

Criteria for Distinguished Educator Award

Each year, SWST will award one deserving individual, a Distinguished Educator Award (in teaching or in extension/outreach). The nominating department head should indicate whether the Educator Award nomination submitted is for *teaching* or for *outreach*.

Purpose of the Award: The SWST Distinguished Educator Award encompasses disciplines of teaching as well as outreach and is intended to recognize individual faculty and instructors at a university for sustainable performance of excellence in teaching or to recognize faculty, staff or industry personnel for outstanding extension, engagement and economic development activities in wood or related field.

Teaching Recognition: Above and beyond an individual exemplary class, the distinguished educator award should show a kind of sustainable excellence in teaching that incites intellectual curiosity in students, inspires colleagues, and makes students aware of significant relationships between academia and the world at large. Part-time instructional appointees, including those who serve the departments at universities full or part-time in other capacities, become eligible for the award after teaching at least 2 course sections.

Extension/Outreach Recognition: The award will recognize a faculty or staff member at a university, or an industry member, who has made significant contributions to extension and outreach education and makes a priority of engagements that link wood and related products to the citizens of the state, nation or globally. The award is intended for individuals who show a sustained distinguished performance and educational contribution to various clienteles (including students, institutions, industry, and others) through various extension activities.

Nature of the Award: Recipients of the Distinguished Educator Award will receive a cash award (\$500.00) and a plaque recognizing them from SWST. The recipient will be honored at the annual SWST International Conference. The recipients of the Educator Award may be called upon by SWST to provide a voice in issues related to teaching or extension/outreach in forums or panels at the SWST conference and they will be advocates for excellence in imparting education in wood science and related fields.

The nominee has to be an SWST member.

Submission Instructions: The department member/s who will be completing and submitting the required materials should email execdir@swst.org with “Distinguished Educator Award Nominee” in the subject line. The content of the email should include the full name and institution/organization affiliation of the nominee. Once the nominations are received, the nominees will be contacted by the Chair of the Educator Award Committee to accept the nomination and send the other required documents (see the submission checklist).

A. DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR AWARD IN TEACHING

Eligibility: All faculty members and instructors at a recognized university are eligible for the Distinguished Educator Award in teaching. Specific eligibility criteria include-

- a. The nominated individual should be a current member of SWST.
- b. The intent of the award is to recognize faculty members who have established a sustained and varied record of teaching excellence. At minimum, nominees must have taught at least two regularly scheduled courses in the last two years in residence. The current semester of nomination and upcoming semester do not count towards the two scheduled courses. Less than two courses in the last two years would not provide sufficient evidence for the SWST Educator Award Committee to review the nominee in the selection process. Evidence of accomplishment does not necessarily require long years of service, which in themselves would not be considered sufficient grounds for recognition.
- c. The SWST Educator Award Committee believes that excellence in teaching and excellence in creative and scholarly work – both essential duties of faculty members/instructors – go hand in hand. Therefore, nominated faculty, who can show examples of having united these two roles successfully, will be considered for the award.
Lecturers are judged on their excellence in teaching and their contributions to the teaching mission of their respective universities and departments.
- d. Only **one** candidate can be nominated for the educator award in teaching by an institution in any year.

Selection Criteria (to be considered where applicable): In general, distinguished teachers will excel in the following areas-

- a. Effective design and redesign of courses.
- b. Ability to engage and inspire in students independent and critical thinking.
- c. Enthusiasm and vitality in learning and teaching.
- d. Active involvement in and guidance of student research projects, both undergraduate and graduate.
- e. Advising students with personal attention and care, even beyond the classroom.
- f. Mentorship and supervision of Undergraduate or Graduate Student Instructors that facilitate effective teaching.

Nomination Process: The SWST Educator Award Committee seeks evidence from a wide variety of sources, including one letter from the department head or department chair of the nominee's department, at least one letter from a faculty (on or off-campus) at the nominees' institution, and two letters from former or current students (at least one of those letters should be from an undergraduate who has taken a class with the faculty member).

While the nomination needs to be approved and submitted by the Department Head, Department Chair, or other appropriate officials, the nomination itself might be initiated by anyone in the department, including students.

In order to simplify the nomination process for both the Department and the Committee, we have provided a number of forms which are to be used to provide the information requested. Detailed information about the nomination process and forms can be found by clicking on the complete

Distinguished Educator Award Guidelines and Procedures for Teaching link on the SWST home page (www.swst.org).

Submission Checklist for Distinguished Educator Award in Teaching:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE NOMINATING DEPARTMENT

Materials should be submitted by email:

- a. Nominating Letter: No more than 2000 words, from the Department Head or Department Chair or equivalent. This letter carries a great deal of weight in the nomination. It will show, among other things, how the nominee clearly rises above otherwise good teaching in the department, how the nominees' research (if applicable) and teaching work go together, and how students respond to the teaching.
- b. Letters of Support (no more than 1000 words each): No more than six total, including at least one from a colleague (campus or off-campus), ideally someone who has recently observed the candidate's class and at least two from current and former students (at least one of which should be from an undergraduate who has taken a class with the nominee).

TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

- c. Reflective Statement: A reflective statement by the candidate of teaching goals, objectives and experiences, not to exceed 1000 words.
- d. Candidate's Curriculum Vitae.
- e. Chronological List of Course Taught: Table containing a chronological list of all courses taught during the last two years of residence (e).
- f. Quantitative Summary and Comparison: Quantitative summary and comparison of student evaluations of those courses listed in (e).
- g. Raw Student Evaluations: Raw student evaluations gathered for the same two courses in (e). Do not submit summary data, but rather the evaluations themselves with student comments.
- h. Teaching responsibilities outside the classroom (if applicable).
- i. Class Materials: Class materials for any one of the courses taught for which evaluations have been submitted. Materials might include syllabi, handouts, tests, assignments, and so on. If these materials are available on a website, simply provide the link.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE NOMINEE

e. Chronological List of Courses Taught

Nominee: _____

List all courses taught during last two years. Does not include current semester.

Course Number	Title	Semester and Year	Enrollment

f. Quantitative Summary and Comparison (use this form or a similar departmental form)

Nominee: _____

Quantitative Summary and Comparison: All courses in the last two years. The average score to be entered is the overall teaching effectiveness score similar to the one question: "Considering both the limitations and the possibilities of the subject matter and the course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of the instructor." If a similar question is not asked by the department or university for measuring overall teaching effectiveness, please create an average of all the scores for teaching evaluation statements (quantitative) for each course.

Course Number	Year	Enrollment	# of Evals Returned	Nominee Average	Dept. Average for Relevant Semester

h. Teaching Responsibilities Outside the Classroom (if applicable)

Nominee: _____

Please include all teaching-related activities for the last four semesters in residence.

1. (If applicable) List of MS thesis and doctoral dissertations – chair, committee member (please specify): Last four semesters
2. (If applicable) List of undergraduate research projects supervised (not as part of your regular assignments in classes): Last four semesters
3. Other advising and mentoring activities (please include number of advisees/ mentees): Last four semesters
4. Other

B. DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR AWARD IN OUTREACH

Eligibility: All faculty members and staff in a wood or related discipline at a university or personnel from the industry or association (in wood or related discipline) are eligible for the Distinguished Educator Award in outreach. Specific eligibility criteria include-

- a. The nominated individual should be a current member of SWST.
- b. The intent of the award is to recognize members of the SWST community who have devoted a substantial time to extension, engagement and economic development activities and have excelled at it. Nominees whose primary responsibility is teaching, research or the execution of extension work are eligible. At minimum, nominees must have been working in extension/ outreach area in wood or related disciplines for at least two years. Less than two years would not provide sufficient evidence for the SWST Educator Award Committee to review the nominee's application in the selection process. Evidence of accomplishment does not necessarily require long years of service, which in themselves would not be considered sufficient grounds for recognition.
- c. The SWST Educator Award Committee believes that extension, engagement and economic development is a meaningful and beneficial collaboration between the nominees' organization and external partners or communities. The nominated faculty should be able to show examples of expertise in developing appropriate programs to address client (e.g., industry) needs and provide education and assistance in disseminating relevant knowledge and technology to solve client problems.

Selection Criteria (to be considered where applicable): In general, Distinguished Educator nominee for outreach will excel in the following areas-

- d. Effective needs assessment of the clients/industry.
- e. Ability to engage with the clients and development programs to solve those needs.
- f. Enthusiasm and vitality in learning and disseminating information.
- g. Ability to interpret, synthesize, adapt and convey knowledge and information through traditional and non-traditional methods.
- h. (If applicable) Mentorship and supervision of students and/or teaching.

Nomination Process: The SWST Educator Award Committee seeks evidence from a wide variety of sources, including one letter from the department head or department chair of the nominee's department or from the executive head or senior management from the nominee's organization (industry or association), at least one letter from a faculty (on or off-campus) at the nominees' institution or a colleague from an industry/association, and two letters from current or former clients.

While the nomination needs to be approved and submitted by the department head, executive head, or other appropriate official, the nomination itself might be initiated by anyone in the department or organization, including colleagues, clients or students.

Detailed information about the nomination process and forms can be found by clicking on the complete Distinguished Educator Award Guidelines and Procedures for Outreach link on the SWST home page (www.swst.org).

Submission Checklist:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE NOMINATING DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION

Materials should be submitted with the email:

- a. Nominating Letter: No more than 2000 words, from the department head or department chair or equivalent from the industry/association (executive head, senior management). This letter carries a great deal of weight in the nomination. The letter of nomination should explain the nominee's worthiness of the award and highlight key aspects of his/her work that merit the Award Selection Committee's special attention.
- b. Letters of Support: No more than six total, including at least two from current and former clients, and at least one from a colleague (campus or off-campus). No letters longer than 1000 words should be submitted.

TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

- c. Reflective Statement: A reflective statement by the candidate of outreach/extension goals, objectives and experiences, not to exceed 2000 words including documentation of the following key aspects:
 - Leadership, vision and relevance: Document that nominees' extension, engagement and economic development efforts on the most innovative, important, critical and urgent needs of the target audience served (including examples).
 - Teamwork, interdisciplinary focus and knowledge/technology transfer: Demonstrate abilities to identify, organize and lead interdisciplinary teams (both internal and external to the organization) in carrying out outreach efforts.
 - Scholarship and dissemination: Show accomplishments in communication and dissemination including academic citations, book chapters, books, peer-reviewed journals, electronic dissemination tools (web pages, wikis, list serves), association meetings and conferences, etc.
 - Impacts and accomplishments: Document impacts of the extension activities including social, economic, environmental or other measurable outcomes/impacts.
- d. Candidate's Curriculum Vitae.
- e. Extension Materials and Evaluations: Outreach materials for any one of the extension activities for which evaluations can be submitted. If these materials are available on a website, simply provide the link.
- f. (If applicable) Teaching Responsibilities in the Classroom: List of courses taught with course title and student evaluations of those courses. Use forms (e) and (f) from the Distinguished Educator Award for teaching.

SWST EDUCATOR AWARDS COMMITTEE

1. Committee to review candidates and select winners: SWST will set up a Distinguished Educator Awards Committee (at least 3 members including at least one board liaison) who will screen the nominees for each award and make recommendations to the Board. The committee should contain an equal representation from individuals with primary responsibility of teaching and outreach/extension.
2. Deadline: The deadline for nominations is May 25, 2026 (*this year*)
3. In the absence of suitable candidates, SWST Educator Awards Committee reserves the right not to offer awards in a certain year.