

RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING ADVISING

One way to promote best practices of advising of graduate and professional students is to sponsor a program or department award that recognizes an outstanding adviser, nominated and selected by the students in the program. All too often the diligent care and hard work of seeing students through from matriculation to graduation goes unnoticed by all but the advisees themselves. While there are several all-University awards, recognition by the students at the program level can be very meaningful.

This award can be conferred on an annual basis, perhaps toward the end of the academic year, and administered locally, with the recipient chosen from the graduate faculty members in your department. The recognition need not be expensive or elaborate.

Some ideas to consider:

- a simple and nicely framed letter, signed by the DGS and chair;
- a small cash award;
- a gift card from the U of M bookstores;
- a plaque suitable for display in the faculty member's office; or
- the adviser's name as part of a permanent display in the department that includes the names of the award's recipients.

To make the award more meaningful, the announcement and presentation of the award can be combined with a year-end departmental event such as a picnic or open house that involves student, staff, and faculty. The program may also wish to post the names and year of adviser award winners on their departmental webpage, and contact University Relations to help publicize the award within the larger U of M community. You may wish to consult with your departmental budget officer regarding gift-giving policies.

Attached for your consideration and use is a sample email message to the students in your program, soliciting nominations and outlining criteria for such an award, along with a nomination form. Please feel free to adapt both of these pieces to make them specific to your department or program.

NOMINATION FORM

OUTSTANDING GRADUATE ADVISER AWARD

(Insert Program/Department Name Here)

ACADEMIC YEAR 201__-201__

Nominee _____

Nominator _____

Submit the following:

1. Completed nomination form.
2. Cover letter from the nominator. The letter, *not to exceed two pages in length*, should succinctly present the following:
 - The nominee's years of advising in the department/program;
 - The number of graduate/professional students advised; and
 - Up to *three specific examples* of
 - a. helping students to set realistic expectations, acquire competencies, stay on track, and overcome personal and professional challenges;
 - b. demonstrating sustained commitment to students through advising in multiple ways, e.g., supporting, mentoring, supervising, etc.; and
 - c. challenging students to go beyond what they thought was possible in academic excellence.
3. Up to three additional letters of support may be submitted, including at least one from a current or former student. Letters of support *should not exceed one page in length*. As with the letter from the nominator, letters of support must provide *specific examples* of the nominee's advising excellence. Letters should be addressed to the Graduate Adviser Awards Committee.
4. *Optional*: Graduate program materials relevant to the nomination. (If materials are submitted, describe the nominee's role in their production or development, e.g., conceptualization, design, writing, editing, etc.)

Submit the documents and refer any questions to:

(Director of Graduate Studies)

Phone: _____

(Address)

E-mail: _____

Deadline: ____/____/201__

Nomination documents on plain white paper, with a single staple in the upper left-hand corner, are preferred. Please do not use special binders, hard covers, tabbed separator pages, etc. Please ensure that type size for all documents in the portfolio is at least 12 pt.

SAMPLE EMAIL TO GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Subject line: Got An Awesome Adviser? Nominate them!

It's easy to nominate your adviser for the Outstanding Adviser Award.

The (_____ department) seeks to recognize a faculty member who is exemplary in their role as a mentor and adviser. The (_____ department) gives this award as a tribute to the adviser's dedication and attention to the needs of graduate students. The award recognizes an adviser who has given generously of their time, intellect, and wisdom to encourage students' academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to the field.

Any faculty member who has a record of at least three years of advising in the (_____ department) is eligible. Additional nomination criteria include:

- Helping students to set realistic expectations, acquire competencies, stay on track, and overcome personal and professional challenges.
- Demonstrating sustained commitment to students through advising in multiple ways, e.g., supporting, mentoring, supervising, etc.
- Challenging students to go beyond what they thought was possible in academic excellence.

Nominating your adviser is easy! The nomination form, with more information about the nomination process, is available online at (grad/program's URL). Please submit your nomination to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will administer the selection process of this award by the Graduate Adviser Award Committee, comprised of (e.g., 3-5 students). For more information on successful advising practices, see (link).

The recipient's achievement will be commemorated with (recognition, e.g., cash, plaque, gift certificate, etc.). Deadline for submission of nominations is (date).