challenged them to think critically, and to consider multiple and sometimes competing points of view in decision making. For her dedication to teaching, she was awarded the UPEI Presidential Recognition Award of Merit for Teaching in 2014 and an Annual Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1992.

Dr. MacLellan contributed to the advancement of her field—at UPEI and beyond. In the late 1990s, she worked with her colleagues to create a new vision for foods and nutrition at the University. As a result, Home Economics was changed to Family and Nutritional Sciences; a major in Foods and Nutrition was introduced; and the existing program in Home Economics was renamed a major in Family Science. In

2000, she worked with Dr. Jennifer Taylor and others to establish the Integrated Dietetic Internship Program. She developed a foundational evidence-based course required for interns in the integrated program. The course is considered so valuable that it is now recommended for any student who plans to apply for a post graduate internship or graduate studies.

Dr. MacLellan's work has had a significant impact on the profession of dietetics in Canada and internationally. She pioneered research on client-centredness in nutrition counselling, shaping how dietitians understand and respond to clients' learning needs and preferences. She is a tireless champion of this approach, and her passion for this work continues.

She has served on professional organizations, including Partnership for Dietetics Education and Practice and the Canadian Association of Professional Programs in Human Nutrition, as well as Dietitians of Canada. For her dedication as a dietetic educator and contributions to her field, she was awarded the prestigious *Ryley-Jeffs Memorial Award* from Dietitians of Canada in 2020.

Dr. MacLellan retired from UPEI in 2018. In 2019, UPEI bestowed on her the title of Professor Emerita—an honour befitting a career marked by dedication, scholarship, and leadership.

Today, we are proud to name Dr. Debbie MacLellan a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the University and her profession.