

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors and Chairpersons

FROM: Teresa Mastin, Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs

SUBJECT: Simmons Chivukula Award for Academic Leadership 2025-2026

The Simmons Chivukula Award for Academic Leadership is generously sponsored by a gift from Dr. Elizabeth H. Simmons (Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UC San Diego; former MSU Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Development and Dean of Lyman Briggs College) and Dr. R. Sekhar Chivukula (distinguished professor of Physics at UC San Diego, former MSU Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies).

The award is for exemplary work in academic leadership at the ranks of: department chair, school director, assistant dean, or associate dean (individuals must be currently holding one of these positions at the time of nomination). An individual will be selected annually on the basis of consistently demonstrated excellence in academic leadership.

An individual will be selected based on consistently demonstrated excellence in academic leadership in the following ways:

- Demonstrates a commitment to creating effective, equitable and inclusive academic communities.
- Treats others with tact, dignity, respect, and compassion
- Empowers the success and development of others
- Develops and communicates a clear vision for the unit
- Operates from a premise of openness, honesty, and transparency
- Displays awareness of own feelings, behaviors, values, and their potential impact on others appropriate
- Develops networks, partnerships, and collaborations rather than operating primarily alone
- Follows through on commitments, pays attention to detail
- Is dedicated to continuous learning and improvement
- Has served sufficient time in role to demonstrate transformative leadership

Nomination Process

Nominations packets for 2025-26 will be due by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, December 3, 2025 and must be the Qualtrics form [here](#).

The nominations may be submitted by faculty and academic staff, support staff, students, or individuals across these roles. It is anticipated that the strongest packets will have broad, collective support.

Materials to submit

- Letter of nomination (no more than three pages of text, signatures do not count toward page limit)
 - Letter should address the criteria mentioned above with specific examples to show how the candidate exemplifies transformative leadership. Examples should discuss both the cause and effect of a particular instance.
- Candidate's CV
- Candidate's essay on leadership as an MSU administrator, including their philosophy, accomplishments, and impact (no more than 2 pages)
- Letter of support from supervisor/MAU administrator
- Draft citation (approximately 325 words (see tip sheet below))

The recipient will receive a \$2000 award and will be honored in spring 2026.

All-University Awards nominations, including those for the Simmons Chivukula Award for Academic Leadership, will be reviewed for misconduct and violations of University policy to ensure alignment with the [University's Mission and Values](#) prior to being advanced for committee review.

Lastly, a nominee not selected for the Simmons Chivukula Award for Academic Leadership may be resubmit their nomination packet in subsequent award cycle; however, all materials must be updated before resubmitting.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Rundblad at honorifics@msu.edu.

TIPS FOR WRITING DRAFT CITATIONS

(Use this outline as applicable to the award)

IMPORTANT:

Please print name as it should appear in the awards brochure. Draft citations should be approximately 325 words. *If you wish to see examples of draft citations, please contact Katie Rundblad at honorifics@msu.edu.*

The citation will be printed in the program booklet. The citation should be an accurate statement of the person's achievements, but it should also be:

Distinctive. The citations should reflect an honoree's distinction; a relevant tidbit about the person (as opposed to the person's achievements) is helpful.

Creative. Search for unusual and descriptive adjectives, varying cadences and turns of phrase.

Easily understood by a lay audience.

Citations should include such items as:

- A quotation from a student (or a colleague) from the material submitted adds human interest to the citation. Such quotations should be specific rather than general.
- Statements of the person's area of expertise and overall significance of the person's contributions/achievements to the world/the University, especially across disciplines. How far does their influence reach? State? National? International? Public/private sector? What constituent groups?
- Specific ways in which their excellence has been evidenced. Undergraduate, graduate, or both. Extension. Textbooks and curriculum development. Student advising and mentorships. Where do students go after MSU? Support of funding for equipment or scholarships.
- Specific evidence of scholarship and contributions to other areas of the University's mission such as research. Avoid citing numbers of things unless they are really phenomenal. Instead, cite capstone examples. Use layperson's terms where possible, and cite the usefulness or results of the person's work in their largest context. Grants, professional societies, and awards are appropriate here, but only the most significant.
- Other - Professional affiliations, consulting service/outreach. MSU committee service. Again, use only the most significant examples.
- Summary sentence of the person's worthiness for the award.