

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

June 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors and Chairpersons
Quality in Undergraduate Teaching Award Recipients 1992-2026

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

SUBJECT: Donald F. Koch Quality in Undergraduate Teaching Award
2026-2027

This award recognizes teachers who take pride in and are committed to quality undergraduate teaching and who demonstrate substantial continuing involvement in undergraduate education. All current fixed-term academic specialists with a primary teaching assignment and tenure-system faculty with at least three years of teaching experience at Michigan State University are eligible for nomination. One award is given annually with a stipend of \$2,500.

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to submit nominations. Each college should appoint a committee to submit up to two nominations. The college nominating committee must be representative of the campus community, including academic discipline, academic level, race and gender; it must also include student representation. Each of the gender, racial/ethnic, persons with disabilities, and sexual orientation faculty groups are invited to submit up to two nominations. The All-University Selection Committee is composed of faculty and students appointed by the provost.

Nominations are based on commitment to and evidence of outstanding **UNDERGRADUATE** teaching, including but not limited to 100- and 200-level courses. Nominees should demonstrate a combination of talent, creativity, and enthusiasm for teaching reflected in their teaching style and student interactions. The purpose of this award is to recognize truly gifted undergraduate teachers — those who have demonstrated that teaching undergraduates is a priority.



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Criteria

All-University Awards nominations, including those for the Donald F. Koch Award for Quality in Undergraduate Teaching, 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.

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.

As nomination materials are collected, confirm that the following criteria are addressed:

- passion and enthusiasm for the subject matter/area of study
- concern for students, in and out of the classroom, including as individuals who deserve acknowledgement and respect
- appreciation of national and international diversity
- provision for student participation to ensure active involvement in the learning process and to maximize active learning
- demonstration of well-developed, organized, and sequenced instruction that explains major course concepts
- encouragement of critical analysis, problem solving, and divergent points of view
- promotion of writing and communication skills as part of the instruction
- prompt feedback on coursework and projects
- linkage with other disciplines
- incorporation of research in the discipline and in teaching

A nominee not selected for the Quality in Undergraduate Teaching Award may be resubmitted in the subsequent award cycle. Nominators should contact honorifics@msu.edu for committee feedback if the nominee is not selected for the award.

Nominees originally submitted by the college must be resubmitted through the college; if resubmitted by the college, the nomination is included in the maximum number of two college nominations. It is important to request committee feedback when assembling the candidate's nomination materials. The strong preference of the All-University Awards Committee is to receive support documents clearly linked to the specific award. Failure to do so will likely impact the nominee's candidacy.

See the attached for additional details about the materials required to submit nominations. Please forward nominee dossiers to the **Office of the Provost via the [Donald F. Koch Nomination Form](#) by Monday, November 9, 2026.** **NOMINEE DOSSIERS SUBMITTED WITHOUT ALL OF THE REQUIRED MATERIALS WILL BE RETURNED.**

Please do not hesitate to contact honorifics@msu.edu with questions. This memorandum and the attachments are on the [All-University Awards website](#).

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.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
DONALD F. KOCH QUALITY IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD
CHECKLIST

DOSSIERS SUBMITTED WITHOUT ALL OF THE REQUIRED MATERIALS WILL BE RETURNED.

- 1. Completed DATA FORM** (https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5cGpNaOiRFLSccu).
- 2. NOMINATOR'S WRITTEN STATEMENT** addressing the instructions and criteria (pages 1-2/Heading 1 titled CRITERIA) with illustrations of **current** teaching (**No more than five pages**). The letter should be illustrative and include disciplinary context on what makes the candidate most deserving.
- 3. LETTERS OF SUPPORT. (No more than three).** (APPLYING SPECIFICALLY TO THE AWARD). Include student letters. In constructing letters of support, see instructions and criteria (pages 1-2/Heading 1 titled CRITERIA).
- 4. CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE.**
- 5. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT.** (One page only). The candidate provides this.
 - a. Candidate's teaching philosophy.
 - b. Describe its implementation.
 - c. How do you determine its effectiveness?
 - d. If not effective, how do you make modifications? Describe modifications.
- 6. TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES.** One-page summary of nominee's normal teaching responsibilities, including size and type of courses (undergraduate majors and non-majors), number of hours of direct contact with students each week, and number of hours teaching assistants teach nominee's classes each week.
- 7. TEACHING SCHEDULE** at MSU. Please complete the "Teaching Table" for the last six courses taught or 3-6 semesters, including summer when relevant. When unit-specific forms other than SPLS are used, fill out the table as completely as possible and provide a summary of students' evaluation of the nominee's teaching (no more than 1-2 pages). Do not send unit-specific individual forms or individual SPLS forms.
- 8. SUMMARY SHEETS from Student Perceptions of Learning Survey (SPLS)** for at least TWO classes but not more than three, or a summarization of the results from other appropriate student evaluation instruments. The summary should include the dates the evaluation forms were administered. Please do not send individual unit-specific forms or individual SPLS forms.
- 9. DRAFT CITATION.** Draft citation of 325 words for awards brochure. List candidate's name as they wish it to appear in the awards brochure and list joint appointments, with the primary appointment listed first.
- 10. ONE AND ONLY ONE DOCUMENT USED BY THE CANDIDATE IN TEACHING.** For example, course syllabus, course outline, student assignment, student quiz, or examination. No books, journals, offprints, or journal articles.

ⁱ Please indicate joint appointments. List the primary appointment first.