

Award Tips from Awardees

President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

"Be certain to explain, in concrete terms, how your teaching, your scholarship, and your interactions with students and colleagues alike reflect the university's philosophy of education, its statement of mission and purpose, and its statement on worldview. Before attempting to do this, revisit these statements to ensure your understanding of them is accurate and that your commitment to them is authentic, and that your teaching and scholarship are, in fact, reflective of their intent."

Donald H. Alban Jr., LUR: Undergraduate, 2011-12

"It makes a positive difference for my students when I give them links to good outside resources as well as LUO library resources with examples (e.g. screencasts) in the first two weeks of the term and then ask students to let me know that they have successfully accessed one of the digital sources. Secondly, I ask that all my students confirm that they have read all class announcements to date at the end of each week - this has received a surprising amount of positive feedback and has cut down the number of oversight errors by students. Last, I give incentives for students to post their initial DB responses and initial replies to other students by midweek and Friday, this translates into much more and better discussion boards all around and gives me time to engage more of the students posts in a meaningful way."

David Alexander, LUO: Graduate, 2012-13

"Be honest with yourself... with student feedback, with areas needing improvement, and with areas that you do well. Never forget that good teaching means always growing and learning. Stay current with best practices and take student feedback seriously to make changes to your courses. This keeps the information fresh for students and keeps you energized because content will always seem new (so you don't become stagnant with your practices). Above all else, remember that you are here to make a difference... to be a Champion for Christ in all that you do and say. People are watching..."

Andrea P. Beam, LUR: Graduate, 2012-13

"As an online professor, I utilize technology in unique ways to augment and optimize learning and to expose students to practical applications of more formalized textbook knowledge. By developing a wide range of YouTube videos, Powerpoint presentations, Screencasts, and my own internet website, I try to connect to students in ways that allow them to "peek around the corner" and personally connect with the online professor who resides behind the curtain."

Brian Campbell, LUO: Graduate, 2013-14

"Look back at the assignments, courses, and interactions where you felt like you were really making an academic or spiritual impact on a student's life. If a student bothered to thank you for something you said or did, that is probably a good place to start."

Russ Claxton, LUO: Graduate, 2012-13

"Be yourself. If you feel you are a good teacher, it's probably not because you can imitate someone else's teaching style. You have yours and the more you own the material you teach, the better it comes across to your students. The "how" of what you do may be the best thing to express in your presentation."

Edward A. Edman, LUR: Undergraduate, 2010-11

"I encourage every faculty member to apply – you may be surprised by the things that you do as a faculty member that no one else is doing. This especially is true if you are using technology in a special manner in your classes, whether online or in the traditional classroom. Also, make sure that you demonstrate a balance between teaching innovation with a genuine care for students."

Jessil Fuhr, LUR: Undergraduate, 2013-14

"God has graced each of us with unique talents, ability, and personalities to reach our students (1 Peter 4:10). Consider what gift God has Graced you with and how you use that gift to make a real, tangible difference in your students lives. Then share it by reviewing the University standards, mission statement, and your own student feedback to view how your work uniquely supports your student's academic and spiritual journey."

Linnaya Graf, LUO: Graduate, 2013-14

"Just be yourself and speak from the heart which will make you relatable. Communication from your students will encourage you to focus on the strengths you should talk about when you are applying for this award. Focus on new and fresh ideas you have brought to your field of study and to your classroom that have been positive to students, and perhaps, other faculty members."

Jennifer Anne Hollis, LUO: Undergraduate, 2011-12

"My best advice is to first focus on what makes you unique from so many terrific faculty here at Liberty. You will find this by reading your student feedback... Explain how you engage your students in this unique fashion in the classroom and beyond. Share success stories that demonstrate this unique approach you take in teaching. Ultimately, how have you served your students academically, emotionally and spiritually?"

Bruce Kirk, LUR: Undergraduate, 2012-13

"Demonstrate your knowledge of teaching-learning practices and what fosters online instruction most effective, and then intersperse student comments from course evaluations which demonstrate these practices. Additionally, highlight collaborative efforts, e.g., publications, with students that expose the faculty-student dynamic to the wider audiences beyond Liberty University."

Mark A. Lampert, LUO: Graduate, 2010-11

"As you put together your package, ensure that you identify the many different areas you have accomplished in the last year. Do not be afraid to put hyperlinks to articles written about your accomplishments to help complete your package. These may help you explain more difficult and unique projects you have accomplished and show the level of recognition received in a multitudes of areas."

John Marselus, LUR: Undergraduate, 2013-14

"Focus on the elements where YOU really connect with your students and teaching strategies that fuels that spark which empowers your students to totally engage in the learning process."

David Nemitz, LUO: Graduate, 2010-11

"Focus on what your students say about their experience in your class, because ultimately it is the students who benefit from personal contact and solid feedback. Compile a list of emails and comments from students that reflect what they thought you are doing well, and what is helpful to them."

Deborah Pinkston, LUO: Graduate, 2011-12

"I have found all the faculty at LU to be outstanding and committed to their students and courses. Think of what makes you unique and sets you apart and focus on that for the application."

Danielle R. Plomaritas, LUO: Undergraduate, 2013-14

"The application for the teaching award offers a terrific opportunity for our professors, within their roles of frontline servants, to review their continued adherence to the doctrinal statement of this great institution.... Inherent in this servant- leadership role is to boldly communicate our joy and classroom accomplishments for the purpose of encouraging the entire university team."

Robert F. Ritchie IV, LUR: Undergraduate, 2010-11

"...the soundest piece of advice I can give is to consider the things you have done that have served students and facilitated their growth academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. These are not necessarily things for which you have received a great deal of credit, nor are they those things which are well known or publicized, but rather, the efforts you have genuinely made to serve your students to the best of your ability."

Amanda J. Rockinson-Szapkiw, LUO: Graduate, 2010-11

"Play to your strengths. What is it that is unique to you, to your style of teaching that connects with students? We all have certain teaching approaches in common (give assignments, lecture, discuss, etc.) but what is it about you that sets you apart in the minds of the students, that causes them to react so positively to you and WANT to come to class? Whatever it is, that's what should be the focus of your application."

Stuart H. Schwartz, LUR: Undergraduate, 2011-12

"Provide all the details you can about how you teach the *whole* student—both academically and spiritually... Showcase what you do to reach out and connect to your online students, to form a bond that makes them feel like real students rather than names on a roster. Demonstrate how your teaching methods support the university mission "to develop Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact the world."

Shelah Y. Simpson, LUO: Graduate, 2012-13

"Since graduate courses require a balanced integration of research and teaching, I would advise you demonstrate ways that you actually meet the stated outcomes of your classes. Give evidence that you are a mentor beyond the classroom. Give careful attention to the innovative use of technology in the classroom. Show how you are helping your students write publishable work. Show that you are active in connecting students with scholars in the field."

Samuel C. Smith, LUR: Graduate, 2010-11

"How you define student success conveys a great deal about what you see as important in your instructional goals beyond the formal learning outcomes for your courses. Consider sharing a specific 'success story' about one of your students. How does that student's success represent the impact you intend to make on students' lives?"

Samuel J. Smith, LUR: Graduate, 2011-12

"Read through the student comments on your course evaluations and identify the general themes and comments that keep repeating across courses and terms. Consider organizing your narrative discussion and evidence of your classroom successes using your school's conceptual framework, for example, *Knows, Implements, Believes* (School of

Education).”

Lucinda S. Spaulding, LUO: Graduate, 2011-12

“I recommend potential nominees approach the award in a creative manner by thinking outside the box as much as possible. For instance, instead of thinking of the award from a faculty member’s perspective, spend some time reflecting upon how students perceive the class. This can be done by reviewing past course evaluations and emails sent by students.”

James Swezey, LUO: Graduate, 2014-15

“Start the application process early so that you will have time to flesh out your ideas concerning all that you are doing to enhance student growth. Such a span of time can both help you develop your ideas, while also providing time to incorporate any videos, pictures, and other materials that might illustrate what you do, how it works, and why it is effective.”

David Towles, LUR: Undergraduate, 2011-12

“The President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching may seem intimidating but with faith in God, trust in your work and yourself, God can do the impossible (Luke 1:37).”

Edna C. Udobong, LUR: Graduate, 2014-15

“Be transparent. Share what about your life and instructional practices gives you a true heart for teaching that is consistent with Jerry Falwell’s vision to Train Champions for Christ!”

Dr. Russ Yocum, LUR: Graduate, 2012-13