

Faculty Excellence Awards: Criteria and Information

UCA has three faculty awards designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. The awards provide recognition of the importance the university places on these three fundamental areas, they publicize the vitality of faculty efforts in these areas, and they reward faculty who have excelled in their contributions to the university, to their disciplines, and to the world community.

I. Description of the awards

A. Teaching Excellence Award

This award is given to faculty who have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance in teaching. Recipients of this award strive to enhance student learning as they continually seek ways to improve their teaching.

B. Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities Award

This award recognizes individuals whose contributions to their disciplines have been exemplary. Through original work in research, scholarship or creative activities (such as performances and artistic productions), they have expanded human knowledge, interpreted the human experience, or enhanced the quality of our lives.

C. Public Service Award

This award recognizes individuals whose service contributions to the UCA community, professional community, and other communities outside the university have been outstanding. It is expected that individuals will have contributed both within and outside the university. Through service work such as volunteering for charitable organizations, serving on advisory boards, donating professional expertise, serving on committees, and conducting outreach programs, these individuals have improved conditions within the community and enhanced the quality of life for all citizens.

II. Number of awards

The university offers one award annually in each of the three categories above. An award may go to a single individual or to two or more individuals if the achievements being recognized result from joint efforts. Up to five finalists (including the recipient) may be selected for each award.

III. Eligibility

Tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track individuals with faculty status (as defined by the current Faculty Handbook) who hold full-time appointments and who have completed five or more years of full-time service to UCA as a faculty member are eligible. The five years need not be continuous. Faculty with administrative responsibilities will be eligible if their administrative duties are 50% or less of their work assignment for the academic year.

If nominated for more than one award within the same year, the faculty member must select one award in which to pursue. Faculty members who receive a particular award are not eligible to win the same award again for a minimum of 10 years. However, receipt of a particular award does not preclude one from qualifying for awards in other categories. Individuals who are not recipients of an award may be nominated and reapply in consecutive years.

IV. Nominations

Faculty who have demonstrated excellence in any of the three areas will be identified through nomination. Anyone may submit a nomination—UCA students and employees, members of the community, faculty at other universities, etc. All nominations will be submitted to the chair of the appropriate award committee.

V. Selection committees

A selection committee will evaluate candidates for each of the three awards: Teaching; Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity; and Public Service. Each of the three committees will generally consist of nine members, selected or elected as follows.

- A. The award recipient from two years prior, who serves as chair. The chair will not vote except to break a tie.
- B. The award recipient from one year prior, who serves as a non-voting vice chair.
- C. One faculty member from each college (Business, Education, Fine Arts and Communication, Health and Behavioral Sciences, Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences and Mathematics), selected by a process agreeable to the faculty of that college (e.g., faculty election, appointment by college committee on committees, etc.); and one faculty member who is unaffiliated with the academic colleges.
- D. Each committee may, at its discretion, add one committee member from outside the university. Any additional committee members are expected to participate fully in all evaluative and deliberative processes.

VI. Procedures

To expedite and coordinate the award procedure, the Provost's Office will provide administrative support. Specifically, the Provost's Office will solicit nominations, verify that nominees have served UCA as full-time faculty members for at least five years (upon request by the committee chairs), present the awards, and coordinate publicity for award recipients.

A. Soliciting nominations

The university community will be notified about the award process and nominating procedure (Appendix A) through email and/or fliers sent to student organizations, faculty, and staff. To encourage nominations from students, alumni, and members of the Conway community, requests for nominations may also appear on the UCA homepage and in appropriate university, alumni, and local publications. When possible, the deadline for nominations will be in early February. Nominators will be requested to justify their nominations, but the nomination process should not be so demanding as to discourage nominations. The nominations will be sent to the chair of the appropriate award committee.

B. Soliciting portfolios from nominees

The committee chairs will contact nominees and request that they submit portfolios as outlined in Appendix B. Portfolios must be submitted to the chairs by the designated date.

C. Evaluation of portfolios

The three award committees will evaluate portfolios according to the criteria listed in Appendix C. The committees are encouraged to seek external expertise when appropriate (e.g., evaluating the contributions of applicants for the Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award). The criteria in Appendix C may be modified by the award committees, subject to approval by the Faculty Senate. The

proceedings of the committees and the choice of recipients will be confidential. Each committee will select up to five finalists and will choose the award recipient from the finalists. The finalists will be selected without regard to Department or College affiliation (i.e., two or more finalists for an award may come from the same Department or College). The award committees will submit names of finalists and summaries of their accomplishments/qualifications to the Provost's Office. The summaries of all finalists will be printed in the program of the fall Convocation ceremony. The award committees will submit the names of the recipients and the portfolios of all finalists to the Provost's Office.

D. Announcement of award recipients

Award finalists and recipients are announced at the fall convocation ceremony. The Provost's Office will be responsible for preparing the program and for publicizing the awards and ceremony so that award recipients are suitably recognized.

Appendix A: Nomination packets

Individuals nominating faculty for the awards should supply the following information:

1. Name of nominee
2. Department and College of nominee
3. Number of years that nominee has served as a full-time faculty member at UCA (if known by nominator)
4. Brief statement why nominee merits the award
5. Name of nominator

Appendix B: Applicant portfolios

Chairs of the award committees will notify faculty who have been nominated and will request that they submit portfolios in support of their nomination. The materials listed below will be requested for each award. The three award committees may modify these lists, subject to approval by the Faculty Senate.

Teaching Award

1. A statement (not to exceed 1,000 words) of the nominee's primary goals in teaching and a description of teaching approach (including creative or innovative techniques).
2. A syllabus for each course taught in the past two years.
3. Samples of student assignments/activities/documentation to support statement in item 1.
4. The average grade point for each class during the most recent semester.
5. Copies of student evaluations for the past three years.
6. Current class schedule, including course titles, times, buildings and room numbers, to facilitate the scheduling of classroom visits by committee members. (As a part of the selection process, each member of the committee makes a concerted effort to visit an instructional setting of every finalist.)

Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Award

1. Copy of vita, including a list of research, scholarly and creative activities placed into appropriate categories such as books, refereed articles, non-refereed articles, reviews, exhibitions, performances, etc.
2. A statement summarizing research, scholarly or creative activities and significance of the work, with an emphasis on the last three years. Nominees should limit their statements to no more than 1,000 words.

3. External documentation attesting to the quality and value of the work. Nominees will be asked to provide evidence that their work has an impact on their discipline and society at large. Documentation may include book reviews, awards, ratings of journals, journal acceptance rates, citations in other works, etc. Actual articles and/or excerpts from books (e.g., chapters) might be included in the portfolio. Also, nominees might include letters from department colleagues or other experts attesting to the significance of the work.

Nominees should remember that it is unlikely anyone in their subdiscipline will be a member of the award committee. Therefore, portfolios must be understandable by nonspecialists and must communicate to the nonspecialist the importance of the work. Finalists may be asked to describe their work to the award committee in a 15-minute question/answer format.

Public Service Award

1. A current vita/resume.
2. A list of service activities.
3. A statement summarizing philosophy and service activities. (This statement should discuss the significance of the service both off- and on-campus. The statement should be limited to 1,000 words.)
4. Two letters of support solicited by the faculty member that provide evidence that the work has had an impact on communities outside the university.
5. Names and phone numbers of two other individuals familiar with the service contributions.

Appendix C. Selection criteria

University award committees will use the criteria described below to select award recipients.

Teaching Excellence Award

This award is to recognize, encourage, and reward superior teachers based on the following criteria:

1. Command of the discipline

- a. demonstrates a thorough knowledge of subject matter
- b. selects content appropriate to developmental level of students
- c. links discipline to other subjects, when appropriate

2. Use of appropriate teaching methodologies

It is recognized that a variety of methodologies may be appropriate, depending upon the type of instructional setting (e.g., classroom, laboratory, studio, or clinic). Some examples of potentially appropriate methodologies include the following:

- a. statement of the objective
- b. use of a variety of stimuli and teaching strategies
- c. use of new technology

3. Demonstration of exceptional communication skills

Depending upon the type of instructional setting, examples might include the following:

- a. presents material clearly and in an organized way
- b. maintains eye contact with students
- c. acknowledges student responses in a manner that facilitates learning

- d. exhibits effective presentation skills (diction, projection, no distracting habits or filler dependencies)

4. Exhibits human relations skills

- a. demonstrates poise and confidence in the instructional setting
- b. has a sense of humor and a friendly disposition
- c. demonstrates respect for and has a positive relationship with students
- d. recognizes and acknowledges students by name

5. Concern for student performance

- a. uses evaluation procedures that are fair and consistent
- b. evaluates student learning by using a variety of assessment measures and techniques appropriate to the instructional setting
- c. provides timely and appropriate feedback on learning activities

6. Maintenance of academic rigor

- a. GPA relative to other finalists (note level of class and number of students in class)
- b. interviews with students, affording insights on this point

7. Exemplifies the teacher/mentor model

- a. supports students in some way outside of the classroom
- b. supports students in research, scholarly, creative, or clinical projects

Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Award

The award committee will be looking for evidence of sustained scholarly activity with emphasis on the last three years of work at UCA. Practical, as well as theoretical research, scholarship, and creativity will be given careful attention. The primary consideration for the committee will be the impact and quality of the work.

Public Service Award

The committee will be evaluating sustained service to off-campus and on-campus communities with emphasis on the last three years. The primary consideration for the committee will be the significance and impact of the service.

Questions or comments may be sent to provost@uca.edu.

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