

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD
TO RECOGNIZE A DEPARTMENT CULTURE THAT MEANINGFULLY
VALUES TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

In the spring of 2003 Utah State University inaugurated an annual award to recognize the collective effort and accomplishment of faculty, staff and students in establishing a department culture that meaningfully values teaching and learning excellence.

AWARD

The Department selected as award recipient will receive a one-time increment of \$20,000 to the department operating budget. The award may be used, within state expenditure rules, in any way the department chooses to support activities that nurture a culture of teaching and learning excellence. The collective accomplishments of the department selected as award recipient will be recognized and celebrated by announcement at the spring commencement exercises. In addition, descriptive summaries of the departmental accomplishments for which the award was conferred will be made widely available to the campus community.

Awardees will be excluded from submitting a new application for five years from the date of the award.

REVIEW PROCESS

Department eligibility for consideration of an award is determined by a two-tiered review process. In the first tier of the review process, each department on campus is encouraged to submit a three-page pre-proposal that briefly summarizes department activities that document commitment to learning excellence. Demonstration of commitment to a department culture of learning excellence will be expressed through ongoing assessment of improvement in the quality of the teaching and learning environment; commitment to enhancing the stock of faculty teaching skills; allocation of department resources to student engagement in the learning process; and linking discovery, creative activity and engagement with teaching and learning pedagogies. Department proposals judged favorably by the pre-proposal review process will be identified as finalists and will proceed to a second-tier evaluation process where departments are invited to prepare and submit a more comprehensive Portfolio of Learning Excellence. As part of the finalist evaluation process, members of the award selection committee will participate in unannounced class observations in a select number of courses taught in departments identified as finalists.

PROPOSAL CONTENT

The guidelines below are suggested as a means to help applicants more effectively communicate how their department fosters a culture of learning excellence. Examples of previous winning Pre-proposal Summaries of Department Activities and Portfolios of Excellence are provided at http://www.usu.edu/aa/awards/teaching_excellence.cfm to demonstrate how previous recipient departments have organized their award application materials.

FIRST-TIER AWARD APPLICATION: PRE-PROPOSAL SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

The three-page Pre-proposal Summary of Department Activities briefly summarizes department activities that document commitment to learning excellence. The deadline for submission of the Pre-proposal Summary of Department Activities is Friday, January 11, 2008.

Formatting Guidelines

Use 8-1/2"x11" pages, no smaller than 11 point font, with a left margin of 1-1/2" and top, right, and bottom margins of 1". Submit an electronic copy of the *Pre-proposal Summary of Department Activities* in PDF format to:

***Office of the Provost
Selection Committee
Department Teaching Excellence Award
Attn: Andi McCabe
andi.mccabe@usu.edu***

The three page pre-proposal summary should contain the following sections:

- Section 1. A brief departmental profile that describes the teaching/learning mission of the department;**
- Section 2. A narrative of department-sponsored activities that establish a commitment to learning excellence;**
- Section 3. A narrative of how the department engages in assessment of learning competency and applies that knowledge to continual improvement in the department culture of learning excellence.**

SECOND-TIER AWARD APPLICATION: PORTFOLIO OF LEARNING EXCELLENCE CONTENT

Department proposals selected as finalists during the pre-proposal review process will proceed to a second-tier evaluation process and will be invited to prepare and submit a more comprehensive Portfolio of Learning Excellence. The deadline for submission is Friday, February 15, 2008.

Formatting Guidelines

- 1. Cover page;
- 2. Statement of the Departmental Philosophy of Teaching and Learning (up to 2 pages);
- 3. Narrative on Departmental Excellence in Teaching and Learning (up to 10 pages);
Describe the approaches used by the department to achieve and measure excellence in teaching and learning and in so doing address the five sections detailed below;
- 4. Evidence of recognition by others (up to 6 pages);
Letters from former students;
Awards to the department from professional and other organizations;
- 5. Attachments (up to 10 pages);
Include supporting materials and other documentation relevant to the accomplishments described in the narrative.

Use 8-1/2"x11" pages, no smaller than 11 point font, with a left margin of 1-1/2" and top, right, and bottom margins of 1". Submit an electronic copy of the *Portfolio of Learning Excellence* in PDF format to:

***Office of the Provost
Selection Committee
Department Teaching Excellence Award
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The second-tier application portfolio narrative on departmental excellence in teaching and learning must include the following sections:

- Section 1. Commitment to sustained excellence in teaching and learning;**
- Section 2. Ongoing assessment and improvement of teaching and learning quality;**
- Section 3. Faculty development for teaching;**
- Section 4. Provision of resources for students;**
- Section 5. Linking discovery, creative activity, and engagement with teaching and learning for the benefit of students.**

Departments receiving these awards are expected to demonstrate significant accomplishment in each of the five areas listed above. Departments may focus on broader educational accomplishments. However, academic departments must demonstrate that significant attention has been given to achieving clear and positive educational outcomes of their graduate and undergraduate activities. This requirement highlights the vital importance of emphasizing the quality and effectiveness of graduate and undergraduate education in the climate of a research university.

Listed below are examples of attributes and activities [in each of the five sections] that can be considered; these listings should not be considered as exhaustive or restrictive:

Section 1. Commitment to sustained excellence in teaching and learning.

Has and follows a philosophy of teaching.
Provides a documented record of excellence in teaching.
Invests adequate departmental budgetary resources in teaching.
Weighs teaching quality in recruiting and rewarding individual faculty.
Stimulates innovation in teaching.
Seeks grants for projects on improving teaching and learning.

Section 2. Ongoing assessment and improvement of teaching and learning quality.

Regularly monitors teaching effectiveness and student learning and makes changes appropriately.
Involves faculty, staff and students (current and former) in assessment and planning.
Provides evidence of use of assessment outcomes for instructional improvement.
Engages employers of graduates, graduate and professional schools and on-campus users (other departments) of academic offerings (general education, elective courses and service courses) in assessment.
Addresses the educational program fully with attention to majors, minors, general education, and service offerings for students on- and off-campus as appropriate.
Engages actively through curriculum design and delivery in improving discipline-specific communication skills of students.
Appropriately addresses issues of ethics and civic responsibility in curriculum and/or professional development activities for students.
Tracks career and intellectual development of former students.

Section 3. Faculty development for teaching.

Provides orientation and continued feedback and support for new faculty and teaching assistants.
Provides opportunities for shared discussion of teaching innovations and problems.
Encourages teaching conference attendance and research and publication on teaching and learning.
Provides evidence that faculty development activities have caused substantive improvements in teaching and learning.

Section 4. Provision of resources for students.

Monitors scheduling of courses and sequences to improve availability.
Insures that students have access to their teachers and advisers outside of class.
Provides or refers students to necessary academic support services.
Resolves student complaints appropriately.
Provides for student learning opportunities outside the classroom.
Facilitates opportunities for student study, meetings, and co-curricular activities.
Involves students in curriculum development and planning for program delivery.
Facilitates transfer student engagement from within and outside the institution.

Section 5. Linking discovery, creative activity, and engagement with teaching and learning for the benefit of students.

Brings faculty experience and expertise in discovery, creative activity, and engagement to bear on enhancing teaching and student learning.
Involves students in discovery projects and engagement undertakings.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Classroom observation is an integral part of the evaluation criteria. While any one classroom experience may not be indicative of a department culture of learning excellence, it is expected that observation of a broad cross-section of a department's course offerings will expose underlying department values with regard to establishing an excellent classroom learning environment. The following general criteria will be used by the selection committee in evaluating their experience in visiting the classrooms of departments identified as finalists.

1. Management of class time
2. Engagement of students
3. Respect for students
4. Preparation for class
5. Enthusiasm
6. Knowledge of subject
7. Rigor
8. Communication
9. Effective use of teaching aids
10. Attendance

APPLICATION TIME LINE

November 19, 2007	Formal announcement to solicit Pre-proposal Summary of Department Activities
January 11, 2008	Deadline for the submission of Pre-proposal Summary of Department Activities to the Office of the Provost
January 23, 2008	Finalists selected and invited to prepare and submit Portfolio of Learning Excellence
February 15, 2008	Deadline for submission of Portfolio of Learning Excellence to the Office of the Provost
February 19 - February 29, 2008	Schedule for classroom observation visits
March 3 - March 7, 2008	Schedule for finalists to make oral presentation to the selection committee
March 19, 2008	Committee makes recommendation to President of recipient of the 2007-2008 Department Teaching Excellence Award
April 11, 2008	Recommendation made to the Board of Trustees for final approval

SELECTION PROCEDURES

All application materials and class observation evaluations that document a department's culture of learning excellence will be reviewed by members of the award selection committee appointed by the Provost. At the conclusion of the Selection Committee evaluation of the Learning Portfolio and class observation evaluations, each of the finalist departments will be invited to make a 30-minute oral presentation to the Selection Committee and respond to questions from the committee regarding their observations.

The award criteria focus on academic departments that demonstrate notable excellence in undergraduate, graduate, or professional teaching. Emphasis is placed on recognizing the synergistic advantage for undergraduate and graduate education of the discovery and engagement capabilities, interests, and programs of the faculty. Departments winning this award will have demonstrated excellence in teaching and learning with wide involvement of the departmental faculty, staff and students.

AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

An award Selection Committee will be appointed by the Provost each year to review department documentation in support of learning excellence. The award Selection Committee will be established with membership constituted as follows:

- Two current faculty members appointed from past recipients of the University Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award (one selected to chair the committee);
- Two faculty members selected from departments who have previously received the Department Teaching Award;
- Two representatives from the Faculty Senate;
- Three undergraduate students;
- Two graduate students;
- One representative from the Office of the Vice President for Information Technology;
- One representative from the Office of the Provost; and
- One representative from the Board of Trustees.

Faculty members appointed to the selection committee will be asked to serve for a two-year term. Terms of faculty members will be staggered to ensure consistency of the review process across annual review cycles. Students may serve up to two terms depending on availability. Administrative representation on the selection committee serves at the discretion of the Provost and may serve multiple terms. Staff support to the selection committee will be assigned from the Office of the Provost.

The outstanding department will be selected upon the recommendation of this committee.

REVIEW OF AWARD PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The award Selection Committee will be asked to review the procedures and guidelines of the previous year and recommend revisions for future years.