

Excellence in Teaching Liberal Studies Award

The Excellence in Teaching Liberal Studies Award recognizes a faculty member for excellence in promoting significant student learning liberal studies courses on a regular basis. A cash award (a \$1,500 check) and a plaque are given to one recipient at Western Carolina University.

Previous Winners:

2022-2023 Katharine Mershon

2021-2022: Benjamin Steere

2020-2021: Heidi Turlington

2019-2020: Heather Rimes

2018-2019: Kim Hall

Eligibility and Nomination Process

Any full-time faculty member who has taught at Western Carolina University for at least one year may be nominated by a faculty member, department head, dean, or by self-nomination. Eligibility requires a minimum of four liberal studies courses/sections to have been taught at Western Carolina University prior to the semester in which nominations take place, as well as that they have not received this award in the preceding five years. Faculty members on scholarly leave are eligible but will still need to be observed in a teaching setting.

*Nominations will be accessible through the Integrated University Awards Nominations process.

Acceptance of Nomination

The chair of the award selection committee will notify the nominated faculty via email by the end of the fall semester. To accept the nomination, each nominee will need to submit a written statement to the Excellence in Teaching Liberal Studies Award committee by the deadline stated in their notification email (generally by mid-January). The statement is not to exceed 1000 words. The statements will be used to select up to three finalists for the Excellence in Teaching Liberal Studies Award.

Each nominee should submit:

- A list of all liberal studies courses you have taught in the last two years.
- A written statement of no more than 1000 words, that must address, but is not limited to, the following items:
 - Address how your liberal studies courses align with and support the liberal studies student learning outcomes.
 - Explain your best practices for teaching liberal studies courses.
 - Express how the teaching modality inspires certain pedagogy, if relevant.
- A sample syllabus of only one course.
- A sample of one piece of teaching material you deem important and representative of your pedagogy (examples might include an assignment, a project description, a field trip description, or a class activity).

Selection of the Finalists

The selection committee, made up of one representative from each college, will conduct a thorough review of all the written statements provided by the nominees and choose three finalists for classroom observation. At that stage, a portfolio may be requested from all the finalists. All materials shall be reviewed by all committee members.

Evaluation of Finalists

Classroom Observations

Each of the committee members will attend one class taught by each of the finalists. The classroom visits should be completed before the specified deadline (generally by the end of Feb or early Mar).

Portfolios

As a guide, the portfolio, not to exceed 25 pages, can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A summary and assessment of student learning in ONE (1) of the liberal studies courses you have taught in the last two years.
- Student evaluation of your teaching.
- Sample assignments and exams, etc. that reflect your teaching philosophies.

Selecting the ETLS Recipient

After the selection committee finishes its classroom observations and portfolio reviews of each finalist, the committee shall meet and vote to determine the recipient. There will be one recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Liberal Studies Award, and the committee chair will provide a written statement about the recipient that can be used to honor and announce them at the annual faculty awards ceremony.