

Guidelines for the USI Outstanding Teaching Award

The Faculty Awards for Service, Teaching, and Research Committee (FASTRAC) has established the following guidelines for the USI Outstanding Teaching Award.

1. Rationale for the award

An important goal of the USI Outstanding Teaching Award is to recognize and reward teaching excellence, so the University can cultivate and nurture an environment of learning in which high-quality teaching is recognized as the standard of performance. In establishing this award for excellence in teaching, the University will recognize faculty for superior performance in the classroom, innovation, commitment to student learning outcomes, and excellence in education.

The award is given by the faculty to recognize truly exceptional teaching performance by a faculty member in his or her discipline and whose primary responsibility is teaching. 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 six 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 teaching, this award seeks to enable recipients to pursue more professional opportunities and to increase their leadership role at USI.

Ideal candidates will exhibit strength in teaching and contribute to the teaching profession. Strength in teaching is determined by a record of excellence in the classroom and supporting student learning. Contribution to the teaching profession can be illustrated through extracurricular achievements, leadership responsibilities, implementation of the nominee's scholarly/creative or community engagement activities within the classroom environment, and involvement of students in scholarship outside of the regular coursework through meaningful experiences as is appropriate in the faculty member's discipline.

The FASTRAC will not grant an Outstanding Teaching Award if candidates do not meet the high standards of the award.

2. Eligibility

Nominators and nominees must be full-time, voting members of the USI faculty. Voting members of the FASTRAC 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, the USI Distinguished Professor 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 point. Each nomination should be made by one faculty member only, thus carrying a single signature. (Nominations sent by email are acceptable.) Students are encouraged to petition department chairs or other faculty to recommend the nomination of candidates they deem worthy. Self-nominations are *not* permitted. Nominations will be due by the established deadlines. 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 FASTRAC the following information in one file by the date outlined in the correspondence:

- 1) an abbreviated, teaching-focused curriculum vitae,
- 2) the nominee's teaching philosophy,
- 3) up to five letters of recommendation (may include letters from current students, former students, and alumni), and
- 4) any other supporting documents.

The abbreviated 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 chair 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 point. 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, conducting of further investigations, evaluation, and the selection of recipients will be made by the FASTRAC because of its representation and its traditional concern for academic excellence. Committee decisions will be finalized by the established deadline for the current academic year.

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 confidential until a public announcement has been made.

This award includes a taxable stipend of \$3,000 that will be added to the recipient's automated salary deposit as well as a \$1,000 faculty development grant.

5. Recipient Responsibilities

All recipients of the USI Outstanding Teaching Award will be expected to demonstrate sustained excellence in teaching and assist other faculty in elevating their own teaching performance. The recipient is therefore required to conduct a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) program such as presenting at the Celebration of Teaching and Learning Symposium. The recipient's program must focus on teaching effectiveness to support student learning and will be coordinated by the Provost's Office.

Exceptions to the recipient responsibilities for a professor approaching retirement may be considered by the FASTRAC.



The USI Outstanding Teaching Award- 2026

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

Name of Nominee _____

Name of Nominator _____

College of Nominee _____ Department _____

This form ONLY is due to nominate a faculty member. Nominators of **selected** nominees will be asked to complete the nomination process by 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 in teaching as a faculty member at USI:

Year or Date(s) of Activity:

Area (scholarship, service, teaching):

Description (approx. 400 words; stay within 1 page):

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

- II. Include examples of the nominee's teaching effectiveness (approx. 400 words). Ideal candidates exhibit strength in teaching and contribute to the teaching profession. Strength in teaching is determined by a record of excellence in the classroom. Contribution to the teaching profession can be illustrated through extracurricular achievements, leadership responsibilities, implementation of the nominee's scholarly/ creative activities within the classroom environment, and involvement of students in scholarship outside of the regular coursework through meaningful experiences as is appropriate in the faculty member's discipline.

Signature _____ Date _____
Return to: USI.Provost@usi.edu.