



**University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
College of Liberal Arts
Faculty Excellence Awards Program**

Approved by the Dean on 10/9/2025

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Purpose and Outline

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) Faculty Excellence Awards Program was created to recognize and honor the many exceptional efforts of CLA faculty members. It is an opportunity to share accomplishments widely and build community through the celebration of these contributions. The awards program recognizes and rewards faculty excellence in four categories: (1) teaching, (2) research, scholarship, or creative activity, (3) service, and (4) community engagement.

Timeline

- December 1st: Call for nominations sent to all CLA faculty
- December 1st: Call for volunteers to serve on the CLA Excellence Awards Committee sent to all CLA faculty
- December 10th: Deadline to submit nominations (via a brief online form/link included in the call). *If fewer than two nominations are received in any college award category, the Associate Dean or Dean may reopen the nomination for at least three days through an announcement to all college faculty*.*
- December 10th: Deadline to volunteer for CLA Excellence Awards Committee membership (via a brief online form/link included in the call).
- December 15th: Nominees will be notified of their nomination and provided with full application requirements and procedures.
- January 31st: Nominee award applicant packets due via online link to Dean's office by midnight. Applications will be distributed to committee members for evaluation and ranking within 5 working days by CLA Dean's Office.
- February 27th: Committee Chair emails the list of the awardees to Dean's Office, based on the committee meetings as needed, discussions, ratings, and vote held to rank candidates during the month of February.
- March - April: CLA Faculty Excellence Awards and Recognition Reception

**NOTE: If the Deadline to submit nominations is extended then all the other deadlines should be adjusted accordingly.*

1. NATURE AND CATEGORIES OF AWARDS

The Faculty Excellence Awards recognize and commend faculty achievement at the College level. Each Faculty Excellence Award consists of a stipend and a plaque/medal or diploma. The College-level stipends amount are determined yearly by the Dean based on the CLA budget considerations. Categories and their criteria for evaluation may be reexamined by the Dean or the CLA Excellence Awards Committee every Spring as needed. Any changes may be proposed to the Dean for consideration and approval.

A. Awards for Excellence in Teaching

This award recognizes, encourages, and rewards superior teachers and their contributions to the development and delivery of effective teaching and learning experiences. The faculty selected for this award will include individuals whose command of their respective disciplines, teaching methodologies, innovation, communication skills, concern for student performance, commitment to improve the teaching/learning process and environment, and commitment to UTRGV's mission are exceptional. The award is designed to distinguish those teachers who maintain high expectations of their students, and who ensure academic rigor in their courses.

B. Awards for Excellence in Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activity

This award recognizes, encourages, and rewards those faculty whose superior research, scholarship, and/or creative activities and achievements have been recognized locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. The results of these efforts should contribute to the expansion of knowledge and/or the quality of life, and/or encourage additional research, and elevate the prestige of UTRGV at establishing itself as an emerging R1 university.

C. Award for Excellence in Service

This award recognizes, encourages, and rewards those faculty whose superior service achievements have been recognized locally, regionally, or nationally. This award is designed to distinguish those faculty whose service, leadership, and dedication have significantly impacted the college/university, community and/or profession.

D. Award for Excellence in Community Engagement

This award recognizes, encourages, and rewards those faculty whose superior efforts in community engagement activities have made significant contributions to the local community. Their commitment to the community through their teaching, research, and/or service has established relationships that provide opportunities for our students outside of the university. These partnerships have promoted the University's mission and vision to engage with the community and

provide an innovative and accessible educational environment that promotes university discoveries.

2. NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF AWARDS

- A. There may be one award for each category annually.
- B. The Award for Excellence in each category may be shared. (*When an award is shared, the Dean determines whether the stipend is also shared, subject to available funds).

3. SELECTION

A. Eligibility

- 1. All full-time Faculty members, except for the visiting category, who have completed two or more full years of service at the University 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% of administrative appointments are ineligible to be nominated.
- 3. Faculty members nominated must NOT have been recipients of an Excellence award of the same category within the past five years.
- 4. Faculty members nominated must NOT have been recipients of an Excellence Award in **any** one of the four categories within the past three years.

B. Nominations

- 1. Faculty members considered for awards shall be identified through the following nomination process:
 - a. The nomination process shall be open; that is, any full-time faculty member at CLA may nominate another faculty member in CLA for any of the awards.
 - b. Nominations shall be submitted via the online form/link provided in the call.
 - c. Nominators should check with the nominee to make sure that they are willing to accept the nomination.
 - d. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
 - e. The Excellence Awards shall be determined by a competitive process. If fewer than two nominations are received in any award category (e.g., Teaching), the Excellence Awards may reopen the nomination for at least three days through an announcement to all college faculty.

C. Selection Committee: College-level

- 1. There will be a call for faculty to join the CLA Excellence Awards Committee each year as specified in the Timeline section.
- 2. The Excellence Committee shall have between 4 and 8 representatives from various departments within the College.
- 3. Individuals serving on the Selection Committee are ineligible for an

award nomination during their membership term.

4. PROCEDURES

A. Administration of the Award Process

1. Administrative support for the award process shall be the responsibility of the CLA Dean's Office.

B. Solicitation of Nominations

1. The call for nominations will be issued no later than December 1 each year (or the next business day if December 1 falls on a weekend/holiday) to the members of the College of Liberal Arts community detailing the Award process and nominating procedures. Nominations will be done via a brief online form/link provided in the announcement/call. If the nomination is accepted, full packets will be submitted by the nominee at the end of January.

C. Preparation of Nominee Packets

1. Nominees are responsible for working with their nominator and department chair to prepare the nomination packets containing the information specified later in this document in the section, "Preparation and Submission of Nominee Packets."

D. Submission of Nominee Packets

1. One single PDF file containing each nomination packet for the College-level Award shall be submitted to the Dean's Office by the end of January.

E. Selection Committee Action

1. The **College-Level Selection Committee** shall meet as necessary to complete the selection of the award winners prior to the end of February.
 - a. Committee procedures shall be determined by the respective Committees in consultation with the Associate Dean or Dean.
 - b. The criteria developed by the committee are based on the criteria mentioned in Section I.
 - c. The Committee shall base its decision ***only*** on the material **submitted** in the nominee application packet and consider the candidate's accomplishments ***only*** within the last five years.
 - d. The proceedings of the Committee shall be confidential.

UTRGV CLA Faculty Excellence Awards Program Preparation & Submission of Award Nominee Packets

One PDF file should be assembled by each 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 CLA Faculty Excellence Awards Committee no later than January 31st.

The contents of each file should be as follows:

1. Cover Page, containing the following information:

- a. Award Category
- b. Name of nominee
- c. Current position (title, rank, department)
- d. Number of years in this position as well as total number of years at UTRGV

2. Table of Contents

3. Letter of Intent (limited to two pages)

The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the award area and address impact(s)

4. The Nominee's Abbreviated CV (Curriculum Vitae) (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) over the last five years.

5. List of achievements/activities during the previous five years pertinent to the award. For faculty who have been at UTRGV less than five years, the list should include UTRGV service only.

6. Short letters of support and recommendation

A maximum of one page in length each; limit 5). Letters of support may be provided from any person who can speak to the Award criteria within or outside the institution. Letters from students likely to be later 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 nominee.

Additional Information on the Preparation of Packets for the UTRGV CLA Faculty Excellence Awards Program

The following information may be useful to those who prepare the nomination packet. The nominees are expected to conform to the page limits specified in the “Preparation & Submission of Nomination Packets” section.

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

Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activity: The Committee will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in Section 1. B. The supporting letters should address the significance and impact of the research, scholarship, or creative activity in its theoretical, practical, or creative aspects, and the contributions have advanced knowledge and yielded demonstrable benefits to society and communities. Supporting letters from knowledgeable individuals, other than those employed at UTRGV, are especially useful. Remember that a copy of the research itself (e.g., book, journal article, etc.) will not be forwarded to the Committee.

Service: The Committee will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in Section 1. C. The supporting material should make clear the impact or results of the service activities. In this category, letters from people inside as well as outside the university are especially useful.

Community Engagement: The Committee will look for evidence of the criteria mentioned in Section 1. D. The supporting material should make clear the impact of community engagement activities. In this category, letters addressing the significance of activities are especially useful, including publications, articles, video links, letters of support from community partners, etc.

General:

- Do not forget to add a table of contents.
- The members of the Selection Committee are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) would be helpful.
- If an individual writing a letter of support is not clearly identified in the letter by professional status, vantage point, or area of expertise, it may be helpful to add a brief biographical statement in the application packet.