



Tuesday, January 27, 2026

2025-2026 Senate Award for Contributions to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Senate Award for Contributions to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is intended to recognize a faculty member who has accomplished an extraordinary achievement in one or more of the following three areas that foster diversity: contribution to diversity in research, contribution to diversity in teaching, and/or contribution to diversity in service (university or public). A list of previous recipients is provided on page 2 and available at https://senate.ucmerced.edu/previous_senate_awardees.

Eligibility

All Senate faculty members who have not previously received this award are eligible, including those nominated in prior years but not selected. Members of the Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are not eligible for this award but may nominate UC Merced colleagues.

Criteria for Award

Excellence in diversity contributions can be defined by the following:

- Scholarship that has made a significant and lasting impact on diversity in the faculty member's field and/or training students who are historically or currently underrepresented in their field.
- Development of curricula or teaching methods that impact diversity and the mentorship of undergraduate or graduate students who are members of groups who are historically or currently underrepresented in their field.
- University or public service that encourages diversity and equity.

Nomination Process

All Senate faculty members are eligible for nomination by other members of the Academic Senate. Initial nominations should be in the form of a letter (not to exceed two single-spaced, typewritten pages) providing a comprehensive summary of the qualities and accomplishments that would warrant the candidate to be considered for the award. **The letter should focus on the scope and impact of the diversity efforts** and should detail the special characteristics that extend the nominee's expertise and set them apart from other faculty, such as their philosophy, objectives, or impact. The committee considers nominations with long-term as well as short-term extraordinary contributions to diversity. The nominator should ensure that documentary evidence is available; however, supporting material should not be attached to the nomination.

Nominations should be submitted electronically as one PDF packet to the Chair of the Academic Senate (senatechair@ucmerced.edu) with a copy to the Senate Office (senateoffice@ucmerced.edu), and must include the following:

1. A **nomination form**.
2. **One nomination letter** (maximum of two pages) highlighting the outstanding contributions of the nominee to diversity. This letter should be written by a UC Merced faculty member

who is familiar with the nominee's accomplishments in these areas.

3. **Two supporting letters** (suggested length one to two pages) specifically solicited for this nomination.
 - a. One letter is written by a Senate faculty member.
 - b. One letter is written by an individual who is familiar with the nominee's accomplishments.
4. **Nominee's current and complete curriculum vitae.**
5. **Nominee's statement on contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion.**

Selection Process

The [Senate Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (EDI) will form an ad-hoc committee from its membership to serve as the EDI Awards Committee with a minimum of three faculty. The EDI Awards Committee will have balanced representation from different academic areas. If additional expertise is needed, non-EDI committee members will be appointed by the EDI Chair. The EDI 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 nomination materials, the EDI Awards Committee will select a slate of finalists from the pool of nominees. Supporting materials for the finalists may be solicited. All materials and notes will be held in confidence by the EDI Awards Committee.

The EDI Awards Committee will review the nominations and members will submit their first-choice candidate or their recommendation that no award is merited, to the Chair of the EDI Awards Committee, with a brief justification for either case. The EDI Awards Committee will select a recipient based on a majority vote. The EDI Awards Committee will complete its selection process and inform the Chair of the Academic Senate (senatechair@ucmerced.edu) and the Senate Office (senateoffice@ucmerced.edu) of the results. On the recommendation of the EDI Awards Committee, any finalist may be nominated for 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 Michele Nishiguchi
- 2023-2024 Whitney Pirtle
- 2022-2023 Roummel Marcia
- 2021-2022 Maria Martin
- 2020-2021 Rudy Ortiz
- 2019-2020 Dalia Magaña
- 2018-2019 Clarissa Nobile