



Tuesday, January 27, 2026

### **2025-2026 Senate Award for Distinction in Research**

The Senate Award for Distinction in Research (for tenured faculty) is intended to encourage and recognize individuals for research and/or other creative activities that have had a major impact on the field, either through a sustained record of contributions or through a specific, highly influential contribution. A list of previous recipients is provided on page 2 and is available at [https://senate.ucmerced.edu/previous\\_senate\\_awardees](https://senate.ucmerced.edu/previous_senate_awardees).

#### **Eligibility**

Nominees for the Distinction in Research Award must be regular ladder-rank UC Merced faculty (not adjunct) who hold tenured faculty positions (Associate Professor or Professor) at the time of nomination. All Senate faculty members who have not previously received this award are eligible, including those nominated in prior years but not selected.

#### **Criteria for Award**

Distinguished scholarship, as recognized through this award, is characterized by originality and creativity of the contribution and its impact on one or more disciplines or emerging interdisciplinary fields. If the work on which the nomination is based is primarily collaborative, the nominee's role in the collaboration and the noteworthiness of the nominee's contribution must be clear. The award is intended primarily to recognize work carried out at UC Merced, although work done by faculty before coming to UC Merced will also be considered.

#### **Nomination Process**

Initial nominations for the Senate Award for Distinction in Research may be submitted by any member of the academic community (students, faculty, staff, or alumni). The nomination should describe reasons for the award to the faculty nominee based on the criteria listed above. **Nominations should be submitted electronically as one PDF packet to the Chair of the Academic Senate ([senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)) with a copy to the Senate Office ([senateoffice@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senateoffice@ucmerced.edu)) and must include the following:**

1. A [nomination form](#).
2. **One nomination letter** (maximum of two pages) highlighting the outstanding accomplishments of the nominee in research and/or other creative activities while at UC Merced. This letter should be written by a UC Merced faculty member who is familiar with the nominee's accomplishments in these areas. Faculty with administrative appointments (e.g., deans) may serve as nominators.
3. **Current and complete curriculum vitae.**
4. **Copies of up to five most significant publications and/or other scholarly or creative contributions, emphasizing work performed at UC Merced.**
5. In addition to the nomination letter, **two supporting letters** (suggested length one to two pages) specifically solicited for this nomination. These letters should be from experts in the nominee's field

of research who are able to evaluate the quality, originality, and impact of the nominee's work. These letters may be written by individuals either at UC Merced or at other campuses or institutions.

### **Selection Process**

The [Committee on Research](#) (COR) will form an ad-hoc committee from its membership to serve as the COR Awards Committee with a minimum of three faculty. The COR Awards Committee will have balanced representation from different academic areas. If additional expertise is needed, non-COR committee members will be appointed by COR. The COR Awards Committee reserves the right to not give an award if there is an insufficient number of nominees, or if nominees do not meet the above criteria for the award.

Based on the initial letters of nomination, the COR Awards Committee will select a slate of finalists from the pool of nominees. Supporting materials for the finalists may be solicited (e.g., published textbooks, articles on pedagogy, additional letters of support, and other evidence of exceptional research activities). All materials and notes will be held in confidence by the COR Awards Committee.

The COR Awards Committee will review nominees and select a recipient based on majority vote. The COR Awards Committee will complete its selection process and inform the Chair of the Academic Senate ([senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)) and the Senate Office ([senateoffice@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senateoffice@ucmerced.edu)) of the results. On the recommendation of the COR Awards Committee, any finalist may be nominated for the award the following year.

**Deadline for Nominations: 5:00pm, Monday, March 30, 2026.**

The announcement of the recipient will be made during the UC Merced Spring [Meeting of the Division](#).

### **Past Recipients**

- 2024-2025 Nancy Burke
- 2023-2024 Lin Tian
- 2022-2023 Martin Hagger
- 2021-2022 Ashlie Martini
- 2020-2021 ShiPu Wang
- 2019-2020 YangQuan Chen
- 2018-2019 Deborah Wiebe
- 2017-2018 Ajay Gopinathan
- 2016-2017 Linda Hirst
- 2015-2016 Linda Cameron / Andy LiWang
- 2014-2015 Ming-Hsuan Yang
- 2013-2014 No nominations received by the Senate
- 2012-2013 Rudy Ortiz
- 2011-2012 Thomas Hansford
- 2010-2011 William Shadish