

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

June 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors, and Chairpersons

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

SUBJECT: Robert F. Banks Award for Institutional Leadership 2026-27

The Robert F. Banks Award for Institutional Leadership is given to a member of the Michigan State University faculty, academic staff, or support staff in recognition of extraordinary and sustained institutional leadership. Up to one award with a stipend of \$3,000 will be conferred.

Faculty, academic specialists, support staff, and students are encouraged to submit nominations. Nominees must demonstrate outstanding institutional leadership in formal and informal roles that advance MSU's commitment to connectivity, quality and inclusion. The award provides acknowledgement of the significant contributions made by Michigan State University faculty, academic staff, and support staff in the multiple dimensions and roles to which they are committed.



Nominees not selected for the award may be resubmitted in a subsequent award cycle. Nominators may request feedback at honorifics@msu.edu.

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See attached for details about the selection criteria and the support materials required to submit nominations. Nominations should be submitted via the [Robert F. Banks Award Nomination Form](#) no later than Monday, November 9, 2026. **NOMINEE DOSSIERS SUBMITTED WITHOUT ALL OF THE REQUIRED MATERIALS WILL BE RETURNED. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me at mastinte@msu.edu or honorifics@msu.edu.

This memorandum and attachments are available on the [All-University Awards website](#).

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. BANKS AWARD FOR INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP 2026-27

The Robert F. Banks Award for Institutional Leadership is designed to recognize the commitment and dedication that MSU faculty, academic staff and support staff leaders demonstrate by their extraordinary and sustained efforts. The award was established in honor and recognition of Dr. Robert F. Banks for his 40 years of service to Michigan State University, including seven years as Dean of James Madison College and 28 years as Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Human Resources.

The award recipient will be recognized at the annual Awards Convocation with an award stipend of \$3,000.ⁱ¹

Nominations

All members of the MSU community—faculty, academic specialists, support staff, and students—are invited to submit nominations. Nominees must have a record of achievement that demonstrates a continuing and sustained commitment to institutional leadership in formal and informal roles.

A nominee must be a current or retired Michigan State University faculty, academic staff or support staff member. Nominees must have at least five years of service at MSU in a leadership role. Retirees are eligible for up to three years following retirement.

Criteria

Final selection of the Institutional Leadership Award will be made by the Provost based on recommendations made by a broadly representative All-University Awards Committee appointed by the President.

The All-University Awards Committee will review and evaluate nominations based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated general vision for change that is advanced in a context of University values.
- Evidence of exceptional, sustained leadership in advancing the University's core values of quality, inclusiveness and connectivity.
- Evidence of fostering partnerships and sharing knowledge across academic and administrative channels.
- Evidence of commitment to University governance which advances priorities in support of the institutional mission.
- Evidence of leadership that results in effective solutions that respect and incorporate the University's values.
- Advancing leadership by example; mentoring and support of colleagues and nurturing emerging leaders.
- Demonstrated professional service to others above self both within MSU and the community.
- Demonstrated honesty and integrity, ethical and moral leadership.
- Evidence of respect and caring for others.

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

Winners receive a stipend of \$3,000. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 eliminated the general exclusion relating to awards made in recognition of educational or scientific achievement. As a result, all MSU award stipends are now taxable income and subject to withholdings and FICA.

In addition to the specific requirements and qualifications for each All-University Award, it is expected that all recipients will have demonstrated behavior over their career that reflects the core values of Michigan State University. Specifically, as stated in the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities policy:

As the primary functions of an academic community, learning, teaching, scholarship, and public service must be characterized by a fundamental commitment to academic freedom and maintained through reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, mutual respect and openness to constructive criticism and change. Faculty members, as central to this community, serve as scholars pursuing the search for knowledge and its free expression, as teachers instructing students, and as professionals and citizens contributing special knowledge and skills through public service and community participation. In the performance of all these functions faculty members are held accountable to the University, in accordance with established policies and procedures.

TIPS FOR WRITING DRAFT CITATIONS

(Use this outline as applicable to the award)

IMPORTANT:

Please print the 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 reach out to 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 (e.g., "An advisor who is also broadly versed in music, literature, and the fine arts, Ms. X.")

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. "One of the most important things Ms. X communicates is her conviction that service in a university can be the heart of an honorable way of life." is preferable to "She was the best advisor I've ever had." Don't overlook humorous quotations.
- Statements of the person's area of expertise and the 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 her/his excellence has been evidenced. Undergraduate, graduate, or both. Extension. Advancing diversity. Textbooks and curriculum development. Student advising and mentorship. Where do students go after MSU? Support for 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 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.

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CHECKLIST

- ☐ **I. Completed DATA FORM** (to be completed via the [Robert F. Banks Award Nomination Form](#)).
- ☐ **II. STATEMENT OF NOMINATION (No more than three (3) pages)** must include the following information:
 - A. Description of the significance and value of their leadership contributions.
 - B. Evidence of the nominee's long-term commitment to and fulfillment of all applicable selection criteria (page 2).
- ☐ **III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**
 - A. Background information on the nominee.
 - B. Description of the nominator's association with the nominee.
 - C. Description of the nominee's leadership role.
- ☐ **IV. LETTERS OF SUPPORT (At least three but no more than five).**

Letters written by faculty, academic staff, support staff, students, or other individuals either inside or outside the university are accepted and should describe how the nominee's specific contributions relate to the award selection criteria (see page 2 for criteria).
- ☐ **V. CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE.**
- ☐ **VI. CITATION.** Please enclose a citation of approximately 325 words to appear in the awards brochure if the nominee is selected. Be sure to list nominee's name as s/he wishes it to appear in the awards brochure and be sure to list joint appointments, with the primary appointment listed first.

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