



Tuesday, January 27, 2026

2025-2026 Senate Faculty Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award

This Senate Award is intended to encourage and recognize individual excellence in teaching at the undergraduate level. A list of previous recipients is provided on page 3 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.

Criteria for Award

1. A faculty member is limited to one award per lifetime.
2. The award may be given in recognition of outstanding instructional activities during a single year or over multiple years.
3. The award is limited to distinguished undergraduate teaching and instructional activities.
4. The award may be given in recognition of a broad range of contributions to the instructional program at UC Merced, including the following criteria:
 - Command of the subject and the ability to present it cogently.
 - Evidence for innovation or exceptional accomplishments related to instruction.
 - Enthusiasm and vitality in learning and teaching.
 - Ability to stimulate thought and engage students in an active learning process.
 - Ability to inspire independent and original thinking in beginning and advanced students.
 - Responsiveness and concern for the education and welfare of students.
 - Participation in student advising and mentoring.
 - Guidance of student research projects.
 - Outstanding supervision and mentoring of teaching assistants.
 - Evidence for student success in subsequent academic and career activities.
 - Responsiveness to student diversity, equity and inclusion.

Nomination Process

Nominations for the award may be submitted by any member of the UC Merced community, including students, faculty, staff, and 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) 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 UC Merced in undergraduate teaching and mentorship. 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. **Three supporting letters** (suggested length two pages) specifically solicited for this nomination.
 - One letter is written by a UC Merced faculty member.
 - One letter is written by a current or former undergraduate student, not necessarily a research advisee of the nominee.
 - One letter is written by another faculty member, another student or any other individual who has an appropriate professional background to comment on the nominee's undergraduate teaching and/or mentorship (e.g. faculty from other campuses or institutions or other UC Merced staff).
4. **Current and complete curriculum vitae.**
5. **Nominee's statement on teaching.**
6. **Nominee's statement on contributions to diversity.**

Student teaching evaluations should not be included as part of the nomination package but may be summarized and/or excerpted by writers of nominating or supporting letters.

Based on the nomination materials, supplementary information may be requested of finalists by the UGC Awards Committee. Supporting materials may include course syllabi, teaching evaluations, published textbooks, articles on pedagogy, additional letters of support, and other evidence of exceptional instructional activities. All materials and notes will be held in confidence by the UGC Awards Committee.

Selection Process

The [Undergraduate Council](#) (UGC) will form an ad-hoc committee to serve as the UGC Awards Committee with a minimum of three Senate faculty. The UGC Awards Committee will have balanced representation from a range of academic areas and broad school representation, with a Senate faculty Chair. Additional members will include an administrative representative, a student representative, and a Unit 18 lecturer representative. If additional expertise is needed, non-UGC committee members will be appointed by the UGC Chair. The UGC 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.

The UGC Awards Committee will review nominees, and members will submit their first-choice candidate or their recommendation that no award is merited, to the Chair of the UGC Awards Committee, with a brief justification for either case. The UGC Awards Committee will select a recipient based on majority vote.

The UGC 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 UGC 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 Lei, Yue
- 2023-2024 Alejandro Gutierrez and Justin Hicks
- 2022-2023 Christopher Viney
- 2021-2022 Elaine Denny
- 2020-2021 Holley Moyes
- 2019-2020 Carrie Menke
- 2018-2019 Eric Walle
- 2017-2018 Laura Beaster-Jones and Ashlie Martini
- 2016-2017 Anneeth Kaur Hundle
- 2015-2016 Po-Ya Abel Chuang
- 2014-2015 Jack Vevea and Rudy Ortiz
- 2013-2014 Rose Scott
- 2012-2013 David Ardell
- 2011-2012 Marcos Garcia-Ojeda
- 2010-2011 Sean Malloy
- 2009-2010 Simon Weffer
- 2008-2009 Teenie Matlock