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University of Lethbridge neuroscientist Dr. Robert Sutherland to receive distinguished contribution award

Marking a stellar career as a researcher and professor, Dr. Robert Sutherland has been named winner of the 2022 Donald O. Hebb Distinguished Contribution Award by the Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour & Cognitive Science (CSBBCS).

The award recognizes those who've made a significant contribution to the study of brain, behaviour and cognitive science through their research, training of others and leadership in the field. Donald Hebb is often called the father of neuroscience for the way he merged psychology with neuroscience.



“This award is a very special honour, in part, because I had the privilege of having met and talked with Donald Hebb after his retirement,” says Sutherland, Chair of the University of Lethbridge Department of Neuroscience and one of the drivers behind the creation of the Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience (CCBN). “His contributions to Canadian neuroscience are

difficult to exaggerate. Receiving an award named after this great scientist is especially valuable to me.”

Following the completion of his PhD at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Sutherland joined ULethbridge as a post-doctoral fellow under Drs. Bryan Kolb and Ian Whishaw. His key focus was on developing better ways to measure memory in non-human animals. He devised methods that are now used by drug companies and laboratories around the world.

Wanting to expand his skill set and work with students at all levels, Sutherland then took a position at the University of New Mexico. There, he was able to work with students from undergraduate to PhD levels and post-doctoral fellows. During that time, he developed a theory of long-term memory that impacted the field and began focusing on understanding the role of the hippocampus in long-term memory. While scientists generally thought the hippocampus

was only briefly involved in the storage of new memories, Sutherland's work has shown the hippocampus continues to be engaged during memory recall.

He returned to the University as a senior Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research scientist when the CCBN building opened in 2001 and ULEthbridge became home to the first Department of Neuroscience in Canada to offer degrees at the bachelor's, master's and PhD levels.

Sutherland has received many honours and was elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 2021 and he was twice named one of the 50 Most Influential Albertans by Alberta Venture Magazine. In 2011, he made the list for his breakthrough discovery about the regeneration of cerebral cortex cells in adult mammals and, in 2013, he was listed for his contributions as president of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations.

Sutherland will receive his award on Tuesday, July 19 at the CSBBCS annual meeting in Halifax, where he will also deliver the Hebb Award Lecture.

This news release can be found online at [Sutherland wins Hebb award](#).

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