

Sally Mason

President, The University of Iowa

Sally Mason became the 20th President of The University of Iowa on August 1, 2007. She holds a full professorship with tenure in the Department of Biological Sciences of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

President Mason served as Provost of Purdue University from 2001-2007, where she was responsible for planning, managing, and reviewing all academic programs at Purdue's West Lafayette and four affiliated branch campuses throughout Indiana. Her accomplishments as Provost included increasing diversity, recruiting top faculty, doubling the research program, advancing public engagement, and improving the learning environment for students. During President Mason's tenure as Provost, Purdue hired over 800 new faculty, 300 of which were new positions; 56% of those hires were women and/or minorities. She also formed a diversity leadership group while at Purdue. President Mason was instrumental in the development of Purdue's Discovery Park, an interdisciplinary research incubator focused on such topics as nanotechnology, entrepreneurship, and biosciences.

The daughter of an immigrant family and the first child to attend college, President Mason received her B.S. in zoology from The University of Kentucky in 1972, her M.S. from Purdue University in 1974, and her Ph.D. in cellular, molecular, and developmental biology from The University of Arizona in 1978. She subsequently spent two years at Indiana University in Bloomington doing postdoctoral research before joining The University of Kansas in 1981. A strong advocate of undergraduate education, she received awards for outstanding undergraduate advising and teaching, and she was awarded a prestigious Kemper Teaching Fellowship. During her 21 years at Kansas, President Mason served as a full professor in the Department of Molecular Biosciences, Acting Chair of the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology, and Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In 1995, she was appointed Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the largest academic unit on the University of Kansas campus.

President Mason is the author of many scientific papers and has obtained a number of research grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Wesley Research Foundation, and the Lilly Endowment. Her research interests have focused on the developmental biology, genetics, and biochemistry of pigment cells and pigments in the skin of vertebrates. She has served as President of both the PanAmerican Society for Pigment Cell Research and the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, and has served as Chair of the Advisory Committee to the National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) and the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) Chief Academic Officers Group. She also served on the Executive Committee of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) from 2003-2007 and was appointed to the National Medal of Science Selection Committee from 2006-2008.

President Mason is married to Ken Mason, an educator and textbook author who teaches biological sciences at The University of Iowa.

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