



Tuesday, January 27, 2026

2025-2026 Dr. Fred Spiess Award for Distinguished Service to the Academic Senate

The Spiess Award was created to recognize a member of the Senate faculty who has performed outstanding service to the Academic Senate (campus and/or systemwide) and whose contributions have had a major impact on faculty governance. Its broader goal is to honor all members of the faculty (including Emeriti/ae Senate members) who have contributed their time and talent to the Senate. A list of previous recipients is provided on pages 2-3 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 is designed to honor a University of California faculty member who has demonstrated:
 - Outstanding and creative contributions as evidenced by major impact on faculty governance.
 - Sustained excellence in serving the Academic Senate.
 - Exceptional abilities in working effectively with different university constituents.

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 Senate service efforts and should detail the special characteristics that extend the nominees' 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 distinguished service to the Academic Senate. 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 the Academic Senate (campus and/or systemwide) and whose contributions have had a major impact on faculty governance. 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 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.**

Selection Process

The Senate [Committee on Committees](#) (CoC) will form an ad-hoc committee from its membership to serve as the CoC Awards Committee with a minimum of three faculty. The CoC Awards Committee will have balanced representation from different academic areas. If additional expertise is needed, non-CoC committee members will be appointed by the CoC Chair. The CoC 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 CoC 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 CoC Awards Committee.

The CoC 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 CoC Awards Committee, with a brief justification for either case. The CoC Awards Committee will select a recipient based on a majority vote. The CoC 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 CoC Awards Committee, any finalist may be nominated for the following year.

Deadline for Nominations: 5:00 pm, 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 Jay Sharping
- 2023-2024 Christopher Viney
- 2022-2023 Michael Scheibner
- 2021-2022 Patti LiWang
- 2020-2021 Carolin Frank
- 2019-2020 Kathleen Hull
- 2018-2019 No nominations received by the Senate
- 2017-2018 Anne Zanzucchi
- 2016-2017 Susan Amussen
- 2015-2016 No nominations received by the Senate

- 2014-2015 William Shadish
- 2013-2014 Peggy O'Day
- 2012-2013 Valerie Leppert
- 2011-2012 Chris Kello
- 2010-2011 Evan Heit
- 2009-2010 Martha Conklin
- 2008-2009 Shawn Kantor