Where Excellence Matters

FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARDS PROGRAM

2016-2017

Co-Sponsored by:
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Foundation
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Purpose and Overview

The UTRGV Faculty Excellence Awards Program, co-sponsored by the UTRGV Foundation, was created to recognize, celebrate, and honor the many exceptional efforts of UTRGV faculty members at the university level. It is an opportunity to share accomplishments widely and promote a culture of excellence through the celebration of these contributions.

There are four different Faculty Excellence Awards which recognize and reward individual faculty members. The categories are:

- **Teaching,**
- **Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity,**
- **Service,** and
- **Student Mentoring.**

Each Faculty Excellence Award consists of a $5,000 stipend and a plaque or medal. The recipients of these awards are determined through a competitive and peer-review process as detailed in this document. All Faculty Excellence Award winners will be honored at the Faculty Excellence Awards luncheon at the end of the academic year.
Faculty Excellence Awards Program
2016-2017

**Timeline**

January 11: Call for nominations for Faculty Excellence Awards.

January 20: Deadline to submit initial nominations for Faculty Excellence Awards. (via a brief online form/link: click here)

February 8: Deadline for the full PDF nomination/application packet of each Excellence Award nominee to be submitted electronically to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Diversity (VPFAD) at FacultyAffairs@utrgv.edu.

February 24: Deadline for the University Awards Committee to forward the PDF applications of the top candidates for each Faculty Excellence Award (where applicable) to the VPFAD, who shall subsequently forward it to an External Selection Committee. If there are few applications for a specific Faculty Excellence Award, the VPFAD will forward the applications directly to the External Selection Committee, without first routing them through the University Awards Committee.

March 3: The External Selection Committee recommends its selection of the winners of the Faculty Excellence Awards to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Diversity.

May 4: The winners of the Faculty Excellence Awards are recognized and celebrated at the Faculty Excellence Awards luncheon.
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A. Description and Number of Awards in Each Category

1. Teaching

The Faculty Excellence Award in Teaching recognizes, encourages, and rewards superior teachers and their contributions to the development and delivery of effective teaching and learning experiences.

Criteria
The faculty selected for this Award will be selected based on the following:

- Use of discipline-appropriate teaching methodologies, with demonstrated innovation and adaption in teaching, including new technology.
- Demonstrated continuous improvement of course material.
- Use of assessment tools to improve student learning outcomes.
- Creation of a positive learning environment.
- Ensured academic rigor in his/her courses.

There will be up to one Award in this category. The Excellence in Teaching Award consists of a $5,000 stipend and a plaque/medal.

2. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity

The Faculty Excellence Award in Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity recognizes, encourages, and rewards researchers and scholars and their contributions to the body of knowledge in their field.

Criteria
The faculty selected for this Award will be selected based on the following:

- Locally, regionally, and nationally recognized research, scholarship or creative activities.
- Research, scholarship, or creative activities expand the body of knowledge in his/her discipline.
- Impact of research, scholarship, or creative activities in the field and beyond.

There will be up to one Award in this category. The Excellence in Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity Award consists of a $5,000 stipend and a plaque/medal.
3. Service
The Faculty Excellence Award in Service recognizes, encourages, and rewards faculty and their service contributions to the university, community, and profession.

Criteria
The faculty selected for this Award will be selected based on the following:

- Service contributions have been recognized locally, regionally, and/or nationally.
- Demonstrated leadership for the university, community, and/or profession.
- Commitment and dedication through service to the university, community, and/or profession.
- Demonstrated impact of the service on university, community, and/or profession.

There will be up to one Award in this category. The Faculty Excellence Award in Service consists of a $5,000 stipend and a plaque/medal.

4. Student Mentoring
The Faculty Excellence Award in Student Mentoring recognizes, encourages, and rewards faculty mentors for their contribution to the student’s success and engagement.

Criteria
The Faculty selected for this Award will be selected based on the following:

- Demonstrated improvements in student engagement and achievement.
- Demonstrated improvement in retention and graduation.
- Demonstrated significant contributions to the lives of students during and after college.

There will be up to one Award in this category. The Faculty Excellence Award in Student Mentoring consists of a $5,000 stipend and a plaque/medal.

B. Eligibility

1. All full-time UTRGV faculty members, except for those in a visiting capacity, who have completed at the time of nomination two or more full years of consecutive service at UTRGV and one of the legacy institutions are eligible to be nominated.

2. Faculty members with 50% or less administrative appointments may be nominated. Faculty members whose current positions involve more than 50% in administrative appointments are ineligible to be nominated.
3. Nominated faculty members must NOT have been a recipient of a University Excellence Award in the same category at UTRGV or one of the legacy institutions within the previous five academic years.

4. Nominated faculty members must NOT have been recipients of a University Excellence Award in any category at UTRGV or one of the legacy institutions within the previous three academic years.

C. Procedures

1. Nominations
   A. Faculty members considered for these Excellence Awards shall be identified through a nomination process.
   B. The nomination process is open; that is, any full-time UTRGV faculty member may nominate another full-time UTRGV faculty member for any of the Excellence Awards, should the nominee meet the eligibility criteria.
   C. Nominations shall be submitted via a brief online form/link: click here.
   D. Nominators should check with the nominees to ensure that they are willing and eligible to accept the nomination.
   E. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
   F. The Excellence Awards shall be determined by a competitive process involving the University Awards Committee (when applicable), and an External Selection Committee.

2. Preparation and Submission of the Nomination Packets
   A. Nominees are responsible for working with their nominator and Department Chair/School Director to prepare the Excellence Awards nomination/application packets containing the information specified later in D (“Preparation of Nomination Packets for the Faculty Awards”) of this document.
   B. Department Chairs/School Directors shall cooperate with the nominators in assembling supporting evidence.
   C. The PDF of each nominee’s packet shall be forwarded to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Diversity by the deadline established in this call, who shall then forward it to the Selection Committee(s).

3. Selection Committees
   A. Description of Committees
      i. The selection process will involve up to two committees: The University Awards Committee and the External Selection Committee.
      ii. The members of the University Awards Committee shall be selected through university procedures for selecting members of academic standing committees.
iii. The members of the External Selection Committee shall be identified and selected by the Provost or his/her designee.
  a) The External Selection Committee members shall be from academia and broadly represent the disciplines in the University.
  b) The External Selection Committee shall not include any UTRGV employees.

B. Actions
  i. University Awards Committee. For Excellence Awards with numerous applications per Award, the University Awards Committee shall meet as necessary to narrow the list of applications for each Award to the top candidates by the deadline in this call. For Awards with few applications, the VPFAD will forward the applications directly to the External Selection Committee.
    a) Committee procedures shall be determined by the respective Committee in consultation with the VPFAD.
    b) The Committee may develop more specific criteria (and/or a rating form) based on the criteria mentioned on pages 5 & 6.
    c) The Committee shall base its decision only on the material submitted in the nomination packet, and consider the candidate’s accomplishments only within the last five years.
    d) The proceedings of the Committee shall be confidential.
    e) The Committee shall forward the PDF nomination packets of the top candidates, unranked, for each Excellence Award to the VPFAD no later than the deadline established in this call.
    f) The VPFAD shall forward the PDF packets for the top candidates for each Excellence Award to the External Selection Committee by the deadline specified in this call. If there are few applications for any specific Award, the review by the University Awards Committee will not be required.

  ii. External Selection Committee. The External Selection Committee shall work as necessary to complete the selection of the Excellence Award winners prior to the deadline established in this call.
    a) Committee procedures shall be determined by the Committee.
    b) The Committee may develop more specific criteria (and/or a rating form) based on the criteria mentioned on pages 5 & 6.
    c) The Committee shall base its decision only on the material submitted in the nomination packet, and consider the candidate’s accomplishments only within the last five years.
    d) The proceedings of the Committee shall be confidential.
    e) The Committee shall forward the names and nominations packets of the winners to the VPFAD no later than the deadline established in this call.
D. Instructions for Preparation of Nomination/Application Packets for the Faculty

One PDF file should be assembled for each Faculty Excellence Award nominee that includes the items described below. Clearly identify the nominee and category in the name of the PDF file. Submit the PDF to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Diversity (FacultyAffairs@utrgv.edu) no later than the deadline in this call. Department Chairs/School Directors are expected to cooperate in helping to assemble the required information.

1. NOMINATION/APPLICATION PACKET CONTENTS

A. Cover Page, containing the following information:
   i. Excellence Award Category.
   ii. Name of nominee.
   iii. Current position of nominee (title, rank, Department/School, and College).
   iv. Number of years in this position as well as total number of years at UTRGV and one of the legacy institutions.

B. Table of Contents

C. Letter of Nomination (limited to two pages)
   The letter should summarize the nominee’s achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).

D. Nominee’s Abbreviated CV (limited to five pages)
   The abbreviated CV should primarily focus on the nominee’s accomplishments (particularly in the category for which the faculty member is nominated) during the last five years.

E. List of achievements/activities in the area of the award as per the pertinent tabular summary(ies) within the past five years.¹
   For faculty who have worked for UTRGV and one of the legacy institution for less than five years, with the exception of nominations for the Research/Creative Activities Excellence Award, the list should include only the contributions made at UTRGV and the legacy institution.

¹ The tabular summaries may be found on the Provost’s website in the Faculty Resources Section or in the Faculty Portfolio Tool.
F. No more than five letters of endorsement (a maximum of one page in length each)

Letters of endorsement may be provided from any person who can speak to the Excellence Award criteria. Letters from students who are likely to be subsequently advised or evaluated by the faculty nominee are discouraged. Individual letters from graduates are appropriate. The perspective or status of the authors of the letters should be clearly identified, either in the letter itself or by the person who prepares the nomination packet.

2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. The following information may be useful to those who prepare the Excellence Awards nomination packet. The nominators are expected to conform to the page limits specified in this instructions.

i. Teaching: The Committees will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in A.1., including innovation and adoption of new technologies. Summaries of the department or program student evaluations and peer-reviews of the nominee’s teaching would be helpful. Persons preparing applications for the Faculty Excellence Award in Teaching should note carefully the importance of addressing assessment of student learning outcomes and how the nominee has used assessment tools to improve the teaching/learning environment.

ii. Research/Creative Activities: The Committees will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in A.2. The supporting letters should address the significance and impact of the research/creative activities in its theoretical or practical aspects, and how it has advanced knowledge and/or contributed to the field/discipline. Supporting letters from appropriate individuals, other than those employed at UTRGV, are especially useful. Remember that a copy of the research/creative activity itself (e.g., book, journal article, artwork, etc.) will not be forwarded to the external Committee.

iii. Service: The Committees will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in A.3. The supporting material should make clear the impact or results of the service activities. In this category, letters from persons inside as well as outside the university are especially useful.

iv. Student Mentoring: The Committees will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in A.4. The supporting materials should make clear the impact or results of the student advising/mentoring activities. In this category, letters addressing the significance of activities are especially useful.
B. General Tips

i. Do not forget the Table of Contents.

ii. The members of the Selection Committees are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) would be helpful.

iii. If an individual writing a supporting letter is not clearly identified in the letter by professional status, vantage point, or area of expertise, it may be helpful to include a brief biographical statement.