

# The Astell Award

Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
University of British Columbia



The **Astell Award** is to recognize trainees at all levels in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at UBC for outstanding commitment to activities related to promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This could be in your own environment at UBC or through knowledge translation and community engagement for the promotion of STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Examples could include activities such as volunteering in local schools with high proportion of low-income families to promote science, sharing your research with patient populations, mentoring under-represented groups including minorities or women in science education, and many others. We want to hear about all of your amazing EDI activities that you have accomplished while a trainee at UBC.

Postdocs, PhD, Masters and undergraduate students in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology are all encouraged to apply for the **Astell Award**. To apply, send a two page CV that includes a 100-150 word statement describing your EDI related activities to [Hudson MacLeod, \(HUDSON.MACLEOD@UBC.CA\)](mailto:HUDSON.MACLEOD@UBC.CA) by March 9, 2026. Top candidates will be invited to share their experiences in person with the selection committee in March and awards will be made directly to the trainee (up to 2 awards of \$500) at the BMB joint hosted EDI lecture on April 24, 2026. For more information please contact [Annie Ciernia](#) or [Thibault Mayor](#).

The **Astell Award** was named after Dr. Caroline Astell one of the first women faculty in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at UBC. Dr. Astell completed her undergraduate degree in Math/Zoology, Masters in Genetics and PhD in Biochemistry/Nucleic Acids all at UBC. After completing a postdoctoral fellowship at Rockefeller University in the USA, she worked at the University of Toronto as a Research Associate and then as an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary. She then returned to UBC as a Research Associate and advanced through the ranks to Assistant, Associate and full Professor in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Dr. Astell's research focused on understating the molecular biology of animal viruses and the structure and replication of eukaryotic chromosomes. She had both an impressive funding and publication track record, leading to over 62 published papers, numerous book chapters and patents and a co-authored book on Nobel Laureate Michael Smith. Dr. Astell was also a dedicated member of the department, leading many committees and the BC Genome Sciences Center. She was also an avid instructor in Biochemistry and directly mentored 11 graduate students and served on over 40 student supervisory committees during her career. Dr. Astell retired from UBC in 2004 and continues to serve her local community through volunteer and outreach activities.

## Previous [Astell Awardees](#):

2020: Katie Gyte & Laura Meleady  
2021: Heather Baker & Saiqah Ghafour  
2022: Catalina Ionescu & Morgan Towriss  
2023: Maya Nue-Lee & Will Stewart  
2024: Ayşe Erdogan & Jenna Goeres  
2025: Dr. Seby Chen & Hannah Shariati