Robin A.J. Lester, Ph.D., professor of Neurobiology, has been awarded the senior faculty 2021 Dean’s Excellence Award in Teaching.

Lester earned his Ph.D. in pharmacology from the University of Bristol, United Kingdom and currently serves as the associate editor for Molecular Pharmacology.

Lester is a cellular neurophysiologist interested in the role of ion channels, receptors, and synapses in learning, memory, and addiction. He specializes in the neurobiology of nicotine, specifically how the drug alters the intricate layers of neural machinery to reshape our minds.

As a UAB faculty member and educator for nearly 25 years, Lester has invested considerable time and effort to the teaching of neuroanatomy and neuroscience to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, including course design and implementation. A former President’s Awardee for Excellence in Teaching and four-time Argus Award winner for best organ module as course director, Lester has taught in the School of Medicine Neuroscience Module for 25 years, serving as course director for most of these years.

“Dr. Lester is a major asset to our department,” says, Craig M. Powell, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Department of Neurobiology. “He has taught at every possible level including medical, graduate, undergraduate, and other professional Students at UAB. As director of UAB School of Medicine’s course on the brain for second-year medical students, he and his collaborators have won the coveted Argus Award for best course multiple times. Dr. Lester brings excitement, energy, and a deep knowledge of his subject matter, the most mysterious organ in our bodies, the brain.”

Powell goes onto say Lester’s presentation style and engaging course designs are unparalleled. He draws from every available mode of instruction utilizing multi-media videos, text, draw-to-learn, small groups, medical case presentations, and many diverse techniques to engage students daily.

Lester employs current, innovative methods in class and encourages other faculty to do the same. His activities change day-to-day to keep students engaged, spanning student-led discussions of clinical cases, to ethical debate, to hands-on practicums.