

**Individual Faculty Excellence
Awards Program
2016-2017**

Co-Sponsored by The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Foundation.

The University of Texas
Rio Grande ValleyTM
Where Excellence Matters

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Individual Faculty Excellence Awards Program
2016-2017

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.

Individual Faculty Excellence Awards

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/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.

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Timeline

- January 9: Call for nominations for the Individual Faculty Excellence Awards
- January 20: Deadline to submit initial nominations for the Individual 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 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 : The winners of the Faculty Excellence Awards are recognized and celebrated at the Faculty Excellence Awards Luncheon

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INDIVIDUAL FACULTY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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:

- 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
- Ensures 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 and Creative Activity

The Faculty Excellence Award in Research/Scholarship and 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:

- Research, scholarship or creative activities have been recognized locally, regionally, and nationally
- Research, scholarship or creative activities expand the body of knowledge in his/her discipline
- Research, scholarship or creative activities inspire additional research
- Impact of research, scholarship or creative activities in the field

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

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3. Service

The Faculty Excellence Award in Service recognizes, encourages, and rewards faculty and their contributions for the service to the university, community and profession.

Criteria

The Faculty selected for this Award will be selected based on:

- Service contributions have been recognized locally, regionally, and/or nationally
- Demonstrated leadership for the university, community and/or profession
- Commitment and dedication to the university, community and/or profession
- Demonstrated impact on university, community and/or profession
- Impact of service activities on the 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 mentors and their contribution to the students' mentees.

Criteria

The Faculty selected for this Award will be selected based on:

- Mentoring activities that demonstrate improvements in student engagement
- Demonstrated improvement in student achievement
- Demonstrated improvement in retention
- Demonstrated improvement in shorten time to graduation
- Demonstrated significant contribution 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.

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B. Eligibility

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. Nominated Faculty members must NOT have been a recipient of a University Excellence award of the same category at UTRGV or one of the legacy institutions *within the previous five academic years*.
- D. Prior recipients may NOT be nominated in any category that they were recognized in *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 for the faculty awards shall be 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 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**.

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- 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 a more specific criteria (and/or a rating form) based on the criteria mentioned in page 1 & 2.
 - 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 Committees shall be confidential.
 - e) Each 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 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 award winners prior to the deadline established in this call.
 - a) Committee procedures shall be determined by the Committee.
 - b) The Committee may develop a more specific criteria (and/or a rating form) based on the criteria mentioned in page 1 & 2.
 - 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.

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D. Instructions for Preparation of Nomination/Application Packets for the Faculty

One PDF file should be assembled for each Individual 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 assembling 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. **The 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, the list should include only teaching and service contributions at UTRGV and the legacy institution.
- 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.

¹ The tabular summaries may be found at <http://www.utrgv.edu/en-us/about-utrgv/administration/provost/resources/index.htm> or in the Faculty Portfolio tool.

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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., as well as evidence of innovation and adaption 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: 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 in its theoretical or practical aspects, and how the research has advanced knowledge. 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 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 material should make clear the impact or results of the 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.