# The University of Texas RioGrande Valley™

# Faculty Excellence Awards Guidelines

**2024 -2025**

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## Timeline

| Date | Activity |
|---|---|
| **Monday, February 24, 2025** | Call for nominations for Faculty Excellence Awards. |
| **Monday, March 10, 2025 by 5:00 pm** | Deadline to submit nominations for Faculty Excellence Awards via online form. |
| **Tuesday, March 11, 2025** | Nominees will be informed of their nomination by the Office of Faculty Affairs. |
| **Monday, March 17, 2025** | Deadline for nominees to accept or decline their nomination. |
| **Monday, March 31, 2025** | Deadline for completed application packets to be submitted to the Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) via email to facultyaffairs@utrgv.edu. OFA will forward to the UTRGV External Awards Committee. |
| **Monday, April 21, 2025** | Deadline for the UTRGV External Awards Committee to complete its review. |
| **Wednesday, April 30, 2025** | Deadline for notification of Faculty Excellence Award winners. |

The Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) will oversee the logistics of the awards process in coordination with the sponsoring units.

## Nomination & Evaluation Process

1. Faculty will be identified for consideration through a nomination process.
2. Nominations must be submitted by the deadline via the online form.
   a. Any eligible UTRGV faculty member may be nominated by their department chair, school director, or Dean's Office during the current excellence award nomination cycle.
   b. Nominators should check with the nominees prior to putting their names forward to ensure they are willing and eligible to accept the nomination.
   c. Individuals who are nominated for an award must recuse themselves from all aspects of that category's review process.
3. Eligibility will be reviewed and confirmed by the Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA).
4. OFA will notify the nominated faculty and provide details for the next steps of the application process via email.
5. Nominees must accept or decline the nomination by the established deadline.
6. Nominees will submit their application packet to the Office of Faculty Affairs via email (facultyaffairs@utrgv.edu) by the established deadline to continue to be eligible for the award.
7. OFA will provide all application packets to the UTRGV External Awards Committee to conduct the evaluation process as outlined in HOP 06-304.
8. The Office of Faculty Affairs will notify the winners after the External Awards Committee selects them.

## Eligibility Requirements

1. All full-time UTRGV faculty members have completed at least three consecutive years of service at UTRGV. Part-time faculty and full-time administrators are not eligible for nomination.
2. Nominated faculty should NOT have received a UTRGV excellence award in the same category as the current nomination within the last five years.
3. Nominated faculty should NOT have been a recipient of any UTRGV excellence award within the last three years.
4. **Distinguished Career Award Eligibility:** Faculty nominees must have at least 20 years of service to UTRGV and its legacy institutions as full-time faculty members. (Intermittent administrative service to UTRGV will count toward the 20 years.)

## Preparing the Application Packet

Each nominee should assemble a **single PDF file** that includes all items listed below. The nominee's name and award category should be clearly identified in the file's name (e.g., JaneVaquero_Research). Packets should be submitted by email to OFA at facultyaffairs@utrgv.edu no later than the identified deadline.

All documents must adhere to the page limits specified in these instructions. Nominations that do not follow the guidance outlined in the instructions are disqualified.

## Teaching

### Award Description

**The UTRGV Faculty Excellence Awards in Teaching** are the university's highest honor for outstanding teaching. This award recognizes faculty who have demonstrated a profound commitment to enhancing the quality of education, leading curriculum development, and actively engaging students, thereby contributing significantly to student success at the institution. **There will be up to two (2) awards in this category** in which all full-time faculty with at least three years of service at UTRGV are eligible. Each recipient will receive a $5,000 stipend.

### Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

The nominee demonstrates a documented record of excellence in teaching, incorporating innovative practices, and aligning curricular practices with student needs. They are established leaders in their teaching discipline, evidenced by program development, conference presentations, publications, workshops, and/or mentorship. They present an established record of capitalizing on best practices and student and peer feedback to inform them of their pedagogical approach that results in student success. Beyond the classroom, they engage students through efforts such as (not limited to) participation in research and creative activities related to teaching practices, supporting students' participation in service learning and/or community engagement activities, supervising clinical or field experiences, and mentoring students in career exploration and development. Collectively, the nominee's teaching portfolio exemplifies a respected professional reputation.

### Helpful Tips

- The members of the Committee are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) is helpful.
- Nominees should encourage individuals to write supporting letters clearly identifying their professional status, vantage point, or area of expertise.
- Summaries of the nominee's student evaluations and peer reviews of their teaching are required.
- Applicants are required to provide materials in their packet that address student learning outcomes assessment.

**Application Packet Contents**

1. **Cover Page containing the following information:** Limit one (1) page
   a. Excellence award category
   b. Full name of nominee
   c. Current position of nominee (title, rank, department/school, and college)
   d. Number of years in current rank and total number of years at UTRGV and legacy institutions
   e. UTRGV email address
   f. Phone number
2. **Table of Contents:** Limit one (1) page
3. **Letter of Nomination:** Limit two (2) pages
   The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).
4. **Nominee's Abbreviated Teaching CV:** Limit five (5) pages
   The abbreviated CV should focus on the nominee's accomplishments in teaching during the last five years. Areas of attention include courses taught, number of students, teaching awards, publications and conference presentations related to teaching, professional development related to teaching, university, college/school, and national service related to teaching
5. **Teaching Philosophy Statement:** Limit one (1) page
   The nominee should be able to articulate a philosophy of teaching that communicates their approach to teaching and describes their primary goals as a teacher and mentor.
6. **Highlighted Achievements/Activities:** Limit three (3) pages
   The highlighted list of achievements should only include work done 1) at UTRGV and 2) in the past five years within the award category. Candidates must provide a narrative of no more than three pages highlighting their teaching practices' quality, impact, innovation, assessment, and significance.
7. **Summary of Peer and Student Course Evaluations:** (Limit two (2) pages)
   Provide data from the last 5 years on student course evaluations and peer teaching evaluations. Include the quantitative and relevant qualitative data, including a sampling of student comments supporting teaching philosophy and practices.
8. **Letters of endorsement:** Limit one (1) page per letter, max four letters
   Up to four (4) letters of endorsement may be included per packet. Letters may be written by anyone who can speak to the excellence award criteria. **At least 1** letter must be from a current student (who cannot be currently enrolled in a course with the applicant) or former students who were advised, mentored, or in prior courses instructed by the faculty nominee.  However, those from former students/graduates are appropriate. The role/position of the letter's author and relationship with the nominee should be clearly identified within the letter. Packets should not exceed 19 pages.

## Online Teaching

### Award Description

**The Faculty Excellence Award in Online Teaching** is the university's highest honor for outstanding online teaching. This award recognizes faculty who have demonstrated a profound commitment to enhancing the quality of online education, creative curriculum development, and innovative approaches to engaging students outside the classroom, thereby contributing significantly to student success at the institution. **There be will one (1) award in this category** in which all full-time faculty with at least three years of service at UTRGV are eligible, regardless of rank. The recipient will receive a $5,000 stipend.

### Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

The nominee demonstrates a documented record of excellence in online teaching, showcasing innovative and successful teaching quality grounded in best practices, teaching philosophy, and student success. The nominee should have a positive professional reputation and align curricular practices with student needs. Additionally, the nominee must show the incorporation of professional development efforts that strengthened their online pedagogical approach, resulting in student success. Evidence of peer observations and reflections on teaching practices is essential, as is the alignment of curricular practices with online student needs. The nominee should also actively participate in online curricula development, ensuring alignment with current knowledge and best practices, and disseminate these practices to help other faculty through presentations and mentoring.

### Helpful Tips

- The committee members are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, so clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) is helpful.
- Nominees should encourage individuals to write supporting letters clearly identifying their professional status, vantage point, or area of expertise.
- Summaries of the nominee's student evaluations and peer reviews of their online teaching are required.
- Applicants are required to provide materials in their packet that address assessment of student learning outcomes.

**Application Packet Contents**

1. **Cover Page containing the following information:** Limit one (1) page
   a. Excellence award category
   b. Full name of nominee
   c. Current position of nominee (title, rank, department/school, and college)
   d. Number of years in current rank and total number of years at UTRGV and legacy institutions
   e. UTRGV email address
   f. Phone number

2. **Table of Contents:** Limit one (1) page

3. **Letter of Nomination:** Limit two (2) pages
   The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).

4. **Nominee's Abbreviated Online Teaching CV:** Limit five (5) pages
   The abbreviated CV should focus on the nominee's accomplishments in online teaching during the last five years. Areas of attention include courses taught, number of students, teaching awards, publications and conference presentations related to online teaching, professional development related to online teaching, university, college/school, and national service related to teaching

5. **Teaching Philosophy Statement:** Limit one (1) page
   The nominee should be able to articulate a philosophy of online teaching that communicates their approach to teaching and describes their primary goals as a teacher and mentor.

6. **Highlighted Achievements/Activities:** Limit three (3) pages
   The highlighted list of achievements should only include work done 1) at UTRGV and 2) in the past five years within the award category. Candidates must provide a narrative of no more than three pages highlighting their online teaching practices' quality, impact, innovation, assessment, and significance.

7. **Summary of Peer and Student Course Evaluations:** Limit two (2) pages
   Provide data from the last 5 years on student course evaluations and peer teaching evaluations for their online courses. Include the quantitative and relevant qualitative data, including a sampling of student comments supporting teaching philosophy and practices.

8. **Letters of endorsement:** Limit one (1) page per letter, max four letters
   Up to four (4) letters of endorsement may be included per packet. Letters may be written by anyone who can speak to the excellence award criteria. **At least 1** letter must be from a current student (who cannot be currently enrolled in a course with the applicant) or former students who were advised, mentored, or in prior courses instructed by the faculty nominee.  However, those from former students/graduates are appropriate. The role/position of the letter's author and relationship with the nominee should be clearly identified within the letter. Packets should not exceed 19 pages.

## Research/Scholarship/Creative Work

### Award Description

**The UTRGV Faculty Excellence Awards in Research** are the university's highest honors for outstanding faculty research/scholarship/creative work. It celebrates exceptional contributions to knowledge, innovation, and scholarly excellence. Recipients of this award have demonstrated significant impact in their field, advancing the frontiers of research and enhancing the university's reputation for academic excellence. This award acknowledges the dedication, creativity, and scholarly achievements of faculty members who have made remarkable strides in their scholarship endeavors. **There will be up to two (2) awards in this category** in which all full-time faculty with at least three years of service at UTRGV are eligible. Each recipient will receive a $5,000 stipend.

### Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

The nominee demonstrates research excellence through a robust record of exceptional research/creative work(s) contributions that significantly advance their field, evidenced by outputs such as external grant funding and publications. The nominee's work should showcase innovation and have a measurable impact on their discipline and beyond, as demonstrated by patents, product development, high-impact publications, or widely disseminated creative works through marquee venues. Additionally, the nominee should be recognized for their scholarly leadership by peers and professional organizations, exemplified through awards, conference invitations, editorial roles, leading grant study sections, or organizing workshops that facilitate the success of other faculty and graduate students.

### Helpful Tips

- The members of the Committee are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) is helpful.
- Nominees should encourage individuals to write supporting letters clearly identifying their professional status, vantage point, or area of expertise.
- All supporting letters should address the significance and impact of the research/creative work in its theoretical, practical, and/or artistic aspects and how it has advanced/contributed to the knowledge in the field/discipline. Supporting letters from peers outside of UTRGV are especially useful.

**Application Packet Contents**

1. **Cover Page containing the following information:** Limit one (1) page
   a. Excellence award category
   b. Full name of nominee
   c. Current position of nominee (title, rank, department/school, and college)
   d. Number of years in current rank and total number of years at UTRGV and legacy institutions
   e. UTRGV email address
   f. Phone number

2. **Table of Contents:** Limit one (1) page

3. **Letter of Nomination:** Limit two (2) pages
   The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).

4. **Nominee's Abbreviated Research CV:** Limit five (5) pages
   The abbreviated CV should focus on the nominee's accomplishments in research/scholarship/creative works during the last five years. Areas of attention include grants, patents, review panels, creative works, editorial boards, research awards, product development, publications, and conference presentations related to research, university, college/school, national, international, and professional service related to their scholarship.

5. **Research Statement:** Limit one (1) page
   The nominee should be able to articulate their research agenda clearly. Briefly explain how your scholarly work aligns with this agenda. Discuss how your scholarship activities enhance your expertise and contribute to your recognition as a scholarly leader within the field.

6. **Highlighted Achievements/Activities:** Limit three (3) pages
   The highlighted list of achievements should only include work done 1) at UTRGV and 2) in the past five years within the award category. Candidates must provide a narrative of no more than three pages highlighting their scholarship quality, impact, innovation, and significance.

7. **Letters of endorsement:** Limit one (1) page per letter, max four letters
   Up to four (4) letters of endorsement may be included per packet. Letters may be written by anyone who can speak to the excellence award criteria. Letters cannot be from students currently enrolled in a course with the applicant. However, those from former students/graduates are appropriate. The role/position of the letter's author and relationship with the nominee should be clearly identified within the letter. Packets should not exceed 17 pages.

## Service

### Award Description

**The Faculty Excellence Award in Service** is the university's highest honor highlighting the individual's enduring commitment to service, underscoring the importance of giving back and making a meaningful difference in the lives of others. The award honors individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and impact through their service to the university, the community, and their profession. This prestigious accolade recognizes those whose contributions have significantly advanced the institution's mission, fostered community engagement, and elevated the standards of their professional field. **There will be one (1) award in this category** in which all full-time faculty with at least three years of service at UTRGV are eligible. Each recipient will receive a $5,000 stipend.

### Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

The nominee demonstrates a robust portfolio of service contributions that have advanced the institutional mission. The nominee's service contributions should have a noteworthy impact on the institution and/or region, gaining local, regional, and/or national recognition. The nominee demonstrates leadership roles such as committee chair, program director, and department chair, contributing to the institution's governance and strategic direction. The nominee actively serves the profession and/or community, enhancing the reputation of the institution and the discipline through professional organizations, editorial boards, conference committees, community outreach, and/or partnerships with schools, businesses, or non-profit organizations. The nominee provides mentorship and professional development opportunities for faculty, students, and/or staff, fostering a supportive and collaborative academic environment.

### Helpful Tips

- The members of the Committee are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) is helpful.
- Nominees should encourage individuals to write supporting letters clearly identifying their professional status, vantage point, or area of expertise.
- All supporting materials, including letters of endorsement, should clearly articulate the impact or results of the service activities.
- Highly regarded packets often include letters from both colleagues at UTRGV and individuals in the community who can attest to the impact of the service.

**Application Packet Contents**

1. **Cover Page containing the following information:** Limit one (1) page
   a. Excellence award category
   b. Full name of nominee
   c. Current position of nominee (title, rank, department/school, and college)
   d. Number of years in current rank and total number of years at UTRGV and legacy institutions
   e. UTRGV email address
   f. Phone number
2. **Table of Contents:** Limit one (1) page
3. **Letter of Nomination:** Limit two (2) pages
   The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).
4. **Nominee's Abbreviated Service CV:** Limit five (5) pages
   The abbreviated CV should focus on the nominee's accomplishments in service during the last five years. Areas of attention include course contributions to committee work, professional service, community engagement, mentorship taught, and institutional leadership.
5. **Highlighted Achievements/Activities:** Limit three (3) pages
   The highlighted list of achievements should only include work done 1) at UTRGV and 2) in the past five years within the award category. Candidates must provide a narrative of no more than three pages highlighting their service contributions, their role, and the impact of these contributions.
6. **Letters of endorsement:** Limit one (1) page per letter, max four letters
   Up to four (4) letters of endorsement may be included per packet. Letters may be written by anyone who can speak to the excellence award criteria. Letters cannot be from students currently enrolled in a course with the applicant. However, those from former students/graduates are appropriate. The role/position of the letter's author and relationship with the nominee should be clearly identified within the letter. Packets should not exceed 16 pages.

Distinguished Career Award

## Award Description

**The UTRGV Distinguished Career Award** honors a senior faculty member (tenured or non-tenure track) who has demonstrated exceptional excellence in teaching, service, and scholarly contributions over a distinguished career spanning 20 years (or more) at UTRGV and its legacy institutions. This prestigious accolade particularly celebrates those whose impactful contributions have significantly advanced the success of both students and faculty, setting a benchmark for academic and professional excellence. **One** Distinguished Career Award will be presented with a $7,000 stipend.

## Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

The evaluation committee seeks an exemplary applicant for a career award who has made significant contributions to UTRGV and its legacy institutions for 20 years or more. The nominee should demonstrate a significant impact on the institution's teaching and/or research/scholarship mission. The impact on teaching should be demonstrated by innovative pedagogy, a positive impact on student success, curriculum development, development and improvement of academic programs, mentorship, and/or recognition through awards, honors, or recognitions from the institution or professional organizations. The impact on research and scholarly contributions should be demonstrated through a robust publication record, securing substantial grants, producing impactful research or training programs, and/or leading collaborative projects that have substantially impacted faculty and student success. Service to the institution and community is also essential, with leadership roles, active participation in professional organizations, community engagement, and mentorship. The nominee's impact on the success of others, including mentorship and the success of alumni and faculty, should be noteworthy, highlighting their long-term influence and commitment to excellence.

## Helpful Tips

• The members of the Committee are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) is helpful.
• Nominees should encourage individuals writing supporting letters to clearly identify their professional role as it relates to the nominee as well as relay their vantage point and area of expertise.
• The supporting materials should clearly articulate the impact the faculty member has had in multiple areas over the course of their time at UTRGV and its legacy institutions.
• It is highly recommended applicants provide letters from former students, colleagues, and/or administrators, in addition to current peers/students, that can demonstrate the longevity of excellence.

**Application Packet Contents**

1. **Cover Page containing the following information:** Limit one (1) page
   a. Excellence award category
   b. Full name of nominee
   c. Current position of nominee (title, rank, department/school, and college)
   d. Number of years in current rank and total number of years at UTRGV and legacy institutions
   e. UTRGV email address
   f. Phone number
2. **Table of Contents:** Limit one (1) page
3. **Letter of Nomination:** Limit two (2) pages
   The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).
4. **Nominee's CV:** No limit
   The CV should be cumulative for their career and include areas of success in teaching, research, and service.
5. **Summary Statement of Institutional Impact:** Limit two (2) pages
   The nominee should be able to articulate their collective impact on the institution with attention to faculty and student success.
6. **Highlighted Achievements/Activities:** Limit six (6) pages
   The highlighted list of achievements should include work done at UTRGV and legacy institutions over 20+ years. Candidates must provide a narrative of no more than six pages highlighting their impact on institutional growth in areas of teaching, research, and/or service.
7. **Summary of Student/Faculty Success:** Limit three (3) pages
   Provide data from the last 20+ years highlighting student and faculty impact. Include examples of (not all 20 years) former students and mentees' success (i.e., graduate school, professional school, occupation). Also include, if applicable, faculty success data (i.e. Developmental workshops, scholarship produced, policy and procedure implemented contributing to faculty success).
8. **Letters of endorsement:** Limit one (1) page per letter, max four letters
   Up to four (4) letters of endorsement may be included per packet. Letters may be written by anyone who can speak to the excellence award criteria. Letters cannot be from a current student currently enrolled in a course with the applicant. However, those from former students/graduates are appropriate. The role/position of the letter's author and relationship with the nominee should be clearly identified within the letter.

## Emerging Scholar Award

### Award Description

**The UTRGV Emerging Scholar Award** recognizes and rewards exceptional tenure-track faculty who have demonstrated excellence in research or creative works early in their careers. This signifies a trajectory toward leading scholars who impact their field and society. Early career faculty with an outstanding record of strong scholarly achievements will be considered. **There will be one (1) award in this category** in which all tenure-track full-time faculty (who have completed three years of service to UTRGV) are eligible. The recipient will receive a $5,000 stipend.

### Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

The nominee demonstrates a trajectory of research/creative work excellence by articulating their expertise and new contributions that have a significant potential to advance their field. The nominees must provide evidence of scholarly independence (or leading a group of scholars) that can be evidenced (not limited to) by external grant funding to support their research program/creative work and/or leading publications in their area of expertise. The nominee's work should show great potential for impact and innovation, contributing to their discipline and building a national/international reputation. This can be evidenced by patents, product development, high-impact publications, mentoring future scholars, or widely disseminated creative works. Additionally, the nominee should be recognized by peers and professional organizations. Examples include awards, conference presentations, editorial board memberships, and grant reviewer roles.

### Helpful Tips

- The members of the Committee are likely to be from different disciplines than the nominee, meaning that clear and simple prose (rather than discipline-specific jargon) is helpful.
- Nominees should encourage individuals by writing supporting letters to clearly identify their professional status/role in relation to the nominee as well as their area of expertise.
- All supporting letters should address the significance and impact of the research/creative work and specifically speak to the criteria listed above as they relate to the influence, attention, and potential impact of the nominee's work.
- Supporting letters from peers outside of UTRGV are especially useful.

**Application Packet Contents**

1. **Cover Page containing the following information:** Limit one (1) page
   a) Excellence award category
   b) Full name of nominee
   c) Current position of nominee (title, rank, department/school, and college)
   d) Number of years in current rank and total number of years at UTRGV and legacy institutions
   e) UTRGV email address
   f) Phone number
2. **Table of Contents:** Limit one (1) page
3. **Letter of Nomination:** Limit two (2) pages
   The letter should summarize the nominee's achievements in the area of the Excellence Award and address impact(s).
4. **Nominee's Abbreviated Research CV:** Limit five (5) pages
   The abbreviated CV should focus on the nominee's accomplishments in research/scholarship/creative works during the last five years. Areas of attention include grants, patents, review panels, creative works, editorial boards, research awards, product development, publications, and conference presentations related to research, university, college/school, national, international, and professional service related to their scholarship.
5. **Research Statement:** Limit one (1) page
   The nominee should be able to articulate their research agenda clearly. Briefly explain how your scholarly work aligns with this agenda. Discuss how your scholarship activities enhance your expertise and contribute to your growing reputation within the field.
6. **Highlighted Achievements/Activities:** Limit three (3) pages
   The highlighted list of achievements should only include work done 1) at UTRGV and 2) in the past five years within the award category. Candidates must provide a narrative of no more than three pages highlighting their scholarship quality, impact, innovation, and significance.
7. **Letters of endorsement:** Limit one (1) page per letter, max four letters
   Up to four (4) letters of endorsement may be included per packet. Letters may be written by anyone who can speak to the excellence award criteria. Letters cannot be from students currently enrolled in a course with the applicant. However, those from former students/graduates are appropriate. The role/position of the letter's author and relationship with the nominee should be clearly identified within the letter. Packets should not exceed 17 pages.