

Top Tier Teaching Awards Committee Observations and Recommendations

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Context:

On October 22, 2015, Senior Vice Provost Carl Reiber charged this committee to consider funding and standards for teaching excellence awards. The committee met November 30, 2015 and developed the following observations and recommendations.

Observations:

There are significant and resolvable obstacles that prevent UNLV's teaching awards from communicating a strong and coherent message about the critical value of excellent teaching to UNLV's mission. These include:

- Types of teaching rewarded, number of awards, and value of awards do not align with UNLV's values (High expectations for student learning and success; Discovery through research, scholarship, and creative activity; Nurturing equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment; Social, environmental, and economic sustainability; Strong, reciprocal, and interdependent relationships between UNLV and the region around us; An entrepreneurial, innovative, and unconventional spirit. www.unlv.edu/about/mission-statement).
- Lack of clear processes for: teaching award applications, criteria, and evaluation by committees
- Scattered and sometimes inaccessible information about campus-level and college-level awards
- Cumbersome application processes and perceived low value of awards discourages applicants.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance the actual and perceived value of teaching excellence awards by:

- a. Soliciting donors to provide funds for named awards (named after donors or after members of UNLV's teaching community). UNLV's Development Office can be encouraged to help with this.
 - b. Attaching the following rewards to our teaching awards: one-time financial reward, % pay raise annually, credit toward promotion, public recognition on provost's website
2. Expand the types of teaching to be recognized so these align better with UNLV's mission and values (www.unlv.edu/about/mission-statement). Additional awards would recognize:
 - a. Excellent or "distinguished" teaching by career tracks or contract types reflective of all UNLV's teaching community (including non-tenure track, pre-tenure, tenured...)
 - b. Teaching innovation/creativity
 - c. Undergraduate advising by members of UNLV's teaching community
 - d. Promoting undergraduate participation in research and creative activity
 - e. Promoting outstanding student achievement
 - f. Fostering service learning and community-engaged learning
 - g. Scholarship of teaching and learning
 - h. Teaching productivity
 - i. Mentoring of UNLV teachers
3. Invite and incentivize colleges to provide college-level teaching awards that mirror campus-level teaching awards. This will make the process of nomination, application, and selection of campus-level awardees equitable for all colleges/schools.
4. Provide grants for teaching development to support:
 - a. Participation in teaching development programs on campus and at national conferences/meetings
 - b. Creation and/or revision of teaching materials
5. On the provost's website, create a webpage that offers information about all campus-level teaching excellence awards and that specifies that the awards collectively recognize the kinds of teaching that are critical to UNLV's mission and values. Include information for each award, including:
 - a. The name of the award,
 - b. what the award recognizes,
 - c. the process for applying, the deadline for application and timeline for award,
 - d. criteria for evaluation,
 - e. the scoring rubric used by selection committee to review applications,
 - f. members of the selection committees,
 - g. the donor or other funding source that sustains the award
 - h. the value of the award (one-time funds, % salary raise, credit toward promotion)
 - i. Names and colleges/schools/departments of all award recipients from prior year(s)
6. Maintain a consistent timeline for nominations, applications, evaluations and notification/publicity for all teaching awards, so that evaluation and award notifications take place in the spring semester (except for Foundation and Regents awards, which must follow the Regents' timeline).
7. Align the requirements for the UNLV Foundation Distinguished Teaching Award directly with those of the NSHE Regents Award. (These were revised and aligned in 2014, but misaligned in 2015.) Adjust the timeline to allow more time between nomination period (August suggested) and application deadline (late September / early October).