

NDSU OUTSTANDING GRADUATE MENTOR AWARD

1.1. General Goal

The goal of the award is to recognize graduate faculty members for outstanding mentorship that contributes to positive and constructive engagement of graduate/professional students, benefiting the educational experience and contributing to the success of graduate and professional students at North Dakota State University.

1.2 Awards

The NDSU Graduate School invites faculty, staff, graduate students, and others (e.g., alums and friends) to submit nominees for consideration of the NDSU Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award. The award will recognize up to two NDSU faculty member(s) on campus for their outstanding mentorship as demonstrated in their supporting, encouraging, and promoting a positive scholarly and teaching environment, and for contributing to academic, professional, and personal growth and development of graduate or professional students.

1.3 Suggested Award Criteria

The following suggested criteria are derived from a variety of sources on mentorship, such as the Council of Graduate Schools' [Healthy Research Teams & Labs](#), and reflect trends in graduate and professional education.

Nominees are not expected to fulfill all criteria. Instead, they should select a few items to highlight their strongest mentoring characteristics, showcasing their mentorship in action.

1.3.1 Nominee demonstrates exceptional ability to set clear expectations for working with mentees, such as communicating roles and responsibilities, and to cultivate mentoring relationships that actively support students' personal, academic, and professional development.

1.3.2 Nominee creates and sustains a learning environment that respects and values student welfare, belonging, and growth, treating well-being as foundational to excellence in graduate/professional education.

1.3.3 Nominee exhibits a transparent and explicit commitment to fair mentoring, such as facilitating access to opportunities, ethical research practices, and consistent treatment of mentees.

1.3.4 Nominee fosters a culture of collaboration rather than competition, encouraging intellectual openness, shared success, curiosity, and innovation while maintaining high standards of rigor and research integrity.

1.3.5 Nominee actively promotes professional development aligned with supporting a variety of career aspirations

1.3.6 Nominee demonstrates ongoing investment in improving their mentoring, leadership, and research management skills through continual learning.

1.3.7 Nominee demonstrates evidence of empowering mentees to be entrepreneurial scholars, researchers and leaders in the future.

The suggested award criteria encourage expanding the concept of mentorship beyond only successfully directing disquisitions (theses and dissertations), research, or completing coursework as part of a professional program.

The award encourages re-framing mentorship through a holistic view of the mentor-mentee relationship, such as recognition and support of graduate students' varied interests, passions, and motivations beyond their research projects.

1.4 Nomination Process and Eligibility

Nominations can originate from graduate students (current or former), graduate faculty, staff members or others (e.g., alums or friends) at NDSU. Self-nominations are eligible for the award.

Nominees must be members of the graduate faculty who have been mentoring graduate students at NDSU for at least the past five years. Also, past award recipients are not eligible for nomination.

- Name and NDSU email of Nominator and Nominee (who should accept nomination)
- A written description (200 words or fewer) that outlines how the nominee exemplifies mentorship as indicated in the suggested criteria, focusing on a few of the criteria and being as concrete as possible in the description.
- An abbreviated curriculum vitae of nominee (five pages or fewer) that focuses on their service to graduate students including a list of current and former advisees and mentees

The nomination materials (via one pdf package) must be sent via email to NDSU Graduate School Selection Committee by March 16, 2026 via ndsu.gsc@ndsu.edu.

1.5 Decisions, Awardee's Benefit, and Recognitions

1.5.1. The Graduate School Awards Committee will consult with representatives from across campus to encourage active participation in accomplishing the goal of the award to recognize faculty who practice a more holistic approach to mentorship. The Selection Committee will have at least one Graduate School staff member, two graduate students, and three faculty representatives by working with the Graduate Council. The Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean's designee will chair the committee.

1.5.2 Recognition: Recipients will be recognized at the Outstanding Faculty Excellence Recognition Ceremony in September 2026.

1.5.3 If there is no budget, an outstanding graduate mentor award plaque will be presented to the recipient(s). If budget permits, we hope to have \$500 to \$1000 (\$500 from the Graduate School and \$500 from the academic College where the recipients work) to support each recipient's professional development (e.g., traveling or purchasing of materials); plus, an award plaque to each recipient. If we give two outstanding awards each year, the recipients must be selected from two different colleges on campus.

1.6 AWARDEES' EXPERIENCES TO BE SHARED

In the following year (either Fall 2026 or Spring 2027), the Graduate School will host a panel or symposium on how to mentor graduate students successfully. The award recipient(s) will be invited to discuss and share their stories with graduate faculty and students.

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