

GUIDELINES
TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS
College of Education
University of South Alabama

Purpose

The goal of the Teaching Excellence Recognition Plan (TERP) is to recognize and reward faculty members who provide exemplary teaching and who demonstrate extraordinary commitment and effort in the accomplishment of the educational missions of the Department, College, and the University.

Awards

Three Awards for Excellence in Teaching are to be made annually, with one in each of the following categories: Distinguished Career, Early Career, and Outstanding Innovation. The awards will be funded by the College of Education. Each award includes a monetary prize and a plaque.

Eligibility

Although awards are open to all full-time faculty regardless of rank or tenure status, each award has specific eligibility requirements. Awardees are not eligible for re-nomination for the same award within five years.

Procedures

Each department in the College may forward nominations to the Dean according to the following formula: two each from the Department of Professional Studies and the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education, and one from the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Leisure Studies. The mechanism by which nominees are selected within departments will be determined by the respective department chairpersons but nominations should include a review by a designated faculty committee. The College's Teaching Excellence Awards Committee will review departmental nominations. Three students (one from each of the departments) shall serve on the College committee (at least one must be enrolled as a graduate student and one as an undergraduate student in one of the degree programs in the College). The committee members will select a chair at the first meeting. Departmental nominees will be evaluated based upon the materials in the supporting dossiers according to the general and specific criteria for the award. As a part of the process, nominees may be required to provide further evidence or documentation for clarification.

Criteria

General criteria for the award include evidence of one or more of the following:

1. excellence in student learning outcomes;
2. quality and quantity of teaching;
3. extraordinary commitment and effort in the accomplishment of the program teaching mission;
4. innovation in teaching approaches;
5. innovative use of technology to promote learning;
6. outstanding contributions in curriculum development; and
7. educational scholarship

Format

Dossiers should be prepared using Microsoft Word, single-spaced, using 12-point type and 1 inch margins. It is in the interest of all concerned that dossiers fully conform to the requirements, specifically those regarding length, set forth above. For this reason, persons involved in preparing dossiers should be sure to clear up any uncertainties they may have prior to submitting dossiers for committee review. Questions concerning the proper form of the dossier are encouraged.

An original and five hard copies of the complete dossier should be submitted to the Dean by April 11th. Staple dossiers in the upper left hand corner only; do not use binders or plastic covers.

DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Purpose

The Distinguished Career Award for Excellence in Teaching recognizes a lengthy period of sustained excellence in instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Award communicates the College of Education's commitment to excellence in teaching, the value placed on the learning experiences of our students, and the centrality of instruction to the University's mission to promote the growth of the individual to think critically and analytically, to communicate effectively, to acquire information and apply it to problem-solving, and to understand the context of global complexity and diversity in which knowledge is applied.

Award

The Distinguished Career Award for Excellence in Teaching will be made each year. The Awardee will receive a one-time monetary award, subject to availability and deductions of all applicable fringe benefits and may use the title: Distinguished Teaching Professor for one year. In addition, the Awardee shall represent the College at the Spring and Fall commencement ceremonies as the College's gonfalonier. The name of the Awardee shall automatically be forwarded to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs as the College's nominee for the University's Alumni Award for Teaching Excellence.

Eligibility

Because the Award is designed to recognize continued quality instruction, nominations will be limited to individuals who have held a faculty position for at least five consecutive years at the University of South Alabama.

Specific Criteria

The intent of the award is to interpret distinguished teaching broadly to include, as noted below, significant contributions to graduate and/or undergraduate instruction over a sustained period. Supporting dossiers will be evaluated against the following specific criteria in addition to the general criteria noted above:

- 1. Demonstrated impact on student performance.** For example, evidence of students presenting papers at professional meetings or of students subsequently publishing their work done with this professor; actions by the professor, both curricular and co-curricular, intended to increase student interest and involvement in their profession.
- 2. Development of effective teaching methods, courses, and/or teaching materials.**
- 3. Outstanding performance as a teacher** demonstrated by student evaluations, enrollment figures, and/or evaluative observations by colleagues or collaborating professionals.
- 4. Concerns with professional identity as a professional educator** evidenced by professional activity on or away from campus, including publications of articles on teaching, stimulation of student research, community presentations, attendance at professional meetings or workshops relevant to teaching in one's discipline, or memberships in organizations indicating such identification.
- 5. Demonstrated contribution to the overall quality of teaching as a member of the College.** There are myriad ways in which significant contributions can be made: principal role in major curricular reform, introduction of pedagogical methods (including computer-aided instruction) that have resulted in others improving instructional quality, publication of a highly valued and adopted textbook or other course materials, development of new or innovative courses that occupy a key role in the curriculum, evaluated contributions to (or research in) disciplinary pedagogy, or systematic mentoring of young faculty members or teaching assistants striving to become better instructors.

Format

Dossiers must conform to the following format, in the order given:

1. **Cover Sheet.** The first page of each dossier must be the program cover sheet, completed according to its directions and signed by the nominee and department chairperson.
2. **Endorsement.** A written statement endorsing the nominee should be prepared by the department chairperson or his/her designee and should be no more than two pages in length. Clearly state the nominee's teaching load over the past five years, and how it compares to the typical teaching load in the nominee's department; the endorsement might also address the variety and levels of courses the nominee teaches. The endorsement may also address how the nominee meets any one or all of the criteria above.
3. **Teaching-Focused Vita.** The dossier should include a teaching-focused vita that identifies the nominee's academic and educational experiences especially related to teaching and include at least the following items:
 - a. Education, degrees, institutions, and majors.
 - b. Current and previous academic appointments and other instructionally related experiences.
 - c. For the past five years (or since appointment), courses taught at the University of South Alabama, course enrollment, average student evaluations of overall quality of instruction, and indicate if course was created or revised by the nominee.
 - d. For the past five years (or since appointment), mentoring and supervising field experiences, or directing student research, including completed thesis and doctoral committees, research seminars, and directed study.
 - e. Relevant certification and licensing.
 - f. Honors, awards, or recognition for excellence in teaching.
 - g. Editorial service related to teaching.
 - h. Contracts or grants received and/or submitted for teaching related instruction, research, or service.
 - i. Listing of presentations* to professional audiences related directly to instruction.
 - j. Listing of publications* directly related to instruction; indicate if publication was refereed or invited.
 - k. Professional service to local, regional, national, and international associations, and professional organizations directly related to teaching.
 - l. Conferences, workshops, professional development programs organized specifically related to teaching.

*Specify presentations and/or publications resulting from collaboration with students.

EARLY CAREER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Purpose

The Early Career Award for Excellence in Teaching acknowledges demonstrated excellence in teaching by faculty members in the first five years of their initial appointment as university faculty. The Award communicates the College of Education's commitment to promoting excellence in teaching among its entire faculty and the expectation of continued improvement in instruction over the course of one's professional career.

Award

The Early Career Award for Excellence in Teaching will be made each year. The Awardee will receive a one-time monetary award, subject to availability and deductions of all applicable fringe benefits.

Eligibility

Because the Award is designed to recognize excellence in instruction early in a faculty member's career, nominations will be limited to individuals who have held full-time faculty positions for no more than five years at the University of South Alabama. Previous awardees are not eligible for re-nomination.

Specific Criteria

The intent of the award is to acknowledge demonstrated excellence and the promise of continued improvement in instruction by faculty who are in the early stages of their careers. Supporting dossiers will be evaluated against the following specific criteria in addition to those general criteria noted above:

1. Interest and enthusiasm for undertaking teaching and promoting student learning.
2. Ability to arouse curiosity and to engage students as life-long learners.
3. Command of the subject matter and improvement over time in the ability to prepare and organise course materials and experiences for students cogently and imaginatively.
4. Participation in the effective and sympathetic guidance and advising of students.
5. Capacity for self-reflection and constructive use of student and supervisor feedback to improve teaching.
6. Increasing capacity to assist all students to participate and achieve success in their courses.
7. Participation in professional activities and research related to teaching in one's discipline.

Format

Dossiers must conform to the following format, in the order given:

1. **Cover Sheet.** The first page of each dossier must be the program cover sheet, completed according to its directions and signed by the nominee and department chairperson.
2. **Endorsement.** A written statement endorsing the nominee should be prepared by the department chairperson or his/her designee and should be no more than two pages in length. Clearly state the nominee's teaching load since appointment to full-time faculty at USA, and how it compares to the typical teaching load in the nominee's department; the endorsement might also address the variety and levels of courses the nominee teaches. The endorsement may also address how the nominee meets any one or all of the criteria above.
3. **Statement of Teaching Philosophy.** The nominee should provide a written statement of no more than three pages addressed to the motivation for teaching, personal philosophy (including significant influential theorists and/or practitioners), examples of innovative teaching approaches consistent with the teaching philosophy, and educational goals for students and for the nominee. In addition, the following questions should be addressed:

How do you engage and stimulate students? This question involves meeting responsibilities to students (e.g., well prepared for class, available for consultation, involved in undergraduate student seminars and advisement, responsive to student questions and needs, provides clear instructions for assigned materials and assessments), and challenging students intellectually and/or physically (as appropriate to the discipline) (e.g., stimulating ideas and/or structured experiences that provoke students to learn more, demanding quality performance in a responsible manner, and encouraging students to rethink their values and epistemologies).

How are you intellectually prepared for and dedicated to becoming a high quality instructor?

This question is intended to get at two central considerations for this award: intellectual preparation to engage in high quality instruction in higher education and commitment to one's own and others' life-long learning. Your response might include, for example, mention of involvement in professional societies or partner agencies and/or institutions focused on improving teaching and learning in one's discipline, thoughtful observations from faculty or professional colleagues about the nominee's scholarly orientation to instruction, formal participation in the national organizations devoted to the improvement of instruction, or past departmental evaluations for promotions or raises.

- 4. Teaching-Focused Vita.** The dossier should include a teaching-focused vita that identifies the nominee's academic and educational experiences especially related to teaching and include at least the following items:
- a. Education, degrees, institutions, and majors.
 - b. Current and previous academic appointments and other instructionally related experiences.
 - c. For the past five years (or since appointment), courses taught at the University of South Alabama, course enrollment, average student evaluations of overall quality of instruction, and indicate if course was created or revised by the nominee.
 - d. For the past five years (or since appointment), mentoring and supervising field experiences, or directing student research, including completed thesis and doctoral committees, research seminars, and directed study.
 - e. Relevant certification and licensing.
 - f. Honors, awards, or recognition for excellence in teaching.
 - g. Editorial service related to teaching.
 - h. Contracts or grants received and/or submitted for teaching related instruction, research, or service.
 - i. Listing of presentations* to professional audiences related directly to instruction.
 - j. Listing of publications* directly related to instruction; indicate if publication was refereed or invited.
 - k. Professional service to local, regional, national, and international associations, and professional organizations directly related to teaching.
 - l. Conferences, workshops, professional development programs organized specifically related to teaching.

*Specify presentations and/or publications resulting from collaboration with students.

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING INNOVATION

Purpose

The Excellence in Teaching Award for Outstanding Innovation recognizes innovative teaching that has had a significant impact upon the teaching or learning at any level and in any learning environment. The Award communicates the College of Education's commitment to continued improvement in teaching and learning aimed at maintaining excellence in a changing world.

Award

The Excellence in Teaching Award for Outstanding Innovation will be made each year. The Awardee(s) will receive a one-time monetary award, subject to availability and deductions of all applicable fringe benefits.

Eligibility

Both individuals and groups are eligible for nomination. Because innovation in teaching and learning is increasingly the result of a prolonged collaboration among several or many interested faculty, nominations will not be limited to individuals but may include groups or teams of faculty, graduate assistants, technical support staff, and pedagogical and content experts who have collaborated in the development of a specific innovation. Further, innovations are not limited to instructional practices but may include a broad range of innovations directed at improving the teaching and learning process. Innovations that include specific learning objects or modules, online activities, courseware, whole courses, comprehensive methods, original learning materials, development or innovative adapted use of instruments or technologies, and so forth, whose implementation has significantly and demonstrably improved teaching and learning, are eligible for nomination. The principle nominee must be the primary architect of the innovation and a full-time faculty member in the College and the larger portion of the team members (if any) must also be affiliated with the College and/or the University.

Specific Criteria

The intent of the award is to interpret innovative teaching to include, as noted below, significant and demonstrable impact on teaching or learning at any level and in any learning environment. Supporting dossiers will be evaluated against the following specific criteria in addition to the general criteria noted above:

1. **Development of a clearly innovative teaching method, course, learning materials, technologies, and so forth.** This criterion could be met by evidence of successful utilization, introduction of pedagogical methods or technologies (including computer-aided instruction) that have resulted in others improving instructional quality, publication of a highly valued and used textbook or other course materials, or development of new or innovative courses that occupy a key role in the curriculum or a specific learning need.
2. **Clearly articulated theory and pedagogy consistently applied in practice to address a learning need,** which allows the innovation to clearly be differentiated as original and innovative.
3. **Demonstrated impact on learning** evidenced by papers, demonstrations, exhibits, performances, testimonials, or projects completed by learners; measured change in overall performance or awards directly attributable to the innovation; dissemination and other evidence of impact such as wide distribution or adoption by a learning community or instructional system; direct student impact such as presenting papers at professional meetings or of juried student performances and/or exhibits, or of students subsequently publishing their work done as part of, or consequence of, participation in the innovation; intended outcomes that increased student interest and involvement in the discipline.
4. **Demonstrated significance to advancing teaching and learning.** For example, evidence of adoption or that the innovation can be replicated in other courses or by other educational units, citation in professional journals, scholarly reviews by professional experts, replication by other scholars, central role in major curricular reform, or peer-evaluated contributions to (or research in) disciplinary pedagogy.

Format

Dossiers must conform to the following format, in the order given:

1. **Cover Sheet.** The first page of each dossier must be the program cover sheet, completed according to its directions and signed by the nominee and department chairperson.
2. **Endorsement.** A written statement endorsing the nominee (individual or team) should be prepared by the department chairperson or his/her designee and should be no more than two pages in length. The endorsement may also address how the nominee meets any one or all of the criteria above.
3. **Descriptive Summary.** The nominee (individual or team) should provide a narrative summary of the teaching innovation clearly and explicitly addressing each of the specific criteria above. The summary should be approximately three pages in length.
4. **Contributions of the Nominee(s).** Description of the major contributions that the nominee(s) made to the activity or product to which this award relates. (no more than one page in length)
5. **Artifacts or Examples related to the Innovation.** A copy of learning materials related to the innovative product or a description of the innovation that adequately describes the activity to which this award relates.