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### **Iota Sigma Pi 2019 Centennial Award Goes to Prof. Maria Craig of Mary Baldwin University**

Iota Sigma Pi, the national organization for women in chemistry, has selected Prof. Maria L. Craig of Mary Baldwin University, Staunton, VA to receive the ***Centennial Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching***. The award is given for excellence in teaching chemistry, biochemistry, or a chemistry-related field. She has been invited to participate in the organization's Triennial Convention in 2020.

Dr. Craig has been teaching at Mary Baldwin since 2008 and is currently department Chair. She has taught most of the chemistry courses, but primarily organic chemistry and biochemistry, including both lectures and laboratories. Her nominator said, "Dr. Craig is determined to help her students succeed. She never hesitates to explain concepts that students have trouble understanding, whether the subject at hand is about organic chemistry, biochemistry, or physical chemistry." The nomination included many similar comments from former students.



Dr. Craig also conducts undergraduate research and has mentored over 20 students. She is interested in studying a short protein molecule called LL37 which has been implicated in the onset of certain autoimmune diseases. This research has yielded both presentations and

publications for the students and their professor.

Dr. Craig is a leader of the Argentum Chapter (Shenandoah Valley) of Iota Sigma Pi, serving as President in 2011-2014. She has a great influence on her students at a personal level, as illustrated by this quote:

A phenomenal member of Iota Sigma Pi, Dr. Craig has strengthened me as a woman in chemistry by serving as one of my greatest role models. She discusses gender inequality in STEM and reassures her students -- many of whom are female -- that they are competent, smart-working researchers. Moreover, Dr. Craig encourages activism in STEM and the importance of on-campus STEM awareness by actively participating in the student-led American Chemical Society club. By doing this, Dr. Craig is not only a teacher, but a friend that many students look up to and want to follow.

Maria Craig holds a BS in chemistry from James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA and a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

**IOTA SIGMA PI** is a national honor society for women in chemistry. Its major objectives are *to* promote interest in chemistry among women students, to foster mutual advancement in academic, business, and social life; and to stimulate personal accomplishment in chemical fields. IOTA SIGMA PI serves to promote the advancement of women in chemistry by granting recognition to women who have demonstrated superior scholastic achievement and high professional competence by election into IOTA SIGMA PI. [www.iotasigmapi.info](http://www.iotasigmapi.info)