

Distinguished Faculty Fellow Award

A mission of Tennessee Tech is “to provide leadership and outstanding programs...that benefit the people of Tennessee and the nation.” The mission also charges Tennessee Tech to engage “in scholarly activity..., creative endeavors, and public service” and is committed to providing “high-quality instruction and learning experiences”. To this end, Tennessee Tech looks to establish itself as an acknowledged leader in these key areas of instruction, scholarship and service. In support of the external nature of the mission, the Distinguished Faculty Fellow Award has been established to recognize faculty who have made significant contributions toward providing external recognition to the University. The award will honor faculty who have distinguished themselves with significant contributions in the areas of instruction, scholarship and/or service at the state, regional and/or national level.

While this award is strongly grounded in the past contributions of the individual, it also looks to the future for continued contributions in these and other areas which will garner further recognition for the university. With regard to future contributions, then, the award can be viewed as a catalyst for continued excellence during the rest of the awardee’s career and, accordingly, recognizes those not only with a notable record but with a promising trajectory. Owing to these accomplishments, a Distinguished Faculty Fellow will, thus, serve as a mentor and a role model for early-career faculty. This feature is truly a distinguishing criterion for the award.

1. Conditions and Provisions of the Award

- a. One DFF will be chosen each year for a two-year term, so that, after the first year, two DFFs would be active in any given year.
- b. Each fellowship carries a \$10,000 award for each of two years--\$5,000 as a salary bonus and \$5,000 as an operating bonus.
- c. The two DFF’s will work as a team to provide mentoring activities for junior faculty members, beginning with a planned activity to be incorporated into the new faculty orientation program each fall semester. This activity will be coordinated with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Prior to planning other activities, the senior DFF will (1) convene an advisory group consisting of all previous recipients of the award and ask this group’s advice on activities for the year; and (2) consult with other individuals on campus who are involved in faculty development (e.g., the directors of the Technology Institute, QEP, and TQI).
- d. The senior DFF each year will submit a report on the year’s mentoring activities to the Provost with a copy to the President.

2. Criteria for Eligibility

- a. The award is open to current full-time faculty members who have served at least five years as full-time faculty members at Tennessee Tech.
- b. A faculty member may not be named a Distinguished Faculty Fellow more than once in his or her career at Tennessee Tech.
- c. A faculty member may not hold the Distinguished Faculty fellow award and one of the University Outstanding Faculty awards or the Caplenor Research Award at the same time.

3. Nominations

- a. Individuals who have won a University Outstanding Faculty Award (Teaching or Service) or a Caplenor Research Award may self-nominate.

- b. Other eligible faculty members must have been nominated by their department chairs/unit heads or, if a given nominee is a chair, by his or her immediate supervisor.
 - c. A nomination consists of a letter from the nominator briefly explaining why the person in question should be made a Distinguished Faculty Fellow. After considering all nominations, the Distinguished Faculty Fellow Committee will contact those nominated and request an award portfolio.
4. Contents of Award Portfolios
- a. A concise summary that highlights the nominee's characteristics that pertain to the distinguished faculty fellow award,
 - b. A *Curriculum vitae* that summarizes the primary contributions of the nominee,
 - c. Written letters of recommendation from three people. The letters should comment on the characteristics that distinguish the nominee and make her/him eligible for this award. At most, only one letter of recommendation shall come from a Tennessee Tech employee.
5. Criteria for Evaluation
- a. Contributions that have received external recognition (ranked based on the levels appropriate for the activity),
 - b. The relevance of the contributions to the University's mission and vision,
 - c. Evidence that the nominee is well positioned to continue serving the university in this manner,
 - d. Evidence that the nominee has served and would continue to serve as an esteemed mentor to junior faculty.
6. Selection Committee and Process
- a. For the first year of this process, the selection committee consists of the first three awardees and one dean appointed by the Provost for a two-year term. The Provost also appoints the committee chair for the first year.
 - b. For the second year of the process, the committee consists of the first four awardees and two deans (the one previously appointed and another appointed for two years).
 - c. After the second year, the selection committee consists of the two incumbent fellows, the fellow who has most recently completed his or her two-year tenure, and two deans. The deans serve for two years, on a staggered basis, with one dean rotating off and one rotating on each year. The dean who is serving in his/her second year of a rotation chairs the committee and appoints the dean who replaces him or her, with the understanding that the new appointee will not have served on this committee for at least three years. Each May, after awardee selection for the coming year, the selection committee chair informs the Provost of the committee's membership for the coming year.
 - d. The committee solicits nominations, screens them, and by May 1 sends to the President its choice of fellows for the coming year.
 - e. The President announces the awardees during appropriate occasions following May 1st.