

Guidelines for the USI Distinguished Professor Award

The Faculty Awards for Service, Teaching, and Research Committee (FASTRC) have established the following guidelines for the USI Distinguished Professor Award:

1. Rationale for the award

The award is given by the faculty to recognize truly exceptional performance by a faculty member at the associate professor rank or higher. The faculty will be solely responsible for identifying recipients, and the procedures for identifying recipients should be kept as simple and flexible as possible. The recipient shall have at least five years of full-time teaching experience at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) prior to being nominated for this award to ensure the recipient is fully vested in the mission of USI. By providing additional support for their work, this award seeks to enable recipients to pursue more professional opportunities and to increase their leadership role at USI.

The following criteria that denote excellence must be considered. While the normal expectation is significant achievement in a number of categories (i.e., teaching, scholarship, professional activity, university service, and community service), this award is intended to recognize the quality of a faculty member's contributions. Therefore, the Faculty Awards for Service, Teaching, and Research Committee (FASTRC) will consider a broad spectrum of accomplishments ranging from balanced achievement in several areas to exceptional work in a single area. Some means must be found to identify and recognize intangible qualities, such as true wisdom, sympathy, justice, integrity, courage, and the ability to inspire others, which should be the hallmarks of the candidate's life.

The FASTRC will not grant a Distinguished Professor Award if candidates do not meet the high standards of the award. Indeed, the FASTRC believes the best analogy would be that of the selection of recipients of honorary degrees, which are granted to individuals, not because they had met previously specified criteria, but rather because the weight of their achievement made recognition necessary.

2. Eligibility

Nominators and nominees must be full-time, voting members of the USI faculty; nominees must have attained the rank of associate professor or higher. Voting members of the FASTRC are ineligible to nominate or be nominated. Past recipients of the award are ineligible to be nominated again. Ex-officio members of this committee who otherwise qualify to nominate or be nominated for the award will be continuously eligible but if they do nominate or are nominated, will be excused from the committee's deliberations and selection. Recipients of the Berger Faculty Community Service Award, Outstanding Teaching Award, and/or the H. Lee Cooper Award in the last five years are ineligible.

3. Procedures

a. Nomination

Nomination forms will be distributed annually in the fall along with the above rationale, and faculty should be encouraged to recommend a colleague. The nominator shall complete the two-page nomination form; font size shall be no smaller than 10 points. Each nomination

should be made by one faculty member only, thus carrying a single signature. (Nominations sent by email are acceptable.) Self-nominations are *not* permitted. Nominators will be apprised of the status of their nomination. Five finalists will be asked to submit additional documentation. The finalists who are not chosen as the recipient of the award will be kept in the applicant pool for an additional two years, unless a specific request is made to withdraw the application. Applicants in the pool will be given an opportunity to update their materials if they wish to do so.

b. Required Supporting Documentation

The nominator must supply to the chair of the FASTRC the following information in one file by the deadline mentioned in the notification of nomination:

- 1) a brief curriculum vitae,
- 2) up to five letters of recommendation, and
- 3) any other supporting documents.

The brief curriculum vitae shall identify the nominee's activity in the following areas: educational background, professional experience, teaching responsibilities, university service, community service, professional activities, and scholarship. Supporting documents must include letters of recommendation (no more than a total of five letters) from the nominee's department chairperson and/or dean and from individuals such as faculty members, alumni, students, and members of the community. The total number of pages for the required supporting documentation shall not exceed ten pages. The font size of all documentation shall be no smaller than 10 points. If a candidate is nominated by more than one nominator, FASTRC will request these nominators to apportion among themselves the tasks of composing the brief curriculum vitae and compiling the documentation.

4. Selection

Distribution and receipt of forms, establishment of deadlines, the conducting of further investigations, evaluation and selection of recipients will be made by the FASTRC because of its representation and its traditional concern for academic excellence.

5. Award

The award recipient will receive a letter of congratulations signed by the University President, Provost, and Foundation President. He or she will be asked to keep this information secret until a public announcement has been made. This award includes a commemorative gift and a taxable stipend of \$7,000 will be added to the recipient's automated salary deposit in addition to a \$3,000 faculty development grant. Recipient's name, award year, and photograph will be added to the Distinguished Professor Award recognition display in the David L. Rice Library.

6. Recipient Responsibilities

Each year, the recipient will speak at a fall commencement ceremony as directed by the Provost. All faculty named as University Distinguished Professors will be expected to demonstrate sustained excellence in teaching, research/creativity, and service. Exceptions to the recipient responsibilities for a professor approaching retirement may be considered by the FASTRC.

The USI Distinguished Professor Award 2026

(This is a two-page form. Font size is no smaller than 10 pt. type.)

Name of Nominee _____

Name of Nominator _____

College of Nominee _____ Department _____

This form ONLY is due by November 15, 2025. *Nominators of **selected** nominees will be asked to complete the nomination process by the deadline mentioned in the notification. Requirements include a brief curriculum vitae, up to five letters of recommendation from dean/chair, faculty members, alumni, students, and members of the community, and other supporting documents (total number of pages should not exceed ten pages).*

Is the Nominee a full-time, voting faculty member?

- I. Briefly describe what you consider the nominee's most significant achievement as a faculty member at USI:

Year or Date(s) of Activity:

Area (scholarship, service, teaching):

Description (approx. 400 words – must stay within one page):

How does this achievement contribute to USI and its surrounding community (approx. 400 words)?

- II. Describe an occasion on which the nominee demonstrated such intangible but essential qualities as wisdom, sympathy, justice, integrity, courage, and the ability to inspire others – “the true hallmarks of a faculty member’s life” (approx. 400 words).

Signature _____ Date _____

Return to: USI.Provost@usi.edu .