✱ 2023 Breakthrough Leadership in Research Awards Guidelines and Criteria

Rationale

The Office of the Vice President for Research created the Breakthrough Leadership in Research Award in 2013 as a means to recognize faculty members from the Columbia, Comprehensive, and Palmetto College campuses who have made outstanding contributions to research, and who also demonstrate sustained leadership in research. These faculty members excel in their own research and utilize a synergistic approach to promote and inspire excellence in research, and perform these activities beyond the scope of their expected duties. The Breakthrough Leadership in Research Award recognizes faculty for these truly exceptional achievements and celebrates their contributions to the university and surrounding communities.

Award Description

The recipients of this non-cash award are featured in a supplement to *Breakthrough* magazine, and are featured throughout the year in other mediums. Additionally, they are invited to attend the annual Breakthrough Awards Dinner, held each spring. The award raises awareness of the importance of leadership and mentoring amongst faculty, particularly senior faculty who take an interest in the development of junior faculty. It also recognizes those who work in capacities outside the university, utilizing their unique skills to promote research in the greater community. *Breakthrough* magazine and its supplement are widely distributed to all faculty and administration, peer institutions, program managers, legislative representatives, and selected alumni and donors.

Award Criteria

The primary criteria for the award are:

- Strong commitment to and evidence of excellence in research and scholarly activity. Indicators can include: H-Index, publications in high impact journals, book chapters or other significant publications, competitive society memberships, strong record of extramural funding, etc.
- Sustained demonstration of leadership in research that positively impacts the research performed by others.
- Sustained demonstration of activities which have a positive impact in the greater community (internally or externally) and/or on public perceptions of the university.

Special merit is given to research-related activities that are in addition to expected duties as recognized by the nominee's discipline or position. Some examples of these types of activities include: successful mentoring of junior faculty, establishing research centers with university-wide impact, promoting research in K-12 settings, community outreach through research, creating research programs aimed at increasing diversity, internationalization, etc.

There are many unique ways through which faculty can demonstrate leadership in research. Award consideration is not limited to the above examples.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Any full-time faculty within the USC system may be nominated.
2. Nominee must be employed within the USC system for a minimum of five years at the time of nomination.
3. Past nominees who were not selected in previous years are eligible for re-nomination.
4. Past recipients of the award are not eligible for re-nomination for a period of three years.
5. Members of the Breakthrough Awards Committee are not eligible to be nominated.
6. Faculty members may not nominate themselves.
7. A nomination may be submitted by any faculty member, chair, dean, associate dean for research, or chancellor.

Nomination Procedures

Nominations for the Breakthrough Leadership in Research award are submitted online through a special nomination system based on USC's sponsored awards proposal routing system USCeRA, a familiar interface for most USC faculty members. The nomination submission system is available at vprinitiatives.research.sc.edu. Download the step-by-step Nomination Submission Guide (pdf) for detailed information on the submission process.

Both the nominee and the nominator have a role to play in completing nomination package components both inside and outside of the nomination system. Completed nomination packages are finalized and submitted to the Office of Research by the nominator.

Complete nomination packets are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 14, 2022.

For questions or difficulty submitting nomination materials, please call **Debbie Gipson** at (803) 777-5458.

Breakthrough Leadership in Research Nomination Packet Components

<u>**Nominees**</u> **Must Provide:**

- An up-to-date CV (to be uploaded in PDF format) that demonstrates excellence in research, scholarly activity, and leadership. The CV should accurately reflect and support the responses to the Nominee Questionnaire and the letters of recommendation (these items are detailed below).
- Responses of 4,000 characters or fewer (counting spaces and line breaks), for each of the Nominee Questionnaire prompts listed below. (Nominees will have 4,000 characters per response.) We recommend that nominees draft their responses outside of the system, then copy and paste the responses into the Nominee Questionnaire form inside of the nomination system.
  - Describe how your contributions have positively impacted the research of other

faculty.

- o Describe how your contributions have positively impacted the greater community (internally or externally), and/or public perceptions of the university.
- o Describe how you have excelled in your current role and how your contributions go beyond expected duties as recognized by your position or discipline.
- o Describe your record of leadership as it relates to your research and scholarly activity.
- o Describe how your record of research and scholarly activity exceeds expectations in your position or discipline.
- o Each year, Breakthrough award recipients are featured in a booklet, with a photo spread and a short write-up. Your response to the three questions below will be quoted and/or used as source material for the awards booklet write-up (responses may be edited for clarity, etc.). Please feel free to take creative license in answering these three questions; we're looking for your interpretations and reflections, rather than a technical response.
    - ▪ Considering your research focus, what drew you to it initially, and what has kept you in those research questions over the years?
    - ▪ How would you summarize the significance and impact of your research career — how has it advanced your own understanding of the research topic? How has it advanced your students and your particular academic discipline?
    - ▪ What's next for your research career?

<u>Nominators</u> Must Provide:

- A letter of recommendation, under the nominator's signature, no longer than two pages in length (to be uploaded in PDF format) that meets the guidelines listed below.
    - o This letter should provide anecdotal evidence of the nominee's merit for the award.
    - o This letter should provide evidence that the nominee's contributions have exceeded expectations for leadership in their discipline or position.
    - o This letter should provide evidence that the nominee's contributions have exceeded expectations for research and scholarly activity in their discipline or position.
- A letter of recommendation from either a USC colleague of the nominee <u>or</u> from someone outside of USC who has first-hand knowledge of the nominee's contributions and impact. This letter (to be uploaded in PDF format) should be no longer than two pages in length and should meet the guidelines listed below.
    - o This letter should provide anecdotal evidence of the nominee's merit for the award.
    - o This letter should provide evidence that the nominee's contributions have positively impacted the greater community (internally or externally), and/or public perceptions of the university.
    - o This letter should describe lasting positive impacts in the greater community attributable to the nominee's contributions.

Notes and Exceptions

- Nominators may only submit one nomination per year.
- The committee will accept and review only one nomination per nominee.
- The committee will not accept or review more than the two required letters of recommendation. Each letter is limited to two pages

Selection Process

Nominations that are complete and responsive to the requirements of this announcement will be evaluated by the Breakthrough Awards Committee. The committee will evaluate nominations using specific review criteria. The committee will provide a prioritized list of recommended recipients to the Vice President for Research (VPR) based on the quality of the materials provided by the nominator. The VPR will determine recipients based on the committee's recommendations.

Nominees and their nominators will receive notification of their selection or declination on or before **Thursday, December 8, 2022.**

Review Criteria

Evaluations will be performed by the Breakthrough Awards Committee. The committee members will score each nomination packet to inform the prioritization of recommendations presented to the VPR. Committee members will evaluate nominations independently, then meet and come to a consensus for recommendations to the VPR.

The committee will evaluate nomination materials, and look for specific evidence of key attributes in making their recommendations.

For questions regarding this award or the nomination process, contact Debbie Gipson in the Office of the Vice President for Research.

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UNIVERSITY OF
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