



## **Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award**

### **2015-2016 Guidelines and Process**

#### **Purpose of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award**

Graduate student teaching assistants (TAs) play a vital role in enhancing the teaching mission of the University. The Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (OTAA) is designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching and to recognize the contributions that graduate students make to the teaching and learning mission of Florida State University.

Selection will be based on the quality of teaching documented in a portfolio as well as on a letter of recommendation. OTAA recipients will receive a \$750 cash award and recognition at the annual University-wide *Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence* at **3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13, 2016.**

#### **Nomination**

- Graduate student TAs from all FSU academic units may be nominated
- All FSU faculty/administrators, FSU staff who work closely with TAs, and FSU students who are enrolled in classes that have TAs can submit a nomination (self-nominations or peer nominations are not allowed)

#### **Eligibility**

- Must be a FSU degree-seeking graduate student hired as a teaching assistant (face-to-face or online) and in good academic standing
- Must have been a TA at FSU for two semesters, one of which must have been during Spring 2015, Summer 2015, or Fall 2015
- Previous OTAA recipients and current PIE Teaching Associates are not eligible for an award

#### **Award Criteria**

- Facilitates and inspires student learning
- Shows evidence of continued improvement of teaching practice
- Engages in professional growth and leadership
- Provides evidence that he/she has unique qualities that set him/her apart as a TA

## Stage 1: Nominations

Nominations must be submitted via the online nomination form on the PIE website by **11:59 p.m. on Monday, January 11, 2016.**

All nominees will be notified of their nomination and the process for the OTAA by email on or before **Friday, January 15, 2016.**

## Stage 2: Nominee Documentation

Once a graduate student TA has been notified of his or her nomination, in order to be considered for the award, he or she must submit the electronic documentation packet (portfolio) described below by **11:59p.m. on Sunday, February 14, 2016.** The supporting documentation should be submitted electronically, in a single PDF file, on or before the deadline, through **FSU Dropbox.** The submission instructions are provided in Stage 3.

The committee expects that a real personality will emerge from the portfolio materials. All of the elements should demonstrate how the nominee practices what he or she does with clear examples which demonstrate that learning occurred. The nominee must make the important links between philosophy, process, and practice. The nominee must submit:

- One letter of recommendation from a department faculty member (**not peers**). If possible, the letter should be written by someone who has observed the nominee's work as an instructor and can speak to what sets him or her apart as a TA. The recommender must save the letter as a **PDF** with the nominees' last name\_recommender last name and send it to [pie-info@fsu.edu](mailto:pie-info@fsu.edu) as an email attachment. The subject line of the email should read, "**ATTN: FSU Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards Committee**".

*[\\*Please note: The letter of recommendation is considered as part of the portfolio and should be submitted before 11:59 PM on Sunday, February 14, 2016.](#)*

- SEVEN items combined into an electronic portfolio document. Please arrange all documents in the order outlined below. (Instructions are available at [pie.fsu.edu](http://pie.fsu.edu).)

### 1) Cover page:

- full name
- college/department/degree working toward
- anticipated graduation date
- the number of students you taught in Spring 2015 through Fall 2015
- teaching position (instructor of record, lab instructor, etc.)

\*There are two categories to ensure that each nominee is compared with other TAs whose responsibilities are comparable:

Complete Responsibility (A): The TA defines the specific course content and measures of student achievement while following general guidelines, such as course descriptions, broad reading lists, certain required assignments or types of assignments. Even though there is overall supervision by a course supervisor, the TA has very wide latitude and discretion in conducting the class.

Partial Responsibility (B): The TA has more limited choices about content and assignments, and supervision is more direct. Teaching discussion sections associated with large lectures or teaching laboratories associated with either large or small enrollment courses are good examples of this category.

- 2) **CV:** Please include an up-to-date curriculum vitae that emphasizes items pertaining to teaching. Identify the professional development and leadership activities that have contributed to your success as a TA (i.e. presenting at conferences, attending workshops, receiving awards, serving on committees, participating in civic organizations, reading/self-directed learning).
- 3) **Teaching Philosophy Statement:** This statement must be no more than one page single spaced, 12-pt., 1-inch margins. It is an introduction to the nominee as an instructor and to his/her teaching portfolio. It provides an opportunity for the nominee to link all other parts of his/her portfolio. It serves as the conceptual framework for the nominee's teaching and his/her portfolio.
- 4) **Narrative – Course I**
- 5) **Narrative – Course II**

Arrange these two narratives as follows:

Course 1: Course Number/Title/#Students

Section one	Teaching Responsibilities
Section two	Approach to Teaching and Learning
Section three	Innovative Teaching Practices
Section four	Outcomes
Section five	Reflective Statement/Plan for Growth

Course 2: Course Number/Title/#Students

Section one	Teaching Responsibilities
Section two	Approach to Teaching and Learning
Section three	Innovative Teaching Practices
Section four	Outcomes
Section five	Reflective Statement/Plan for Growth

The course narratives can be for **any** two courses in which the nominee was or is a TA at FSU. The two courses can be either two different courses or the same course taught during two different semesters.

Each of the sections below (teaching responsibilities, approach to teaching and learning, etc.) should be 200-500 words. Narratives should demonstrate what makes the nominee's teaching at FSU stand out.

- **Teaching Responsibilities:** A brief description of the course and the nominee's responsibilities for the course.
- **Approach to Teaching and Learning:** Describes what methods the nominee used to facilitate student learning in the course. This should include specific, concrete examples and may include references to appendices if desired.

- **Innovative Teaching Practices:** Artifacts, supplemental items, and/or narrative that the nominee wishes to include as part of his/her overall course narrative. Nominees should include a brief statement for each item of why you included the item and why this item is an accurate representation of you as a teacher. The nominee should include one or two items per course that best reflect the argument he/she wishes to make about why his/her teaching at FSU stands out from that of other TAs.
- **Outcomes (Part I & II):**

**Part I.** Provide evidence of faculty/peer/student feedback on your teaching

  - If you have SPOT/SPCI student evaluations then list the course and include a copy of the SPCI report and reflect on the meaning of this type of evaluation.
  - If you do not use the university standard SPOT/SPCI student evaluations, then include any kind of student/peer/faculty evaluation you have (mid-semester evaluations, peer evaluation, faculty evaluations) and reflect on the meaning of this type of evaluation.

**Part II.** Describe what your students are able to do as a result of your teaching, what strategies you used for assessment, and how you know your students are learning.

  - **Reflective Statement/Plan for Growth:** Describe the effectiveness of your teaching approach, what you learned about your teaching approach, what surprised you, and what you would do differently in the future.
- 6) **Optional Appendices:** Documents/items intended to support the assertions made in the course narratives. Nominees should include no more than five. The nominee can, if desired, include student written comments scanned from the evaluation instrument or other types of student comments. These comments should be chosen carefully. Quality comments describe WHAT the nominee DOES in the classroom that helps students learn, NOT simply that he/she is the best TA. Repetitive comments should be avoided.

**The committee wants to know why the nominee stands out!**

- 7) **Eligibility Form :** (available at [pie.fsu.edu](http://pie.fsu.edu) or click this [direct link](#)) –print, sign, get someone in your department to verify that you have taught two courses at FSU as a TA and that one of those courses was within the following time period (Spring 2015, Summer 2015, or Fall 2015).

### **Stage 3: Submission of Documentation**

The nominee's portfolio must be submitted electronically to FSU Dropbox by **11:59p.m. on Sunday, February 14, 2016**. \*Late or incomplete teaching portfolios will NOT be evaluated.

To submit your portfolio:

1. Go to FSU Dropbox at <https://dropbox.ucs.fsu.edu/>
2. Click the **Drop-off** button

3. In the section of *Information about the Sender*, put down **Your Name** and **Your email** address. Make sure you keep the box at the bottom checked to receive a notification once your file is picked up.
4. In the section of *Information about the Recipient*, put down **PIE** as recipient's **NAME**. For the recipient's email, put down **pie-info** in the box before "@ fsu.edu" (PIE program's email is [pie-in@fsu.edu](mailto:pie-in@fsu.edu)).
5. In the section of *Choose the File(s) you would like to Upload*, click the button **Choose File** and choose your portfolio from your computer. Click the **Drop-off the File(s)** button to complete your drop-off.

### **Stage 4: Award Selection**

Winners will be selected by an interdisciplinary selection committee comprised of faculty and senior graduate student teaching assistants. Awards are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School based upon the recommendations of this committee.

Awards will be announced on **March 29, 2016**.

Award nominees should plan to attend the *Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence* at **3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13, 2016** at the **FSU Alumni Center**.