SUS President's Award Program

Overview

An awards program is being established to recognize exemplary online teaching practice by faculty in the State University System. The Steering Committee, SUS provosts who are responsible for guiding the implementation of the SUS 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education, asks that each institution identify one outstanding faculty member to receive its first President's Award based on evidence of a sustained body of exemplary online teaching practice.

Program Goals

This program seeks to address tactic 1.1.1 of the Strategic Plan:

> *In conjunction with the Florida College System (FCS), create a statewide award system for exceptional online courses.*

President's Award Plan

Each institution identifies one outstanding online faculty member based on evidence of a sustained body of exemplary online teaching practice. Exemplary online teaching practice includes high-quality course design but is focused on effective online instructional delivery methods relevant to student engagement, student learning gains, and student satisfaction.

1. Process and criteria for choosing award winners are at the discretion of each school. Suggestions for criteria that may be customized by each institution are provided below.
2. As a baseline, it is suggested that the faculty considered for recognition have developed one or more **High Quality** courses, as designated through their institution's internal **Florida Quality OnlineCourse Review** process.
3. Recommended criteria for assessing exemplary online **teaching** practice could include, but not be limited to:
   a. Quality course **delivery** across multiple courses or repeated offerings of the same course over time.

b. Teaching Methods: Faculty actions in support of student learning that are beyond typical course delivery. Demonstration of innovative, student-centric practices. Evidence of formative course evaluation leading to creative interventions for improved student outcomes.
4. Categories for evidence of exemplary online teaching can include, but are not limited to:
   a. Student engagement
   b. Learning gains
   c. Student satisfaction

Recognition

Institution-selected faculty are showcased annually as Florida SUS Institutional Online Teaching Award recipients on a webpage of the Board of Governors (Board) site. A new page is added for each awards year. Each of the selected instructors shares their effective teaching practice(s) with other faculty in the manner of their choosing.

Sharing options for award recipients that describe exemplary online teaching methodologies include, but are not limited to:
1. A short video(s) to be made available through the Board site.
2. Sample materials with commentary.
3. Materials made available as OER or through Florida CourseShare.
4. Presentation at the annual TOPkit Workshop or Innovation Summit.

Timeline

It is recognized that the schedule for awards review varies widely across institutions. Because one of the opportunities for disseminating the good teaching practices highlighted by the Presidents' Award recipients is the annual TopKIT/Online Innovation Summit, the timeline outlined below works back from the conference event.
- October 2021 - Customizable criteria are made available to institutions.
- March 2022 - Institutions announce a call for applications (suggested).
- January 2023 - Institutional winners are selected and sent to the Board by January 30.
- February 2023 - Institutions provide a bio, photo, a short video, and teaching artifacts (as appropriate) for the Board website.
- March 2023 - Faculty present at the TOPkit/Innovation Summit (optional)

FAQs

Is this award restricted to full-time faculty?
- The Award eligibility is determined by the individual institution.

What if the suggested timeline does not work with the awards schedule of my institution?
- This is the reason the timeline suggests that the first awards be selected in January of 2023.
- Institutions may wish to select award recipients in April who would be recognized on the Board website the following January.

Starter Criteria for Customization

Institutions have complete control of the awards selection criteria. These criteria should speak to exemplary online teaching practices rather than course design. However, it may be appropriate to include some design elements that demonstrate an "over and above" level that is not covered by Quality Matters or equivalent rubrics. The criteria offered below may be adapted and used or disregarded, based upon the needs of the institution.

Student Engagement

- Instructional methods encourage:
  - A sense of community and peer-to-peer interaction.
  - Building student-student and student-teacher connections.
  - Participation in collaborative problem-solving activities.
  - Leadership opportunities in student learning groups.
  - Active participation in all online activities.
  - An inclusive, supportive, and engaging climate.
- Instructional methods show:
  - Effective use of peer-review assignments (coordination and student preparation).
  - Evidence of effective teacher/learner feedback loop.
  - Use of innovative instructor-created demonstrations, videos, AI/AR, Immersive interactive objects.
  - Use of embedded learning opportunities, i.e. virtual field trips, expert panel discussions/Q&A, research projects, case studies, investigative reports, interviews with experts, and/or globally connected learners.
- Teaching practices support the accessibility needs of students.

- Use of affordability techniques, i.e., creation/curation of open educational resources (OER).
- Consistent and timely guidance for successful outcomes.
- Personalized student-teacher communications.
- The instructor is visibly present throughout the course via frequent text, audio, and/or visual communications.
- The instructor consistently demonstrates enthusiasm for the course subject matter.
- An environment that reflects respect and appreciation for students' diverse identities, life experiences, and backgrounds.

Student Learning Gaines

Evidence is provided to show:
- Creative use of self-directed learning over and above basic design (iterative grading, resubmission of major assignments, low-stakes/practice tests).
- Authentic and varied assessment methods.
- Interventions for improvement in learning gains, i.e., pre/post assessment data, adapting instruction based on students' needs.
- Demonstration/artifacts of student learning impact.
- Use of formative assessments, scaffolded learning techniques, self-checks.
- Use of augmented learning opportunities through technology tools.
- Evidence of increased self-efficacy.

Student Satisfaction

- Artifacts include student survey questions and completion data over multiple semesters.
- Artifacts demonstrating consistently high or growing engagement in learning activities.
- Data indicating student use of self-directed learning techniques.
- Consistent/growing participation in student forums, live events, and/or study groups.
- The instructor demonstrates ongoing changes and improvements based on constructive student feedback.
- The instructor manages issues that arise throughout the semester.
- The instructor models competence with the learning management system, etc. and uses technology appropriately.