Report of the

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity Review of Teaching Awards Working Group

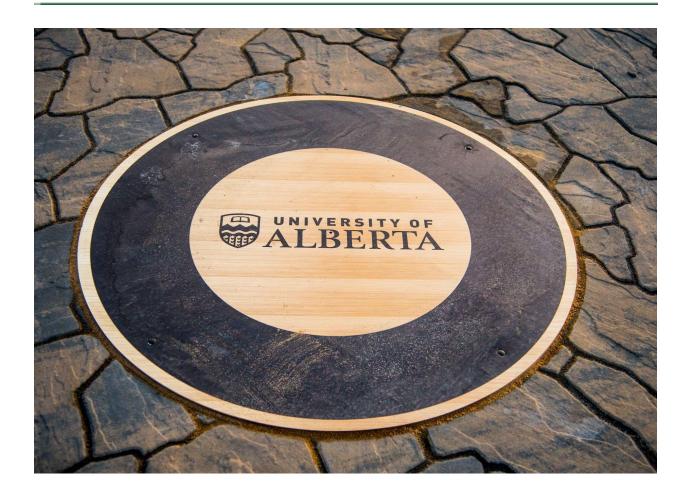MAY 2022

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Introduction

The University of Alberta values the contributions of its staff, faculty, instructors, students, and community partners. As stated in the mission within the [2019 Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity](#):

> *"We envision—and will cultivate—a community that recognizes equity and diversity as fundamental to achieving inclusive excellence in learning, teaching, research, service, and community engagement." [p.4]*

One important way the University demonstrates this commitment is through formal recognition such as internal awards. The University of Alberta offers a multitude of internal awards in teaching research and service. Such awards are available to different ranks of academic staff and different employment categories (see the Awards Grid table in the Appendix).

In addition to historical awards statistics collected by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), an equity audit conducted by the University of Alberta Academic Women's Association examining award recipients from 1968-2016 revealed the full extent of the systemic inequities inherent throughout the suite of awards at the University of Alberta including a stark lack of diversity in genders and race of nominees and recipients, and a lack of diversity in the Faculty (or Unit) of the nominees and recipients (see Historical Diversity Data tables in the Appendix). To examine this more closely, the Provost initiated a formal review of awards.

Purpose

Following an open call for members, a Working Group was established to perform a review of the awards that fall under the purview of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) (the Faculty Excellence and University Teaching Awards) through the lenses of equity, diversity, and inclusivity. The diverse Working Group included fulsome representation of various perspectives, beliefs, genders, and values held by members of University of Alberta campuses.

Mandate

The Working Group's mandate was to:

1) Identify **Desired Outcomes** of the awards review;
2) Identify **Barriers** within the *nomination* and *adjudication* processes;
3) Provide **Recommendations to ameliorate pervasive systemic barriers within the Faculty Excellence Awards and the University Teaching Awards**

Desired Outcomes

After much discussion and reflection, the Working Group identified the following desired goals and considerations:

- *The University of Alberta's Awards and Recognition Culture will strive to:*
  - ensure consideration for Indigenous initiatives (such as languages, values, ways of knowing and being) and equity, diversity, and inclusion;
  - Engage thoughtfully with change, and listen to how our community is willing to experience the discomfort of change;
  - use awards to help dismantle barriers to inclusion;
  - highlight ways to share varied knowledges, skills, values, and dispel stereotypes, biases, and assumptions.

- *We will attend to Excellence by*:
  - demonstrating and celebrating "excellence" (with or without awards);
  - demonstrating learning, unlearning, and relearning around interpretations about "excellence";
  - thinking of ways to reimagine, redefine, expand our understandings of *excellences* (what, who, why);
  - shifting to inclusive excellence: move forward on opening up the awards to allow for a narrative about different forms of "excellence."

- *Our Values and Intentions with Awards and Recognition are:*
  - to uphold the institutional values as stated in the strategic plan [For the Public Good](#):
    - Above all, we value **intellectual integrity, freedom of inquiry and expression**, and the **equality and dignity of all persons** as the foundation of ethical conduct in research, teaching, learning, and service.
    - We value **excellence** in teaching, research, and creative activity that enriches learning experiences, advances knowledge, inspires engaged citizenship, and promotes the public good.

- We value **learners** at all stages of life and strive to provide an intellectually rewarding educational environment for all.
- We value **academic freedom** and institutional autonomy as fundamental to open inquiry and the pursuit of truth.
- We value **diversity, inclusivity, and equity** across and among our people, campuses, and disciplines.
- We value **creativity and innovation** from the genesis of ideas through to the dissemination of knowledge.
- We value the **history and traditions** of our university, celebrating with pride our people, achievements, and contributions to society.

- respect for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples;
- to clarify the values we wish people to embody as the institutional values, and to recognize such embodiment with associated awards and recognitions;
  - in such a way our values will be showcased through people in the ways that are meaningful to them;

- to show/message our values (all of them; teaching and beyond, beyond classroom teaching; service);
- to be intentional about what we are celebrating and reflect our values;
- to honor the work we do (showing appreciation and valuing);
- to demonstrate expertise we have as an institution; and
- to support institutional principles (as stated in the [2019 Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity](#), pg. 5):
  - Diversity,
  - Equity,
  - Inclusion,
  - Human Rights,
  - Equality (substantive),
  - Intersectionality, and
  - Accessibility.

- ***Recognition is an important aspect of:***
  - welcoming people to: feel seen, and be seen; to feel heard, and be heard; to feel understood (esp. Junior colleagues), and be understood; to feel recognized, and be recognized; and
  - publicly recognizing the value of teaching, service, and research.

- ***Reflection and Growth are important processes in professional development to:***
  - encourage reflection on teaching (reflective and reflexive);
  - demonstrate growth in our teaching and service; and
  - serve an opportunity to strengthen CVs.

- *Collaboration is often a part of our work, and we need to:*
    - acknowledge the collective and shared nature of teaching and research;
    - acknowledge that awards have the capability to 'uplift the whole people'; and
    - recognize collaborations in teaching, learning, research, and service.

- *Community should be represented through:*
    - awards, and the notion of excellence should be tied to how it uplifts, enables robust and rich research and learning within our communities;
    - formal and public recognition of the communities who partner with the University;
    - better consideration of citizenship and community-based activities; and
    - consideration of the impact to communities--why does it matter?

- *Administrative Process Revisions:*
    - review self-nominations--allow or disallow?
    - modify nomination process to reduce barriers; and
    - staged application process (e.g., expression of interest then submission of a full application).

Gaps

The Working Group identified the following as **types of work, teaching, service, and research that are not currently being recognized, or are not as prevalent as they should be**:
- emotional labor;
- community work;
- educational leadership for the senior awards;
- the impact nominees have had on others to inspire and improve others' teaching;
- teaching (educational) innovations that have impacted the applicant and others at the university and beyond where applicable; and
- community engaged and Indigenous approaches to research and teaching.

The Working Group also identified **gaps in representation throughout awards:**
- members of equity-denied groups (e.g., Indigenous, BPOC, members of disability communities, members of 2SLGBTQI communities, women);
- those on leave (e.g., parental, medical, disability, compassionate)
- Indigenous Elders;
- community;
- graduate students; and
- individuals where English is not their first language (e.g., Francophone).

Awards Procedures

The Working Group was tasked with reviewing the teaching awards under the [Awards for Faculty Excellence](#) and [Awards for Teaching Excellence](#). After careful review, the following considerations were identified:

- Should the award be continued??
  - Why or why not?

- What should change in the various sections of the descriptions?
  - Language (to be more inclusive),
  - Eligibility,
  - Nomination process,
  - Application process:
    - Are all the elements required?
    - Can other forms of evidence be submitted?

  - Deadline and submission, and
  - Selection process.

- Should new awards be established??
  - Why or why not?
  - What would the award recognize, and what would be the eligibility criteria?

Barriers

During their review, the Working Group closely examined how the current nomination processes (procedures and criteria) and administration of the awards suites create barriers to members of the academy, Departments, and Faculties. The identified barriers are outlined below.

Structural Barriers

Nomination Procedure

- Nomination processes can be arduous and requires support to complete:
  - Ask for letters of reference (multiple touch points to get them on time);
  - Student evaluations (search, find, engage someone to analyze, present data[1]);
  - Need to work closely with nominee to get their pieces;

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[1] Ratings of instruction can contain embedded inequities in student evaluation and perception, which can disproportionally affect people in equity-denied groups, and in recognition of this aspect to data, there is mandated need for multifaceted evaluation of teaching though various employment agreements.

- Formatting and integrating (time intensive; staff person available in some cases); and
- Constrained by limited resources (manpower, knowledge, and/or time).

- Lack of available support, and resources, potential nominees do not perceive themselves as being eligible or qualified (e.g., Chairs are in a good position to know faculty members' work).
- Service work is not recognized - how can we ensure the work of nominators is seen as valuable work and a contribution to the institution?
  - Many equity-denied groups lack recognition for their:
    - Additional informal mentorship to students who are also members of equity-denied groups, as part of their teaching and research roles; and
    - Additional community service.

- Rhetorical aspect to applications - take a certain kind of experience to know how to create a successful nomination package.

Administration of Award *(Adjudication Process)*

- Who is adjudicating the awards? Have they considered and applied evidence-based equity, diversity, and inclusivity and anti-bias best practices before and during the adjudication process?
- Adjudication committees are not reflective of the community.
- Some members of the academy are asked to sit on several committees, multiple times, and are burned out.
- Lack of feedback about nomination packages for nominators.
- Biases held by nominators and reviewers.

Additional Structural Barriers

- Faculty and instructors who are Black, or people of color, are more likely to have precarious employment (short term contracts) and this limits career progress and also eligibility for awards. Historical racism results in the advantaging of faculty who are white and disadvantaging faculty who are Indigenous, Black, or people of colour.
- Other structural barriers result in other forms of exclusion, for example ableism and sanism can disproportionally affect queer/gender non-binary faculty and instructors.
- Concept of 'visible minority' contributes to stereotypes and racism—there needs to be a shift, and some education, in how we talk about one another in respectful ways.
- Access to teaching opportunities can limit access to awards (e.g., graduate students who don't have access to TAships).
- Not all the institutional values seem to be EDI focused.
- There are inequities in course allocations, big vs. small classrooms. Also some courses receive more attention than others.
- How awards are communicated out; who gets to hear about them, access to information

as a kind of privilege.
- Homogenizing equity seeking groups in ways that erases embedded inequalities within and across groups.
- Exclusionary practices and minimal mentorship of equity seeking groups.
- How we recognize different teaching contributions is often not accounted for in the qualifying criteria (e.g., course development).
- Perceived value to awards; for some, awards are not considered "newsworthy" on an institutional level, or they are perceived to be unattainable so they self-select out of the processes.

Cultural Barriers

- Over time, because 'major' award winners tend to win IN faculty first, lack of structural capacity doubly impacts our ability to see Indigenous studies award winners.
- Service and mentorship not considered or valued as highly as teaching and researching in awards.
- "Excellence" is defined differently in different contexts.
- Some people in the BPOC community have experienced so much racism that it can become internalized and they are less likely to self-promote, approach people to assist with nominations, or it weakens their confidence in applying for awards (negative perceptions of self-promotion for certain groups, Imposter syndrome and/or humility in relation to self-nomination).
- Procedural unfairness - perceived and actual.

Political Barriers

- Larger Faculties have more members to sit on the committees and have 'played the game' for longer, better ensuring favorable outcomes.
- Precarious employment - contract instructors and graduate students engaged in teaching often don't have the time to spend on processes with no guarantees of compensation.
- Impact on hiring and promotions for future positions.
- Political and social capital are often required to receive nominations.
- Inequity of who is recognized (some have to prove their worth more than others).
- Power relations (e.g., within ranks of Faculty).
- Internal department politics that privileges individuals from certain cliques—oftentimes to which equity-seeking groups do not belong.
- Social capital begets more social capital, how can we provide 'incubator' environments/resources for new faculty or faculty who work in disciplines that are less visible and powerful?

Recommendations

After careful consideration and deliberation, the Working Group identified the following recommendations.

Revision to Nomination Process

- Establish guidelines for self-nomination.
- Develop a method/process for nominators to account for their labour/mentorship/sponsorship (especially where members of equity deserving/denied communities are involved).
- Provide mentorship to novice applicants, nominees, and nominators.
- Revise calls for nominations to reflect the new vision for inclusive excellence.
- Self-nominations - should they be disallowed? / Implement an initial self-nomination process to increase the applicant pool.
- Broaden thinking about the "ideal" nominee.
- Revise to reduce the burden of applying to some awards.
- Include clarifying language and provisions around awards and leaves of absence.

Revision to Nomination Package

- Ask for letters of reference (anonymize letter writers).
- Reflections on student evaluations.
- Application process: checkbox for applying "as a team" or "alone".
- Applicants should demonstrate EDI practices in the classrooms for all the awards; require attention to EDI in the nomination process and package.
- Invite applications in languages other than English (e.g., French, Indigenous languages).
  - Translation costs should be provided by the institution.

- Create space for reflections on teaching / reflexive practice as part of the submission.

Revision to Adjudication Process

- Streamlining the nomination procedure at the faculty level to make sure all eligible applicants are considered.
- Ensuring that adjudicating committees are diverse and trained on best adjudicating practices.
- Consider how to better assess the work of faculty and instructors from equity-denied groups.
- Maternity leave provisions and provision for other leaves.

Other Recommendations

1. Reflecting on the Current Portfolio of Awards

For example, consider increasing the number of awards given that they have not kept pace with the growth of faculty over the years; consider creating new awards to reflect changing institutional priorities and identify 'missing' areas (e.g., community award, Indigenous Education and Research Award); consider how awards cover various career stages (e.g., early-stage career, graduate student awards).

- Identify missing awards and develop necessary criteria and procedures.
- Increase the number of awards where applicable, in particular, the Provost's Award for Early Achievement (e.g., increase possibility for more awards at all ranks).
- Consider creating specific awards for equity−denied groups.

2. Recognizing Concrete Ways to Mentor, Sponsor, and Support Award Nominees

For example, what can Chairs / Deans do to: sponsor /mentor faculty; recognize diverse forms of excellence; what types of networks of support and mentorship need to be and can be created.

- Chair or Dean School sessions - sponsoring faculty, recognizing different forms of excellence, making way for a different way of thinking, forestall the reproduction of old ways of thinking, value difference instead of sameness.
- Networks of support / mentors: encouragers.
- Develop support for nominees, especially in instances where self-nominations will be permitted.

3. Raising Awareness of Awards and What / Who We are Celebrating

For example, holding a symposium on teaching awards; being intentional about what is being celebrated and values reflected in our awards; learning about who awards are named for / or consider renaming; define and think intentionally about what the university is trying to accomplish with an awards culture.

- Define what the University community is collectively trying to accomplish in creating an awards culture.
- Develop a 'handbook' based on this work for other units to use as they re-evaluate their own awards.

Conclusions

The Working Group identified numerous **Desired Outcomes** and **Barriers** within the *nomination* and *adjudication* processes, and created a number of **Recommendations**.

- The range and variety of challenges associated with barriers is of critical importance in rethinking the re-design of awards–in order for University members and community partners to feel like they belong, and are celebrated, considerable changes are required.

Minor Suggested Changes

In some cases, there emerged tangible (and immediately implementable) ideas for how to revise the awards and processes:

1. The language in the award descriptions needs to be changed to be gender neutral and more inclusive.

2. It is evident that accountability for who is, and how they are nominated, should be included in the awards nomination process (the exemplar is what has been incorporated into the Vice-President (Research and Innovation) Internal Awards and Recognitions Procedures–and such changes will be applied to all awards reviewed herein).

3. Changes related to Governance, requiring General Faculties Council approval, such as:

   a. Updating the policies to reflect inclusive excellence:

      i. [Awards for Teaching Excellence Policy](#)
      ii. [Awards for Faculty Excellence Policy](#)

Major Suggested Changes

1. Some major changes will need to be undertaken with respect to the UAPPOL Procedures for the award descriptions, to be approved by the Provost & Vice-President Academic:

   a. Faculty Excellence Awards
   b. Teaching Excellence Awards

2. In many other cases, potential changes will need to be built from the ground up:

   a. There should be additional awards for:
      i. Indigenous Teaching and Research;
      ii. Communities;
      iii. Early career faculty and staff.

b. A new, two-stage nomination process should be explored to reduce the burden of nomination package creation.

      i. Provide support (either a website, or personnel) to potential nominees, or nominators.

3. The idea of creating one adjudication committee for all the awards in each award suite should be explored. The training of the adjudication committee members should include:

    a. Bias awareness training;
    b. Assessing work of individuals, or teams, in diverse contexts (e.g., Math, Music, Community Research, and Clinical Education).

Communications

Planned changes should be widely and clearly identified and communicated (e.g., UAPPOL Policies and Procedures, award descriptions, nomination procedures, nomination process, and adjudication process).

There should be awareness, and dedication, to having an open mind and asking for feedback prior to going live, and for making adjustments on a regular basis (concomitant with communications indicating any changes in awards or associated processes).

A communication plan should be developed in consultation with the Office of the Vice-President (External Relations).

In consideration of other work being done across the institution, for example within UAPPOL Policies and Procedures, the changes in awards related to teaching should better align with the [Effective Teaching Framework](), which is embedded in the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation (TLE) Policy Suite. Communication of the alignment of awards and new UAPPOL Policies and Procedures should be alongside support provided, for example, Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) resources on multifaceted-evaluation of teaching (which will be mapped to the Effective Teaching Framework in time).

Appendix A: Membership

Members	
John Nychka Vice-Provost (Learning Initiatives) Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	Chair
Evelyn Hamdon Senior Advisor, Equity and Human Rights Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	EDI Scholar
Chris Andersen Dean, Faculty of Native Studies	Dean
David Draper Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union (SU)	2020 - 21 Vice-President (Academic), SU
Abner Monteiro Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union (SU)	2021 - 22 Vice-President (Academic), SU
Sachiketha Reddy Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association (GSA)	2020 - 21 Vice-President (Academic), GSA
Kathy Haddadkar Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association (GSA)	2021 - 22 Vice-President (Academic), GSA
Bukola Salami Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing	Academic Staff Member
Andy Knight Professor, Faculty of Arts	Academic Staff Member
Parker Lieb (Leflar) Education Facilitator Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights	Support Staff Member
Jennifer Tupper Dean, Faculty of Education	Dean
Karen D. Hughes Professor, Faculty of Arts and Alberta School of Business	Academic Staff Member; EDI scholar

Members	
Carol S. Hodgson Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry	Academic Staff Member
Crystal Gail Fraser Assistant Professor, Faculties of Arts and Native Studies	Academic Staff Member
James Kariuki Associate Dean (Teaching) & Professor, Augustana	Associate Dean (Teaching); Academic Staff Member
Deanna Davis Senior Lead, Educational Curriculum Developer Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)	Resource Member
Tommy Mayberry *(he/she/they)* Executive Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning	Senior Administrative Member; EDI Scholar
Theresa Curry Financial Officer Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	Resource Member
Andrea Patrick Selection and Reviews Initiatives Manager Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	Resource Member
Suzanne French Portfolio Initiatives Coordinator Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	Resource Member
Carley Roth Portfolio Initiatives Manager Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	Resource Member

Appendix B: Awards Grid (2019)

#	AWARD	Since appointment @ UofA	Assistant	Associate	Full	Teaching	Research	Leadership	Fund	Adjudication Coordination
			RANK*			AREA			ADMIN	
1	Provost's Award for Achievement of Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching	< 5 yr							Endowment--Special Teaching Fund	UTAC
2	Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching	> 5 yr							Endowment--Special Teaching Fund	UTAC
3	Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award								Endowment--Special Teaching Fund	UTAC
4	Vargo Teaching Chair								Endowment Fund for the Future (EFF)	Office of the Provost
5	McCalla Professorship								Endowment Fund for the Future (EFF)	Office of the Provost
6	Martha Cook Piper Prize	< 10 yr							Martha Cook Piper Endowment Fund	Office of the Vice President Research
7	CRC Tier II								External	External (NSERC)
8	Petro-Canada Young Investigator Award	< 8 yr							Petro-Canada Endowment	Office of the Vice President Research
9	CRC Tier I								External	External (NSERC)
10	NSERC Industrial Research Chair								External	External (NSERC)
11	Henry Marshall Tory Chair								EFF: HM Tory Chairs	Office of the Provost
12	Killam Annual Professorship								Killam Endowment	Office of the Vice President Research
13	CERC								External	External (NSERC)
14	J. Gordin Kaplan Award								Research Initiative Fund	Office of the Vice President Research
15	UofA Distinguished Professor	> 10							Base Operating Funds	Office of the Provost
16	University Cup	> 10 (20 total)							Base Operating Funds	Office of the Provost
17	Killam Memorial Chair (Engineering and/or Science)								Killam Endowment--VPA	Office of the Vice President Research

* All appointments must be full-time academic; multiple ranks show eligibility

J.A. Nychka
Sept. 17, 2019
version 1.0

Appendix C: Historical Diversity Data: Sex[2] (2019)

Award	Males	Females
UofA Distinguished Professors (UADP)	-	2
Centennial Professors		
Previous	1	1
Current	5	5
Henry Marshall Tory Chairs (HMT)		
Previous	3	1
Current	7	5
University Cup	17	8
Vargo Teaching Chairs	10	5

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[2] The category for "sex" was used because that was the demographic information available at the time of data collection, and that the working group is aware it does not reflect the gender diversity.

Appendix D: Historical Diversity Data: Awardees' Faculty (2019)

Award	Faculty/Unit	Count
UofA Distinguished Professors	Engineering	1
	School of Public Health	1
Centennial Professors (current)	Arts	1
	Education	1
	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry	2
	Nursing	1
	Science	4
	School of Public Health	1
Henry Marshall Tory Chairs (HMT) (current)	Arts	9
	Engineering	1
	Extension	1
	Science	1
University Cup	Arts	7
	Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences	3
	Campus Saint-Jean	1
	Engineering	2
	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry	6
	Law	1
	Science	5
Vargo Teaching Chair	Arts	2
	Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences	1
	Augustana	1
	Business	1
	Education	1
	Engineering	3
	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry	1
	Nursing	1
	Science	4