

CALS/MAFES OPPORTUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The CALS/MAFES Opportunity Excellence Awards aim to encourage awareness and engagement among faculty, staff, and students in fostering a welcoming and supportive environment within the college, university, and surrounding community. These awards recognize outstanding contributions in three categories:

1. Faculty/Staff
2. Student
3. Team

Faculty and Staff Awards

The CALS/MAFES Faculty and Staff Opportunity Excellence Award honors faculty and staff members who go beyond their expected responsibilities to create opportunities and enhance participation within the institution and broader community. Nominees must hold a current faculty or staff appointment within CALS and/or MAFES (including those with administrative roles). Candidates should demonstrate:

1. A commitment to fostering engagement through extracurricular activities or initiatives at various levels (institutional, community, state, regional, national, or international).
2. Leadership in encouraging positive collaboration among individuals with different backgrounds.
3. Actions that reflect a dedication to expanding opportunities within the institution.

Student Award

Undergraduate and graduate students in CALS are eligible for this award. Candidates should:

1. Actively participate in activities or initiatives that encourage engagement within the institution or community.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to creating an environment of openness and connection among peers.
3. Show leadership in efforts that enhance participation and involvement on campus or in the broader community.

Team/Department Award

This award recognizes small groups, departments, stations, or centers that have made significant efforts to expand engagement and opportunity within the MSU campus, MAFES R&E Centers and Stations, or the community. Nominees may have:

1. Secured grant funding to create opportunities for students and staff in fields where participation has been limited.
2. Developed programs aimed at improving educational and professional experience for students and community members.

Nomination Packets

For each Individual or Team Nominee, nominators should prepare a packet that includes the required materials (see below) and does not exceed 25 pages.

1. Nomination forms are available on the CALS website at <https://www.cals.msstate.edu/committees.php#awards>. If nominating a team, a form must be completed for each member.
2. A cover letter summarizing how the nominee(s) meets the award criteria, including references to supporting materials and specific examples of their contributions. This should include:
 - a. Evidence of efforts to promote engagement and opportunity in the CALS/MAFES community.
 - b. Specific examples of leadership, collaboration, and innovative actions taken.
 - c. How CALS/MAFES has benefited from their contributions.
 - d. Any civic or community involvement outside MSU.
 - e. Relevant professional affiliations.
 - f. Related publications or programs developed by the nominee(s).
3. Up to three (3) supporting letters from colleagues or supervisors.
4. A one-page letter from the nominee explaining why they deserve the award.
5. Additional materials, such as photos, news articles, or program materials, that support the nomination.

Nomination and Selection Process

Nomination packets must be submitted as a single PDF file by 5:00 p.m. on February 21 to **nominations@cals.msstate.edu**. The CALS/MAFES Opportunity Excellence Advisory Council will review nominations and present recommendations to the CALS/MAFES Dean/Director for final selection.

Award recipients will be recognized at the CALS/MAFES Awards Banquet in the spring. Faculty award recipients will also receive a monetary prize.