

Faculty members recognized for excellence with university teaching awards

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Tulane University 2021 Teaching Awards (Video by Marianna Barry)

At the end of the spring semester, Tulane University offers [university teaching awards](#) to four faculty members — two for excellence in undergraduate teaching and two for graduate and professional teaching.

The Suzanne and Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellows Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching are awarded to two full-time faculty members for extraordinary achievements in undergraduate teaching, student advising and instructional improvement and development as well as success in making distinctive contributions to teaching and influencing students beyond their formal role of teaching. The President's Award for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Teaching is given to two full-time faculty members who have a record of excellence in their teaching and learning and an ongoing commitment to educational brilliance.

(Photos by Rusty Costanza)

WEISS PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWS AWARD

Julie Alvarez, senior professor of practice in the Department of Psychology at the School of Science and Engineering, strives to make her classes engaging and enjoyable in order to maximize students' learning potential. One current student wrote, "Dr. Alvarez was very engaging and always presented the material in an interesting and understandable manner. It was evident that Dr. Alvarez enjoyed teaching the material and wanted all of her students to succeed." A former student wrote in a supporting letter, "Dr. Alvarez has continued to teach me and encourage me far beyond the walls of Tulane's lecture halls, and I feel truly grateful to have had the privilege to cross paths with her during my time at the university."

, WEISS PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWS AWARD

Roxanne Dávila, senior professor of practice in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the School of Liberal Arts, aims to bring curricular innovation to the Spanish Language Program, of which she is also the director. The Teaching Awards

review committee noted that Dávila transitioned all of the Spanish language courses online in a short time and ensured that students thrived in the new learning environment. One student wrote, “She made class enlightening and enjoyable no matter the circumstances. Also, she showed true compassion for her students and made sure we knew she was there for us no matter the situation.” Another supporting letter read, “She is devoted to giving every Spanish student a compelling experience that will help them appreciate the importance of language to culture and society.”

, PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL TEACHING

David Franklin, professor of the practice in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the School of Medicine, adapts his courses and teaching strategies so students can become learners who take active roles in their education and learning. The Teaching Awards review committee noted that Franklin provides opportunities for various types of assessments so students can better understand the material and what they need to improve on. One student wrote, “The thing that Dr. Franklin does best is clearly demonstrate his passion for our learning. He provides us with all of the materials that we need, sets up the mock exam the day before the real exam, and makes it abundantly clear that he will help us in any way possible.”

, PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL TEACHING

Mark VanLandingham, Thomas C. Keller Professor at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, believes it’s important for students to get out of their comfort zones, a fact emphasized by the Teaching Awards review committee. A former student who completed undergraduate and master’s degrees at Tulane recognized VanLandingham’s mentorship by writing, “Not only has he provided great guidance and support to me but he has also helped me realize my passion for research. He continues to set an example for me on how to be a rigorous researcher, a meticulous teacher, and a public health professional.” A current postdoctoral student wrote of VanLandingham, “He has created a safe, open environment for me to develop and present my research ideas with his respect, encouragement, and critical comments.”